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Between History and Identity: Reading Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk

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Between History and Identity: Reading Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk

Dissertation
submitted to the University of Rajshahi in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
English

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April 2015

For

my departed father whose words of inspiration resonate still

“[C]omparative literature [is] a field whose origin and purpose is to move beyond insularity and provincialism and to see several cultures and literatures together, contrapuntally…to get a perspective beyond one’s own nation, to see some sort of whole instead of the defensive little patch offered by one’s own culture, literature and history.”–Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994): 49.

“That history deals with real events and literature with imagined ones may now be seen as a difference in degree rather than in kind. The difference between cases of historical and literary events will always be there as a differential moment in terms of what is called ‘the effect of the real.’ ”–Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mohasweta Devi’s *Stanadāyini*,” *Indian Literary Criticism: Theory and Intrerpretation,* Ed. G. N. Devy (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2002): 220-258; 223.

“Since the project of identity, whether individual or collective, is rooted in desires and aspirations that cannot be fulfilled, identity movements are open-ended, productive, and fraught with ambivalence.”–James Clifford, “Taking Identity Politics Seriously: ‘The Contradictory, Stony Ground…’,” *Without Guarantees: Essays in Honour of Stuart Hall*, Eds. P. Gilroy, et. al. (London: Verso, 2000): 94-112; 95.

Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation titled “Between History and Identity: Reading Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk” submitted by me to the University of Rajshahi through the Department of English as part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a product of my own research and appropriate credit is given when references to the works of other authors have been used. I also declare that the dissertation, either in part or full, was not previously submitted anywhere for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or title of recognition.

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Certification

I have great pleasure in certifying that the dissertation titled "Between History and Identity: Reading Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk" submitted by Mr. Md. Mominul Islam to the University of Rajshahi through the Department of English for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is his original research work done under my supervision. This dissertation, either in part or full, was not previously submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or title of recognition. Materials used from the works of other authors have been duly acknowledged in the dissertation. I have gone through the final draft of the dissertation and found it well worth submission.

I, therefore, recommend and forward the dissertation to the University of Rajshahi through the Department of English for necessary formalities leading to its acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

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As per the requirements of the university I had to present the thesis at two seminar sessions, one progress seminar and the other presubmission seminar. I extend my warm thanks to the participants of those seminar sessions for their engaged hearing, insightful comments, constructive criticism, and, of course, for their encouraging words. In this connection, especially I would like to thank Ms Shahnaz Yasmeen, my respected teacher and the chairperson of the department, who took enthusiastic effort to arrange those seminars in a congenial and scholarly environment. As chairperson she has been extra co-operative with me during the study period in all academic and official matters including my study leave processing.

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Abstract

More than ever in its history of evolution novel as an elastic and promiscuous genre now crosses disciplinary boundaries and, in addition to delineating "universal" themes like love, betrayal, war, and death, illustrates the inevitable bearing of history and politics on literature. Along the line of this argument, this study intends to explore Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk in regard to their treatment of the issues encapsulated by "history" and "identity." Following a comparative and historicizing mode this dissertation argues that Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk project transverse worlds with intersecting historical trajectories. Their major fictional and non-fictional works are found revolving around the themes of history and identity, or to be precise, issues of historiography and identity in the colonial and postcolonial periods. Although these issues appear as central engagements of most postcolonial and postmodern narratives, they become especially worth researching with respect to some particular writers like the ones I have selected because of their important locales, exceptional contexts, and unique mode of representation.

Amitav Ghosh, loosely categorized as a postcolonial and postmodern novelist, takes his materials from the colonial and postcolonial political history and cultural canvas of India, South East Asia, parts of China, and parts of the Middle East, using the alternative lens of fiction vis-à-vis the officially recorded version. The complex issue of identity which may be political, geographical, economic, cultural, and individual in scope and nature appears as an overriding concern in his writings. In dealing with the issue in fictional terms he challenges histories influenced by the hegemony of the West, and writes, sharing the spirit of the movememt of writing history from below, a version of history that projects the predicament of individuals and is "humanized" by fictional characters. He shows how history is woven with hope and despair, with the elements of cross-cultural relation and the partitionist agenda. Sometimes, incidents of violence abounding in his writings make readers feel that the history of human civilization is the history of violence. While official histories often remain discreetly silent about the "violence chapter," his fictional history deliberately breaks the spell of silence, for silence, to him, means complicity, encouraging the repetition of the "black spots" of history.

Broadly in the same line of thought, Orhan Pamuk shows in microcosom what Ghosh captures in a wider spectrum of history. He invokes the romanticized past as "hyperhistory" and at the same time reveals the "black spots" in his country's unspoken history. "A happy postmodernist" in his own words and a postcolonialist in the broad sense, he writes on the paradox and problematics of Turkish identity from the perspective of a revisionist reading of Ottoman and post-Ottoman history of Turkey coming to him from the sources of both internal and external Turkologists. The issue he handles becomes relevant to most eastern nations that were once under colonization in different forms and are still living the anxieties of identity. Although Turkey was never colonized, its present-day position in the global context is similar to that of the once colonized nations projected in Ghosh. The East-West conflict/compromise underpinning the Turkish condition, the country's high vulnerability and sporadic resistance to neo-imperialism, and the colonization of the psyche of the people compare obviously with the conditions of people depicted in the narratives of other postcolonial nations.

Therefore, the novelists selected for this study can be "yoked together" (and of course, not by "violence") for writing narratives of nations grappling with the question of identity in a similar vein; of course, their narratives ultimately go beyond the range of being "national allegories" and become a viable and vibrant space for "speaking to all." Their major works project many characters who suffer from the cultural and human costs of boundaries arbitrarily drawn by colonial power structures in the creation of nation-states and attempt to foreground the cartographies people bear constantly in their mind. This study explores the canons of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk with a view to studying in-depth the literary representation of the dynamics and formation of identity in the context of history related to the spread of transcontinental ocean trade, colonization, withdrawal of empires, rise of (ultra)nationalism, onslaught of globalization, clashes of cultures, East-West entanglements, and the role of colonial cities in shaping people's sense of cultural belonging.

The thesis is divided into five chapters: the first introducing the scope and parametre of the thesis with some theoretical discussions, the second and third on Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk respectively in relation to the area of this study, the fourth on comparative analysis of the two authors in the light of the discussions in

chapters two and three, and the last for summing up and making concluding remarks. In the fourth chapter, the core analysis of the study, the points of divergence and convergence are explained for a comprehensive understanding of the authors who actually write in the great tradition of the "world novel," not in the the novelistic tradition of a particular country or language. The way they critique both empire and nation as begetters of evils, man's egoistic self, and disintegration of society constitutes a broad point of comparison. That their reflections on maps, boundaries, and partitioning of the past and the present bear some sort of resemblance is pointed out. Having a strong legacy of the eastern tradition replete with mystic stories and thoughts they invite comparison with each other in the use of mystic ideals to show the elusive nature of some of their characters' quest for the self.

In connection to their dealing with self-other binary, imperialist-native negotiation, East-West entanglement, convergence of the powerful and the powerless, and cultural conflict/negotiations from philosophical and mystic perspectives this study makes an emphatic use of the trope of master-slave relation as it comparably appears in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* and Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*. It shows how both the writers illustrate "transcendence in bondage" model through their treatment of master-slave relation without admitting the superioty or inferiority of either party. Their use of art and colonial cities in the interpretation of history and identity, their sense of "worldliness," and their writerly campaign for a post-nationalist world-order particularly underlie the comparative analysis. In the context of Pamuk a post-secularist and post-Islamist worldview comes up for discussion quite relevantly. Moreover, since artists are the presenters of people, the multiple and in-between identities of artists in the globalized world draw some focus in the analysis of their writings. While based on thematic analysis the study also takes note of these writers' common theoretical leanings in the areas of postcolonialism, postmodernism and the other relevant cultural, political, and critical theories of the time. Metafictional self-reflexivity as a postmodernist trait in many of their works comes up for particular discussion as it connects with the identity of the authors in relation to their fictional universe.

Key Terms: Amitav Ghosh, Orhan Pamuk, Fiction, History, Identity, Culture, Self, Other, Nationalism, Nation-state, Partition, Geopolitics, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, Empire, Imperialism, East-west, Subalternity, Worldliness, Exile, Modernity, Secularism, Hybridity, Social Capital, Syncretism, Mysticism, Ottomanism/Neo-Ottomanism, Orientalism, Occidentalism, Self-Reflexivity, Historiography, and Metafiction.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations parenthetically used in this dissertation only refer to the primary sources and correspond to the following editions that are given in order of their original years of publication:

CR *The Circle of Reason*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

SL *The Shadow Lines*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

AL *In an Antique Land.* New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

HT *The Hungry Tide*. New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2005.

CC *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery.* New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

DCOE *Dancing in Cambodia and Other Essays.* New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

CD *The Countdown.* New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

GP *The Glass Palace*. London: HarperCollins, 2000.

I&I *The Imam and the Indian.* New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.

SP *Sea of Poppies.* New Delhi: Penguin, 2009.

RS *River of Smoke*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2011.

WC *The White Castle*. Trans. Victoria Holbrook, London: Faber and Faber, 1990.

MNR *My Name is Red.* Trans. Erdag M.Goknar, London: Faber and Faber, 2001.

BB *The Black Book*. Trans. Maureen Freely, London: Faber and Faber, 2006.

NL *The New Life*. Trans. Guneli Gun, London: Faber and Faber, 1997

IMC *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. Trans. Maureen Freely, London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

OC *Other Colours: Writings on Life, Art, Books and Cities*. Trans. Maureen Freely, London: Faber and Faber, 2007.

MI *The Museum of Innocence*. Trans. Maureen Freely, London: Faber and Faber, 2009.

SH *Silent House*. Trans. Robert Finn, New Delhi: Penguin, 2012.

NSN *The Naive and the Sentimentalist Novelist: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 2009.* Trans. Nazim Dibkaş, New Delhi: Penguin, 2012.

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Chapter One
Introduction: From History to Story, and Identity through Routes to Roots

> Everyone lives in a story…because stories are all there to live in, it was just a question of which one you chose… (SL 201)

> [T]his phoenix [is] rising from the ashes of history, the names of those alleged to have taken part in it were likewise false. (BB 75)

Conceptual Issues/Fiction, History, and Identity

The emergence and proliferation of the theories of literary and cultural studies in the twentieth century, needless to say, have caused a considerable shift in the appraisal of literary texts – from aesthetic and "disinterested" reading to historical, cultural, and socio-political reading. Resulting from the interdisciplinary expansion of Literature into the domain of Cultural Studies issues/concepts encapsulated by "history" and "identity" have become some of the important central engagements of postmodern and postcolonial narratives. In this connection, Ania Loomba posits that "[p]ostcolonial studies have been preoccupied with ideas of hybridity, creolisation, mestizaje, in-betweenness, diaspora and liminality, *with the morality and cross-overs of ideas and identities*."[1] History emerges as an important trope in fiction for it provides the contextual framework for exploring various phases of the formation, negotiation, and metamorphosis of identity in all its configurations and permutations – national, cultural, psychological, and anthropological.

The interaction of roots and routes, and cultural exchanges through globalization, mass migration, and easy travels also significantly contribute to the process of negotiating people's identity. Dispersion and exile – forced or willing, physical or mental – prominently figure in the postcolonial narratives as exilic condition redefines the notions of home and identity. Being cut off from their roots, the fictional characters and their authors in postcolonial narratives are often found on the routes for a while, but ultimately they turn from their routes to searching their roots in the process of identity formation. The root searching naturally entails re-reading and re-narration of history subjectively since it has

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[1] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998): 173. Emphasis added.

been so far narrated from the perspectives of power. And the lens of history naturally becomes integrated with or complementary to the lens of fiction as story etymologically constitutes the basic component of the term "history." This research project explores the literary representation of the history and identity negotiations of different geopolitical areas of Asia and the Middle East in connection with colonization, dissolution of empires, rise of nationalism and nation-states, spread of globalization, and negotiations of cultures as reflected in the works of two select authors of different backgrounds.

General Context/Thematic and Theoretical Background of the Study

The relation between history and fiction, needless to say, is a quite well-trodden area of critical debates and discussions. The debate over the distinction between historical fiction and academic history has been going on ever since the publication of the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). Scott is considered the founder of the historical novel by the Marxist literary theorist Georg Lukács whose work *The Historical Novel* becomes the starter of the historical fiction's theoretical paradigms. "The so-called historical novels of the seventeenth century," Lukács argues, 'are historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume. Not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer's own day".[2] Although Lukács considers anachronism as the weakness of Scott's predecessors, postmodern historical fiction often flaunts anachronism. While classical historical novels closely follow the rule of maintaining fidelity to the historical realms, postmodern historical novels may sometimes transgress it for overt self-consciousness. Thus the question of fidelity to past details in the historical novel is addressed variously over the period of its development.

What is, however, undisputed right from the beginning of the writing of historical fiction is that history and fiction are interwined for enriching and popularizing each other. As novelists are attracted by historicity in fiction, historians also sometimes feel enticed by fictionality in both official and personal versions of history. In this connection we can refer to the confession of the historian Iain McCalman in his "Flirting with Fiction" where he gives credit to R.L. Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and Scott's *Ivanhoe* for making him attracted towards history.[3] German historian Leopold Ranke also confesses

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[2] Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, Trans. Hannh and Stanley Mitchell (London: Penguin, 1962): 15.

[3] Iain McCalman, "Flirting With Fiction," *The Historian's Conscience: Australian Historians on the Ethics of history*, Ed. Stuart Macyntyre (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne UP, 2004): 151-161; 151.

to have started his historiographic study through reading the fiction of Scott.[4] Fictional text works as a trigger in historical study as imagination is the corner stone of human achievement of knowledge. The innate weakness of the historians for studying historical novels, however, is more noticeable in the West than in the East. The condition is sometimes reverse in India where most historians come to their field knowledge through the study of social sciences, not through the study of historical novels.[5]

Historical fiction adds flesh to bare bones that historians can only unearth – it provides the bones with colour, meaning, and context. In the process the fiction writer can inspire readers to conjure up the faithful images of the past in a comprehensive way, by bringing them to life. The debate about the historian's and the novelist's overlapping crafts has its roots in the questioning of the impartiality of historical representation, in the problematizing of the position of the history writer as subjective or objective, hegemonic or non-hegemonic. The act of historical narrativising appears problematic when the emphasis is considered to be on subjective rather than objective history, giving rise to a widespread critique of the "official histories." One of the pioneers in this shifting paradigm of historiography is Robin George Collingwood who first points out that the knowledge of the past becomes communicable only when the historian projects his/her "self" into the context of his/her study.[6] Postmodernism contributes to this change in the mode of approaching history by positing that claiming any objectivity in historiography is simply self-contradictory. In short, the subjectivism of history is the main impetus for writing historical novels. The emergence of the historical fiction also correlates with the rise of nationalism and the renewed search for identity.[7] Unlike the conventional history writing, postmodernist history, focusing upon those who are forced to be ex-centred and inconsequential, draws much of its strength from the contemporary people's obsession with the politics and problematics of identity.[8]

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4 See David D. McGarry and Sarah Harriman White, *Historical Fiction Guide: Annotated Chronological, Geographical and Topical List of Five Thousand Selected Historical Novels* (New York: Scarecrow, 1963): 17.

5 Amitav Ghosh, "Between the Walls of Archives and Horizons of Imagination," Interview with Mahmood Kooria, *Itinerario* 36.3 (Dec 2012): 7-18, 14. <http://journals.cambridge.org/ITI>. Ghosh in this interview cites the example of one of his friends, an Indian historian who after reading the draft of *In an Antique Land* asked him to throw it away for encroaching on the domain of the historians with feelings and emotions.

6 Robin George Collingwood's *The Idea of History* (OUP, 1946) traces the evolution of history from the time of Herodotus to the twentieth century.

7 Ian Dennis, *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction* (London: McMillan, 1997): 1.

8 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "History in a Postmodern World," *Reconstructing History: The Emergence of a New Historical Society,* Eds. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn (New York: Routledge,1999): 44.

Hayden White, the leading postmodernist philosopher of history, favours the idea of deleting any distinction between "history" and "story" as they have a common etymological root.[9] He argues that historians in crafting their trade have to get involved in subjective arrangement of historical facts for ideological reasons and sometimes, they have to rely on fictional plot devices such as the "fairy tale or detective story on the one hand, as Romance, Comedy, Tragedy, or Satire on the other."[10] Considering narrative form as the only available form of representation for a historian he marks history writing as a kind of "emplotment," that is, "making stories out of mere chronicles." As he explains, chronicles

> are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like – in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of the novel or a play.[11]

Without following the literary mode the historian's materials will remain fragmentary, incomplete, and incomminicable. Like a teller of stories he has to invent contextual frameworks to prevent chaotic interpretations by the readers.

Gayatri Spivak makes illuminating remarks on the nature of continuous two-way trafficking between history and fiction. Suggesting resemblance at the interpretive level of historiographical and literary texts she writes: "That history deals with real events and literature with imagined ones may now be seen as a difference in degree rather than in kind. The difference between cases of historical and literary events will always be there as a differential moment in terms of what is called 'the effect of the real'."[12] She further explains that "the archival or archeological work of historiography might resemble a certain work of reading which is usually associated with literary interpretation."[13] Of

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9 Hayden White in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1973) shows how historians in figuring out historical processes in their works make use of poetry and rhetorical devices like metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony which in turn make history take the forms of literary genres like romance, tragedy, comedy and satire.

10 Ibid., 8.

11 Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," *The History and Narrative*, Ed. Geoffrey Roberts (London: Routledge, 2001): 221-236; 223.

12 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mohasweta Devi's *Stanadāyini*," *Indian Literary Criticism: Theory and Intrerpretation,* Ed. G. N. Devy (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2002): 220-258; 223.

13 Ibid., 223.

course, as Dominick LaCapra warns us, historians often have to take necessary caution in considering literary interpretations which, sometimes, may prove to be "the outgrowth of wild speculation rather than careful research."[14]

Complicity between fiction and history is also reflected in Derrida: "literature and the archives seem complicit in that they are both a crosshatching of condensations, traffic in telescoped symbols that can too easily be read as each other's repetition-with-a-displacement."[15] Exploring borderlines between academic history and historical fiction Richard Slotkin says that both can be true as both depend on the choice of story. History, he explains, "is not a thing, an object of study, but a story" people like "to tell about things"; history is what people make of history, to put the point paradoxically. To be construed as history, events or facts happening over time "must be selected and arranged on some sort of plan, made to resolve some sort of question which can only be asked subjectively and from a position of hindsight." This leads to the proposition that "all history writing requires a fictive or imaginary representation of the past," and that "there is no reason why, in principle, a novel may not have a research basis as good as or better than that of a scholarly history; and no reason why, in principle, a novelist's portrayal of a past may not be truer and more accurate than that produced by a scholarly historian."[16] Given the involvement of essential subjectivity in the selection of materials, the relation between historiographic and novelistic practices is at once close and complex, friendly and rival.

In compliance with the above views many novelists show a preference for using historical materials reconstructed subjectively as the basis of plot in fiction, giving rise to the theories of historiographic metafiction and self-reflexive fiction. In this process the past is screened through the mind of the author, put in close interaction with the figment of his imagination, and consequentially fiction opens up the space to question its own nature of fictionality. Fiction writers become aware of the line of demarcation between private and public versions of history, and take up the first version which may also be termed "micro histories" or "humanised histories." About this distinction between the

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[14] Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983): 344.

[15] As qtd. in Brinda Bose, Ed. *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives* (New Delhi: Pencraft, 2005): 17.

[16] Richard Slotkin, "Fiction for the Purposes of History," *Rethinking History* 9.2 (Sept 2005): 221-236; 222.

two versions Ghosh makes an illuminating comment: "If you look at Tolstoy's *War and Peace*...I think the difference between the history historians write and the history fiction writers write is that fiction writers write about the human history. It's about finding the human predicament, it's about finding what happens to individuals, characters."[17] Again, in another interview Ghosh explains the relation of history and historical fiction with the help of river-fish metaphor. If history becomes a river with layers and crosscurrents, historical fiction pursues fishes swimming in different directions within the river. The fiction writer has to be aware of the flow of the river water as much as required for the proper knowledge of the fish's movement, that is, the psychology of the characters inhabiting the past.[18]

Microness/characterization becomes the redeeming feature of fiction when it encroaches on the domain of history through the prism of characters. As novelists have liberty to mould the historical materials into a form suitable for literary representation, historians have their subject matter vulnerable to manipulation by any powerful quarters though they are apparently guided and constrained by documentary records. Fictional history as a human narrative can engender in the reader compassion and empathy which cannot be aroused by mere facts and figures provided by recorded history. The same persons who being presented in history as such incur the wrath of the reader may compel the reader to empathise with them if presented in fictionalized history. Therefore, history as a story means an engaging process of humanizing history.[19]

A novelist's portrayal of humanized histories emphasizes the construction of emotional and teleological links between the past and the present – revealing the characters' struggles to get at the roots of identities at myriad levels, as Ghosh, drawing on Faulkner's famously uttered view of the past, tells us: "The past…is not over, in fact the past is not even the past. One of the paradoxes of history is that it is impossible to draw a chart of the past without imagining a map of the present and the future" (I&I 319). Consequently, one of the important concerns of historical reconstruction in modern third world literature is re-imagining the cultural cartography and re-formation of

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[17] Amitav Ghosh, "Shadow Script," Interview to *First City* (New Delhi, Sept 2000): 30.
[18] Amitav Ghosh, "Between the Walls of Archives and Horizons of Imagination," op. sit., p. 9.
[19] Kirsty Murray in conversation with Pankaj K. Singh, "Fiction Humanizes History": Kirsty Murray on Writing Australian History and Multuculturalism," *Indian Journal of Australian Studies* 2, Ed. Pankaj K. Singh (Shimla, 2009): 47-55; 47-48.

identities in the imperial period as well as in the wake of the emergence of nation-states in the post imperial era. State plays the catalytic role in the process of identity re-configuration by providing "the grid on which history is mapped."[20] In this context Ghosh quotes from Ranajit Guha'a brilliant lecture on Hegel and the South Asian history writing: "It is the state which first supplies a content, which not only lends itself to the prose of history but actually helps to produce it."[21] It is because state requires a history, be it real or invented, to be born out of the yoke of external domination and to be sustained in the midst of fractures within, and to provide its citizens with some popular discourse of (national) identity.

Fredric Jameson points to the involvement of the nationalist ideas in mapping human history and identity when he says: "all third world texts are necessarily ... national allegories."[22] Nationalism, according to him, becomes significant for the third world people to protect "their radical difference" in the political and cultural spheres of postcolonial societies. Difference is considerd important to invest them with invidualitiy and mental freedom from the anxiety of influence and dependence. John Plamenatz echoes the same view when he defines nationalism as a "desire to preserve or enhance a people's national or cultural identity when that identity is threatened, or the desire to transform or even create it where it is felt to be inadequate or lacking."[23] "The nonsectarian anti-imperialist nationalism of a Gandhi or a Saad Zaghloul" could effectively use "difference" as a basis of establishing the relatively autonomous identity for people of heterogeneous orientations (I&I 279). But nationalism in the postcolonial context sometimes "seeks to banish 'difference' in the interests of promoting [a kind of] 'identity' and teleology" when the idea of imposing unity on heterogeneity ignores the alternative discourses of identity.[24] Nationalism's relation to the process of inclusion and exclusion, of highlighting difference from external forces and subordinating difference within becomes integral to the operations of literary representation in the narrative form

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[20] Ibid., 93.

[21] Ibid., 93.

[22] Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," *Social Text: Theory /Culture/Ideology* (Fall 1986): 65-88; 69.

[23] As qtd. by Alan Lawson, "The Discovery of Nationality in Australian and Canadian Literature," *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, Eds. Bill Ashcroft, et. al. (London and New York: Routledge, 1995): 167-169; 168.

[24] Laura Chrisman, "Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, Ed. Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: CUP, 2004): 183-198; 193.

like novel. Hence the discourse of nationalism and identity, and the related issues like globalization, cultural clashes, and the East-West trope appear necessarily through the projection of historical memory in the third world novels.

Often the fictional imagination of a historical novelist moves between past and present to project the identity-related predicament of certain people who were previously treated as objects of history. Even after becoming subjects of history they sometimes fail to define the parameters of their subjecthood. The emergence of nation-states, contrary to its founding principles, often creates artificial and arbitrary boundaries between individuals, cultures, communities, geographical spaces, and epochs of history. And postcolonial fiction critiques the official boundaries and the consequential "shadow lines" between peoples, and celeberates the cartographies of imagination. Some fictional characters inhabiting imaginative cartographies often tend to defy the homogenizing force of the nation-states established on the model of the West without considering the native reality of cultural and ethnic heterogeneity. The western model for managing diversity entails identity-related violence by problematizing the idea of partition and integration.

In the historical flux of focus, the West has now gained the normative value against which the excellence of other nations is judged. According to this notion, what is not up to the mark by the western standard is rejected and what matches western value is duly accepted. This triggers a kind of self defeating competition which, to quote Benedict Anderson, can be termed "spectre of comparisons."[25] The stimulus for the comparisons encompasses the wider areas of art, culture, technology, and political system, and, sometimes, instigates bitter relation and violence between nations. This phenomenon appears both at the centres and the peripheries, at the macro level of history and the micro level of individual consciousness. The disjunction between East and West, past and present, and centre and periphery creates a kind of mirror that reflects the cultural cleavage via competition and comparison. And it exerts a tremendous influence on the creation of the mimetic and combative relationships between "us" and "them,"

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[25] Benedict Anderson in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London and New York: Verso, 1998) writes about the effects of comparisons on nations when they, moved into excessive self-awareness, tend to match themselves against the excellence of others and construct their identities through the exercise of imaginative analogy. The Filipino nationalist, reformist, and artist José Protacio Rizal (1861-1896) is credited with the first use of the phrase in the context of the change of Manila when it ceases to bear comparison with European capitals.

"here" and "there" giving birth to the new scenes of combinations and permutations of identities. The postcolonial and postmodern novelists taking insights from the history of conflict, denial, and reconciliation become engaged with construction of these scenes and their actors in narratives with a view to envisioning a new world order.

Historical fiction has to deal with the issue of identity as an important trope since history and identity are intimately related. The term identity is derived from the French word "identite" having its root in the Latin "idem" meaning the "the same." Veiwed from etymological perspective, identity appears as essentially comparative in nature but in application it is both comparative and contextual. Identity consists of the total features of a person or a group that make one distinct from others. This abstract term finds its concrete manifestations through different markers like language, dress, food habit, religion, nationality, customs, behaviour, personal idiosyncrasy, cultural legacy, ethnicity, and history. Given the diversity of markers, categories of identity may include, cultural, ethnic, political, and geographical. Identity in the political and ideological sense has emerged as a serious issue in the present-day world. Literature like many other branches of human and social sciences cannot but project the issue of identity prominently. Especially the way the identities of the characters are projected in postmodern fiction can produce new insights into the meaning of the term.

The postmodern writers, in representing their fast changing societies composed of people having fragmented identity markers pulling in different directions, have to be preoccupied with the elusive nature of identity. Identity, narrowly defined as monolithic putting people into cages in an appalling process of miniaturization, appears like a "moveable feast" in their context. It has to be organized and reorganized in a continuous process in response to the diverse ways people are addressed in the complex dynamics of postmodern societies.[26] "Ghosh's texts also" to quote Anshuman A. Mondal, "represent the correlate view that identity is therefore 'unstable' and fluid, because what is made can be unmade, and often is – over time or in different contexts: again, a central preoccupation of postmodern writers."[27] While diasporic literary studies now heavily utilize the thematic lens of identity to portray people and settings, it is no less used by

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[26] See Stuart Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Eds. Stuart Hall, et al. (London: Blackwell, 1996): 598.

[27] Anshuman A. Mondal, *Amitav Ghosh* (New Delhi: Viva, 2010): 20-21.

non-diasporic writers dealing with culture and history. All the socio-political movements of the present as well as the recent past in some way or other have connections with identity politics and crises. The main reason behind the widespread identity debates is that identity, more than ever in the social history of mankind, is in crisis in the contemporary world of conflicts, barbarities, and divisive politics.

Any study dealing with the crisis of identity involves references to history since the crisis is likely to have its roots in the past. Identity involves identification which is the process of attaining various positions and manifestations of identities. It is a way of discovering shared characteristics with other people, group, and society. Therefore, identification is fundamental to making up people and their cultures. But the coherence, integrity, and essentiality of identity are problematized due to global cultural exchanges, cutting-edge-communication technologies, aggressively free market economy, and the emergence of ever expanding diaspora. In the fluidity and influx of identity constituents people are seen to carry on a persistent quest to get at the roots of their existence. But they are often at a loss since identity has become diversified, self-contradictory, self-reflexive, and tangled in a state of flux. The modern space of identity precludes any attempt at finding a distinct and singular position as it has become essentially many folded and paradoxical. This condition applies to all aspects of human identity – social, historical, cultural, and linguistic. The varied interpretations of history, culture, language, place, and society coordinate the creation of identities through their continuous new combinations.

In fact, history as a major socio-cultural baggage accompanying a person from the cradle to the grave persistently plays the principal role in the formation of his/her identity. A person is what his history as well as his surrounding events make of him. His history becomes his essential story through which he has to understand his life and society. The distinction of humans as a species consists in their ability to experience the world through (hi)stories.[28] History provides people with a constant lens to observe how one group is differentiated from the other for being born with different stories. It is through the understanding of history that people profess their identities and define their collective or individual self. Writing history involves at once an objective process of revealing facts and a subbjective process of commenting on the facts, and a society thereby reviews its past and shapes its present and future. It is through memories of the

[28] Amitav Ghosh, "Wild Fictions." (1). <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?239276>.

past that people reproduce themselves in the present. Hence, history can act as a kind of collective imagination of a people wishing to shape their past and present in the way they like. And this "imagination with precision" (SL 26) works as the driving force behind any narratives. The purpose of precisely used imagination is "to be able to recognise the contemporaneity of the past, to be able to see historical memory as vital to any understanding of the present, and to be able to see different times and places as inextricably intertwined with one's own."[29] Therefore, any fictionalized projection of people with complex roots in general and the people of the postcolonial situation in particular interlinks imagination/story, history, and identity.

Contextualizing Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk

Among a host of contemporary novelists dealing with the issues under consideration, the Indian English novelist Amitav Ghosh and the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk have been chosen for this study. Born in a country with the strong native cultural legacy and the powerful colonial impact, Amitav Ghosh writes in English on historical and postcolonial issues using diverse fictional locales; Orhan Pamuk, on the other hand, was born in a non-colonized country, and he writes in Turkish on his country's issues and problems which, of course, in the ultimate analysis, correspond to the reality of most third world nations. Naturally the question may come to one's mind: what could be the justification for the daunting project of studying together such two authors with glaring dissimilarities in geo-linguistic and cultural backgrounds? Although these two authors may strike one as an incompatible pair at first glance and their putting together may look like a case of metaphysical conceit, "yoking by violence," the facts of their writing in the same global ambience and sharing of some important conceptual grounds, which become evident in a close reading of their oeuvres, will justify my choice of studying them together in this research. Besides, if the points of convergence and divergence between any two authors are too obvious, serious study is not required to find them out.

This thesis argues that these two novelists with intersecting historical trajectories project two interconnected worlds beset by the, more or less, identical problems and politics of identity formation. It explores how history can be projected alternatively

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[29] Suvir Kaul, "Separation Anxiety: Growing Up Inter/National in *The Shadow Lines*," *The Shadow Lines*, Educational Edition (New Delhi: OUP, 1995): 268-286; 277.

through stories of individuals in the fictions of these two novelists and how their dominant narratives written from two different backgrounds deal with the more or less similar identity anguish of peoples from different parts of the world. The primary fictional, quasi-fictional and non-fictional texts selected for this dissertation include *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* 1988), *In an Antique Land* (1992), *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1996), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), *The Imam and the Indian* (2008) by Amitav Ghosh, and *The White Castle/Beyaz Kale* (1990), *The Black Book/Kara Kitap* (1994), *The New Life/Yeni Hayat* (1997), *My Name is Red/Benim Adim Kirmizi* (2001), *Snow/Kar* (2004), *Istanbul: Memories and the City/ Istanbul:Hatiralar ve Şehir*(2005), *The Museum of Innocence/Masumiyet Müzessi* (2009) and *Other Colours: Writings on Life, Art, Books and Cities/Öteki Renkler: Seçme Yazilar ve Bir Hikâye by İletişim* (2007) by Orhan Pamuk. However, other works by these writers also appear in the discussion wherever they cross ways with the above texts in order to project a more comprehensive analysis of the issues under examination. Moreover, in this study their interviews are explored as parts of their oeuvres.

Before we proceed deeper into the issues of the present research, let us have a brief introduction to these two authors' biographies and oeuvres. A general but brief introduction to their ouvres would set readers comfortably in the worlds of the authors and prevent their encountering possible confusions created by abrupt textual referencing in the body of this study. Amitav Ghosh – one of the most prominent (semi)diasporic Indian English novelists of the post-Rushdie generation and a winner of a number of prestigious prizes including the Prix Médicis Étranger Award, Sahitya Akademi Award, Arthur C. Clarke Award, Grand Prize for Fiction at the Frankfurt International e-books Awards, Hutch Crossword Book Award for Best Work in English Fiction, Grinzane Cavour Prize, and the Dan David Prize – was born in Calcutta[30] in 1956 into a partition-affected family that hailed from Dhaka immediately before the partition of India in 1947. His father was a diplomat and Lieutenant Colonel in the British Indian army and his

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[30] In this dissertation I would like to stick to the old spelling of the city of Calcutta since this spelling consistently appears in Ghosh's writings, and he also explains the reason convincingly through his character Kanai in *The Hungry Tide*: "I should be more careful, but the re-naming was so recent that I do get confused sometimes. I try to reserve "Calcutta" for the past and "Kolkata" for the present but occasionally I slip" (HT 12).

mother was a housewife. In addition to Calcutta and Delhi, Dhaka, Colombo, and Tehran contributed to the making of his childhood world, as a consequence of his father's changing foreign postings. But the anchor of his mind remained in Calcutta, "an oddly bookish city," where as a child he spent his holidays in his grandfather's house. Here he was first imbued with the shaping spirit of great novelistic traditions of Europe and Asia. The aspect of his ancestral house that attracted him most was the bookshelves in which "the great majority of the books were of a single kind; they were novels.... [Besides] the mainstream tradition of Bengali fiction in the twentieth century…[t]he others were translations from a number of other languages, most of them European: Russian had pride of place, followed by French, Italian, German and Danish" (I&I 291-292).

Ghosh received a BA in history from St. Stephen's college of the University of Delhi in 1976 and an MA in Sociology from the same university in 1978. He earned his PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Oxford in 1982. He stayed in Tunisia for a period of six months in 1979 to learn Arabic for his fieldwork stint in two remote Egyptian villages, Lataîfa and Nashâwy. As a man with exceptional aptitude for language learning he could master modern Arabic to decipher, for his research purposes, the meanings of the medieval Geniza documents written in old Arabic and he could communicate fairly well with the Egyptian *Felaheens* (peasants) in their colloquial Arabic. After earning his degree, he worked as a journalist for some time for *The Indian Express* in New Delhi. Subsequently, he started his teaching career in Antropology at the University of Delhi and worked as a visiting fellow and professor in several universities in the West. Most of his novels and prose pieces bear unmistakable intellectual marks of a journalist, researcher, and academician. He currently teaches creative writing at the University of Columbia, New York and divides his time between New York and two cities of India – Calcutta and Goa, and thus striking a balance between routes and roots. Besides his main occupations, as befits a worldly conscious writer, he also makes contribution to the world as international peace keeping and environmental activist through his jounalistic writings, public talks, and extensive visits to the trouble-torn areas of the world.

Amitav Ghosh's debut novel *The Circle of Reason* – written partially in magic realism technique and set for the first part in an Indian village near the Bangladesh-India border from where the major characters move to an imaginary Gulf city called al-Ghazira

– deals with the issues of empire, nationalism, migration, exile, and globalization. As the first publication of Ghosh this novel foreshadows his tendency to cross the boundary of genre, as it is at once a detective story, a travelogue, a tale of exile, "a women's rights tract, a Marxist protest, a plea for humanistic camaraderie, etc."[31] His second novel and arguably his magnum opus, *The Shadow Lines* takes Calcutta, London, and Dhaka as its settings and deals with Bengal partition, communal conflict/harmony, and East-West interface. Set in the rural Egypt and the west coast of India, *In an Antique Land*, a "non-fictional" or mixed-genre novel, happily mingles history, ethnography, and travelogue, and deals with Jews-Muslims relationship in the 12th century, and the mideaval ocean trade and cultural exchanges between India and Egypt. *The Calcutta Chromosome* subtitled "A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery" is an attempt to rewrite the history of science and counter-science – European rationality and Indian myths.

His Burma novel *The Glass Palace* scripts an epic history of three generations of characters who traverse three parts of the British Empire: Burma, Malaya, and India.[32] *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke* (2011), first two novels of the proposed "Ibis Trilogy," are epic sagas under the guise of the history of opium trade on the Indian Ocean between Britain and China. He is currently working on the forthcoming last novel of the proposed trilogy which is expected to carry some of the characters of the first two books and their progeny to some other lands. His prose works include three collections of essays: *Countdown* (1999), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), and *Dancing in Cambodia and Other Essays* (2008) where Ghosh has extensively written on literature, history, politics, culture, and globalization. In addition to the above, a large number of his generously given interviews found both online and printed constitute a kind of special primary source providing researchers with a direct authorial perspective on the issues delineated in his fictional and non-fictional writings and valuable insights into the nature of his intellectual make-up.

On the other hand, Ferit Orhan Pamuk, the Nobel Laureate and the most globally acclaimed modern Turkish novelist after Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar and Yashar Kemal, is

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[31] John C. Hawley, *Amitav Ghosh:An Introduction* (New Delhi: Foundation, 2005): 54.

[32] While dealing with the novel *The Glass Palace* I would prefer the name Burma to its modern equivalent Myanmar for the convenience of quoting from the novel where the old name is used and for the reason that the new name is imposed by the military dictator, and not accepted by the majority of the countrymen fighting for democracy including the legendery leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Even the novelist in his writings done after the changing of the capital's name has retained the old name.

easily the most available English translated Turkish novelist who has succeeded in crafting an idiom for both national and international readers. [33] Son of an engineer and a westernized housewife, he was born in 1952 into an upper middle class secular Muslim family of Istanbul which got the opportunity of accumulating vast wealth through railway construction in the early republican phase of the country. He attended Robert College in Istanbul, an extension of the American Ivy League and a seat of secular and western education for the children of the city's privileged elites. As early in life he developed a strong passion for visual arts, he studied architecture for two years in the University of Istanbul but dropped it to get his degree in journalism. First trying his hand in writing poetry Pamuk gradually discovers his aptitude for writing novels. His novels, going beyond the boundary of national readership through translation into English and other major languages of the world, earned him the highest recognition in the form of Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006.

Pamuk, like Ghosh, "grew up in a house where everyone read novels." He says about his drawing inspiration from European novels in his essay "In Kars and Frankfurt": "My father ... would discuss the great novelists … – Mann, Kafka, Dostoyevsky, and Tolostoy .... From an early age, all these novelists – these great novelists – were linked in my mind with the idea of Europe.... [And] the novel was one of the greatest artistic achievements to come out of Europe" (OC 233). A (semi)diasporic, he too like Amitav Ghosh currently divides his time between Istanbul and New York, and teaches comparative literature in each fall semester at Columbia University. For writing-translating project he has recently started passing some time of the year in India also with his fellow author and partner Kiron Desai. Most of his novels and nonfictional works have been translated into English with his endorsement and collaboration and published by the London-based publishing company of T.S. Eliot fame, Faber and Faber. Adapting the methods of the western postmodern novelists to his non-western subjects and combining the easily appropriated "wealth of games, gimmicks, and parables" of the "sophisticated tradition of highly refined ornamental literature" in Turkey and "lots of

[33] The first name "Ferit' is not used by Orhan Pamuk in his writing. That is why I will drop it in the subsequent references to the author's name. While he is acclaimed as the international author on the basis of his English translated texts he remains a Turkish author for his Turkish context and untranslated texts. It is better to say he began as a Turkish author and is now an international author. Paradoxically he is not that much famous in his own country as he is in the international scene. Some local readers raise the peculiar point about him that what he writes turns overwhelmingly attractive in translations while it reads boring in the original.

allegories that repeat themselves in the various oral story telling traditions – of China, India, Persia" (OC 367) he wins the approbation of the mainstream reviewers and critics of Europe and America.

Pamuk's first novel, written in a distinctly realist and modernist narrative style, has not appeared in English translation, and the second written in the same style appeared in English translation only very recently. So, until his third novel he could not craft a transnational idiom and form to write in. The first novel *Cevdet Bey and His Sons* (1982), a family saga, narrates the history of three generations of a wealthy Istanbul family resembling the Pamuk family and wins Pamuk the Orhan Kemal Prize and the Milliyet Prize in Turkey. The second novel *Silent House* (1983), a historical reassessment of the Turkish republic in the twentieth century through the story of an Istanbul family, won him Prix de la Découverte Européenne in 1991 for its French translation. *The White Castle*, the third Pamuk novel and the first to be translated into English, deals with identity shifts, the Ottoman history, and the East-West trope. *The Black Book*, a postmodern novel with a mystery plot, carries on the theme of doubleness and merging identities, and focuses on the western influence on the Turkish life and art. *The New Life* is a novel-cum-metaphysical thriller about love and self. *My Name is Red* explores allegorically the East-West question and the "sorrow and pain of lost history" (OC 270). *Snow* is his overtly political and widely debated novel dealing with Turkish politics of identity through the conflicts between religious extremism and secularism, radical nationalism and cosmopolitanism, tradition and modernity, and also between East and West.

Istanbul: Memories and the City, an autobiography, is the double-portrait of the author and his beloved city Istanbul which bears the traces of the long history of the interplay of many cultures and powers. Pamuk's latest novel *The Museum of Innocence* is a cultural history of Istanbul presented through fictional objects collected by a lover to furnish his museum which has a real counterpart in the city of Istanbul gradually built and furnished by Pamuk. *The Innocence of Objects* (2012), a recent addition to the Pamuk oeuvre, is a guide book to the museum. His non-fictional work titled *Other Colours: Writings on Life, Art, Books and Cities* contains many essays on his country and literature, and a long interview given to *The Paris Review*. In this book he passes his observations on his own life, his novels, world literatures, globalization, and his country's problem and prospect from a historical perspective. The latest addition to his

non-fictional work is *The Naive and the Sentimentalist Novelist* (2012) which consists of Pamuk's distinguished Charles Eliot Norton lecture series given at Harvard University in 2009. This book, comparable to E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, John Gardner's *The Art of Fiction*, and James Wood's *How Fiction Works*, is Pamuk's masterful poetics of the novel. He has also expressed his views and comments on his life, writing, and context in numerous interviews which he, like Ghosh, gives generously.

Scope of the Study

History and identity inform the basic themes in the works of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk. They work on two distinct historical spaces – one connected primarilly with the British imperialism and the other with the Ottoman imperialism. They explore how the legacies of the imperial past impact the construction and understanding of contemporary identities. Their portrayal of the politics of identity includes issues like the reliability of the official history, arbitrariness in demarcating national boundaries, the East-West trope, and clashes of civilizations or cultures. Both the authors "are travelling in the West" (AL 193) with their roots in the East. Or, in the words of Robert Dixon, we can call it "travelling in the East."[34] While their cosmopolitan imagination imbibes ideas from across the globe it does not unsettle their emotional anchor in the native tradition. Nurturing roots in their countries of origin they write at once from national and international perspectives, shuttling between two spaces – local and global. Pamuk nicely spells out his "glocal" status in his Nobel lecture: "My world is a mixture of the local – the national – and the West" (OC 410).

In the trouble-torn globalized society they cannot remain artistic loners but become socio-politically engaged by reflecting burning issues and "incendiary circumstances" in their writings. Such an engagement mingles fact and fiction, and comes closer to other branches of human and social sciences. That is why both Ghosh and Pamuk use fiction as a medium of representation of the community history, national tradition, and of civilizational interactions. As they believe in intrinsic heterogeneity of this genre, fiction in their hands goes beyond the confines of a self-contained autonomous domain, it takes a metaform combining history, journalism, anthropology, and literature. Consequently what they narrate turn into "social document" novels; their writings are meticulously researched and evince distinctively academic flavour.

[34] Robert Dixon, " 'Travelling in the West': The Writing of Amitav Ghosh," *Amitav Ghosh : A Critical Companion*, Ed. Tabish Khair (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003): 34.

The major novels and prose pieces of Amitav Ghosh are based on the fictional rendition of history – rewriting of archives and facts through the portrayal of imaginary characters that have in most cases the real life counterpart. His primary concern as a novelist is, of course, story, and history only provides him with a very important backdrop. He is interested in history not for the bare recorded facts but for the insights into people provided by history. In this connection Ghosh in a discussion says: "it's important to acknowledge that an historical novel is like any other novel: essentially it's about people" and "[u]nless people's stories are interesting, the history itself doesn't matter at all, it's only a backdrop." In the same discussion he categorically states the reason behind his choice of history: "History is interesting to me because it creates specific predicaments, that are particular to that moment in time and nowhere else. So I'm interested in history to the point that it can represent that predicament truthfully and accurately."[35] By way of his faithful rendition of human predicaments he narrates segments of Indian, South Asian and world histories through his fictional imagination. During and after the colonial rule many people were dispersed willingly or by force in many Asian and African countries. Reading Ghosh's novels helps one visualize the anxieties of colonized people, diasporic beings, and of those living in the newly founded nation-states in the form of micro histories. History, as Ghosh views it, is the story of the division of the world or "partitioning of the past" (AL 283).

Ghosh's master piece *The Shadow Lines* covers the partition history of the British India in general and Bengal partition in particular. In *In an Antique Land* he retrieves the life of the Indian subaltern Bomma from "the anonomity of history" and through depicting Bomma's long standing relation with the Egyptian merchant Ben Yiju emphasizes the history of cultural negotiations and exchanges between India and the Arab world in the twelfth century through Ocean trade. *The Calcutta Chromosome* deals with the history of the discovery of malaria vector in Calcutta and the contribution of the Indian subalterns to it. The novel narrates the history of colonial subject-master relation from the subject's perspective, and critiques nationalism and globalization. *The Glass Palace* fictionalizes the history of Burma, India, and, to some extent, Malaya in the grip of two contesting empires – British and Japanese. The novel particularly uncovers two

[35] Amitav Ghosh, "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation," Interwiew with Claire Chambers, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41.1 (2005): 26-39; 30.

silent chapters in Burmese history—the reign and fall of Thebaw, the last Burmese king, and the role and predicament of the Indians working with the British authority in Burma. *The Hungry Tide* historicizes the Morichjhapi massacre of 1979, uncovers the background narrative of the victims connected with 1947 partition and the internal Indian diaspora, and explores at the ecological level the genealogical history of the fresh water dolphins through the field work story of an American cetologist working in the Sundarbans channels. *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke,* the first two of the proposed Ibis trilogy, unearths the little discussed history of the Opium War between Great Britain and China in the middle of the nineteenth century and portray characters suffering from various crises in the aftermath of the distructive trade war.

Ghosh's three prominent prose works primarily relate different histories. The history-concern in the fiction is also retained in his non-fiction which abounds in direct "descriptions of troubled parts of the world" (I&I 60). *The Imam and the Indian* as a major non-fictional work contains essays which deal with many historical concerns and locales narrativized in his fiction. As the title piece suggests, most of the essays primarily concern the Middle-Eastern history, life, and economy, and explicate the history of the Indian-Arab cultural exchanges through ocean trade. *Dancing in Cambodia, at Large in Burma* connects the historical European visit of the Cambodian king Sisowath accompanied by a troupe of Cambodian dancers in 1906 with the more recent history of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge regime, uncovers stories associated with the history of the lost art of the Cambodian dancers, and gives the author's first-hand accounts of the post-imperial chaos in Burma where many minority groups with long history of turmoil are fighting for independence. *Countdown* recounts the history of the post-partition Indian subcontinent by way of exploring the background and nature of Indo-Pak border conflict over Kashmir with particular reference to the Pokhran neuclear explosion of India in a village on the border of India and Pakistan.

Amitav Ghosh presents the issues of nation-states, identity paradox, and cultural conflict in the context of history spreading over pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras relating to countries like India, Bangladesh, Burma, Malaya, and some parts of the Middle East. In the pre-colonial period people of the different parts of the globe lived in contact zones through trade and travels, as illustrated in *In an Antique Land*. In the colonial period they were dispersed and divested of their roots as we find in *The Circle*

of Reason, *The Glass Palace*, and Sea *of Poppies*. After imperialism the idea of forming nation-states with a fixed geopolitical boundary becomes a reality. This raises a pertinent question as to whether geopolitical reality corresponds to that of the mind. In the fictional reflection of Amitav Ghosh, a person conceives nation and nationalism through a series of memories, not by geographical locations or by official set-up. Such views can aptly be described by Benedict Anderson's oft quoted phrase "imagined communities."[36] The characters in his novels live in memories or imaginary cartographies and suffer from the anxiety of their nationhood, or, for most of them, "anxiety of Indianness."[37]

Some novels of Ghosh also broach the question as to whether new nation-states can be viable in the midst of conflicts and troubles whose seed was sowed in the imperial past of partition and is nurtured by the post imperial present of forced formation of official boundary. The condition of post imperial Burma as projected especially at the end of *The Glass Palace* can be a glaring example in this context. The country suffers in the hands of two colonial powers – the Japanese and the British – which ultimately leave the country in the grip of unending military autocracy. To make the matter worse, the racial diversity in the country becomes a constant threat to the establishment of a nation. This exemplifies how, after the end of imperialism, the new nation-states face problems to carry on their newly formed entities since their strength is drained up in various ways like military intervention, artificial bordering, communal disharmony, and senseless nuclear weapon competition.[38] Ghosh's works critique the ideology of nationalism which seeks to suppress and homogenise the various voices and incidents within the nation and by indulging narcissism creates both real and artificial ruptures across nations. In *The Shadow Lines* the narrator's questioning of nationalist ideology reflects this position of Ghosh. The direction emerging from Ghosh's work may be viewed as a call for national consciousness without nationalist ideology – one allowing unity in diversity and the other encouraging sectarianism and violence.

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[36] Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991): 224.

[37] Meenakshi Mukherjee in her essay "Anxiety of Indianness," *The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian writing in English* (New Delhi: OUP, 2000):166-186;166, uses the phrase to denote a symptom of a psycho-literary desease of the Anglo-Indian authors having firm roots in the mother language and culture but writing in English. I have used the phrase to mean the condition of the characters rather than the authors in the context of neocolonization.

[38] Ghosh elaborately talks about the nuclear competition between India and Pakistan in his non fictional work *The Countdown*. He has explained how India and Pakistan are involved in nuclear compition solely out of the peculiar sense of national prestige, not for any real danger from each other.

The broader discourse of identity deriving from the rise of nationalism and history of imperialism remains a major concern in Ghosh's fiction. His novels thematise the loss, regain, and blurring of cultural, national, and psychological identities of people as individuals or collective body seen through the lens of a writer in the guise of a traveller-historian. His men and women embark on a journey of (re)discovering their identities by questioning their sense of themselves and exploring the conditioning events taking place around them. Some restrictive interpretations argue that a person is naturally given an identity by attaching some fixed characteristics and applying some objective criteria. But to Ghosh, "the question of 'identity' is always implicated in representations of the 'self' and of the world around it; identity does not stand alone nor is it derived from some inborn 'essence' within a given human being; rather, it is made or 'fashioned' by language and representation."[39] Identity is in the final analysis an issue of representation, a socio-psychological construct which arises out of one's self-construal through interaction with others in a given situation. The self-construal in a particular situation is made up of the elements created by the continuity between one's reviewing the past and charting the future. The past may relate to one's ethnicity or imperial legacy, and the future may relate to nationalistic spirit or new cultural belonging.

Many dispersed characters in Ghosh's novels are seek to define their present identities by retrieving their past. The major part of *The Circle of Reason* deals with characters who, being dispersed by force or by economic necessity, live exiled life in the imaginary city state "al-Ghazira" in the African part of the Middle East, and reflect on man-made borders, passports and official formalities that hinder free human movements. The quest for identity appears in *The Shadow Lines* where arbitrary partition of India dispersed the people of two Bengals who live half of their life imaginatively in their lost home and the other half in the present geographical reality. The characters in *The Shadow Lines* are divided into three groups – one living in Dhaka, another living in Calcutta and the rest choosing a third place like London. Their interactions from multiple geographies culturally create a condition favourable for the evolution of heteroglossic identities in Bakhtin's term and politically create ambivalent identities. Ghosh's novels critique the constructions of otherness and ambivalence in the formation of identities. Being politically and culturally dislocated, a good number of Ghosh characters like

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[39] Anshuman A. Mondal, op.cit., 20.

Rajkumer, Dinu, Soya John, and Uma in *The Glass Palace* try desperately to get back to their discarded roots. Other characters like the Collector, Arjun, Hardy, Mohon Singh, and Kishan Sing attempt consciously or unconsciously to imitate the English or the Europeans at large in vain and give rise to hybrid identity as colonial "mimic men" challenging both Englishness and Indianness as discussed by Homi K. Bhabha in his essay "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse." [40]

At one point of their long interactions with the colonial masters and after having long arguments with themselves the Indians serving in the British Army in *The Glass Palace* find their in-between identities as fragile and suffer from the sense of alienation and inferiority. They show a psychological condition which is expounded by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*.[41] Other characters of the novels like the king, the queen, and the collector's wife struggle to recover identity by fighting back in different ways. *Sea of Poppies* gathers people of diverse backgrounds both from East and West in the grand historical narrative and creates scopes for rethinking about their past, culture, and identity. They leave behind their identities based on caste, religion and nationality, and forge a new identity of the exploited in the ship or the ocean which acts in many novels as a place of making and unmaking identities. As the narrator says: "Surely all the old ties were immaterial now that the sea had washed away their past" (SP 431). Identity thus emerges through the interaction of "roots" and "routes."

In some writings of Amitav Ghosh, identity discourse underpins the theme of the clashes and exchanges of cultures and civilizations. India's socio-cultural evolution due to the contact with the European sensibilities and before that with other ancient civilizations has been focussed in Ghosh's novels. The historical canvas of *In an Antique Land* contains India and parts of the Middle East with Indian Ocean as a traffic between two intertwined civilizations and shows cultural syncretism in the past across religions and civilizations through two characters recovered from "the anonymity of history" (AL 296) – a Cairo-based Tunisian Jewish master named Abraham Ben Yiju and his Indian slave Bomma who could overcome the boundaries of their national and cultural identities. But the present-day reality as presented by the narrator and the Egyptian

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[40] Homi K.Bhabha, The *Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994): 121-132.

[41] Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Trans. Charles Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967) explores the psychological effects of colonialism on both the conquerors and the conquered.

Muslims he has lived with is partition and gap of communication due mostly to the manipulation of history and the lack of mutual knowledge. In *The Calcutta Chromosome* the subaltern figures like Mangala and Laakhan, by their "counter-science," challenge the autonomy and universality of western science. They add to the debate about the nexus of knowledge and power by questioning the proposition that modern scientific knowledge is essentially Eurocentric. In *The Glass Palace,* the Indian characters like Arjun, Kishan Sing, Mohan Sing, and Hardy serving in the British army oscillate between two choices: the Japanese as bad masters and the British as good masters. Hardy thus tries to resolve the conflict: "in a way the better the master, the worse the condition of the slave, because it makes him forget what he is" (GP 438). Arjun in British Indian Army tries to overcome his inferiority complex by serving under the West against his own people. Although the internal and external conflicts of these characters relate the East-West conflict to a colonial setting, it spills over into postcolonial settings as well.

As an important centre of Bengali cultural, intellectual, and political life, Calcutta, "the city [he] considered home," has influenced Ghosh in shaping his views on the issues related to history and identity. Once the capital of British India and the second most important city in the British Empire, Calcutta lost its status when the capital was moved to Delhi. But the chequered past of the city as a traffic of eastern and western ideas helps create an imaginative geography of the city in Ghosh's major novels in different ways. *The Shadow Lines*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, and *Sea of Poppies* can broadly be defined as Calcutta novels while in other novels the city appears significantly. To Ghosh, Calcutta, "an oddly bookish city," (I&I 290) is more than a social and physical environment. It is an indicator of global cultural "contact zones." To quote Anshuman A. Mondal, "the city is both a metaphor for the knowledge/power relations initiated by colonialism, and the stage on which Ghosh re-enacts what has been called 'the battle for cultural parity' that the Bengali cultural elite have waged ever since."[42]

The issues encompassed by history and identity as we find in Amitav Ghosh are also present in Orhan Pamuk. His major novels as well as his autobiography and non-fictional pieces deal with the issues of nationalism, paradox and intricacies of identities, anxiety of cultural influences and clashes, and East-West entanglement, all in the context

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[42] Anshuman A. Mondal, op.cit., 5.

of the Turkish history which may be divided into four eras: Ottoman imperial history, the transition from Ottoman Empire to modern Middle East, the Kemalist cultural revolution (1923-1935), and the impact of the legacy of all three in the present-day Turkey. Keeping in view the natural courses of history Pamuk reviews Kemalism [43]as an aggressively launched political and cultural movement to impose new identity on the country and its people to be on a par with the West, and points out the loopholes in the metanarrative of Turkish secular nationalism. His writings offer a vibrant space to carry on the debates about the possibilities of national transformation through a happy blending of western modernism and Neo-Ottomanism which requires the revival of the neglected cultural history and identity existing before the year 1923. It is possible through the objective digging up of the past combined with the continuous assessment of the present, not through the blind imitation of the West. Although the modern Turkish identity tries to sever its ties from the past, the Ottoman past haunts like a stabborn ghost. Pamuk's narratives dramatize the ambiguity of the question of belonging and seek to negotiate the forces of past and present, tradition and modernity.

Although Pamuk denies having any historical project in fictional form to reconstruct or recuperate the Ottoman Turkish past, any close reading of his novels reveals the overarching presence of the historical materials and his predilection for viewing present issues in the light of the past. In his interview with Ahmet Karamustafa he talks about this: "there is, of course, a deliberate urge, always an urge to write about history, explore history, so to speak, through fiction...[but not] in a Zola kind of mission" where a novelist may blur the distinction between a writerly approach and a researcher's scientific approach with a view to reveal some historical truths that the readers must know. [44] He is not for exploring any alternative narratives of history in order to break the myth, mystery, and code of the present. Ottoman history only provides him with a background and a rich store of imagery, necessary for the exercise of his imagination. He intends to reveal the hidden historical materials as much as needed for cultural understanding of the present through analyzing "the Romantic notion of the glories of

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[43] The philosophy propagated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to make his country and people modern in the European style through erasing the imperial and Islamic past, blindly imitating the West, and maintaining a strict separation between religion and the state.

[44] Orhan Pamuk,"A Bit of Irresponsible Reading: Five Questions with Orhan Pamuk," Interview with Ahmet Karamustafa, *Arch Literary Journal* 2 (Spring 2009):1-7; 2. <http://www.artsci.wustle. edu/~ archword/interviews/ pamuk/ interview.html>.

[the] past revealed in research," as for example, his use of the lives of the sixteenth century Islamic miniature artists in *My Name is Red* to explicate the situation of modern Turkish artists and writers grappling with the ways of accommodating ideas from European modernism in their native setting.[45]

His first English-translated novel *The White Castle* moves between two historical phases – the Ottoman phase in the seventeenth century and the modern phase in the twentieth century. To view the present in the light of the past Pamuk adopts the means of narrating the history of Ottoman miniature art in *My Name is Red* and the means of collecting anthropological objects to furnish an imaginary museum within the frame of a story of love and revenge in *The Museum of Innocence*. In a historically important phase of socio-cultural transition and transformation the miniature artists of *My Name is Red* represent the diverse perspectives to understand the world pulled by binaries of traditional and modern, religious and secular, eastern and western. In *The Museum of Innocence* the western concept of museum is used in the love story of Kémal and Füsun to tell the cultural history of Turkey from 1970 to 1983. The lover collects objects from his beloved's house and makes replicas to be preserved in his museum. The objects of museum become "objective correlative" to the historical and cultural memory of the people. As the objects are filled with both individual and cultural memories the lover and the beloved appear as subjects of history. Their stories cannot be narrated without reference to the cultural memories embodied in the objects. Many of his stories thus turn into media of narrating the socio-cultural history of Turkey hanging between the memory of the imperial past and the present (unaccomplished) process of modernization/ westernization.

The discourses of nationalism and identity formation come up in Pamuk's presentation of multilayered history that reveals lots of images, mysteries, and truths necessary for understanding the nature of the present nationalist quest. Many of his characters often show a tendency to think of going to the distant past which would offer them an imaginary scope to explore a possible space of pure identity in history "where the Ottoman is the Ottoman, or the Persian is the Persian...that's Romanticism-Nationalism...go[ing] hand in hand"[46] like German nationalism. It is rather a controlled tendency on the part of some anxious characters to be radical about their national identity

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

to explore the real Turkish, made up of the core constituent elements not corrupted or qualified by the infiltration of things western. His fictional navigating back and forth in time and space is partially due to a Romantic Nationalist urge to glorify the status of his city and people as Turkey, unlike India, was never a colony of the western powers. Many of his characters suffer from "the anxiety of Turkishness" and feel the "spectre of comparisons" with the western nations.

Pamuk like Ghosh explores and questions the validity of imposed cartography in nation formation and the radical national identity which demands pure Turkishness and cultural insularity. In the work of Pamuk the debate of imposed cartography plays a considerable role in both characterization and delineation of major issues. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, he meditates on the demarcation between the West and the East which gives his native city Istanbul a unique status. Although he questions the cartographic aggression in general in the context of the post-Ottoman nation formation, he is particularly positive about the dual cartographic status of his native city. While the characters of Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* regret the artificial lines between countries, Pamuk along with the characters he shares worldviews with tries to derive strength from the division in his city. He says in an interview that he derives his creative "energy from this traditional wall that still exists in Turkey between East and West, between modernity and tradition" and that his little artistic trick is to "*see this eternal fight between East and West, that takes place in Turkey's spirit, not as a weakness but as strength, and to try to dramatize that force by making something literary out of it.*"[47] In the context of Pamuk sometimes the violence of cartography makes one aware of the roots and thereby provides him with psychological strength and insight to build something new whether in terms of politics or of art.

Pamuk, in *Snow*, through the exposure of the status of the Turkish border city of Kars, once made home alternately by Armenians, Russians, Persians, Greeks, Georgians, Kurds, and Circassians, has shown the historical cruelty of the post- imperial boundary formation of nation-states (*Snow* 20). The city with a multicultural historical background was "on the border between two defunct empires, the Ottoman and the Russian...[and]

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[47] Orhan Pamuk, "Turkish Divided Character," Interview with Michael Skafidas, *New Perspectives Quarterly* 17.2 (2000): 20-22; 20. Emphasis added.

benefited from the protection of the standing armies each power had in turn placed here..."(*Snow* 20). Still the Armenians as minority struggle here to preserve their ethnic identity through demanding the recognition of their distinct history and culture which stand in grave peril due to the majority pressure. Their condition also relates to the question of Kurds who, lacking any separate cartography, live on the borders of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Although they are living outwardly within certain political territories, they actually inhabit their own mental cartography. The present political border for them is a "looking glass border," to quote Ghosh from *The Shadow Lines*.

With characters of diverse ideological and ethnic orientations Pamuk explores the possibility of defining "Turkish Identity" in pluralistic terms against the state sponsored efforts towards a monochromatic identity. His novels relate multiple facets of the question of identity in an increasingly polarized country like Turkey, torn by the conflicting forces of East and West. His characters feeling the opposite pulls of Turkishness and Europeanness ask whether it is possible to be modern in the way the Europeans are. In depicting the conflicting cultures Pamuk's novels reflect the conflict of two worldviews that can, like Huntington's prediction of the consequence of "Clash of Civilizations," push the world on a fault line. In *Snow* while some characters try to become "Europhiles" – "mock-Europeans" or "mimic men," others, who can be defined as "Turkophiles," raise dissenting voice in the words of Blue: "I refuse to be a European, and I won't ape their ways. I'm going to live out my own history and be no one but myself" (*Snow* 331). *The White Castle* dramatizes the same conflict and identity politics in a detective and semi-allegorical vein through two queer characters, one European and the other Turkish, who can easily trade places and positions for their identical appearance and thirst for knowing each other intimately.

Through the mystic engagement of the characters with the "self" and the "other" Pamuk's master piece *The Black Book* traces Turkish national identity evolving from various phases of history. Here Pamuk narrates a number of symbolic stories of people's inability to articulate their own identities for they lose themselves in a kind of self-inflicted identity-theft. In a narrative strand of the novel a ruler is shown as donning the attire of a commoner only to encounter a commoner disguised as the ruler, a master mannequin-maker is presented as destined to fail in attracting customers for his figures

not resembling models from western countries, and women in brothels are portrayed as pretending in vain to be charming film actresses to attract more clients. Their attempts are foredoomed to failure as they are reluctant to pay close attention to the gestures that make them who they are. "A nation," as a character of the novel elaborates a philosophical point, "could change its way of life, its history, its technology, its art, literature, and culture, but it would never have a real chance to change its gestures (BB 62)." The melancholy inherent in the novel is due to this inevitable impossibility of ever establishing an authentic identity or changing it according to whims. In *My Name is Red* the impasse is shown in the context of the miniaturists' Hamletian dilemma, to follow or not follow the Venetian style, choosing between novelty and heresy.

The conflicting world that Pamuk has portrayed disperses certain characters who bear an in-between/mongrel identity. Their exilic condition negates the notion that identity is only understood in a cosy home. Exiled in Germany the hero-poet Ka of *Snow* experiments with living in estrangement because he knows that sometimes the safe and familiar territory called home may create mental prisons, and exile can liberate the mind from that prison. In *The White Castle* the Turkish master is self-exiled in Venice and the Venetian scholar-turned slave finds himself happily stranded in Istanbul to realize their identities better. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City* the Istanbullus are presented as living in a sort of inner exile through cultural displacement, imperfect imitation, and fear of "the Western gaze." They try to reclaim a cultural identity deriving from this unusual exilic condition. This desire for distinct cultural identity is expressed through the emotion-laden word "huzun" or "end-of-empire melancholy" – a distinct melancholic state resulting from the involvement in a painful process of regaining the cultural identity that was lost, or supposed to be endangered. Exile, "the perilous territory of not-belonging," is important in searching one's root, as Edward Said in "Reflections on Exile" reflects: "the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other."[48]

As Calcutta is for Ghosh, so is Istanbul for Pamuk in shaping his creative mind. Pamuk's native city Istanbul works as the perpetual anchor of his drifting imagination engaged with a literary venture to grapple with the issues of history and identity, as he

[48] Edwar Said, "Reflections on Exile," *Reflections on Exile and Other essays* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2000):173-186; 176.

writes: "My imagination, however, requires that I stay in the same city, on the same street, in the same house, gazing at the same view. Istanbul's fate is my fate. I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am" (MIC 6). Being emotionally attached to the city, in many of his works Pamuk seeks to portray the present and the past of the city with the mixture of imaginative reconstruction, journalistic facts finding, and literary representation by the western traveler-writers. Professor Horace Engdahl of the Swedish Academy aptly says: "in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city [Pamuk] has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures."[49] Istanbul with the legacy of myriad cultures and civilizations was the capital of Ottoman Empire and was connected with the colonization of many important parts of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. As a centre of an eastern empire it had to compete for power and glory with its European counterparts for more than four hundred years. This status of the city challenges the essentialist concept of the colonizing West and the colonized East. With its chequered history the city, the biggest and the oldest in the country, works as a cultural mirror for the whole country and as a viable means to understand the issues of identity, cultural encounters, (ultra) nationalism, and East-West entanglements pervading the Pamukian oeuvre.

In reflecting the troubled issues of the past and the present Pamuk and Ghosh cannot escape being termed "political," although, being aware of the term's conflict with the aesthetic, they deny having political motive behind writing. Amitav Ghosh in an interview says: "By instinct I'm non-political"[50] and Orhan Pamuk also expresses in an interview his distrust of politics: "The writers, you know, previous generations of Turkish writers...went into politics and ended up destroying their art – and it turned out to be bad politics too. So in that sense I am not political, I am not a political person."[51] Given the circumstances of their time, they have slipped unawares into politics, as "once you live in a troubled part of the world everyone is asking about politics anyway."[52] This easily reminds one of dilemmas of artists portrayed in Tennyson's allegorical poems "The Palace of Art" and "The Lady of Shalott." Artists retiring to sheltered solitude may

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[49] Announcing the Nobel Prize for Pamuk Horace pays this compliment to him. <www.nobelprize.org / nobel-prizes/literature/laureates/2006/press.html>.

[50] Amitav Ghosh, "Shadow Script," op. cit., 32.

[51] Orhan Pamuk, "Writing and writing is my only happiness," Interview with Nirmala Lakshman, *The Hindu*, 2 Feb 2010.

[52] Ibid.

get uninterrupting atmosphere for literary creation but they will necessarily fall short of human materials to use as the basis of their creation. Therefore, artists are perenially caught by the opposite currents of aesthetic and public sensibilities.

It is Edward Said who has traced the public role of the writer as a recent transformation which gives birth to writer-intellectuals: "Even at the dawn of the twenty-first century the writer has taken on more and more of the intellectual's adversarial attributes in such activities as speaking the truth to power, being a witness to persecution and suffering, and supplying a dissenting voice in conflicts with authority."[53] This public role of the contemporary writer-intellectual telling truths about the present world situation is duly performed by both Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk. In line with the tenet of a writer's worldly engagement through art Ghosh has in person visited many locales appearing in his novels and prose pieces both within and outside his native India, while as a rooted Istanbullu Pamuk has direct understanding of the predicaments of his fictional characters who are mostly inhabitants of Istanbul. His only novel having different setting and set of characters is *Snow*. Pamuk had visited the Turkish eastern border city of Kars, the locale of his much acclaimed novel *Snow*, to be an eye witness to the actual conflicts before he set out to portray them in the novel. As a result of such first hand observations, in many cases the novelists impersonate their important characters, and their narratives reveal self-reflexivity, in postmodernist terminology.

Many of their theoretical leanings, as it is one of the grounds for this comparative analysis, bear explicit and implicit comparisons, though sometimes in stylistically very different ways. Being contemporaries with only four-year age gap and passing most of their creative phases in an identical literary and intellectual environment provided by New York they could not help drawing upon the identical theoretical sources while at once sticking to their distinct backgrounds and traditions. Their writings to reflect the concepts//theories of history and identity I have so far discussed. In following or being influenced by theories, they only differ in degree not in kind. Ghosh denies having any conscious theoretical alignment on his part. Yet, scholars and discerning readers cannot miss his novels' tangible connections with many postcolonial and postmodern theories. Pamuk, on the other hand, appears to acknowledge his theoretical alignment rather frankly.

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53 Edward Said, "The public role of writers and intellectuals," *The Nation*, Sept 17 2001. <www. The na tion.com/doc/20010917/essay>.

In brief, the novels of Ghosh and Pamuk portray scenes and characters that are found revolving around the tropes of history and identity. Both are engaged in "using history as a tool by which we can begin to make sense of – or at least come to terms with – our troubling present."[54] The sense of history giving meaning to present-day reality appears as a conceptual pattern in their plot development. They pursue issues which in some way or other fall between history and identity. Belonging to eastern tradition of telling story with the flavor of oral narration both the authors have finely combined the western method of postmodern novel writing with their eastern settings and themes. To a certain extent, they share some common settings, since different parts of the Arab world constitute the major setting of Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*, partial setting of *The Circle of Reason* and become major focus of most of the essays of his major non-fictional work *The Imam and the Indian*. Although Pamuk's native city Istanbul, the locus of his novels, or his country at large cannot be technically considered as part of the Arab world, practically it is a part of that world by virtue of its geographical proximity, cultural and religious affinity, and for being once at the centre of an empire ruling the whole Arab world. They are "travelling in the West"[55] while staying in the East; they are at once diasporic and anasporic, national and transnational.

Survey of Existing Research

Amitav Ghosh has drawn a fairly rich critical and academic investment both at home and abroad. Many scholarly books and articles on Ghosh have been published in India and the West and many research projects are ongoing. It is difficult to keep abreast of all the developments in Ghosh criticism and enlist them in the limited space of this research. Only the prominent ones and those relevant to this study can be briefly discussed here. Firstly, I can mention John C. Hawley's *Amitav Ghosh* (2005) in Contemporary Indian Writers in English (CIWE) series. This monograph on Amitav Ghosh in a reader-friendly format provides an astute and thorough entry-point into the wide range of fiction and essays of the author, provides a multifaceted analysis of the contemporary problems of the world Ghosh writes about, and highlights the most characteristic features of his writing. *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives* (2005) edited

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[54] Brinda Bose, op. cit., 16.

[55] Amitav Ghosh compares himself and a local Egyptian Imam by saying "We were both travelling, he and I: we are travelling in the West" (AL 193).The only difference is that Ghosh has first-hand knowledge of the West and the Imam has second-hand knowledge. The nature of similarity between Ghosh and the Imam also applies to Ghosh and Pamuk in their outlook on East and West.

by Brinda Bose is a substantial collection of essays on the works of Ghosh. They cover a wide range of topics including history, globalization, ethnography, quest for identity and so on. Another collection of essays edited by Anshuman A. Mondal entitled *Amitav Ghosh* (2010) gives a thematic overview of Ghosh's major texts with special focus on their theoretical alignments. *Amitav Gosh: Critical Essays* (2009) edited by Bibhash Choudhury is a significant addition to the corpus of Ghosh scholarship. While some essays of this collection deal with the theoretical framework of Ghosh's fiction, others deal with national allegory, post colonial melancholy, fragmentary history, postcolonial knowledge/power discourse, identity politics, cultural legacy, and western cultural hegemony. Thus these essays can introduce one to the issues of history, culture, and nationalism in Ghosh oeuvre at large.

The Novels of Amitav Ghosh (1999) edited by R.K. Dhawan contains a good number of essays which discuss Ghosh's historical imagination and humanistic worldview. A significant number of essays on *The Shadow Lines* edited by Novy Kapadia in the book entitled *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines* (2001) look at the novel from historical, cross-cultural, post-imperial and postcolonial perspectives. A very illuminating collection of articles on Ghosh is *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion* (2003) edited by Tabish Khair. The book's scholarly articles including one by Amitav Ghosh himself on Satyajit Ray who played a significant role "in shaping the imaginary universe of [his] childhood and youth,"[56] reveal a insightful reading of the political, anthropological, historical, and subaltern issues of major Ghosh texts. *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh: An Assessment* (2009) edited by O.P. Dwivedi contains articles with focus on globalization, history, intertextuality, and interdisciplinary approach in Ghosh's fiction. Shubha Tiwari's monograph *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study* is a commendable venture as a commentary on all the books of Amitav Ghosh except the last two novels of Ibis trilogy. *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines: Critical Essays* edited by Arvind Chowdhary, a significant work on the seminal novel, gives illuminating ideas on memory, nationalism, identity, globalization, and culture as abiding themes in Ghosh oeuvre.

Rituparna Roy's *South Asian Partition Fiction From Kushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh* tracing the theme of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in the major English

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[56] Amitav, Ghosh, "Satyajit Ray," *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*, Ed. Tabish Khair (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003): 1-8; 5.

novels of South Asia concludes with Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines.* She focuses on the novel's delineation of the partition theme from historical perspective. I have come across a comparative study of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk in the form of an M Phil dissertation titled "Of Nation, Dispersion and Engagement with the Non-pure in the Selected Nonfiction of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk" done by Ipsita Sengupta. This is a very relevant study in the field of my pursuit. The PhD thesis of Ms Claire Grail Chambers titled "The Relationship of Knowledge and Power in the Work of Amitav Ghosh," done in the Leeds MetropolitanUniversity of UK and published online, is an illuminating study of Amitav Ghosh. She has sent me some of her important articles grown out of the thesis and shared her ideas by email correspondence. A plethora of insightful articles on the author published in different journals like *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *Postcolonial Text*, *Social Text*, *Contemporary Literature*, *The Atlantic Literary Review*, *Cultural Critique*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Asiatic*, and *The Global South* are available on line. The Ghosh articles published in these journals, if studied together, can help anyone interested in Ghosh make a critical assessment of his oeuvre, know the existing critical trends and interests in him, and find clues to explore hitherto unstudied areas in his corpus for study in depth.

On the other hand, book-length studies in English on Orhan Pamuk are very few since he has got serious attention by the mainstream Euro-American criticism very recently, that is, after having his major novels translated into English and getting Nobel Prize in literature. *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels* by Michael MacGaha, the first book-length study of Pamuk's life and works in English, deals with the historical and cultural context of Pamuk's novels and shows how aesthetically the novelist's self appears in his novels. Recently published *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics* edited by Afridi M. Mehnaz and David M. Buyze is a major break-through in Pamuk criticism in English. The book comprises an array of academic articles that consider Pamuk from a cross-disciplinary perspective and in an international idiom. The articles of this compilation cover issues related to religion, history, existentialism, secularism, nationalism, and postcolonialism in Pamuk' novels. Especially, one article of this book titled "The Spell of the West in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* and Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* by Thomas Cartelli is very relevant to my area of study. The most significant book in English to break the

western mainstream critical silence about Pamuk is *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel* written by Erdağ Göknar, a Turkish-American scholar of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University. The book contexualizes Pamuk's oeuvre into the Turkish tradition, defines the intersections of art and politics in Pamuk, and examines his views on "Islamosecularism"[57] in modern Turkey through the fictional representation of ideological clashes. Göknar's PhD dissertation titled "Between 'Ottoman' and 'Turk': Literary Narrative and the Transition from Empire to Republic" done in the University of Washington in 2004 is an important historical study of modern Turkish fiction which can be a reference work for the prospective researchers of any modern Turkish author.

Although printed works of criticism on Pamuk are scanty, a good number of articles and some research works on Pamuk are available through electronic sources. The article " 'To dig well with a needle': Orhan Pamuk's Poem of Comparative Globalization" by Grant Farred focuses on globalization, historical space, and the city of Istanbul in comparative literature. In the short space of the article the writer has discussed all the Pamuk novels where these issues appear. This can be an excellent introduction for a beginner to the Pamukian world. "Bridging the Gap between Literature and Linguistics: A Bakhtinian Approach to Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*" by Dilek Kantar discusses the theoretical alignment of Pamuk's first English translated novel *The White Castle* and highlights the East-West issue in the novel. "Depopulated Cosmopolitanism: The Cultures of Integration, Concealment and Evacuation in Istanbul" by Benton Jay Commins takes Pamuk's *The Black Book* for consideration and presents an illuminating discussion of global culture and Ottoman history. Feride Cicekoglu's essays "A Pedagogy of Two Ways of Seeing: A Confrontation of 'word and image' in *My Name is Red*" and "Difference, Visual Narration and 'Point of View' in *My Name is Red*" explore the nature of the influence of the western art on the Islamic tradition of the art of illumination, and the conflict between the two.

" 'Speaking to All Humanity': Resistance Drama in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*" by Mary Jo Kietzman, "Orhan Pamuk and Modernist Liberalism" by Marshall Berman,

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[57] Erdag Goknar coins the word to mean the peculiar combination of Islamism and secularism in Turkey while the heated debate is going on in the Muslim world as to whether secularism is (in)compatible with Islam and scores of books and articles have been written on the issue.

"The West, Fundamentalism and Postmodernism in *Snow*" by Maria Gull, and " 'Suicide Girls': Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* and the Politics of Resistance in Contemporary Turkey" by Collin Ann Lutz Clemens address some of the most pressing issues of our time found in *Snow*: viability of the western model of democracy in eastern countries, East-West encounter, conflict of tradition and modernity, historical cycle in national life, religious fundamentalism and its causes and possible solutions in historical and global contexts. "Parable of Turkishness: Identity Figure in Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*" by Saman Hashemipour deals with identity politics in Turkey, globalization, and economic nationalism as reflected in *The New Life*. Amy Mills's article titled "Narratives in City Landscapes: Cultural Identity in Istanbul" articulates the core elements of the Turkish cultural identity by way of exploring literary representation of Istanbul landscape as text, identity, and history. Pamuk's translator Maureen Freely, a novelist and professor of Warwick University, has written a number of articles on Pamuk and Turkey namely "Two for the Road Beyond Bars," "Why They Killed Hrant Dink," "Secret Histories," and "A Translator's Tale" all of which focus on Pamuk's involvement with Turkish contemporary issues through literary writings and interviews, western writers' reaction to the Turkish authority's indictment of Pamuk for "insulting Turkishness"[58] through open comments on the genocide of Kurds and Armenians on Turkish soil, incidents of secret cruelties by the republic, and her experience in translating the major novels of Pamuk.

In his doctoral dissertation titled "Self Reflexivity in Postmodernist Texts: A Comparative Study of the Works of John Fowles and Orhan Pamuk" done in the Middle East Technical University in Ankara Saraçŏglu Semra has discussed the postmodernist theoretical trends with special focus on historiography and self-reflxivity in Pamuk's three selected novels. In another doctoral dissertation titled "Collective Melancholy: Istanbul at the Crossroads of History, Space and Memory" done in the University of Southern California by Hande Tekdemir, history, melancholy, East-West entanglements, and the city of Istanbul in the writings of Pamuk and some other western and local writers are explored**.** As many of the above authors are Turkish researching in Middle-Eastern and western universities, their responses to Pamuk's works can be for my

[58] In Turkish Penal Code under the Article 301 any comment by any Turk against the Republic is called "insulting Turkishness" which leads to severe punishment, even upto death sentence. Pamuk escapes the punishment as under the pressure of the western writers and intellectuals the law is slightly revised to relieve the high profile individuals of the charge if they pass any anti-republic comments coincidentally or by mistake and get endorsement of the fact from the Ministry of Justice.

research a kind of substitute for the Turkish language secondary sources on Pamuk. It is possible to become familiar with the tradition of the Turkish novels through their critical responses which, while analyzing Pamuk, also focus on a considerable range of Turkish novels by way of locating his position in the history and evolution of the Turkish literature or by directly comparing him with other Turkish writers.

Objective or Research Question

Through my study of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk, separately and comparatively, I seek to explore how "history" in different ways shapes the fictional worlds of both of them and what the common and distinct features of their treatment of history are. My study aims to analyze the situations people face in identity exploration in the imperial period as well as in the emerging nation-states as projected in the writings of these novelists and the effects of the of British Empire on the psyche of the people of South Asia vis-à-vis the effects of the Ottoman Empire on Turkish people. How the oeuvres of the two writers show the tensions between the local and the global, the East-West binary, and the issue of civilizational conflict is also explored in this study. Through the study I intend to comment on their views on the present world of conflict and confusion mostly created by the forces of the past. It looks at how their native cities, with the rich historical, cultural, and political past, play on the imagination of the two novelists while they deal with the cosmopolitical and cultural issues. Finding out the points of convergence and divergence in the two writers' perspectives on the foregoing issues and concerns through analysis with textual supports is the objective of this research. In short, this project through a comparative analysis of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk aims to find answers to many questions related to history and identity against the backdrop of empires giving place to nation-states.

Rationale / Distinctive Traits of this Research

By etymological definition, as we know, research means the reappraisal of the existing fund of knowledge, making critical intervention in it, and by implication it also means addition or creation of knowledge. My project is not an exception to the established form of research. While many significant studies exist on the issues of history, identity, and fictionality per se, and considerable research is done on Amitav Ghosh too, comparatively very few critical works, especially in English, are available on

Orhan Pamuk. To the best of my knowledge, no doctoral level study of my chosen area in the context of Ghosh or Pamuk exists, let alone a comparative study of the two. Particularly, Orhan Pamuk is hardly studied in a serious academic-critical vein in our part of the globe although he deserves to be seriously read and evaluated by us. I intend to see, therefore, how some significant issues appear in the narratives of these two contemporary writers writing from two different literary, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Hence the proposed thesis on the very conceptual plane indicates its departure from the existing studies on literary representation of history and identity.

Although Pamuk writes in Turkish, he can be comfortably studied in English translation like other transnational writers such as Borges, Calvino, and Marques within the academic praxis of English discipline. His work deserves readership from other linguistic communities across the globe. And he is not unaware of the fact that his "books have been translated into 46 languages…*And since (the announcement of) the Nobel*, [his] books are being translated in Vietnam, *Bangladesh*, and the Spanish Basque country… It's weird, it gives [his] goose bumps that it's being read all over the world."[59] Spivak has pointed out the paradox of a literary text's target readership: "The verbal text is jealous of its linguistic signature but impatient of national identity. Translation flourishes by virtue of that paradox."[60] Of course, we should also admit that sometimes our English Departments try to "guard their territories zealously and refuse to acknowledge the fact that an alien text translated into a particular language is an acquisition of the literature of that language and not a foreigner in a temporary disguise."[61]

In fact, all the third world or the subcontinental/Indian writers writing in English, one may very well argue, are cases in translation at one level or other. In expressing local realities in English, as G.J.V. Prasad has contended, these writers get involved in a process of translation subliminally.[62] There is an important revelation of the fact by Amitav Ghosh in his conversation with Claire Chambers. He confesses "that the way linguistic difference really shows up in [his] work is through something which people in

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59 As qtd. by Michael MacGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels (*Utah: U of Utah P, 2008): 44. Emphasis added.

60 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia UP, 2003): 9.

61 Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays on Indian Literature in English Translation* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1994): 46.

62 See G. J. V, Prasad, "Writing Translation: The Strange Case of the Indian English Novel," *Postcolonial Translation*, Eds. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 1999): 41-57.

Bengal always comment on, that is, that the shape of [his] sentences has a very Bengali feel to them." He does not understand why that should be, but he believes it is true. He recollects that so many times in Bengal he has found people say to him, "Of course your books are translated into English, aren't they?" and he replies, "No, no, I write them in English" and they retort, "But they sound so much like Bengali."[63] Anglo-Indian Literature in particular and postcolonial English literature in general can be considered as instances of translation**.** The situation is explained by the translation theorist Dora Sales Salvador: "Transcultural narratives are highly particular instances of self-translation arising from their authors' bilingual status. They are original texts which already bear the burden of translation, are already a translation..., thus giving rise to a new questioning of the basic notions of the translation process."[64] Meenakhsi Mukarjee[65] also considers these writers as having two births or "dvija" –the first one obviously in their mother tongue and the second in English.

In the case of Pamuk or any other writers like him the second birth is experienced by the translator on behalf of the writer. Most of the English translations of his works as I have already mentioned are endorsed by him and done with his collaboration. This process of collaborative translation of a living writer becomes in a sense a creative activity and an eye opener to the author. In this context we can refer to Isaac Bashevis Singer who, with respect to the English translation of his Yiddish works, says that his translators are his best critics and "not only is the collaborating with the translator good for the translation, it also helps in editing the original" as "translation undresses a literary work, shows it in its true nakedness" to reveal real beauties and blemishes of the text. A writer may have the chance "to fool himself in his own language, but many of his shortcomings become clear to him in another language." [66] Indeed, translation has the power to tell the bitter truth to the writer about the weak spots in the original. Pamuk confesses to have noticed many weaknesses of his originals while co-travelling with his translator. His translator Maureen Freely explains the tortuous but illuminating process of her translation of Pamuk in "Translator's Afterword" attached to her translation of *The*

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[63] Amitav Ghosh, "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation," op. cit., 34.

[64] As qtd. by. Christopher Rollason, " 'In our translated world': Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide,*" *The Atlantic Literary Review* 6.1-2 (2005): 86-107; 88.

[65] See Minakshi Mukherjee, *Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English* (New Delhi: Pencraft, 1971).

[66] Isaac Bashevis Singer, "On Translating My Books," *The World of Translation* (New York: PEN. 1971): 109-111; 111.

Black Book. Pamuk and she hit upon an effective system in which she worked straight to the end without consulting him. He then went over the finished draft of translation, measuring minutely his Turkish against her English and inserting his marginal notes of "praises, curses, and exhortations" profusely. Only then did they "sit down together and go through each manuscript, sentence by sentence, hour after hour, no matter how high the sun in the sky, or how hot."[67]

My design here is to choose one representative author of "Muslim Fiction"[68] dealing with issues related to history and identity to club with Amitav Ghosh. Orhan Pamuk appears suitable to serve my purpose, since, writing from Istanbul, a former cultural capital and centre of a vast empire, he lends himself to some points of comparison with Amitav Ghosh who uses Calcutta as the centre of action and imagination in many of his novels. Two major works of Ghosh are set in the Middle East which bears resemblance of or proximity to Pamuk's world and if read with Pamuk, they can provide readers with new insights. Besides, his surprising (at least to his detractors) winning of the Nobel Prize for literature, his growing international readership despite his writing in his native tongue, and allegations of West-pleasing approach against him have aroused curiosity in me to study him in depth. The purpose of this comparison, to borrow from Edward Said, "is to move beyond insularity and provincialism and to see several cultures and literatures together, contrapuntally…to get a perspective beyond one's own nation, [and] to see some sort of whole instead of the defensive little patch offered by one's own culture, literature and history."[69] For the growth of multiculturalism and cultural studies, comparative study of literatures, or reading authors of diverse backgrounds contrapuntally demands renewed attention.

Study of this kind is enriched with the flavour of Area Studies. Spivak emphasizes "a joining of forces between Comparative Literature and Area Studies, because the times seem to have come up ... [for] such a coalition."[70] This thesis keeps in view such a perspective by studying two leading postmodern novelists of different

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[67] Maureen Freely, "Translator's Afterword," *The Black Book* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006): 463-466; 464.

[68] By "Muslim Fiction" I do not mean any special type of fiction; I mean fiction in the hands of the transcultural Muslim authors. This categorization is deemed necessary in view of the scanty Muslim contribution to world fiction.

[69] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994): 49.

[70] Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, op. cit., 20.

backgrounds. Pamuk is popularly perceived as a liberal Turkish voice. My effort will be to show how Pamuk, rooted in his national history, language, and experiences like Amitav Ghosh, is "speaking to all humanity"[71] although such role is mostly considered as a prerogative of the western writers, and how he, as a cosmopolitan writer, addresses the pressing issues of our time, in line with others writing in English from the periphery. I have chosen Amitav Ghosh because of his Bengali-Indian origin, his use of Bangladeshi locales as partial settings in some novels, his large oeuvre straddling diverse fictional locales of different continents, and of course, for his growing readership. I have been influenced by his attachment to Bangladesh expressed in an interview: "I feel it is not just India that is my home, but also Bangladesh and Sri Lanka."[72]

Delimitation of the Study

The major works of these two novelists are covered in the present study. The other works especially non-fictional ones are partially consulted when thematic links with my area of study are found. As I concentrate on the specific themes of history and identity in their novels, I have to exclude, naturally, other aspects from my analysis. In exploring theoretical leanings of these authors I intend to be selective since it is not possible within the scope of this thesis to trace all the theoretical ideas their oeuvres have reflected consciously and implicitly. Also, it is not possible to provide a survey of all existing critical materials, however relevant, on Amitav Ghosh because of their vastness and the constraint in getting them online or in print despite my best efforts to explore all the latest developments in Ghosh scholarship.

In pursuing the study of the novels of Orhan Pamuk I could not consult the original sources for the obvious reason of the linguistic barrier, though I have followed those translations which are endorsed and in most cases collaborated by the author himself. However, I have consulted many of his comments and interviews related to his works and their contexts which are mostly available in his own English and some in translation. Furthermore, I could not consult the Turkish Language secondary sources on Pamuk and the tradition of the Turkish novel; I had to exploit the alternative means of studying the scholarly articles of a fairly good number of Turkish scholars and academics

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71 Orhan Pamuk, *Snow* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004):277. A character here regrets that the West enjoys the prerogative of "speaking to all humanity" and the rest is considered as speaking to a limited audience.

72 Amitav Ghosh, "Between the Walls of Archives and Horizons of Imagination," op. cit., 8.

who have written on Pamuk in English and published in journals of local as well as Euro-American universities. In pursuing the theme and perspective of history I could not go to the whole extent of historical study of the locales either in Ghosh or in Pamuk since my interest, needless to say, is only the literary/fictional representation of history.

Methodological and Theoretical Approach

This thesis is written within the hermeneutical approach since it deals with the select authors through close textual exegeses, content analyses and critical discussions. As I have already pointed out, the writers chosen for this research, being living contemporaries and writing in their prime creative phase, have not yet got huge critical and academic investment from the West as well as our part of the globe – particularly Pamuk being a very recent attraction for the mainstreram critics of world literature. Therefore, it is deemed proper for this study to start the core analysis of the primary texts and concerns only after providing a comprehensive induction to the authors' biographies and works. The postmodern and postcolonial novels, as we know, are both aesthetic and cultural texts. Therefore, any in-depth study of them should combine theoretical, contexual, and aesthetic studies. This thesis is an exception to this inclusive approach. Literary-critical reading of the primary texts and their comparative analysis in this study take into consideration the contemporary theoretical concepts and existing body of criticism in the area.

While primarily based on thematic analysis this thesis draws upon Robin George Collingwood's view of historiography, Frantz Fanon's postcolonial and psychological theories, Samuel P. Huntington' theorization of the clashes of civilization and the new world order, Hayden White's metahistory, Fredric Jameson's theory of nationalism, Edward Said's theory of orientalism, imperialism, and culture, Benedict Anderson's theory of nation, James Clifford's cultural anthropology, Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction, Homi K. Bhabha's theory of nation, narration, mimicry, and culture, and Amartya Sen's philosophical view of identity. Apart from purely literary and postcolonial theories I draw upon some psychological theories concerning people's constant revision of and engagement with rewriting of their personal and collective history and identity. In this context we can mention Mark Freeman who describes the act of rewriting the self in terms of interpreting the past.[73] All kinds of interpretations, he

[73] Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the Self – History, Memory, Narrative* (London: Routledge, 1993): 26.

argues, are basically subjective and, therefore, "all interpretations are fictions," and any rendering of past with exactitude is inconceivable.[74] Besides theoretical sources, relevant books on European imperialism, Indian subcontinent, Burma, Egyptian civilization, Ottomanism/neo-Ottomanism, and Turkology have been consulted. To include authorial insights into the issues delineated in this project, interviews, letters, speechess, and public statements of the authors on their texts and contexts are also extensively referred to, because interviews and statements of living authors, as we know, can be treated as a fascinating commentary on their works. For the broader comparative study I would also consider the writings of some other contemporary and prominent Indian and Turkish writers when they cross paths with the writers chosen for this study.

Although there is no well-defined methodological framework for comparative studies, this study is based upon the generally practiced two-way rationale for the study of comparative literature. In the first place, it discusses general features of the authors revealing affinity within two literatures and analyzes similarities and differences. In the second place, it studies the connections between literature and the other areas of human and social sciences, such as history, politics, philosophy, sociology and religion. In brief, the study covers comparison of two novelists of two literatures with interdisciplinary approach since the areas of study are broadly denominated as "history and identity." Of course, the marking of any literary study under the heading of "comparative" is often treated as unnecessary, since the domain is covered by English studies and cultural studies. Besides, "to compare," essentially means the act of putting together two or more things in order to find out their resemblances and differences, and any literary analysis in a broader sense has a core tendency to use comparison as as analytical tool.

Despite its declining status in the recent past, the domain of comparative literature having impact from the growing popularity of postcolonial and cultural studies continues to evolve in our time. Now, to borrow the words of Robert J. Clements, "it is a fact of life that the often maligned term 'comparative literature' is here to stay and we must live with it." Not only mere revival, "indeed it has achieved a rank of distinction in many quarters – in the titles of many important literary journals and books, a plethora of articles on every continent, and most college catalogs."[75] Therefore, it is not true that

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[74] Ibid., 30.
[75] Robert J. Clements, *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline* (New York: MLA, 1978): 11.

"[t]oday comparative literature in one sense is dead."[76] It is gaining ground once again as an independent domain of literary-cultural studies following Mathew Arnold who first emphasizes the study of foreign literatures for the English readers, critics, and writers.[77] In line with the Arnoldian spirit this study endeavours to carry on the simultaneous reading of works belonging to two writers with different national, regional, and linguistic backgrounds with a view to going beyond the concept that any comparative approach is simply literary study.

Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is structured into five chapters out of which the first one is introductory; the next two are concerned with the discussions of the oeuvres of the two select authors respectively in terms of issues revolving around history and identity and each begins with a brief focus on the biography and the oeuvre of the respective author to help readers avoid possible confusion in the crowd of abrupt references. The fourth one, the core critical analysis of the thesis, is entirely devoted to the purpose of comparative study of the authors in the light of the foregoing chapters and the last, as it goes with the tradition, is to round off the thesis with the overview of the foregoing chapters with some additional comments.

In the present introductory chapter titled "Introduction: From History to Story and Identity through Routes to Roots" I have already defined the scope, parameters, objective, rationale, and delimitation of this dissertation and introduced the novelists and their works selected for the study. By way of giving the conceptual framework of the study I have also expalined the concepts of history, identity, and fiction, and their interrelation. Some theoretical ideas and concepts on historiography, fictionality, paradox/politics of identity, cultural study, and East-West encounter have also been discussed to prepare the theoretical framework for the study. This chapter has provided a brief but a fairly comprehensive survey of the critical-academic studies done on Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk. Finally, the structure of the dissertation is discussed here in some detail.

The second chapter titled " 'Travelling in the East': Reading Amitav Ghosh" concentrates on the core texts of Amitav Ghosh. This chapter discusses Amitav Ghosh's six novels and three prose collections to present his distinctive treatment of history,

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[76] Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993): 47.

[77] Mathew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Essays in Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1865): 9-36.

nationalism, cultural exchanges, globalization, and identity paradox. This analysis of Ghosh illustrates how his history-based imagination for fictional creation, while rooted in his native India, traverses the major South Asian countries as well as parts of the Middle East, giving global dimension to his writing. As delineated in Ghosh corpus, micro or human histories, partition and cartographic agression, exile, and communal violence are discussed here at great length. The chapter gives considerable focus on Ghosh's representation of subalternity, the colonial city as an indicator of identity formation and historical evolution of the society, the Jewish question in the Middle East, and his ideal project of syncretism as a means of fighting out xenophobia and communal/racial conflicts the world is beset by. The binaries of East and West, tradition and modernity, centre and periphery, and past and present obviously underlie the discussion of the above issues.

The third chapter entitled " 'Speaking for All Humanity': Reading Orhan Pamuk" concentrates on the core texts of Orhan Pamuk. This chapter deals with five novels, one prose collection, and one autobiography-cum-citybook of Orhan Pamuk with a view to presenting the output of his literary, historical, and cosmopolitical imagination involved in giving a revisionist reading of his country's imperialist history and the present predicament related to ambivalent Kemalist project of modernization/westernization, identity crisis, cultural transformation, and the rise of different ideologically conservative groups. While all these issues are viewed by Pamuk, who impersonates in many of his works, from a progressive and liberal perspective, he gives due space to other perspectives through fictional characters of diverse socio-cultural affiliations for a comprehensive critical understanding of the issues. As a polyphonic genre, novel in his hands becomes a common platform for representations and exchanges of diverse perspectives. The chapter has particular focus on Pamuk's take on the concept of nation-state, discourse of nationalism, imperialism, politics of identity, cartographic violence, exile, fundamentalism-secuarism debate, extremism in diverse forms, globalization, and entanglements of the East and the West. This chapter discusses Pamuk's delineation of the Ottoman history and the present crisis of identity in terms of museum making, artistic dilemma of the miniaturists, and the photographic presentation as visual history.

The forth chapter titled "A Transverse World: Sites of Contact and Convergence" is centred on the comparative study of the authors as it brings out and analyses the points

of divergence and convergence in their delineation of the identical issues and concerns. This chapter shows that both the novelists are writing narratives of nation which, with some qualifications, can be categorized by Fredric Jameson's oft-quoted phrase "national allegories"; both "are traveling in the West"(AL 193) nuturing their roots in the East, and both are engaged in "speaking to all humanity"(*Snow* 277) challenging the western writers' prerogative to have the space of speaking for universal readers. The metaphor of master-slave relation is used as a key thematic link of comparison in this chapter. The metaphor explicates and repudiates different binaries like master-slave, colonizer-native, and Muslim-Christian/Jew from anthropological, philosophical, and mystic perspectives. Besides, treatment of past-present interaction, critique of ultranationalistic discourse and imperialism, view of violence of identity and cartography, foregrounding of mélange identity, and the use of art and city in the oeuvres of these writers bring them closer to each other. How in literary presentation the reality of one nation or region applies to another is analyzed in this core chapter of comparison. The analysis shows different parts of the non-western world as essentially transverse with intersecting histories and sites of contact. By way of thematic and comparative analysis this chapter points out how the two select writers follow identical theoretical lines to a certain degree. Their views on art, artist, and the poetics of novel are also discussed comparatively for better understanding of the issues depicted in their novels.

The fifth and last chapter titled "Conclusion: Overlapping Cultural Cartographies" rounds off the thesis by giving overviews of the first four chapters. This chapter, in keeping with the common tradition, restates the main arguments put forward in the foregoing chapters and also attempts to add fresh insights, coming as a result of studying them together, into the existing readings of the canons of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk. The main issues raised in the body of the thesis are reviewed and the key points of convergence of these writers are further evaluated in this chapter. The limitations of the thesis, since no study on any area or any author can be called exhaustive, is hinted at and explanation for the same is attempted. This chapter presents the findings of the study with the researcher's individual reflections on the authors which may encourage new critical responses of the prospective researchers in the area.

Chapter Two
"Travelling in the East": Reading Amitav Ghosh

> [M]y father saw a female ghost once, an afrîta, at night as he was walking past the graveyard. He never went that way at night again, by God. Why…I can tell you whose ghost it was; but only if you want to know. (AL 107)

Contextualizing Amitav Ghosh

Amitav Ghosh has earned arguably the status of a literary icon in the second generation of Indian English writers. He can be placed between V. S. Naipaul "who first made it possible for [him] to think of [himself] as a writer, working in English" as one he read "with the intimate, appalled attention that one reserves for one's most skilful interlocutors" and Salman Rushdie whose postmodern tencniques he has appropriated in his own innovative way (I & I 55). Like Salman Rushdie, Vikaram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, and Upamanyu Chaterjee he leaves his distinct marks in writing English novels in postcolonial and postmodern tradition. Following in the footsteps of Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naupaul and Gabriel Garcia Márquez he has earned much credit in integrating the art of "magical realism" with the biting socio-historical commentary in many of his novels and non-fictional pieces. Besides the writers in English, according to his own confession, Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray, the greatest figures of Bangla literature and movie respectively, have influenced him tremendously with their humanist worldview and anti-imperialist and anti-nationalist philosophy. In crafting a conversational style and in being ingrained in the Bengali travel-writing tradition he admits to have been influenced by the "wonderful Bengali writer called Syed Mustafa Ali" who "in some ways" is "a real exemplar for" him.[78]

Calcutta appears as a prominent canvas in his fiction because of his emotional attachment to the city and also because of its historical significance as a centre of Indian Ocean trade, Bengali culture, and of colonial and anti-colonial power struggles. Next to Calcutta, Bombay, the Sundarbans, and the Indian Ocean appear as his significant Indian fictional locales, and the rest of the settings in his fiction extend to South Asia, China, the Middle East and beyond. Unlike many Third World writers in English he is not

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[78] Amitav Ghosh, "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation," op. cit, 35.

primarily writing back to the centre, rather he is writing of the East to a globally emergent readership. He has, to quote Anita Desai, "belonging to [that] international school of writing which successfully deals with the post-colonial ethos of the modern world without sacrificing the ancient histories of separate lands."[79] He is equally influenced by the milieu of pre- and post-colonial India and the literary-intellectual ambience of New York, the modern-day imperial centre and a city with the most visible international character. His conceptualization of culture and society, identity and history, and politics and progress, therefore, projects both local and global resonance. The events of "sectarian violence," either witnessed by him or "remembered stories" of riots told by his mother, have "the greatest effect on [his] life," have been "profoundly important to [his] development as a writer, so much so that" the theme of identity-related violence and its roots in history appears significantly in his writings (I&I 45; 316).

Ghosh's Fictional Poetics

Before embarking on constructing any fictional plot Amitav Ghosh generally follows the formula of visiting the places of action and of having extensive archival study on the incidents and locales to be portrayed fictionally. Study of historical materials through library and archival work together with visiting the historical locales has been followed as a regular pattern of his novelistic pursuit**.** As for examples, we can mention his visit to Burma, Cambodia, Siachen (India-Pakistan border in Kashmir), the Sundarbans islands, and the remote villages in Egypt, and his archival studies in the Universities of Oxford, Philadelphia, Cairo, and Alexandria. His concern as a writer with matters of global dimension moves him beyond the primary setting, the colonial and postcolonial india, to some other countries of South Asia and the Middle East. He travels in the West while nurturing his roots in the native land like his cosmopolitan characters moving between East and West in some novels.

Having "History" as major in the undergraduate study Amitav Ghosh in his fiction writing project retains an abiding interest in history. Turning into a fiction writer he has made history a basis of his stories. His major novels take up historical incidents and narratives as materials for art though he does not have any extensive project of presenting fictionalized histories. Social Anthropology with its fieldwork basis, his area of doctoral

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[79] Anita Desai, "Choosing to Inhabit the Real World." *Third World Quarterley* 11.2 (1989): 167-175; 169.

study, has also direct bearing on his treatment of history in fiction. This interdisciplinary interest has moved him to write a good number of extensively researched, but not drily academic, historical novels and non-fictional works. About the interdisciplinary nature of his writing or the influence of his early academic and professional background as a historian, anthropologist, and journalist Ghosh reveals that for him "the value of the novel, as a form, is that it is able to incorporate elements of every aspect of life – history, natural history, rhetoric, politics, beliefs, religion, family, love, sexuality." He sees "the novel [as] a meta-form that transcends the boundaries that circumbscribe the other kinds of writing, rendering meaningless the usual workaday distinctions between historian, journalist, anthropologist, etc."[80] He finds no alternative to genre-crossing as generic fixity defies the kind of picture of the world he intends to project. Variety is the other name of his writing project, be it in the use of techniques, themes or of settings.

History and the Related Concerns

In his major novels Amitav Ghosh has chosen the often less discussed chapters of history for fictional rendition; characters, mostly imaginary and in some cases historical, give human face to the bare facts found in the archives. His fictionalized history takes the colonial and postcolonial India as primary locus for the treatment of subject-ruler relation, rise of anticolonial nationalism, cultural conflict, and the problem of postcolonial boundary formation. The primary setting of his fiction expands to Burma, Singapore, China, and parts of the Middle East to show the nature of intertwined histories and geographies. Although Ghosh takes up the fashionable postcolonial and postmodern tropes of identity, subalternity, mobility, and diaspora, he gives them new twist by situating them in the contexts of non-West centric histories and travels. Although the West appears to the characters in almost all his novels as a symbol of superior power, science, and culture, he questions the normative status of the West by accumulating the value symbols of the East through his repeated fictional "travelling in the East." The East provides Amitav Ghosh with fictional settings and materials to view history, so to say, through an inverted telescope. The stories and characters of his fiction provide readers "with an insight into the uses [and also abuses] of history" manipulated by the agencies of power (AL 221).

[80] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," with Michelle Casewell, *Asia Source*, 6 Sep 2004. <http://www. asias ource.org/arts/ghosh.cfm.:14>.

Problematics of identity of the colonial and postcolonial individuals, status of the subalterns in the postcolonial nation-states, the cosmopolitan identity formation, and "self-other" binary appear prominently in his major fictional and non-fictional writings. His history-based mode of novel writing facilitates his delineation of the trope of identity in a context broader than that of the diasporic communities in Europe and America. During and after the colonial rule many people were dispersed willingly or by force in many Asian and African countries. Being uprooted they had to suffer from the anxiety of negotiating a hanging identity. Reading Ghosh's major novels, in the forms of micro histories, helps one visualize the troubles and discomforts of people living in dislocations, either at home or in diaspora, either in the pre-colonial or in the post colonial period. History, as Ghosh views it, is the story of the division of the world or "partitioning of the past" (AL 283) leading to more fractured identities in the present. As researcher-critic, I am interested in the vision of history and identity emerging from his fiction, though I am fully aware that story rather than history is, of course, the primary purpose of Ghosh in fiction.

Ghosh's magnum opus *The Shadow Lines* indicates a turning point in the history of the Indian historical novel in English as it combines the Indian partition history with the genealogy of violence that applies to any country riven with sectarianism. Ghosh here seeks to explore the history of sectarian violence of the Indian subcontinent with its enormous human and cultural consequences through the "micro" histories of the characters belonging to three generations of a Bengali and a British family. As their interlinked lives are conditioned by the anti-British movement, World War II, the partition of the subcontinent and sectarian violence following it, and are narrated through layers of "macro" history and memory, the family novel in *The Shadow Lines* becomes ultimately historical. The novel is triggered by the author's first hand experiences of two cataclysmic political-sectarian events in the Indian subcontinent with a hiatus of twenty years: the 1964 riots in Dhaka and their mirror image in Calcutta experienced by him as a child and the 1984 Shikh killings experienced as a thoughtful young universityman in New Delhi following Indira Gandhi's assassination. To think of literary influence, as the title obviously suggests, the novel bears resonance of Joseph Conrad's novella *The Shadow-Line*. Unlike the Conradian narrator's understanding of history as objective truths to be obtained in a linear journey of self-discovery, Ghosh's narrator in his

tortuous journey of self and collective discovery comes to understand history as subjectiverly construed changeable reality. He reviews the history of the identity conflict in the Indian subcontinent in complex ways so that the readers going through the book undergo a transformative experience every time.

In an Antique Land subtitled *History in the Guise of a Traveler's Tale* moves between the medieval past and the postcolonial present, and between India and Egypt to focus on the history of cultural exchanges the absence of which explains the history and background of violence in India and the Middle East. It projects a syncretic medieval life in Egypt or the Middle East, the significant cultural relation via ocean trade between the Arab world and India, and the Egyptian village life during the nineteen hundred eighties and the early nineties. Here the narrator uncovers the midieval history of syncretic human society from a subaltern perspective in contradiction to the perspective of power through literary rescue of an Indian slave, who once lived in Egypt, from the "anonymity of history." It is the unlocking of a society sealed by western imperialism. The novel's initial title "An Infidel in Egypt" has been replaced by the present one extracted from the the first line of Shelley's well known sonnet "Ozymandias" apparently in order to give the title the ambience of historicity and mainly to avoid controversy over the word "infidel" which is a western construct used extensively in the Crusade era for the non-Christians or Muslims and later appropriated by many Muslims to designate the non-Muslims disapprovingly.

Coming to *The Glass Palace* Ghosh reveals himself as a consummate interpreter of Burma's colonial and postcolonial history. The little known histories of the last Burmese king Thebaw evicted from his glass palace in Mandalay and exiled in a small town called Ratnagiri in the western India are narrated with the emotional nuances of an epic family saga in one strand of the novel while in another strand stories of the colonial invasion in Burma, rise of Indian nationalism, and the conflict in the civil and military Indian officers serving under the British authority are narrated. Here the individual's predicament, such as the king's, is given predominance over the incidents at the macro level. The portrayal of King Thebaw in *The Glass Palace* reminds one of William Dalrymple's portrayal of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar in *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857*. Although one is a historical novel and the other a "pure" history book, they bear comparison for containing strikingly similar turn of events delineated in them. In these books, both the kings to whom history written by

the West has not been kind enough are rescued from near anonymity, both as frail men are banished by the British under false charges – one from Burma to India and the other from India to Burma – and both inherited thrones in steep decline. The comparison shows Ghosh's power of rendering the grand historical events in fictional terms for readers' understanding of them as human events of tragic outcomes.

While tracing history along the family tragedy of the royal personages *The Glass Palace* does not ignore the stories of the commoners represented by the family of the Chittagong-born Rajkumer starting his life in Burma under the Malayan businessperson Soya John. Rajkumer's romance and marriage with Dolly who is a more than maidservant in the royal Burmese family bring the two strata of the society together in the fictional representation of history . While the king, the queen, and their daughters are historical figures the commoners fictionally created become affected by the royal fate and get passport to history. Thus, a fine balance of facts and fiction invests *The Glass Palace* with historical authenticity which does not overshadow the tortuous journey of the characters in the fictional storyline where love, family and suffering go hand in hand with the questions of empire, nationalism and war. Starting in the colonial Burma this novel gradually unfolds events leading to the present Burma of ethnic conflicts and democratic struggles: the historical novel turns into a documentary novel about the evolution of a society.

Ghosh's fourth novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* subtiled *A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* adds a new dimension to his concern with history. Here he stimulates the debate of Euro-centric and non-Eurocentric history. While narrating the alternative history of the discovery of the malaria vector in Calcutta by the renowned scientist Sir Ronald Ross the novel engages with the history of colonial subject's relation with the rulers viewed from the subaltern perspective. *The Hungry Tide* dealing with a contemporary setting depends for a substantial part on historical flashbacks supplied by the diary of the dead idealist Nirmal once inhabiting the islands only out of philanthropic motive. The novel historicizes the Morichjhapi massacre in the Sundarbans islands of India in 1979 and at the same time traces the genelogical history of Irrawadi dolphins in the Sundarbans channels and the behavourial history of the tigers in the forests, in a way to trace the non-confrontational relationship between man and nature in the history of the islands. The novel provides readers with alternative (subaltern) perspective to look at the historical event of mass eviction to counter the state sponsored version of the story where

the island settlers are projected as encroachers destroying the ecological balance of the site, an idea much favoured by the West. The novel extends the self-other binary to the realm of nature in relation to man.

Sea of Poppies and *River of Smoke,* first two of the proposed "Ibis Trilogy," use imaginary characters and plots to illustrate a historical and controversial subject like Opium Wars during the nineteen hundred and thirties between Great Britain and China. Ghosh makes the characters tell their stories in relation to the British East India Company's export of vast quantities of opium to China for more than one hundred profitable years leading to long-standing wars with the imposition of embargo by the Chinese authority. Although opium trade constituted the single largest financial basis for the British Empire in the East not much was explored about it by the werstern historians probably for avoiding the ethical issues. On the other hand, Indian historians have not come forward to explore the area probably for having a complex about less ugly terrains of the past. Where the academic history hesitates fictional history in the hand of a writer like Amitav Ghosh feels free to dig deep into a drug trade that shaped the world imperial history unexpectedly. And that history repeats itself in different ways – either by running hidden drug trade patronized by states for greed or by forcing people strategically to buy goods or services they do not actually need. Although it may appear that the characters in Ibis trilogy are used to embellish the historical setting, the matter is other way round. About this Ghosh points out in an interview: "It's not that I'm mounting the character in order to illustrate the history – that's not it at all. My primary interest is in the lives and fortune of these people."[81] To learn about the characters and their surroundings in the "Ibis" novels he had to engage in an extensive archival study in several libraries of Britain, India, and Singapore though this project involves less on-ground research required by the narration of contemporary history in *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide*.

Most of his non-fictional works also bear the marks of his interest in history and training in anthropology. His major non-fictional work *The Imam and the Indian* combines his historical and anthropological bent in exploring people, culture, and countries as diverse as India, Egypt, Tibet, and the United States. In *Dancing in Cambodia and Other Essays* the title piece recounts his visit to Cambodia, the historical

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[81] Amitav Ghosh, "Opium, giant whales and khidmatgars: a conversation," Interview with Jai Arjun Singh, 6 July 2008. <http///:www.opium-giant-whales-andkhidmatgar-s.html>.

European visit of the Cambodian King Sisowath accompanied by a troupe of dancers in 1906, the childhood and upbringing of Pol Pot, and the more recent history of Khemer Rouge revolution with its human and cultural losses from 1975 to1979. In the same collection, “At Large in Burma” focuses on the postcolonial history of Burma with a view to diagnosing the cause of the present disorder, and leaping forward in time the essay also recounts the struggle of the Burmese people for democracy led by their legendary leader Aung Sun Suu Kyi, his own meetings with the leader, and his jungle journey to have interactions with Karenni insurgents to discover the nature and motive behind their armed struggle for independence since 1946 for a thinly populated territory of tracts of forest without any major urban centres. The major concerns of the essay appear in the fictional narrative of *The Glass Palace.* “The Town by the Sea” of the selection is his report on India’s Union Territories, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the wake of the tsunami of 26 December 2004 with some focus on the islands’ political and geological history. The prose pieces concentrates more on the contemporary history with a view to understanding the epistemology of violence and the nature of a particular land and its people than unlocking the silent chapters done mostly in his fiction.

Questioning Border and Cartographic Violence

As markers of territorial autonomy boundaries, maps, and routes are intimately connected with the idea of subjecthood, community, and identity with which most postcolonial works are concerned. Having engagement with different types of arbitrary and imagined boundaries Ghosh in his major works shows how some people attempt to transcend boundaries and some people attempt to intensify them. In the process of erecting and crossing borders – geographical, cultural and temporal – the characters in Ghosh’s fiction reveal their individual and world histories in a new pattern. Given his ancesters’ sad experience of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, Ghosh shows an abiding interest in commenting on the cartographic violence. He feels disgusted about borders mostly for their arbitrariness, their constructedness, and the modern political motive and mythmaking behind their naturalization project. His interest in dealing with partition and cartographic aggression grows out of his visceral dislike and distrust of things given or taken for granted without probing into the reality of people involved.[82]

[82] Amitav Ghosh, “Interview,” With John C. Hawley, *Amitav Ghosh: An Introduction*, op. cit., 6-16; 9.

Geographical partition means inevitable dispersal of some people and their casting glances of melancholic longing upon their lost home. It involeves, as Ghosh broods upon in his essay "the greatest sorrow: times of joy recalled in wretchedness," a haunting pain born of "the knowledge that the oppressor and the oppressed were once brothers. It is this species of pain, exactly that runs so poignantly through the literature that resulted from the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947" (I&I 314). Ghosh in this essay, to untie the mystery of this pain, remembers Michael Ondaatje in his poem "The Story" to make us understand the intensity of the incident of new maps replacing the old ones. The poet exiled from his Eden in Serendib evokes the story of the loss of map in terms of a child's vision of severing connections with the past in his first forty days:

> A last chance for the clear history of the self
> All our mothers and grandparents here…
> Some great forty-day daydream
> Before we bury the maps.
> (I&I 321)

While the child can easily think of building something out of the buried maps, the loss of the map for others means unmitigated sufferings.

The issue of arbitrary partition and porous borders is introduced in Ghosh's first novel *The Circle of Reason* and then it is extensively treated in the second and best-known novel *The Shadow Lines*. The theme of partition in *The Shadow Lines* is given a unique expression in the novel's compass episode in which the unnamed narrator recalls his experience of putting his compasses on the world atlas in order to grasp the historical and cultural links between different geographical locations. He thinks that people started drawing lines and circles despite their historical understanding "that all maps were the same" and therefore any newly drawn lines have no potential to imprison people in walled locations (SL 257). He reported the historical fact that when incidents of communal violence took place in Calcutta and Srinagar it had its repercussions in Dhaka and Khulna because things inevitably appear on the "looking glass border." Ironically, the historical and cultural proximity is brought to clear notice of the people concerned through the physical separation by the barbed wire boundaries. The officially imposed physical separation paradoxically projects in the horizon of mind a stronger sense of proximity as people become aware of what they have lost through the erection of boundary like the paradox of a person being conspicuous by his absence.

Ghosh's major works reveal the "cartographic aggression" as a byproduct of the creation of nation-states after the withdrawal of colonial rule. The arbitrary lines and borders in the geography inevitably affect the psyche of the people. In the creation of the discrete cartographies linguistic, cultural, historical, and ethnic bonds are sacrificed to the altar of politics and administration. The official lines encourage the creation of ever multiplying shadow lines. *The Shadow Lines* which has become an eponym of cartographic violence deals with this fact at length. In an anecdote of the novel the narrator's Tha'mma, the grandmother, while planning her first post-partition plane journey to Dhaka from Calcutta to see and if possible to bring home her ailing and stranded Jethamoshai in their old home after partition, "wanted to know whether she would be able to see the "border between India and East Pakistan from the plane" (SL 167). The narrator's father asked whether "she really [thought] the border was a long black line with green on one side and scarlet on the other, like it was in a school atlas" (SL 167). She ruled out that type of perception of the border on her part but held that "surely there's [at least] something – trenches perhaps, or soldiers, or guns pointing at each other, or even just barren strips of land [called]...no-man's land" (SL 167). She is puzzled to think how two nations can be distinct from each other without having trenches on both sides of their common border.

The Tha'mma's apparently naïve questions regarding border challenge the rationale behind the urgent partitioning of the British India for maintaining peace amomg rival groups if there is no need for geographical distinction marker to shut them out from each other. She asks the pertinent questions: "But if there aren't any trenches or anything, how are people to know? I mean, where's the difference then?... What is it all for then – partition and all the killing and everything – if there isn't something in between?" (SL 167). Without anything tangible on the border to obstract people's movemrnt to and fro she considers it still possible to catch a train in Dhaka and get off in Calcutta the next day as she did in her early youth. Her naïve ideas reflect the mind of the countless common masses who do not count the function of check points in land and air ports for entry in and out. The geographical border is the reflection of the distorted mental border created by politicians in a bid to implement their colonially inherited "divide and rule" policy. They could give the border concrete shape only in the official formalities required by the modern world. "The border," the narrator's father explains,

"is not on the frontier: it's right inside the airport. You'll see. You'll cross it when you have to fill in all those disembarkation cards and things" (SL 167).

The land boundaries are given extended dimension by paper work and material forces like immigration offices, the border check posts, passports, and visas. Although these tangible forms clarify the abstract notions of nations and boundaries, the real basis of nation formation lies in imagination as theorized by Benedict Anderson by the phrase "imagined communities." Imagination works in two ways: the state's imposition of unity on a geographical space without consideration of diversity within and ordinary people's nurturing a map of the mind. People's map remains intact in the mind, "that map of longings with no limit," though "Nothing will remain, everything's finished," to use the words of Agha Shahid Ali quoted by Ghosh (I&I 320). Ali writes of a poet who returns to Kashmir in search of a familiar landmark which no longer exists. To him, the loss of a landmark amounts to the loss of the map (I&I 321). The poet's reaction in his part of the subcontinent may be considered as analogous to that of the Tha'mma in her part. After the dissolution of the empire territorial circles are drawn to give artificial space for nurturing identities on the basis of caste, creed, and language without considering the inevitable emotional and cultural wounds.

In *The Shadow Lines* the grandmother of the narrator in filling up the disembarkation cards with place of birth is "[un]able to quite understand how her place of birth (Dhaka) had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality (Indian)" (SL 169). Therefore, when referring to her many pre-partition trips "in and out of Burma" where her father worked she faces problems in using the term "home" and clarifying "the difference between coming and going" (SL 168-169). At that time she "could come home to Dhaka whenever she wanted." But now it is beyond her capacity to know whether in visiting Dhaka she is going or coming home. In her family the distinction between coming and going disappears, and it is not the fault of any individuals. It is the whimsical partition that brings the linguistic dislocation and the resulting confusion. Explaining the nature of this linguistic dislocation the narrator says: "Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a coming or a going at all; a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits

the proper use of verbs of movement" (SL 169). Thus the cartographic aggression creates not only social and emotional dislocations but also dislocation in the usage of language.

Instead of serving the purpose of shutting out peoples from each other like water tight containers of liquid, all partitions whether made of stone or of barbed wire become essentially porous and ultimately turn into "looking glass border[s]" (SL 256). In the creation of the borders by the arbitrary decision of the departing colonial authority or by the declaration of a national leader the reality of the tangled roots of people inhabiting a geographical location for centuries is sadly overlooked. Therefore, all borders become artificial, and necessarily inflict emotional wounds which find an intense poetic expression in the lines Tagore wrote addressing Lord Curzon, the architect of the 1905 partition of Bengal:

> "Bidhir bandhan katbe tumi?
> Emni shaktiman, tumi emni shaktiman!"
> (Will you cut the bond decreed by Providence?
> You are so powerful, are you!)[83]

The child narrator of *The Shadow Lines* thus reflects on the artificiality of border: "within the tidy ordering of Euclidean space, Chiang Mai in Thailand was much nearer Calcutta than Delhi is; that Chengdu in China is nearer than Srinagar is. Yet, I had never heard of those places until I drew my circle" (SL 255-56).

After the redrawing of the maps out of the wrongly held motives, people seemed to think that the lands on the two sides of the line would be clearly separated from each other. The supporters of partition did not get their expected result as "within ... [boundaries] there were only states and citizens; there were no people at all" (SL 256), the lines could not create a virtual separation in people. The narrator illustrates the irony through the example of Dhaka and Calcutta in the post-partition Bengal: "there had never been a moment in the four-thousand-year-old history of the map, when the places we know as Dhaka and Calcutta were more closely bound to each other than after they had drawn their lines – so closely that I, in Calcutta, had only to look into the mirror to be in Dhaka; a moment when each city was the inverted image of the other, locked into an irreversible symmetry by the line that was to set us free – our looking glass border" (SL

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[83] Qtd. in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (London: Routledge,2002): 118.

257). This irony explains the reason behind the killing of Tridib, the mentor and the uncle of the narrator. He died in Dhaka as a result of the communal violence in Calcutta that had its sporadic repercussions in Dhaka.

The separation by the artificial line is not the magical solution to various conflicts within various communities living in adjascent areas but belonging to different creeds and ethnicities; the solution lies elsewhere, in emphasizing significant commonalities. Ghosh here ironically points out what constituted the basis of the pre-partition unified India. The fact that the communal groups of one subcontinental city repond to the riot of another distant Indian city but remain unaffected by the similar incident in a nearer city in China or Thailand proves that India existed in the past as a unified entity with tangled roots of people living on an identical land mass. The irony of arbitrary partition technically executed by Sir Cyril Radcliffe could not escape the eye of W. H. Auden, a poet deeply interested in world history and politics. In his poem "Partition" written on Radcliffe's misguided mission to divide the British India Auden says:

> Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission
> Having never set eyes on this land he was called to partition
> Between….
> 'Time,' they had briefed him in London, 'is short.
> It's too late for mutual reconciliation ….'
> He got down to work, to the task of settling down the fate.
> The maps at his disposal were out of date
> And the census returns almost certainly incorrect,
> But there was no time to check ….
> But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided.
> A continent for better or worse divided.[84]

The reality Radcliffe had to face is an exemplary case behind all events of hasty and arbitrary partition. People themselves are denied the space to take their decision about their fate. Even their elected and sometimes self-appointed leaders' stance appears ill-concieved, politically manipulated, and vested with personal interests. The confusion in the family of the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* regarding cross-border travel has roots in this kind of arbitrariness and manipulation in history.

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[84] W.H. Auden, "Partition," *The Collected Poems of W.H. Auden*, Ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1994): 803-804.

Sometimes, dividing airy lines are drawn where none can physically exist as Ghosh in *Countdown* has given the example of the controversial “Line of Control” between India and Pakistan over Siachen glacier in Kashmir. Ghosh narrates the background of this highest battleground of the world where the soldiers of both sides are killed more by the inclemency of weather than by their mutual fire exchanges. For a few decades following the partition of India and Pakistan the unreachable snowy terrain was claimed by neither country. When in early eighties some international mountaineers attempted to go near the region through Pakistan-controlled areas, suspicion was aroused in India regarding Pakistan’s probable foreign campaign over its alleged claim over the region. Notional lines on maps published in the United States mainly for the use of the mountaineers “were eventually to transform the Siachen glacier into a battleground’’ (CD 27) for two neighbouring countries. Here the cartographic aggression becomes the result of internecine suspicion and competition**.**

Ghosh concludes his view of cartography and violence on it in *The Shadow Lines* through the Dhaka-based reluctant-to-move Jethamoshai’s cynical view of border and partition. When he is forced by his relatives to consider leaving Dhaka for Calcutta permanently he expresses distrust of the intention of the politicians who can bring about further division of the Bengal on the basis of an administrative fiat. He says:

> Once you start moving you never stop…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? No one will have you any where. (SL 237)

Such perception became reality when after a decade of the incident in the novel Bangladesh was born through a second partition in the former British India proving the impracticality of the religious basis of the first partition. With first hand experience of managing riots and insuregence as an administrative officer the narrator’s uncle and friend Robi provides a similar perspective on partition. He criticizes the indiscriminate use of the concept of freedom and independent identity as romanticisation of such concepts works as the key factor behind the fast brewing separatist movements around the world.

> Free, he said laughing. You know, if you look at the pictures on the front pages of the newspapers at home now, all those pictures of dead people—in Assam, the north-east, Punjab, Sri Lanka, Tripura – 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. (SL 271)

While the separatists are killed as terrorists in the name of greater national unity, cultural affinity, and shared history, the supporters of unity are killed in the name of establishing freedom. Both sides do not lack rhetoric to garner popular supports in their favour. However, the reality of one geo-political area may vary significantly from the other.

Therefore, Robi's views of freedom and cartographic violence cannot be accepted uncritically. Although in some cases movements for freedom and independent identity merge with terrorist activities, there are positive instances of freedom movement like Bangladesh's war of independence. Or in the international scene the movements in Bolkan region and Palestine are distincltly freedom movements. And as a classic example of perspectival ambivalence in a slightly different context we can mention the changing appreciation of Nelsion Mandela by the West, first as a terrorist leader and then as a world hero supporting the cause of the oppressed. Of course, Robi's thrust of argument considers regions like the subcontinent with a long shared history and an indivisible collective memory. He thinks if the whole subcontinent is divided into small places with new names it would not bring any change in the lot of people. Drawing thousands of little lines would be an act of running after a mirage; "the whole thing is a mirage. How can anyone divide a memory?" (SL 272). Any attempt to divide a memory must entail the historical, psychic, and cultural violence.

To show a counter model of the arbitrarily bordered world Ghosh presents the tidal islands in *The Hungry Tide* where man made border appears irrelevant or even meaningless against the backdrop of nature's continuously changing contours. The novel through the metaphor of the tidal landscape pictures a utopia where the concept of land border does not apply, as utopia etymologically means "no place." From geographical perspective, the Sundarbans have "no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometers inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily – some days the water tears away the entire promontories and peninsulas; at other times it throws up new shelves and sandbanks where there were none before" (HT 7). The changing contours of the islands force the inhabitants to construct permanent land and ocean scapes in the mind, inaccessible to the politicians. *The Hungry Tide* projects through the poetry of nature what Ghosh in his major novels foregrounds, that is, either crossing boundaries or

living in imaginary cartographies by ignoring physical boundaries. In the same line of constructing the cartography, Ghosh's central woman character in *The Hungry Tide*, the Indian-born American marine zoologist Piya, like Ghosh's American daughter Leela, would like to imaginatively construct India based on the stories told by her expatriate father "as a place where there were only two makes of car and where middle-class life was ruled by a hankering after for all things foreign" (HT 200). Or she would change the earlier construction of her ancestral country on the basis of her understanding of the land as inhabited by Kanai, a land "as distant from the India of her father's memories as it was from Lusibari and the tide country" (HT 200).

View of Nationalism and Nation-state

The bulk of Ghosh's oeuvre shows how peaceful coexistence had prevailed in the East in general and Indian subcontinent in particular before colonial powers started applying their partitioning strategy. Even during the colonial period a sort of working, though sometimes artificial, exchanges prevailed among different groups along the diverse lines of religions, languages, and ethnicities; they found the scope of showing the greater unity and solidarity in the freedom movement against the colonial rule but the emergence of nation-states has permanently created artificial boundaries and ruptures between individuals, cultures, communities, and geographical spaces. The imperial structure could give a sort of collective identity to the groups with diverse religious, linguistic, and tribal affiliations. When the colonized lands got territorial and political sovereignty the issue of nation-building for creating distinct cultural identity free from the governing structures of the imperialist came up for engaged discussion. We can here refer to Ghosh's discussion of Burmese independence and Karenni history of forming "a minuscule, tight-knit nation-on-the-move" in the essay "At Large in Burma." The members of this putative nation, as the writer comes to understand from his interactions with them, believe that they "have never been a part of Burma" and they embraced the British Allies in the Second World War in the hope of favourable treatment (DCOE 83). But the British forgot them by "annexing the Karenni territories to Burma proper" at the point of their departure, giving rise to "a bitter historical grievance" (DCOE 81) Naturally, the question comes to mind: is it practicable to divide a region into many tiny nations with "twilight economy" only for their distinct ethnic identities? Perhaps not, specially if considered from the point of view of survival question. But the paradox is

people in all cases unreasonably blame the map drawing authorities though they may be responsible in many cases.

What Ghosh says on the Karenni status in the context of a "greater Burma" may apply to many regions of the world:

> Burma's borders are undeniably arbitrary, the product of a capricious colonial history. But colonial officials cannot reasonably be blamed for the arbitrariness of the lines they drew. All boundaries are artificial: there is no such thing as a 'natural' nation, which has journeyed through history with its boundaries and ethnic composition intact. In a region as heterogeneous as South-east Asia, any boundary is sure to be arbitrary. (DCOE 87)

In most cases, the nation-building proved an unrealistic and insurmountable task as national identity was made up of myriad irreconcilable fragments. This unreality is aptly reflected in Salman Rushdie's comments on the creation of the Indian nation: "an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate...a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will except in a dream we all agreed to dream ...India, the new myth – a collective fiction where anything was possible, a fable rivaled only by the two other mighty fantasies–money and God."[85] Amitav Ghosh, of course, does not consider the notion of the nation as something brought into being by the collective fantasy; rather he conceives it as a sort of necessary (evil) establishment accepted in the absence of better alternatives.

The novels of Ghosh put forward the creative question as to whether new nation-states can be viable in the midst of conflicts and troubles whose seed was planted in the imperial past. In addition to political instability, people inhabiting the states psychologically suffer from indecision in feeling affiliation to certain identity. Ghosh refers to this psychological damage in relation to Cambodia and Burma in *Dancing in Cambodia and Other Essays*. The condition of the post imperial Burma as projected at the end of *The Glass Palace* can be an example in this context. The country suffers in the hands of two competing colonial powers of the Japanese and the British which ultimately leave the country in the grip of military autocracy. This exemplifies how after the end of imperialism the new nation-states face problems to sustain themselves since their

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[85] As qtd. by Pramod K.Nayar, *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction* (New Delhi: Pearson, 2011) : 77.

strength is drained up in various ways like military intervention, artificial and forced bordering, communal disharmony, and unhealthy nuclear weapon competition becoming a symbol for a national identity.[86]

To him, the discourse of nationalism and the concept of nationa-state have emerged out of practical necessity but they fail to appear free from their erronous mode of construction and achievements of goals. His work, therefore, tends to critique the ideology of nationalism for it seeks to suppress the divergent voices and incidents within the nation and by nurturing narcissism creates antagonistic relation between nations. The nationalist spirit, which was embraced positively in the past for igniting anti-colonial movement, has ultimately become the instrument of suppressing dissenting voices in the postcolonial states. What was good and essential in one temporal reality has turned negative in another reality. The new elites in many nations taking the position of ruling the states turn more oppressive than the former colonial masters to consolidate their power. To cover up their other failures they make desperate attempts at building forced unity in the name of nation-building at the expense of ethnic and local distinctions. Those who show reluctance to yield to the process of assimilation have to pay a heavy cost. This desperate process of unification by causing emotional violence on them and by excluding those who do not qualify for the process can be called postcolonial subalternization.[87] Fallen under this process of subalternization the condition of the poor and the downtrodden remains the same though the colonial masters are replaced by the new rulers of the newly independent societies.

The postcolonial nation-states are aided under the grand project of national development by the Euro-American grants which ultimately benefit the rich and make the poor poorer. This is what comes under the scathing criticism of Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon painfully observes "that nationalism, that significant song that made people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters, and dies away on the day that independence is proclaimed" and it no longer functions either as a political

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[86] Ghosh has given deeply disturbing descriptions of neclearisation in Soutrh Asia occasioned by India and Pakistan in his non-fictional work *The Countdown*. The book grew out of his visits to the Pokaran area, Indian-controlled Kashmir, and the Siachen glacier in the Karakoram Mountains and his converasations with hundreds of people in those areas about three months after the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in 1998.

[87] Pramod K. Nayar, op. cit.,106.

doctrine or a social programme. Therefore he warns:"If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness."[88] He is critical about the definition of nation given from the revolutionary perspective as it does not well adjust to the era of self-development and self-governance. He categorically says: "The nation does not exist in a program which has been worked out by revolutionary leaders and taken up with full understanding and enthusiasm by the masses. The nation's effort must constantly be adjusted into the general background of underdeveloped countries."[89] Although Fanon speaks in the context of the newly independent African countries, his comments generally apply to all "underdeveloped countries" of the world that consider the nurturing of nationalism as the only means to achieve prestige and distinctive identity. Many of Ghosh's stories illustrate "the pitfalls of national consciousness" and supplies space of comparison between pre- and post-nation-state worlds. In some fictional and non-fictional works he consistently reviews the misleading construction of the concept of national identity as it is paradoxically founded on the dual dynamics of homogenizing and othering—one impractical and the other self-defeating.

In Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* the poor and landless Morichjhãpi settlers who belong to the Dalits[90]class are denied lands in the Sundarbans though they have lived in the region for a long time and known the environments intimately. Being rejected by the mainstream society and being unable to become Indians under the prescribed formula of the rulers they take refuge in nature and try to make themselves men.[91] They were cruelly treated by the nation-state ironically in a period when the West Bengal Government was run by the communists whose manifest proletarian philosophy could not function practically in the case of these settlers.They are ruthlessly evicted and even massacred sometimes in the name of environmental conservation and maintaining

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88 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1963): 203.
89 Ibid.
90 The term "Dalit" is derived from the Marathi word "Dala" meaning "grounded," "suppressed," or "crushed." The word generally denotes the dispossessed and the deprived, and especially the so- called untouchable in the Indian social hierarchy. Now free of the derogatory sense, the term has become a political identity comparable to the use of the word Black in the United States. It is used here in the new sense. The other name of the "Dalit," as used by Mahatma Gandhi, is "Horijan" meaning people under the supervision of God.
91 In his recent essay "Wild Fictions" Ghosh discusses an anecdote of one Paraya, a Dalit naturalist in the Sundarbans, who in the story *The Indian Hut* written by Jacques-Henry Bernardin de Saint-Pierre says: "I was not able to be Indian. Thus I made myself a man; rejected by society, I took refuge in nature" (2). This applies to the fate of all Morichjhãpi settlers.

echological balance; actually they are outcasts in the frame of the postcolonial nation-state of India. One Mr Daniel Hamilton once in the colonial time dreamed of establishing an ideal community in the tidal lands. With the help of some NGOs the settlers have tried to establish an egalitarian society on the model of Hamilton.

Their joint efforts towards the implementation of the ideal conceived by Hamilton point to "*one vital aspect of difference: [that] this was not one man's vision. This dream had been dreamt by the very people who were trying to make it real.... [It] was an experiment, imagined not [only] by those with learning and power, but by those without*" *(*HT 171; emphasis in original). Like the educated and the powerful they can also dream of a model community life and thus create an environment to observe the course of "history from below," to use a phrase from "Subaltern Studies." Nirmal, the idealist working for them, expresses their non-belonging status in the postcolonial Indian nation-state through the question: "*Who, indeed, are we? Where do we belong? ... In Kolkata or in the tide country? In India or across the border? In prose or in poetry?*" (HT 254; emphasis in original)). In his answer "*Where else could you belong, except in the place you refused to leave*" (HT 254; emphasis in original), he points to the bond between place and people which may defy the imposition of sanctions by the state structure.

In sympathetic portrayal of the Morichjhãpi settlers struggling under the hostile state Ghosh critiques the nation-state for adopting means of coercion and violence in its homogenizing, marginalizing, and subalternizing process. Aijaz Ahmad in his oft-quoted essay "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" writes on the "bloodbath" and "fratricide" perpetrated by the postcolonial nation-state to solidify its structure. He repudiates nationalism at the juncture of the last century as

> a nationalism of mourning, a form of valediction, for what we witnessed was not just the British policy of divide and rule, which surely was there, but our own willingness to break up our own civilizational unity, to kill our neighbors, to forgo that civil ethos, that moral bond with each other, without which human community is impossible.[92]

In the absence of the foreign enemies we have made enemies of ourselves out of the peculiar psychology of "othering" as a persistent tendency. As a result what post-colonial

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[92] Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New Delhi: OUP, 1994): 119.

fiction records is that a "critique of others (that was the spirit of anti-colonial nationalism) [is] receded even further into the background, entirely overtaken now by an even harsher critique of ourselves" and "the major fictions of the 1950s and 1960s...came out of that refusal to forgive what we ourselves had done and are still doing, in one way or another, to our own polity.[93] Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* critiques the structure of the nation-state which unfairely differentiates the elite from the poor, ruthlessly uses the homogenizing apparutusses like the police and political party.

Contrary to the basic foundation of identity as something always in the process, a nation-state aims at giving an identity which is achieved by the declaration of a nationalist leader as a result of the revolution of a people or, as in the case of India and Pakistan, may be imposed by the enactment of a law in the parliament of the imperial authority when it likes to leave out certain territories from its imperial fold. As a result, the micro identities within the nation are denied proper position in the structure of the state and are repressed to the point of extinction or put on the position of raising violent resistance against the state structure. As Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* has questioned the ambiguity of the constitutional identity of the Dalits in the structure of the Indian nation, a similar issue emerges in Bangladesh regarding the constitutional status of the tribal people under the concept of Bengali nationalism, and many other countries of the region are not free from crisis like that. Thus, nationalism, the founding philosophy behind the establishment of the nation-state, appears "Janus-faced," liberating and constricting. What Eric Hobsbawm writes in the context of Europe becomes applicable to Ghosh's context too. He questions the philosophy behind the creation of discrete territorial states: "The logical implication of trying to create a continent neatly divided into coherent territorial states, each inhabited by a separate ethnically and linguistically homogeneous population, was the mass expulsion or extermination of minorities. Such was and is the murderous *reductio ad absurdum* of nationalism in its territorial version."[94]

In *The Shadow Lines*, a novel having national identity as one of its central concerns, the narrator's distrust of exclusionary and military nationalist ideology held by his grandmother reflects the similar distrust of Ghosh. The direction coming out of

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990):133.

Ghosh's delineation of the theme may be percieved as a preference for nurturing national consciousness when needed without upholding exclusionary nationalist ideology. We can here add one anecdote of Agha Shahid Ali with respect to the condition of Kashmir in Ghosh's essay " 'the ghat of the only world': agha shahid ali in Brooklyn." Once Ghosh remarked to Shahid that he could be considered a national poet of Kashmir. The poet shot back: "A national poet, maybe. But not a nationalist poet; please note that" (I&I 354). This wariness on the part of the poet regarding the distinction between national and nationalist consciousness expresses Ghosh's position too. He understands what afflicts the poet's mind: "Kashmir's current plight represented for him *the failure of the emancipatory promise of nationhood* and extinction of the pluralistic ideal that had been so dear to intellectuals of his father's generation" (I&I 354; emphasis added). Therefore, the poet finds in Ghosh the fittest friend to reach for his hand to communicate the dying words: "I wish all this had not happened. This dividing of the country, the divisions between people—Hindu, Muslim, Muslim, Hindu—you can't imagine, how much I hate it. It makes me sick" (I&I 346). To come back to *The Shadow Lines*, for contrastive purposes Ghosh has created two important characters in this novel – one is the narrator's grandmother holding an extremely exclusionist view of nationalism and the other is the narrator's mentor-uncle Tridib having a very liberal and inclusionist view of nationalism. Ghosh seems to support the point of view of the latter who at one point of the narrative tells the narrator about his desire for enjoing an identity across the barriers of time and space:

> that one could never know anything except through desire, real desire, which was not the same thing as greed or lust; a pure, painful and primitive desire, a longing for everything that was not in oneself, a torment of the flesh, that carried one beyond the limits of one's mind to other times and other places, and even, if one was lucky, to a place where there was no border between oneself and one's image in the mirror. (SL 32)

The longing of Tridib rather reflects a phase of the world that existed before the imposition of geo-political borders by the nation-states or even before the colonial phase. In that phase of history human beings lived in the collective self and at the same time could maintain discrete identities. There was no binary of "self" and "other," "here" and "there." Tridib elaborates on the idea with the help of the story in *Tristan and Isolde*. It is a wonderfully sad German story set in a time when Europe was without borders. Tristan

the hero of the story appears as a man without country and quite fittingly, he falls in love with a woman-across-the-seas. Therefore, the hero acts out the role of an everyman figure and his story is fit to take place in any region of the world (SL 205-206). The story of Tristan and Isolde can supply a set of images that constitute an objective correlative to a visa-free globalized village. Of course, Amitav Ghosh does not support a nationless world which must be an unreality in the present-day context. He just criticizes the western model of the nation-state that fails to accommodate the discrete identities within.

By the representation of the Indian Ocean as a symbolic space for diverse peoples' movements out of the fixed territorial boundaries, he shows the feasibility of having alternative to nation-states. People's movement through the sea for trade and tourism expands the horizon of their identities while their staying within the nation-state encourages narrow outlook on human relationship. But the concept of nation-state like that of democracy has to exist for want of any better alternative. He thinks that "in some ideal world somewhere, we wouldn't want nation-states" and explains his take on the issue with the example of Burma: "But I've been in places where the nation-state doesn't exist – Burma, for instance – and unfortunately the alternative to the nation-state isn't a state of freedom; what actually comes into being is warlordism. In the absence of the nation-state, what happens is worse."[95] Out of his first hand experience he elaborates in interviews on the condition of Burma, which is also reflected at the end of *The Glass Palace* and commented upon in his essay "At Large in Burma." Roaming around Burma he recounts his realization regarding the present crisis of nation-state and the future of it. From his interactions with many Burmese insurgents, it strikes him that a completely failed state is the result of the absence of a nation state.[96]

He gives his first hand experience of visiting the remote large swathes of the Burmese countryside where the nation-state has practically ceased to exist giving place to warlords, not to freedom and liberty. In places like this, he predicts, in the fight between political order and warlordism the latter is for obvious reasons likely to win. Considering the condition in Burma, he feels happy with the prevailing state of India where except some parts, the north-east for example, people are free from the disaster of living under the warlords. According to him, India on the whole is "fortunate to be

[95] Amitav Ghosh, "Opium, giant whales and khidmatgars: a conversation," op. cit.
[96] Ibid.

among the contemporary post-WWII states that have survived, because so many others, like Burma, are going down in flames, and others like Pakistan and Sri Lanka are facing crises."[97] Ghosh's example can be extended to the present volatile condition of Afganistan, Iraq, and Syria. The absence of a thing better shows its necessity: nation-state becomes a desired thing when compared to its worse counterparts.

He repeats his optimism with India in another interview to *The Hindu*: "And I see that under absolute attack from two sides; from the empire on the one hand and from religious fundamentalism... And I think we have been very lucky here in India that somehow in some strange way our nation-state has more or less survived and more or less made something possible.[98] His repeated attempts of contrastive analysis of Burma and India only show his urge to better the present nation-state model. Discussion of its negative sides may mean the growing demand of concerted efforts from all the stakeholders to minimize the negative forces within the structure of the nation-state. What he seeks for the world is the preservation of the model of secular democracy to maintain the functioning nation-state. Actually, he has not attempted to put forward any ideal alternative to the nation-state. And he is not supposed to do that as a novelist whose duty is to broach a burning issue for serious reflections of readers, not to prescribe solutions. He has judged, reflected, and problematized the issue in terms of the predicament of the individuals who people his plot. Some critics have read globalization as the alternative model suggested by Ghosh. Even some critics have marked a sort of floating 'homeland" as an alternative to the western notion of the geo-centric nation-state. In a similar vein, Ipsita Sengupta "Taking cue from [Ghosh's] fiction and interviews" marks "'dispersed India' [as] the Amitavian shade to the debate on nation."[99] She has limited the scope of Ghosh's corpus to British India though Ghosh's focus covers the wider world. In my contention any alternative, if possible, to be deducted from the Ghosh oeuvre is a kind of simultaneous belonging to nation and the world, home and diaspora, physical home and the mental home.

He also hints at the possibility of establishing confederations of states in different regions like South Asia or South-East Asia; nostalgically he cites the example of the

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[97] Ibid

[98] As qtd. by Ipsita Sengupta, "Whither the Nation-State? – the Debate on Nationalism and its Alternatives in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction," *Musings Post Colonies*, ed. Maswood Akhter (Rajshahi: Chinno, 2012): 53-81; 73-74.

[99] Ipsita Sengupta, op.cit., 79-80.

medieval India as concieved by the Arab traders and travelers as Al-Hind with a centre at 'Mankîr' which can be located somewhere in south India (AL 232). It might come nearer to what EU stands for in the modern world context. But he knows that it is not practicable at least in the third world context of diverse ethnicities and economic conditions. Ghosh says in an interview:

> To date we do not know what is going to take the place of the nation state. Ideally it would be something like the EU; realistically, in most places it's probably going to be more like the fusion that occurred between southern Afganistan and Pakistan over the last decate – a world of porous borders, warlords and trafficking in everything avilable. So it seems right now that we are in a moment when the future is still unborn and the past is not quite dead.[100]

To understand Ghosh's take on the issue what Meenakhshi Mukherjee says about Ghosh's view of nation and boundary in *The Shadow Lines* can be noteworthy here: "The novel betrays no anxiety because it attempts to prove nothing and interrogates rather than defines the concept of a totalizing India."[101] No one knows whether the discrete identities will combine under an umbrella larger than a nation-state, or fall into further smaller circles as a result of the fast spreading freedom/separatist movement, political play of subjugation/exploitation, and people's increasing distrust of rulers. With the transnationalization of the forces of production, growing popularity of market economy, and the mass exodus of people globally for diverse reasons, the geographical basis of national identity is already undergoing a kind of qualitative change.

Spatial and Non-spatial Contexts of Identity Formation

In addition to the importance of memory and association, identity in Ghosh shows geopolitical roots. Place appears as a seminal coordinator of identity because the concept of place can easily mark culture, language, and tradition of a people. The loss of place physically and from memory triggers the loss of identity. This loss is also connected with the notion of displacement and dispersion. But place in Ghosh is not as static as a spot on the map. It can be carried on in the memory of those who are driven out of their territories. It is the result of the ways in which people inhabit a geopolitical location. In *The Hungry Tide* identity is presented in terms of spatiality and reproduced

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[100] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Rahul Sagar, *The Hindu*, 16 Dec 2001.

[101] Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English* (New Delhi: Oxford India, 2002): 184.

through particular geopolitical spaces. Most of the people of Morichjhãpi island, according to the official version, are settlers from other places. First they had migrated from Bangladesh to the Indian border states after Partition and then got temporary settlement in different unhospitable locations of the Madhya Pradesh. Ultimately, they moved to the tidal country with the prospect of making it their home. As things turn out gradually, they develop intuitive knowledge of the environment. That is why the researcher Piya , leaving aside the institutional support, has to depend on the illiterate boatman Fokir to know the delails of the dolphins living in the Sundarbans channels. So any government move to evict the settlers on the plea of their being from other places and in the name of ecological preservation cannot be justified in the ultimate analysis.

The islanders want to preserve their unique cultural identity which crosses the boundary between Hindus and Muslims. Their hybrid culture is presented through the myth of Bon Bibi, the deity of the forest who partakes of the elements of both Muslim and Hindu elements, for example, accepting Mantras with the mixtures of Muslim and Hindu names, and Sanskrit and Arabic words. The inhabitants in the distant islands have done what the mainstream people have deplorably failed to do, the failure resulting in riots and partition.Their assimilation of diversity bears comparison with the mixture of Muslim and the Jewish cultures in the shrine of Sidi Abu-Hasira in *In an Antique Land.* The identity of the island as geographical space cannot be essentialized since it is always vulnerable to changes and fluxes. Similar is the condition of people inhabiting the islands. Although they are considered rootless and moving people, they develop intimate knowledge of the place they settle in, no matter for however short or long term. They call the island their home and plan to organise a society no less attractive than the society conceived by the educated and the powerful. Thus *The Hungry Tide* explores the relevance of place to the shaping and reshaping of identities. Since identity is territorialized, Kusum, Fakir and others in the island possess identity which Piya and Kanai lack. Being members of the Dalit caste the islanders also raise the question of their vulnerable status in the larger space of national identity. Since they are denied the ownership of land, their role in the national identity building remains marginalized.

The issue of belonging is given an extra dimension in this novel through the delineation of man-nature binary. While human beings are limited within their "self" the world of the animals is infinite. Animals are not imprisoned in the self as their perception

of the surroundings is devoid of any self-interest. Humans on the other hand see the world in terms of their personal gain. Nirmal in his diary quoting the poet tells Fakir that the animals

> "already know by instinct
> we're not comfortable at home
> in our translated world" (HT 206).

The distinction is established by man's communication through language turning the world a translated one and animals' comminucation through vision denoting a world fit for intuitive understanding. To make out the point of difference Ghosh takes the help of an intertext: excerpts from Rilke's *Duino Elegies*. The difference proves that the non-linguistic factor is important in the merging of self and other. Piya and Fakir pressed by the tidal surge come together like animals without premeditated awareness of each other like, say, deep love relationship where language becomes redundant. The novel thematizes the paradox of language as a barrier as well as a means of reaching out to other as conveyed through the translation metaphor. Man's immersion with the non-linguistic nature can teach the way the distance between self and other can be bridged as illustrated by Piya and Fakir.

Coming over to "Ibis" novels, identity formation is here shown in a unique situation provided by the oceanic space or the ship floating on it. *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke,* the first two of the "Ibis trilogy," portray how the opium war between Britain and China shaped the lot of the Bengal poppy producing farmers, opium traders, and, most importantly, of many creole characters involved in the trade on board the ship. The mother-like ship gather people of diverse backgrounds from both the East and the West for gestation and provide them with a healing space for rethinking about their pasts, cultural roots, and sense of belonging. As Ghosh often writes about the illusory nature of all boundaries and lines, here he conceives a world where the discrimination in terms of class, race, religion, and nationality disappears giving birth to new, hybrid identities. Set amid the historical Opium Wars between Britain and China in the middle of the nineteenth century, the novel portrays a motley of characters who leave behind their identities related to caste, creed, and nationality, and forge a new identity of the exploited on board the ship named Ibis which stands as a symbol of a new and hybrid world of making and remaking identities. Sea as an extension of the ship becomes the only nation

for the characters of *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke.* Here the characters are uprooted from their places of origin but the memories of home remain intact in their mind. Home remains with them simultaneously as a physical and imaginative construct.

Coming "from places that were far apart and [having] nothing in common, except the Indian Ocean" they constitute a sort of nation which remains floating and constantly changing and growing with cross fertilization of people of diverse locales and ethnicities (SP 13). In other words, their notion of the nation is based on the ship or the sea which forces them to forgo their narraow frontiers of caste, creed, and community to forge new identities as ship-siblings while at the same time they live leisurely in memories of their nations and societies of origin. On board the ship the passengers realize that new identities are emerging for them as collective necessity: "From now on, and forever afterwards, we will all be ship-siblings—*jaház-bhais* and *jaház-bahens* – to each other. There will be no difference between us" (SP 356). Therefore, a character named Baboo Nob Kissin comes "to know that the Ibis was not a ship like any other; in her inward reality she was a vehicle of transformation, travelling through the mists of illusion towards the elusive, ever-receding landfall that was truth" (SP 422-423). The passengers undergo a rebirth in the mother ship as Deeti, the central woman character of the novel, realises "their rebirth in the ship's womb that made them into a single family" (SP 432).

The network of relationship they forge is unthinkable in their places of origin in the main land. The village widow Deeti marries Kalua – a lower caste man who would not even be allowed to talk to her in public in the village they are born in, the one time Jaminder Neel Ratton becomes a friend of his Chinese cellmate, and the fluit player American sailor becomes lord Krishnan for the pious gomusta. Some characters of the novel prefer ambivalent identity for practical reasons. The orphan girl Paulette, born of French parentage and reared by a lower class Indian woman, falls under such a category. Assimilated into Indian culture, she puts on disguise and easily passes for an Indian in search of work abroad. Deeti and Kalua appear distinct in that thay cross the boundary of castes and position, and embrace rebirth through marriage. These characters illustrate hybridity and challenge the monolithic process of identity formation. Either as indentured labourers or travellers by force of circumstance they settle in the new countries/colonies and contribute to the creation of creole cultures.

To Ghosh, a person conceives his identity not only on the basis of fixed geographical locations but also on the basis of collective memories of the past and possibilities of movements in the future. People in his narratives live in "imagined communities" not in totally abstract sense. They have concrete thinking of past, present, and future. As many characters in his novels have to change their living places, they suffer from the anxiety of their subjecthood. Deeti in *Sea of Poppies* comes to the realization of the ship's appearance in her vision when she stands face to face with the ship: "it was because her new self, her new life, had been gestating all this while in the belly of this creature, this vessel that was the Mother–Father of her new family, a great wooden *mái-báp*, an adoptive ancestor and parent of dynasties yet to come: here she was, the Ibis" (SP 356-57). The condition of Deeti and her sorts can be exemplified by a species of sailors called lascars who were first considered a nation by Zachary, a member of the crew. Zachary "thought that lascars were a tribe or nation, like the Cherokee or Sioux: he discovered now that they came from places that were far apart, and had nothing in common, except the Indian nation; among them were Chinese and East Africans, Arabs and Malays, Bengalis and Goans, Tamil and Arakanese" (SP 13). Even the Lascari tongue endorses the existence of a mongrel identity: "that motley tongue, spoken nowhere but on the water, whose words are as varied as the port's traffic, an anarchic medley of Portuguese calaluzes and Kerala pattimars, Arab booms and Bengal paunch-ways, Malay proas and Tamil catamarans, Hindustani pulwars and English snows – yet beneath the surface of this farrago of sound, meaning flowed as freely as the currents beneath the crowded press of boats" (SP 104). Identity thus emerges through the interaction of "roots" and "routes" and essentially denotes intermingling, impurity, and hybridity.

Transcontinental ocean journey for trade and human transportation, which is repeatedly used in the Ghosh oeuvre as a metaphor for seeing and changing, sheds significant light on the notion of identity formation. Presentation of the ocean journey provides readers with a kaleidoscopic view of human diversity and demonstrates the interaction of diverse roots on the ocean which symbolizes flux and evolution. While in the precolonial past international business trips put equal emphasis on earning money and enriching cultures by bringing people of far-flung lands together, business trips in later times put more emphasis on amassing wealth. Ghosh's nostalgic preference for the

former is also found in T.S. Eliot when he shows in *The Waste Land* how the eastern merchants carried tradable commodities in one hand and spiritual ideas through myths and legends in another to export to the West. And through the portrayal of the one eyed merchant in the second section of the poem Eliot regrets that the spiritual eye of the merchants is now blinded by the obsession with material gain and animal pleasure, and the ever open commercial eye can only give a distorted view of human civilization.

In the same line of thought Ghosh in *In an Antique Land* portrays Abraham Ben Yiju, an Egyptian based Tunisian business man, and his servant Bomma, an Indian, who, crossing the cultural boundaries, forge new identity of syncretic humanity. They could trade places and positions as master and servant so that one cannot really decide who is who. Even the Egyptian trader jumped out of his cultural boundary to marry an Indian woman, spent many years with her at Mangalore, and begot children of mixed blood. This coming to the "other" for hybridizing identity through business is of course a phenomenon of the pre-colonial past. The present-day reality is mostly the opposite. Instead of bringing people mentally closer business creates unwanted segregation due to obsession with materialism. Some positive instances can also be found in the colonial time when business people of diverse origins had to live together in a far off place for a long time. In the variegated business society of Canton in China depicted in *River of Smoke*, most of the characters are engaged in lending and borrowing cultures since they are far from their places of origin. The Mumbai-based Indian trader Bahram Modi follows his Parsi creed inwardly, and outwardly he imitates the European style to fit into the atmosphere of the European traders. His love-son born out of his union with the Chinese boat woman Che Mei embodies the biological symbol of cultural crossing the ocean trade provides the space for. The Armenian Zadig Bey, a business friend of Modi, is a widely travelled man having acquaintance with various cultures and creeds. Many other characters are involved in identity swapping to suit their purpose like the Chinese fellows around Canton who "are always changing their names − one minute it's Ah-something and next minute it's Sin-saang this and Sin-saang that" (RS 258).

Identity in Ghosh's fiction hinges on both its abstract and concrete roots, its natural and acquired properties. Followers of essentialism conceive of identity as something prefixed, inherited by a person, not to be taken away from him under any circumstances. But identity as delineated by writers like Ghosh can neither be given to a

person nor be created out of the whim of a person. It is a socio-psychological construct which arises out of interactions and negotiations with others in a given situation. Many dispersed characters in Ghosh's novels are found on a quest to define their present identities by retrieving their past to qualify their present. The major part of *The Circle of Reason* deals with characters who, being dispersed by force of circumstance, live exiled life in imaginary city state "al-Ghazira" in African part of the Middle East and reflect on man made borders and official formalities which hinder man's inherited right to free movement across the globe. The quest for identity appears in *The Shadow Lines* where arbitrary partition of the British India dispersed many people of two Bengals who live half of their life imaginatively in their lost home and the other half in the politically constructed geography, one in the past and other in the present reality.

Some characters of Ghosh lacking in-depth understanding of the historical forces playing on people's identity tend to live in a vacuum. Passively swimming in the tide of history they find themselves ever moving and having different shapes. Ila in *The Shadow Lines* is such a character. The daughter of an Indian diplomat, she is forced to live in the position of an "other" in London. Her lover Nick Price who is drawn to her for her father's wealth is "ashamed to be seen by his friends, walking home with an Indian" (SL 77). As she prefers to live only in the present without taking into account her past**,** her position remains ambivalent. Critricizing her intellectual superficiality the narrator says: "For Ila the current was the real: it was as though she lived in a present which was like an airlock in a canal, shut away from the tidewaters of the past and the future by steel floodgates" (SL 30). Living long in the cosmopolitan London as "a decoration almost" she does not acquire anything to add to her personal identity. That is why Tha'mma insists upon her leaving London for India: "Ila shouldn't be there [as] she doesn't belong there" (SL 77). In contrast, some characters' identity is rooted in their childhood, the narrator in *The Shadow Lines*, for instance. His attitude to life is shaped by his childhood memories and impressions. Therefore, his Tha'mma's narrow view of identity cannot change his flexible view of the same.

The question of "Indiannness" features prominently in Ghosh. *The Shadow Lines* covers the post-partition phase of the question. Javed Majeed reads *In an Antique Land* as a "displaced working out of the problems which have beset the definitions of Indian

national identity since the 1920s."[102] In this novel Ghosh also goes to the medieval past to project an enlightened image of the Indian civilization coming in contact with other civilizations through the story of cultural exchanges between the Egyptian Ben Yiju and the Indian Bomma in a trade-linked world. Here he discovers a syncretic model of cultural exchanges which could be applied in the undivided India. This existed before the western invasion and the application of the policy of "divide and rule" or, in the words of Ghosh, the policy of "partitioning the past" (AL 283). This model explains Ghosh's preference for the past when the world was without borders in the modern sense of the term or with very porous ones. The creation of this romanticized past is an important element in his discourse of nationalism and identity.

Critique of Empire, Imperialism, and Colonialism

While having considerable reservations about the contribution of nationalism and nation-state to human well-being and global peace Ghosh does not exempt imperialism from his sting of criticism**.** Notwithstanding its many shortcomings nation-state is still the better alternative to imperial rule. Although the imperial authorities could hold the discrete and conflicting identities within the nation-states, imperialism was based on the deceptive idea of philanthropy. Even the imperial centre did not have full idea of what was practiced in the colonies in the name of business and well being. Raja Neel Rattan in *Sea of Poppies* tells the Englishman Mr Burnham that the British Parliament will not pass any bill allowing the proposed opium war against Chaina as, according to his naïve idea of the British imperial centre, parliament is the symposium of sensible and chosen people. Mr Burnham says laughing: "Parliament will not know of war until it is over. Be assured, sir, that if such matters were left to Parliament there would be no Empire" (SP 117-118). According to Ghosh, "Opium Wars" bear startling similarity with many wars of today including the Iraq War where imperial motive becomes conflated with political and mercantile interests. He says: "when national identity, a colonising power and a battle for control of a profitable natural resource collide, people may not know [the real purpose]."[103] Almost all neo-imperial wars in the present including the much talked war on terrorism are faught under many pretexts of doing good for people through

[102] Javed Majeed, "Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*: The Ethnographer-Historian and the Limits of Irony," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 2 (1995)**:** 45-55; 54.

[103] Amitav Ghosh, "Colonial Wars, Imperial Power, and a Controversial Literary Prize," Interview with Tim Teeman, *The Times*, 11 June 2011. <html:file://H:/Amitav Ghosh Interviews.mht>.

controversial means like bombing the terrorists or imposing bussines embargo that leads to the starvation of innocent millions. While the terrorists are bombarded, the lands inhabited by them go under total devastation.

Ghosh's anti-colonial stance as a writer is also questioned after his acceptance of the Israeli Dan David Prize. The controversy arises as the acceptance of the prize runs counter to the anti-colonial spirit of many intellectual groups around the globe campaigning for a cultural boycott of Israel. An association of the universities of Palestine says: "It's surprising to have to raise Israeli colonialism with a writer whose entire oeuvre seems to us an attempt to imagine how human beings survived the depredations of colonialism."[104] Ghosh, however, rejects the criticism on the ground that the prize is awarded by Tel Aviv University in collaboration with a private foundation, not by the Israeli state. The protesters insist on their charge by arguing further that the university campus is built on the occupied land of a Palestinian village and the state has many collaborative projects with the university. Ghosh further clarifies his position by emphasizing the conflict negotiating power of literature and his deep distrust of the power of embargoes in bringing peace or resolving crisis. He says: "Look, what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is appalling. I very much hope a solution can be found. But, for me, literature is a means to building bridges."[105] He attempts to strike a balance: if the opposition to his accepting the award is reasonable, the idea of branding a whole country as "untouchable" is unreasonable.

Ghosh has also touched upon the much talked about subject of a "new American Empire." In his 2003 article "Nana Sahib And The Texas Detour," written in the shadow of the Iraq occupation and published in *The New Yorker*, he critiques the nature of the American hegemony of the world by venturing beyond its borders with a new version of a "civilizing mission" and at the same time repudiates the way resistance to it comes from some quarters. With "disquieting historical resonances" he compares the September 11 attack with the anti-British Indian uprising of 1857 in which several hundred unarmed British civilians were butchered by Nana Sahib's followers in Kanpur. Many of the architects of the insurrections were soldiers of the Empire who had been overpowered by nihilism. In both cases citizens around the world were torn between revulsion and fear.

[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.

The resistance camps, of course, used the very technique of "shock and awe," often used by the imperial forces.

As far as Iraq war is concerned Ghosh likes to call the term "new American Empire" a misnomer. As the qualition army fighting in Iraq is dominated by America, Britain, and Australia –three English speaking countries with shared history and culture, the alighnment can be looked at as an indicator of Anglophone Empire. This new empire is likely to have only a short tenure because it uses only the single imperial pillar of weaponry in contrast to the past empire in British hands that could pay equal attention to the means of persuasion. The apparatus of persuasion to create legitimacy and consent, which is essential for the survival of empire, is ineffective today for the activity of the forces of dissuasion. Most Americans are unconvinced of the need of any American venture beyond their borders – a fact distinguishing the present connotations of the word "empire" from that of the past. In this changed context, Ghosh remembers George Orwell who has marked imperialism as a means of imprisoning both the imperialists and their subjects. This has come to pass now as "most Americans begin to dream of an escape from the imprisonment of absolute power."[106]

East-West Issue

Amitav Ghosh's critique of imperialism and interest in the portrayal of human predicament relate to the East-West issue. The issue appears prominently in most Indian English novelists. The social, cultural, and political confrontations of the East and the West are viewed from different perspectives by different novelists. As Meenakshi Mukherjee writes:

> The definition of 'East' as well as 'West' varies from novel to novel, but each tries in its own way to grapple with the problem that has continued to concern the Indo-Anglian novelists for more than fifty years. One is struck by the unabeting interest shown by these novelists in the interaction of the two sets of values that exist side by side, and often coalesce, in the twentieth century.[107]

While some novelists deal with the issue with respect to the cultural crossing experienced by the diasporic Indians or the Asians in the West and some novelists view

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[106] Amitav Ghosh, "Nana Sahib and The Texas Detour." <http://www.outlookindia.com/article/Nana-Sahib-And-The-Texas-Detour/ 219850>.

[107] Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction* op.cit., 65.

the issue from the political perspective in the colonial and postcolonial times, Ghosh has treated it from political, historical, and philosophical perspectives. His novels abound in the overbearing presence of the West in relation to colonial power, ethnographic authority, progressive ideas, cultural hegemony, and scientific knowledge. Sometimes, he has projected the West as a normative scale against which to judge all forms of human achievements and in some cases he has developed the counter discourse that gives the East prominence over the West. When he does accept the West as having normative value he does not rule out the possibility of its converse connotations also.

Sujala Singh makes the following insightful comments on Ghosh's view of East-West dichotomy: "through the charting of pre (as in *In an Antique Land*) and post (as in *The Circle of Reason*) colonial journeys, where the points of arrival and departure are often non-Western, Ghosh traces genealogies, histories and routes of travel that *question the role of the West as paradigmatically normative*."[108] Most eastern people have the idea of the West as an imaginative construct. In *Sea of Poppies* the main character Bahram Moddie, a Canton-based Indian business man, discourages his love-son to entertain the bookish view of the West. He says: "This 'West' you've got in your head is just something that was made up in a silly old book. Later, when you're grown up, I'll send you to the real West – to France or America or England, some place where people are civilized" (SP 422). Unlike the idealized West perceived through uncritical reading "the real West" has both positive and negative achievements. Conversely, the West's view of the East is also an imaginative construct to a greater extent nurtured by their tendency to political hegemony. This often wrongly held and varying East-West perception is due largely to the wrong perspectives of history narrated by the powerful. He has explored the reason behind the East-West conflict in the colonial past as well as in the present world of western hegemony in diverse neo-colonial forms. He presents artistically the possibilities of bridging the gap through mutual respect and understanding. He also hints that the resolution of the conflict is a far cry in the context of the present world scenario of growing violence in the name of free trade, intellectual property rights, and new version of the enlightenment burden.

By narrating the often overlooked chapter of the British Indian history related to the opium war between Britain and China in the 1830s and 1840s in *Sea of Poppies* and

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[108] Sujala Singh, "Who Can Save the Subaltern? Knowledge and Power in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*," *Critical Survey* 16.2 (2004): 45-58, 47. Emphasis added.

River of Smoke Ghosh exposes the camouflage of free trade to conceal the intention of exploitation of the East by the West. The then British authority did not hesitate to wage war against China for a non-productive and even destructive item like opium in the name of free trade and in the name of helping the Indian poppy farmers who were actually exploited. This is comparable to "Neel" cultivation in the early phase of colonization in India and tobacco cultivation in the present period of neo-economic colonialism. In the present-day world scenario the West's apparent humanitarian missions in the East under the banner of peace keeping, food aid, medical aid, infrustructural development programme, and education development scheme, to a certain extent, have subversive effects on the people of the East as the projects often have concealed agenda of cultural domination, financial gain, and self aggrandizement. In the short term people may be benefitted by these projects, but in the long run they remain both economically and culturally crippled.

In his debut novel *The Circle of Reason* Ghosh shows the conflict between reason and emotion – one treated as a manifestation of western science and understanding and the other as eastern pseudo-science and irrationality. Ghosh critiques the grossly drawn binaries by exposing the paradox inherent in both western and eastern models of thoughts/epistemology to perceive reality. The failure of the circle of reason in the novel to bring salvation to the subaltern by following the formula of western reason endorses the Hamletian idea that "there are more things in heaven and earth…than are dreampt of in" (western) reason/science. And reason per se cannot be taken logically as a western monopoly; it is a property of collective humanity distributed all over the globe. Even reason has repressive elements to be neutralized or "thwarted by its necessary imbrication with the emtional ties of custom, tradition, and human sympathy."[109] The novel uses the history of weaving "as a synecdoche for the nature of Reason, which is both liberating and oppressive; linear and straighforward, and circular and convoluted; reasonable and unreasonable [unlike the western connotation of the concept]."[110]

The same novel shows the Middle-Eastern oil encounter between the East and the West in the imaginary city of Al-Ghazira under the plea of intellectual property rights, a pressing issue underlying the western control of the petrolium in the Middle East. This

[109] Anshuman A. Mondal, op.cit., 8.
[110] Ibid., 8.

control leads to oil wars, called by different names. And Ghosh opines in an interview that the similar type of war is repeated in Iraq:

> As for similarities between past and present there were clear parallelisms between the Iraq war and the Opium war, most of all in the discourses that surround them. There is all this evangelical stuff, this assumed piety: 'we are doing good for the world.' but beneath that there is the most horrific violence, the most horrific avarice and greed.[111]

And we can add that the list will include many other Asian and African countries facing such implicit and explicit wars due to the interference of the disguised champions of peace. Even under the cover of humanitarian help package in terms of food supply, medical aid, and infrustructure building in the Asian and African countries, let alone the military and technological help, the western powers are not free from the motive of domination and exploitation. In contrast to the recent history of East-West conflict based on trade benefit Ghosh has shown the twelfth century ideal trade through the Indian Ocean between India and various parts of the Middle-East. Business of that type, before the corrupting influence of the western powers, instead of creating conflicts between nations brought together different countries and cultures for beneficial exchanges.

However, Ghosh projects the possibilities of reconciliation even in the present time as the revival of the happy past before the partition by the West is always a possibility. In *The Shadow Lines* the narrator, Tridib, May Price, and Nick eventually succeed to narrow the cultural gap between the East and the West through engaged understanding and exchanges of views. In *The Hungry Tide* the American researcher Piya and the western educated Kanai come to the remote Sundarbans Islands with the obvious possibilities of East-West encounter with respect to their idea of interaction between man and nature. But the potential conflict is resolved by constant dialogue between the indigenous and the intruders through translation, in both literal and metaphorical senses. And Ghosh through the words of his character Nirmal comments that we all have to live together "in our translated world" (HT 206). The motif of translation is used to mean dialogue, negotiation, and strong desire to know the "other." The West as represented by Piya here stands for the cause of environmental conservation

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[111] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview ," With Angiola Codacci, L′ espresso Magazine (Nov 24, 2011): 2. Emphasis added.

at the cost of human living and the East is for the co-existence of humans with nature. Piyali Roy represents the western view of the world where a tiger can be more important than a man for the sake of maintaining ecological balance. Her research financers have the romantic passion of spending more money for nature preservation than for feeding the starving millions. About the expensive fresh water project for the tigers in the Sundarbans launched by a German naturalist and enthusiastically received by the Forest Department in 1980s Nilima, a humanist character in the novel, quite naturally becomes wonder-struck: "Just imagine that! They are providing water for tigers! In a place where nobody thinks twice about human beings going thirsty!" (HT 241). For them the study of the Gangetic dolphin's geneaology is also no less important than the study of man. And also, human settlers may be evicted in order to make safe breeding place for the tigers and dolphins in the Sunderbans.

Fakir and Nirmal who represent the East give more emphasis on human survival. The concern over ecological balance must be subservient to the issue of human cost and concern. Fakir in his intimate knowledge of the world he lives in does not find any real animosity between tigers and humans. To him the idea of animosity must be replaced by the question of crossing each other's boundaries. If they make forays into each other's sanctuaries, their life may be at stake as the act violates the natural scheme of things. Piyali Roy expresses her surprise over Fakir's apparent insensitivity to animal kingdom or the issue of ecological balance and wonders how any sensible man can think of tiger killing for whatever reasons. It does not strike in her mind that humans are also frequently killed by tigers because she lacks intimate knowledge of how life goes on in a remote place of the East, the knowledge of the Sundarbans life. Her very arrival in the Sunderbans indicates an intrusion of the reason dominated West into the East which is projected by the author as being dominated by human emotions, exemplified by the cordial behaviour and empathetic understanding of the simple hearted characters like Fakir, Moyna, Horen, Kusum, and Tutul. The conflict generated by the intrusion is resolved through her acceptance of Fakir's intimate knowledge of the Sundarbans and her decision to stay there. Her decision marks a structural change in the scheme of living and knowledge seeking: New York connecting with the Sundarbans, laboratory knowledge yielding to experience driven knowledge, and man preceding nature in the field of research.

In *The Calcutta Chromosome* Ghosh shows how the East-West conflict affects the production, ownership, and dissemination of knowledge. Through the interaction of western science and Indian pseudo-science the novel shows a version of the type of conflict that is occasioned by colonial partitionist philosophy. The conflict takes its origin in the fact that the West does not accept the role of what they call pseudo-science, which is actually based on intuition and common sense, to establish the real science. For the discovery of the malaria bug which brings Nobel Prize for Ronald Ross the substantial part of the credit should go to those who work behind the screen, the scavengers like Laakhan and Mangala. In the ground breaking discovery of the Malaria vector, scientific knowledge originally produced by the subalterns in the East ultimately goes in the name of a western scientist entirely. The West with its superior theoretical grounding in science tries to marginalize the home-grown, though sometimes unorganized, knowledge of the East. Unsystematic knowledge is no less important as any knowledge owes its origin to the previous knowledge, and in the act of knowing something the seeker only comes to know its history (CC 91). Therefore, it follows that any attempt to establish a claim to know anything is the first thing that a counter-science would come to dispute (CC 91). The subaltern figures like Mangala and Laakhan by their "counter-science" challenge the autonomy and universality of western science. They give rise to the debate about the nexus of knowledge and power by questioning the view that superior scientific knowledge is essentially Eurocentric.

To a certain extent, the East-West opposition is the result of cultural stereotypes. The exchanges between an Egyptian local Imam and Amitav Ghosh cited in *In an Antique Land* over the issue of burning the dead in India sheds light on this point. For his prejudiced perception of the West the Imam says that Indians should not burn the dead as people do not do it in the West. When asked why he gives the normative value to the West he replies that the West has superior tanks, bombs, and guns. Ghosh wonders the Imam does not have any idea of the West's rich libraries, museums, and theatres. While his is the first hand knowledge of the West the Imam's is the knowledge constructed from afar through the observation of the West's activities in terms of military superiority. Such ignorance on the part of the Imam is only symbolic of the gap between the East and the West created by the wrong play of power and the lack of cultural exchanges in a real sense. Thus Amitav Ghosh treats the East-West trope on a broader basis, covering its political, historical, and cultural aspects.

Representation of Subalternity

Ghosh has personal connection with the Subaltern Studies group led by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. [112] Through his fictional portrayal of subaltern characters and retrieval of neglected/forgotten chapters of history he also contributes to this study in his own way of writing novel. An important target of subaltern studies is to challenge the western historiography and renarrate history for the faithful portrayal of the neglected "other." Through archival studies Ghosh uncovers stories of a good number of subalterns and give them space in many of his novels "in defiance of the (western) enforcers of History"(AL 285). In addition to the recovery of forgotten voices, a subaltern study also aims at recovering the lost texts. In writing *In an Antique Land*, a "history in the guise of a traveller's tale," Ghosh as a subaltern ethnographer recovers the lost texts in the form of a merchant's personal letters which bear the image of an Indian subaltern working in Egypt. A similar type of foray into hidden archival sources in the form of reading Ronald Ross's biography is the basis of the plot of *The Calcutta Chromosome*. In *The Hungry Tide* the act of rescuing the idealist Nirmal's diary through the character of Kanai coming from Delhi in the Sundarbans falls under the same category of subaltern text-rescue mission as the diary contains the details of the subaltern struggles and visions in the islands. In a number of novels, Ghosh, having reliance on the archival materials, gets involved in the dynamics of producing unhegemonic history through the individual's memory, nostalgia, and imaginative reconstruction. Scattered versions of personal narratives of the less influential constitute authentic/alternative history with the touch of the author's imagination.

Leaving alone the projects of rescuing subaltern texts and showing defiance to "the enforcers of history" by writing the counter narratives, the mere presence of many unforgettable subaltern characters in his novels testifies to the fact that novel is not only for the middle class representation but also for the subalterns. Bomma the subaltern does not have any living role in the plot of *In an Antique Land*; the author takes his part through identification. In the process he becomes more appealing and becomes more conspicuous by his absence in the actual narrative. Gathering symbolic dimension in the

[112] The word subaltern, originally meaning a low ranking officer in the British army, is first taken up by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to designate the politically and economically underprivileged groups like peasant and workers. Then the term is adopted by the Indian researchers headed by Ranajit Guha who seek to assemble a counter history to contest both colonial and nationalist versions.

cultural narrative he attracts the principal focus of the text. Dolly is a subaltern attending the royal entourage as maidservant in *The Glass Palace*. In the historical narrative she comes from the margin to the centre by virtue of her attractive human characteristics and by entertaining the readers with her more attractive story of romance than the one involving the Burmese princess. Being portrayed in *The Calcutta Chromosome* the scavengers Laakhan and Mangala become unforgettable. The subaltern agents like them coincidentally crossed paths with Sir Ronald Ross in the discovery of the malaria vector and the fact proves that fringe people can have significant involvement in scientific research. L. Murugan, who solves the malaria puzzle in Ghosh's science fiction, traces the reference to Lutchman, a variation of Laakhan, in a diary of Ross. According to Murugan's perception, Lutchman as a typical figure "was all over the map, changing names, switching identities" (CC 76).

About these subalterns in *The Calcutta Chromosome* Murugan comments: "Remember that these guys haven't got a whole lot going for them; they're fringe people, marginal types; they're so far from the mainstream you can't see them from the shore" (CC 92). They are not working for "fame, prospects, promotions, a Nobel"; what they are after is much bigger: "the ultimate transcendence of nature," to overstate the point a bit. The story shows that the so called intellectual authority plays only the subsidiary role in the attainment and dissemination of scientific knowledge while the subalterns following their instinct carry on the spade work behind the curtain without any hope or target of recognition and material benefit. Their condition reminds one of Brecht's famous lines that raise the crucial question as to who deserves the main credit of great achievements in history, the spade workers in the field, the planner in the laboratory or the financer in the development forum from afar:

> Who built the Thebes of the seven gates?
> In the books you will find the names of kings.
> Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?[113]

Ironically, it is the ordinary people who build histories but credit goes automatically to the kings or the rulers who have no direct knowledge of the work and no physical involvement in it.

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[113] Bertolt Brecht, "Questions from a Worker Who Reads," *Poems 1913-1956*, Trans. M. Hamburger (New York and London: Methuen, 1976): 252; ll.1-3.

As Ghosh shows in his narratives, the leading position traditionally ascribed to the scholars and the rulers especially in the West is shifted to those in the margin, and the subalterns are lifted to a central position of creating and disseminating knowledge. The narratives he retrieves for fictional rendition particularly relate to the less empowerd who are neglected by the dominant discourses of history. In this way he brings their identity into focus, and they get protection from the fate of vanishing "into the anonymity of history" (AL 296). In *In an Antique Land* the Indian slave Bomma, a subaltern figure forgotten for a long time, is not only recovered from the historical anonymity and given a significant position in the narrative, but he is also identified at one level (or at least so the narrator claims) with the novelist working as a cultural negotiator and anthropological researcher in the remote Egyptian villages. To put it in the words of John C. Hawley, "[Bomma] is not only a subaltern who cannot speak, but also one that Ghosh uncovers/discovers and thereby owns."[114] Ghosh's claim to have the right to do the job explains the basis of this identification: "I knew nothing then about the Slave of MS H.6 except that he had given me a right to be there, a sense of entitlement" (AL 8).

As a subaltern ethnographer in *In an Antique Land* he puts aside the omniscient position required by the western anthropology and shares ground with the marginal characters like the Indian slave found in the archived letters, the Egyptian village Imam he talks with on matters of diverse interests, the Iraq-returned Egyptian workers like Nabil, and also the Egyptian"Felaheens" (peasants) he interviews and lives with for the purposes of anthropological research. The facts of his cosmopolitan Indian identity and Oxonian training could not bar his identification with those living out their whole lives in the margins. "[A]fter his studies and conversation with Imam Ibrahim and others," says John C. Hawley rightly, "he appears to have identified more closely with the delegates of two superseded civilisations." [115] In a sense, he has come to identify himself in this broader historic and geographic context as a member of this vast "subaltern class" comprising the Indian slave from history and Egyptian peasants of the present. These characters find in Ghosh their own voice to "speak back to the centre." This new identity of Ghosh, to quote Maria Elena Martos Hueso, "not only replaces the duty of the ethnographer to the civilising mission with a commitment to the agency of the subaltern,

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[114] John Hawley, *op. cit.,* 96.
[115] Ibid., 101.

but also demystifies the image of the colonial subject as a naive uncultured individual in desperate need of western enlightenment and guidance."[116] The colonial subjects have their own enlightenment project and history which have only to be uncoverd truthfully by passionate engagement of the eastern ethnograper-writer like Ghosh.

The dominant trend in Ghosh is to magnify the subaltern figures. In *The Hungry Tide* Ghosh passionately engages himself with the poor settlers who can be called subalterns in the Sundarbans through the creation of a visionary and humanitarian character Nirmal and they appear poetically magnified in their struggles, resilience and vision of life. Nirmal goes to the extent of endangering his life in fighting for the domicile right of the island subalterns. Their simple life with ordinary living pattern strikes him "with blinding brightness and clarity." Nirmal, for example, becomes wonder struck seeing Fakir "sitting with a crabline, what is called a 'don' in the tide country, and as [Nirmal] watch[es] him play with it, [his] heart spills over"(HT 193). He wonders how better he can praise this world and takes recourse to poetic lines, from *The Duino Elegies* by Rilke "speaking of potters and ropemakers, by telling of

> some simple thing shaped for generation after generation
> until it lives in our hands and in our eyes, and it's ours."
> (HT 193)

The context of these lines has also Wordsworthian resonance as we are readily reminded of "the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor" reading the muddy book of nature by stirring water with his staff while gathering leeches "to give [the poet] human strength, by apt admonishment" in "Resolution and Independence."[117]

Colonizer-Subject Relation and the Notion of Purity

Some of Ghosh's novels show the ambivalence in the perception of identities by critiquing the problematic premise of self-other relations. *The Glass Palace* can be an important text in this context. While fictionalizing the history of Burma, India and to some extent Malaya in the grip of two contesting empires – British and Japanese *The Glass Palace* brings into focus the effects of long colonial domination on the characters'

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[116] Maria Elena Martos Hueso, "The Subaltern Ethnographer: Blurring Boundaries Through Amitav Ghosh's Writing," *miscelanea:a journal of english and american studies* 36 (2007): 55-66; 59.

[117] William Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* 6, Eds. M. H. Abram,s et al. (New York: Norton & Company,1962): 109-113.

psychological sense of belonging. One of the major issues of the novel is the colonized subjects' problem of identification with the British colonial culture. The issue comes up with the outbreak of the Second World War and the start of the Japanese invasion of Burma when the Indian and Burmese soldiers were put to the dilemma of fighting or not fighting in the British army.

Arjun, who is from Calcutta working in the British Army, initially feels like identifying himself completely with the British army even after accepting the condition that "the British-Indian army has always functioned on the understanding that there was to be separation between Indians and Britishers" (GP 283). He wants to be one with them though he is well aware of their racist attitude towards the Indian soldiers. In the portrayal of racism in the British-Indian Army in Burma Ghosh could rely on his familial source. His father while fighting as an officer in the British-Indian Army in Burma in the Second World War once hit a white officer with his belt on the spur of the moment for being called a "nigger." He was worried about facing court-martial but to his utter surprise he was exempted from any charge because the colonel as a practical manager did not want his team lose the morale by alienating his Indian officers in critical moments of the war. The family anecdote tells Ghosh how strong was racism in the colonial Burma/India where the native officers in the army were not given the status their white colleagues enjoyed.[118]

Unlike Ghosh's father many Indian officers like Arjun, at least for the time being, forgot humiliation by thinking of th position they enjoyed above the common Indians. When in Calcutta a processionist puts a pamphlet through his car window Arjun picks it up and reads the front page containing some quotations from Mahatma Gandhi. One of the quotations reads : "Why should India, in the name of freedom, come to the defense to this Satanic Empire which is itself the greatest menace to liberty that the world has ever known?" (GP 292). He becomes extremely irritated and passes angry comments on the followers of the anti-British movement. "Idiots," he bursts out, "I wish I could stuff this down their throats. You'd think they'd have better things to do than march about in the hot sun...." (GP 292; elipsis in original). For him, as was common for many Indians living under the British rule with some previllege or other, identification with the culture

[118] Amitav Ghosh, "Colonial Wars, Imperial Power, and a Controversial Literary Prize," op. cit..

and habit of the British army means to be modern and progressive. He thinks that freedom for him lies in erasing his past and following the social etiquette and artificial table manners of the British: "we're the first modern Indians; the first Indians to be truly free. We eat what we like, we drink what we like, we're the first Indians who're not weighed down by the past" (GP 279). He fails to understand that the past cannot be erased; it returns like the stabborn ghost as it makes what we are. Therefore, only making peace with the past one can make real progress in life. The characters like Arjun run after mirage created by the temporary charms of the colonial masters.

The Indian officers like Arjun in the British army develop such a deep feeling of Anglophilia that their understanding of modernity becomes the other name of western style of living and thinking. They are made to forget that Indian or any indigenous culture is as rich as the foreign one, that the issue of cultural superiority is essentially relative and defined wrongly by the powerful to their political advantage, and that the exchanging of the native culture with the borrowed one leads to the destruction of the sense of self-honour. Failing to understand it due to his living under the spell of the British Arjun thinks that "the West [is not] a distant abstraction" to him and his fellow officers as it may sound to the common Indians. He claims: "We understand the West better than any of you civilians....We know how the minds of Westerners work. Only when every Indian is like us will the country become truly modern" (GP 279-280). When his friend Hardy reports to him about Captain Mohon Singh's decision "to break with the Britishers," to form an independent unit called the Indian National Army, and to fight on the Japanese side, he finds no point in following the Japanese who will just replace the British who have proved better masters. About the choice of masters he makes the paradoxical point: "There are no good masters and bad masters, Arjun – in a way the better the master, the worse the condition of the slave, because it makes him forget what he is...." (GP 438).

Under the ironical impact of the better master Arjun becomes a representative of the colonial "mimic men." He cannot help considering himself more British than Indian as he tells Hardy: "Just look at us Hardy – just look at us. Who are we? We've learnt to dance the tango and we know how to eat roast with knife and fork. The truth is that except for the colour of our skin most people in India wouldn't even recognize us as Indians" (GP 439). This revelation of Arjun's mindset shows the perfectly desired result of the colonial educational scheme in India as proposed by Thomas Babington Macaulay

in his 1835 essay "Minute on the Indian Education" where he gives the vision of fashioning a subservient Indian mind in the much quoted (in)famous line:"We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."[119]

The image of hybrid native made by the colonizers, exemplified by Ghosh's Arjuns or theorized by Homi K. Bhabha and other postcolonial pundits, reminds one of V.S. Naipaul's bleak portrayals of the Trinidadian Indians' amorphous identity – half-native and half-westernized, belonging truly to neither. Thus writes Naipaul scathingly: "A peasant-minded, money-minded community, spiritually cut off from its roots, its religion reduced to rites without philosophy set in a materialistic colonial society: a combination of historical accidents and national temperament has turned the Trinidad Indian into a complete colonial, even more Philistine than the white."[120] Naipaul criticizes the ambivalent Caribbean identity resulting from colonial encounter and the blind imitation of the West without paying due attention to their roots. When Arjun recalls his original intention of joining the British army: "When we joined up we didn't have India on our minds: we wanted to be the sahibs and that's what we've become" (GP 439), he reveals unknowingly the colonial plan of dividing the mind and society of the colonized for administrative advantage.

Finally, Arjun joins the Indian National army and fights desperately against the British army. But he cannot dispel the doubt about the rightness of his choice or the success of his decision:

> Did we ever have a hope?...We rebelled against an Empire that has shaped everything in our lives; coloured everything in the world as we know it. It is a huge, indelible stain which has tainted all off us. We cannot destroy it without destroying our lives. And that, I suppose, is where I am...." (GP 518).

He helplessly remains hanging in the perpetual doubt because his long association with the British officers has given him an ambivalent status and an opaque critical perspective from which he cannot consider the destruction of the British Empire separable from his

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[119] Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute on Indian Education," *Thomas Babington Macaulay, Selected Writings*, Eds. John Clive and Thomas Pinney (Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 1972): 238-250; 249.
[120] As qtd. by Pramod K. Nayar, op. cit.,186-187.

own destruction. He has desires to be equal with the Britishers but he finds it hard to fulfill them. He encounters a phase of protean identity which is not to be grasped so easily. This situation is thus summed up by James Clifford: "Since the project of identity, whether individual or collective, is rooted to desires and aspirations that cannot be fulfilled, identity movements are open-ended, productive, and fraught with ambivalence."[121] The condition of ambivalence can be used productively if the persons concerned do not sever their relationship with the roots entirely. Otherwise it is bound to be counterproductive, making a caricature, a deformed psyche, bringing destruction to a person's self and to the environments he lives in.

In *The Glass Palace* Arjun is not the only character to face the ambivalent position in the projection of self. A good number of other characters like Rajkumer, Soya John and the Collector in the same novel try to appear like the English but fail to discard their native roots. The Collector, an Oxford educated Indian, serves the colonial administration like Arjun serving the colonial army as envisioned by Macaulay, and dies without any realization of his mistaken position. As a fortunate Indian enjoying a prestigious and lucrative position in the British Indian Civil Service he suffers from superiority complex and always feels a kind of anxiety to prove his eminence according to the standard of the British culture he claims to have mastered by virtue of his position. Marrying Uma, a culturally rooted Bengali woman, he thinks wrongly that his western education and beaurocratic position will be a sufficient gauranty to domestic happiness. Without trying to understand the type of cultural consciousness his wife possesses he becomes obsessed with maintaining false forms and etiquette and scorns his wife for failing to maintain the same.

Lacking genuine passion and sympathy for his loving wife he laments the absence of domestic happiness only after coming to know that his wife is planning to leave him: "I used to dream about the kind of marriage I wanted…To live with a woman as an equal, in spirit and intellect: this seemed to me the most wonderful thing life could offer. To discover together the world of literature, art: what could be richer, more fulfilling?" (GP 172-173). On the same score he harshly critizes the last Burmese Queen who is forced to pass exiled life in a district town of south-west India under his surveillance: "But what

[121] James Clifford, "Taking Identity Politics Seriously:'The Contradictory, Stony Ground… '," *Without Guarantees: Essays in Honour of Stuart Hall*, Eds. P. Gilroy, et. al. (London: Verso, 2000): 94-112; 95.

could they possibly know of love, of any of the finer sentiments, these bloodthirsty aristocrats, these semi-illiterates who had never read a book in their lives, never looked with pleasure upon a painting ?" (GP 152). Even he retains his sense of superiority in his manner of suicide by paddling out to the sea in an old boat discarded by an Englishman, without experiencing any pricks of conscience for his abandoned wife.

Hailing from Chittagong Rajkumar, the self-made Bengali businessman in Burma, marries Dolly, a Burmese maid servant in the entourage of the exiled Burmese king in India. He and his sons build a network of relation with the family of Malayan Soya John, the one time business patron of Rajkumar. Thus they give rise to hybrid identity in both metaphoric and biological senses. Their expanding of relationship network over racial and territorial boundaries gives the issue of racial impurity versus hybridity a new perspective for analysis. In the story of the novel the physical union of a Burmese princess and a Marathi coachman proves this impurity of race and challenges the so called purity of any royal blood. Love appears as the dominant binding factor that ignores petty differences. As Ghosh comments on the understanding of Uma who "could see inscribed the history of her friendships and the lives of her friends − the stories and trajectories that had brought Elsa's life into conjunction with Mathew's, Dolly's with Rajkumar's, Malacca with New York, Burma with India"(GP 225). Love having the eastern connotation of reaching out to the other performs the role of a catalyst to bring together people of diverse origins. As colonial mimic men as envisaged by Bhabha in his essay "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse" they challenge both Englishness and their indigenous status.[122]

Unlike the aforementioned characters Arjun and Hardy find their in-between identities as fragile and suffer from the sense of alienation and inferiority as they find themselves presented through the lens of the white Europeans. Arjun and Hardy illustrate a conflict between national allegiance and acquired identity in many respects – a condition of western souls in eastern bodies. They embody elaborately the conflicting forces and loyalties that come into the making of colonial Indian identity. They show a psychological condition which is comparable to the condition expounded by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*.[123] Contrary to the ambivalent position of many characters in *The Glass Palace*,

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[122] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit.
[123] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, op. cit.

Uma and her circle struggle to find the authentic identity by fighting back through mobilizing anti-British nationalist movement outside India. The awareness of "Indian" identity in a colonial setting, "reinforced by the overt racism of Europeans and Anglo-Indians," takes a political turn in the Uma-like characters who grow under circumstances.

The ambivalence of identity of the British subjects found in many characters of *The Glass Palace* may be compared with the condition of Tagore's protagonist suffering from psychological crisis in a dreamlike surrealistic setting in "The Hunger of Stones" ("Kshudito Pashan"), a short story Amitav Ghosh has translated and referred to in some of his writings and interviews. In this story, "very explicitly a fable of **s**witched identities," Ghosh finds Tagore in ambivalence regarding his sense of vernacular cultural legacies and his deep-seated anger over his condition as a colonial subject.[124] The angst of Tagore is revealed when the protagonist warns himself repeatedly, "Stay away! Stay away! It's a lie, all of it's a lie" (I&I 338). In Ghosh's reading of the story this emotional bursting out indicates the colonial subject's insight into his own alienation and forced identity switching. According to Ghosh, the protagonist's preoccupation with the changing of clothes and switching of identities projects Tagore's dealing with the issue of split colonial subject, one half leaning to the roots and the other half leaning to the lure of foreign cultures. And there is no easy way out of this schizophrenic condition created by the long association with the colonial masters.

Beauty and Art in Resolving the Crisis of Identity

Sometimes Ghosh portrays characters who take recourse to the space created by beauty and art to resolve the crisis especially in the political sphere. Dinu in *The Glass Palace* becomes obsessed with capturing the countryside beauty with his camera while the Japanese tanks move across Southeast Asia. He establishes a photographic studio named after the title of the novel where weekly discussion sessions on art are held among students, enthusiasts, artists, and dissidents to find a way out of the existing political impasse through the disciplining impact of art. When some young revolutionaries insist that "aesthetic matters have no relevance to [their] situation," Dinu replies:"I quoted Weston…Weston reflecting on Trotsky…that new and revolutionary art forms may awaken people or disturb their complacency or challenge old ideals with constructive

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[124] Amitav Ghosh and Dipesh Chakrabarty, "A Correspondence on Provincializing Europe," *Radical History Review* 83 (Spring 2002): 146-172; 162.

prophecies of change…It does not matter…every week this comes up…every week I say the same thing." (GP 510; ellipses in original). The participants in discussions at Dinu's studio may have cultural differences which they can suspend temporarily in the pursuit of their disinterested discussion of artistic values in solving the practical problem of life.

Thus they develop a sense of freedom, adventure, and discovery to counter the stunting effect of their restrictive environment: "that all their lives they've been trained to obey…their parents, their teachers, the military…this is what their education teaches: the habit of obedience…." (GP 509; ellipses in original). Their new liberty born out of their artistic engagement has the potential to lead to the emergence of a common identity smoothing out the hurdles of conflicting ideological affiliations of the society. In this connection Simon Gikandi's view of the role of aesthetic in building an integrated sense of identity can be worth mentioning: "[people] burdened with the stigma of difference turned to art (and other modern categories of it) to affirm their universal identity as human beings."[125] Art as the powerful agency engaged with the portrayal of the essence of universal humanity can make people shed their petty narrowness and differentiation in the way of building an integrated society of humans.

Beauty as manifestation of art provides catalyst for positive change in a society like the one represented by Burma which is beset on every side by quotidian strife. Towards the end of *The Glass Palace* the Burmese legendary democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi is projected as a manifestation of beauty on a messianic mission to help her nation get rid of the repressive social order created by the long standing junta regime. When she comes to address huge meetings attended by people who consider the occasions as pilgrimages twice a week at the gate of her house of confinement she is thus idolized by the narrator: "A slim, fine-featured woman stepped up. Her head was just visible above the gate. Her hair was dark black, and gathered at the neck. She was wearing white flowers above her hair. She was beautiful almost beyond belief" (GP 541). None but such a figure becomes a source of inspiration for Dinu's photographic studio named "Glass Palace." Suu Kyi is identified with a healing space, a creative alternative to military regime, as Jaya considers that "it is impossible to behold this woman and not be half in love" with her (GP 542). Although Jaya, like many Indians coming to the

[125] Simon Gikandi, "Race and the Idea of the Aesthetic," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 42.2 (2001): 318-350; 347.

meetings of Suu Kyi, "could not understand what she was saying…[she thought] the delivery was completely unlike anything she'd ever heard" (GP 542). Her mannar of delivery has something electric about it that gets across the linguistic barrier like an extraordinary piece of music enthralling the listener's mind, making the meaning only subsidiary. This reminds one of the role of art Shelley envisions at the end of "To a Skylark" to bring positive change in the society: "Such harmonious madness/From my lips would flow/The world should listen then" as Joya has experienced from the living art of a popular leader like Suu Kyi who is "much greater than a politician" (GP 542).

The potentiality of the artistic representation of any political vision resides in the capacity of creating empathy that leads to resolving any kind of conflict, be it mental or the political. Again Suu Kyi's art with her innocent smile, her charisma, has the capacity for creating that empathy which animates "the millions coming all the way to see her defying the eyes of "the swarming intelligence agents" and the possible revenge of the military authority. By the visionary character Dinu she is rightly summed up as a Messiah assigned to take the oppressed people to a promised land. Dinu's estimation of Suu Kyi is worth quoting in full:

> She's the only one who seems to understand what the place of politics is…what it ought to be…that while misrule and tyranny must be resaisted, so too must politics itself…that it cannot be allowed to cannibalise all of life, all of existence. To me this is the most terrible indignity of our condition—not just in Burma but in many other places too…that politics had invaded everything , spared nothing…religion, art, family…it has taken over everything…there is no escape from it…." (GP 542; ellipses in original)

As she understands the purpose of politics and art, different fighting camps in Burma have full faith in her potentiality.

In the related essay titled "At Large in Burma," written on the basis of his witnessing the turmoil of the post-independent Burma through his visits to the Karenni insurgent camps in the forest, Ghosh has registered one fighting group's very positive view of Suu Kyi though she has no connection with their ethnicity. Talking to the Karenni insurgents he comes to know that they are determined not to form a single nationhood with the Burmese. Ghosh asks one Mr Htoo, one of the leaders of the insurgents: "If Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy came to

power would you be willing to end the war and join a federal union of Burma?" Thus the answer comes: "With Aung San Suu Kyi maybe peace can come to Burma" (DCOE 85). Ghosh concludes that the Karenni camps, otherwise determined to establish a tiny independent nation in the south, "would vote overwhelmingly for Aung San Suu Kyi" in a free election for the sake of maintaining a "Greater Burma" and it may be taken as a common view of all the fighting groups in the country(DCOE 86).

What the writer intends to project through the above anecdote is that the threat to greater national identity many countries are badly facing nowadays is due to the lack of the capacity in the the leaders to combine politics with art. Through the near apotheosis of the iconic inspirational figure of Suu Kyi in fictional narrative Ghosh seems to argue that art can have control over politics and galvanize the diversely oriented people into forming an inclusive selfhood. And audio-visual art symbolized by a leader's captivating figure with great personal charisma and right manner of managing diversity in the light of the profound philosophy of inclusivism quickly inspires man's imagination to be linked with the "other" in bonhomie and like healing narratives helps remove people's petty sense of narrowness and descriminations. Such inclusion of the elements of art into politics is imperative in a country like Burma which has become "byword for repression, xenophobia, and civil abuse" (DCOE 60).

In some other places also Ghosh deals with the theme of identity and politics in relation to art and painting. Artistic heritage significantly contributes to the formation of the basis for the identity of a nation as art denotes the underlying bond of a people. In Ghosh's historical essay "Dancing in Cambodia" the Cambodians are shown as undergoing "a kind of rebirth: a moment when the grief of survival became indistinguishable from the joy of living" (DCOE 45) while they are enjoying the performance of their dancers and musicians. The traditional Cambodian dance is celebrated as a marker of the entire nation's cultural identity. It provides them with the sense of empathetic understanding of each other. They flock to the theatre and cannot hold their tears through the entire period of performance. Ghosh refers to the astonishment of an Italian relief worker named Onesta Carpene, then working in Cambodia, over people's whole hearted engagement with their traditional music and dance at a time when "the city (Phnom Penh) was in a shambles; there was debris everywhere, spilling out of the houses, on to the pavements, the streets were jammed

with pillaged cars, there was no money and very little food" DCOE 45). This strong sense of cultural legacy could not be destroyed by the modernizing project of the Cambodian King and the social re-structuring of the revolutionary leader Pol Pot and his ultra-radical clique. This survival of traditional culture stands as a challenge against the Eurocentric paradigm of "progressive" and "modern" identity.

Ghosh has given another instance of artistic potency by projecting the iconic significance of the reputedly largest religious edifice of Cambodia named Angkor Wat in the sequel essay "stories in stone." A twelfth century Cambodian temple and symbol of Cambodian identity, this historic monument is an omnipresent image pervading virtually all aspects of the nation's life. For Cambodia it has turned at once into a unique emblem of "the romance of lost civilizations; of ancient glory…and a no less vivid symbol of modernity" (DCOE 49). Although the country's flag has changed with the change of regime, the image of Angkor Wat has remained a constant element in the design of every flag. Transcending its original purpose of housing the Budhist worshippers it is transformed into a living history in art form like, say, Keats's Urn, commanding respect of the people and politicians of diverse affiliations. As ideologically polar opposite politicians find a common ground of identity reflection in Angkor Wat, it denotes a viable means of representing what "the modernizing nation-state" often fails to acieve, representing "a token of the country's belonging'' not only in the medieval past but also in the contemporary world of progressive ideas.

Calcutta/Colonial City Embodying History and Identity

His native city Calcutta as a centre of Bengali cultural, intellectual, and political life has influenced Ghosh in his treatment of the issues related to history and identity. In an interview he makes this confessional remark: "I suppose the thing that's been most important is Calcutta; it's a kind of constant that runs through all my books. Calcutta has been in some way the centre of my imaginative world."[126] Many of his novels are justly called Calcutta novels because of the city's importance as a setting of the plots and a place of origin of the important characters. Once the centre of the British India and the second most important city in the British Empire, Calcutta lost its status when the centre was moved. But the chequered past of the city as a traffic of eastern and western ideas

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[126] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives*, Ed. Brinda Bose (New Delhi: Pencraft, 2005): 214-221; 114.

helps create an imaginative as well as historical geography of the city in Ghosh's major novels in different ways. In the past the city housed a micro society of the Europeans. As Ghosh says in *Sea of Poppies*: "The mansions [of the white merchants of Calcutta] …were as varied as the owners' tastes would allow, some being modelled on the great manors of England and France, while others evoked the temples of classical Greece and Rome" (SP 99). Their contact with the local people created vibrant space for daily cultural exchanges and negotiations.

To Ghosh, the city is more than a social-physical environment. It is an indicator of shifting identities of a people in the course of history and a symbol of global cultural "contact zones" in the past. To quote Anshuman A. Mondal, "the city is both a metaphor for the knowledge/power relations initiated by colonialism, and the stage on which Ghosh re-enacts what has been called 'the battle for cultural parity' that the Bengali cultural elite have waged ever since".[127] Besides the notion of Calcutta "with its philology and philosophy and history" of culture and politics, Ghosh has the notion of the city of Calcutta with its history of science as explored in *The Circle of Reason* and *The Calcutta Chromosome*. This fact is better expressed in the way the protaginist Balaram in the first Ghosh novel *The Circle of Reason* understands the city:

> He had his own version of Calcutta. For him it was the city in which Ronald Ross discovered the origin of malaria, and Robert Coch, after years of effort, finally isolated the bacillus which causes typhoid. It was the Calcutta in which Jagadish Bose first demonstrated the extraordinarily life-like patterns of stress responses in metals; where he first proved to the disbelieving world that plants are no less burdened with feeling than man. (CR 43)

Calcutta figures in its entirety – as a geographical setting and a mental source of energy – in Ghosh's creative imagination. His principal interest remains in its dwellers of the past and present.

Indianized English as Indicator of New Identity

Amitav Ghosh's use of English with his personal marks and distinct Indian flavour speaks of a new cultural element in identity formation. The Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of the pioneers of postcolonial studies, puts forward his strong

[127] Anshuman A. Mondal, op. cit.,5.

argument in favour of the use of the native vernaculars rather than English in writing by the people of the former colonies as English as an elite language of the privileged furthers the colonial and hegemonic social relations. This debate over the use of English instead of the vernacular languages has been continuing in India for a quite long time. And Ghosh has his significant stake on the debate. He believes that Standard English or King's English because of its colonial legacy cannot truly represent the Indian experiences in all situations. As Salman Rushdie states: "For some Indian critics English-language Indian writing will never be more than a post-colonial anomaly, the bastard child of Empire, sired on India by the departing British."[128]

Taking into consideration the anxiety of cultural representation induced by the fear of English, Amitav Ghosh likes to twist the language when he considers it necessary for the faithful representation of a distinctly local idea, situation or character. While Ngugi speaks against English only after getting his position established through the use of that language, Ghosh accepting the reality of the language sometimes relishes the act of stamping local identity onto it. What Ghosh says to justify his mixture of English with words and sentences from other languages in his Ibis novels can be taken as a tenet he follows in the use of language in novels. As he loves to study dictionaries of various kinds like ones of laskari and nautical language he believes that "English people when they were living in India were certainly not speaking like Jane Austen or George Eliot" and it is often reported that when they went back home to England, people couldn't understand them clearly.[129] He explains his position thus: "We don't know how Englishmen spoke in the 19th century, so perhaps my representation of how they spoke is perhaps as close as Thackaray's."[130]

Especially in his "river novels" Ghosh feels the need of extensively mixing transliterated vernacular words and phrases with English like "Jahaz Bhais-Jahaz bahens," "báp-ré-báp," "lál-sharáb," "chhi chhi!," "Eki-ré," "ei beti…meri ján," "bacháwela," "Khoda-hafej," "Allah rahem," Bismillah," "Hai Ram," "Mái-báp," and Sãp! Sãp!," to give only a few examples from *Sea of Poppies*. Of course, it can be contended that the admixture of Bangla words with English is more a result of his aggressive stance for Indianizing English than a necessity for better projection of the

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[128] Salman Rushdie, *Step Across This Line*: *Collected Nonfiction, 1992-2002* (Westminster: Random House, 2003): 148.

[129] Amitav Ghosh, "Writing Through Turmoil," Interview with Sheela Reddy. <http://www. outl ook india.com/article/The-Ghazipur - And-Patna-Opium-Factories- Together-Produced-The-Wealth- Of-Britain/237500>.

[130] Ibid.

setting and reality of the characters. Even when context allows it**,** he does not slip the chance of using Bangla slang and curse words which the non-Indian readers will find difficult to understand. But it does not pose a problem to him and he has not felt the necessity to append a glossary of the Indian words at the end of his novels. In the "Ibis" novels the interaction of his characters from diverse spatial origins through the mixture of various languages with English also gives a new insight into human relationship that has the potentiality of transcending not only geo-political but also linguistic borders. *In an Antique Land* being set in Egypt and the prose pieces on the Middle Eastern topics like "The Imam and the Indian," "An Egyptian in Baghdad," "The Human Comedy in Cairo," "The Relations of Envy in an Egyptian Village," "Categories of Labour and the Orientation of the Fellah Economy," and "The Slave of MS. H.6" are strewn with transliterated Arabic words to provide the readers with local flavour**.**

He agrees very much with the opinion that in the modern hybrid world English should be an essentially hybridized tongue to become a common means of communication and windows should remain open as they were during the period of colonial expansion to host words and expressions from the daily store of the non-native users. Language cannot be overlooked as a less important area in the exploration of the crucial location for the postmodern cultural hybridity. The writers in English in different regions of the world have no reason to think that the English they use for the faithful representation of their experience is a deviation from the standard British or American English. Ghosh's Indianized English made by a kind of occasional "Chutnification" to add local flavor is a contribution towards establishing English as a truly global and hybridized language, capable of representing all varieties of experiences, cultures, and settings. This hybridity rejects the binary relationship between English as the language of the former colonizer and english/es as the language changed into myriad distinctive varieties throughout the world.[131]

Amitav Ghosh's rejection of the colonizer's brand of pure English in favour of the Indianized English shows a siprit which underlies his stance for the indegenous languages when the question of Commonwealth Prize appears. This incident brings to the fore the issue of identity around the status of the former British colonies in keeping relation with the former colonizer. When his *The Glass Palace* was nominated for the competition of 2001 Commonwealth Writer's Prize he withdrew it on the ground that the

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[131] Bill Ashcroft, ,et.al., *The Empire Writes Back* (London and New York: Routledge,1989): 45.

term Commonwealth is a misnomer as far as the languge question is concerned. He protests that the Commonwealth Prize considers only the books writen in the colonizer's language while the native lanuages of the former colonies have the equal claim to be considered Commonwealth language/s in the real sense of the term. What he writes in protest in a letter addressed to Sandra Vince, the Prize Manager of the Commonwealth Foundation, may be worth quoting here at length:

> As a grouping of nations collected from the remains of the British Empire, the Commonwealth serves as an umbrella forum in global politics. As a literary or cultural grouping however, it seems to me that 'the Commonwealth' can only be a misnomer so long as it excludes the many languages that sustain the cultural and literary lives of these countries. It is surely inconceivable, for example, that athlets would have to be fluent in English in order to qualify for the Commonwealth Games.[132]

This view reveals Ghosh's strong position against the linguistic imperialism in creating disparity in identity construction on the basis of the colonizer's language though he himself writes in English.

And his English in the use of Indian words and idioms deviates, to some extent, from the queen's brand and has "a Bengali feel to it" according to his own confessions, English being no longer a property of the native users. The focus of his criticism as far as the Commonwealth Prize issue is concerned is the spirit behind the use of English by the prize giving committee. He objects that the committee considers writings in English only, ignoring the languages of the majority member countries. For further clarification of the point, he makes a comparison between the Commonwealth and the former Japanese empire while talking to one interviewer:

> During the Second World War, the Japanense called their empire in Southeast Asia—after this incredibly damaging and violent campaign in Southeast Asia—they called this entire region 'The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere', as I'm sure you're aware. Now, if someone came to me and said would you accept 'The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere Prize' would I accept? Of course I wouldn't! Why should I accept something, which is just a euphemism for some incredible violence that was done to the world that is now seeking to whitewash itself?[133]

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[132] Amitav Ghosh, "Letter to Administrators of Commonwealth Writers Prize" (2001). <www.ezipangu. org/english/contents/news/forward/3/2.html.>. Originally published at www.amitavghosh.com>.

[133] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Chitra Sankaran (Singapore, 2005). As qtd. in Tuomas Huttunen's *The Ethics of Representation in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh* (University of Turku, Finland 2011): 1.

This historical point made by Ghosh in his withdrawal of name from the nomination for the competition of Commonweath prize speaks of his intention to take the readers beyond "the aesthetic of indifference" and inspire them to view the world with its history of violence, naked reality, and dirty politics. The march for a future of friendship and cooperation will be smoother only when the past will be studied in its entirety, including the positive and the negative stories.

Amitav Ghosh's Project of Syncretism[134]

Amitav Ghosh represents syncretism[135] as a potent antidote to the conflicts and divisions governing the globe. He contends that a syncretic society existed in the world before the partition initiated by "the enforcers of History" and the emergence of nation-states. The residues of that society still exist, albeit in dispersed forms. If they are given a model-form to be followed by the post-partition world, many of the burning conflicts besetting our time can reasonably be eschewed. The form has already been working through myriad processes of cultural negotiations in the wake of globalisation. The present efforts can be ennobled with the infusion of the ideas of past model which, as we know, was deliberately relegated by the colonial power for its policy of prolonging hegemony. Although syncretism can bring diverse groups of people into peaceful coexistence, their respective difference in faith and ideology remains well defined. Therefore, a more pragmatic approach will be to narrow the gap in the ideological and civilisational fault line, rather than to attempt to get rid of the gap forever. Ghosh holds this balanced and creative position in his effort towards promoting syncretism, although, sometimes, his approach to the issue appears to have shades of idealism and nostalgia.

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[134] I published an earlier version of this section as an article with the title "The Project of Syncretism in Amitav Ghosh: Utopian or Pragmatic?" in *A Research Journal* 19, Faculty of Arts, University of Rajshahi (Nov 2013): 31-51.

[135] The term "syncretism," as *Wickipedia* traces the roots of the word, derives from the Latin word "syncretismus" which is based on a Greek word meaning "Cretan federation." Plutarch first used the term in his essay "Fraternal Love" in *Moralia* with reference to the Cretans who compromised and reconciled their internal differences to form a political alliance when they faced any foreign threats. Erasmus first applied the term to the domain of theology in the sixteenth century to designate the blending of different theological opinions. In the seventeenth century the term acquired negative connotations when it, generally, meant an inconsistent mixture of diverse Christian denominations, and particularly the blending of European Christianity and the native theological elements of the colonised Africa. Now free of abuse, the term in social studies denotes unity in diversity through a synthesis of different cultures, creeds, and traditions.

In a world riddled with identity-related problems, people are often deeply divided in terms of religion, race, and region. This issue has given rise to opposing theories about the interface between cultures and civilizations; the future of the human kind, according to many contemporary thinkers, hinges on how ingenuously people take efforts to tackle this burning issue. To repair the fault line along religious borders, syncretism can stay not as "a transient stage" of healing in the process of cultural negotiations but as a permanent prop of a modern and essentially hybrid world where, in the words of Edward Said, "all cultures are involved in one another; none is simple and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic."[136] The tide of the intercultural influence is so irrepressible that even the postcolonial societies trying to resist western dominance cannot deny the reality of cultural hybridity. Amitav Ghosh launches a literary project of cultural negotiation through the articulation of syncretism in a world of divisions and distrust. As a strategy for survival in a strife-torn world, as we know, one must try to narrow the gap between "self" and "other" by giving more importance to commonalities than differences. Among possible remedies to heal the growing rupture among people of diverse ideological orientations a historically well - grounded syncretic view of human society can be the most useful one.

Given the tremendous importance of syncretic understanding of human society , the "imagination of Amitav Ghosh – that wrestles with an understanding of bi-culturism as it 'yokes by violence together' discrete and distant identities – is essential to our understanding of our history as it is being created."[137] While the dominant tendency in today's world is to foreground difference and individuality, Ghosh in his writing makes efforts to present a subliminal counter-image of human dividedness by using the history of human connectedness as a tool. As no identity is pure and inflexible in the modern hybrid world, Ghosh seems to uphold syncretic model of cultures and creeds as an alternative way to deal with the challenges of cultural confrontation and identity formation. The model partially exists in the present world and existed too in the past before partitioning began after the emergence of nation-states and because of western hegemonic history-making. One may well argue that the idea of a syncretic society has no inherent novelty since it has been in the thoughts of all social thinkers of all ages. But

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[136] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., xxv.
[137] Brinda Bose, op. cit.,15-16.

in Ghosh's literary rendition the model is given a new twist through historical analysis, ethnographic research, and the "precision" of his imagination. But when he presents the ideals of syncretism he does not appear to be an ivory-tower artist since he has not glossed over the inherent problems of translating them into reality.

Ghosh's second novel *The Shadow Lines* not only deals with hidden and barbed lines dividing people and their lands but also the possibility of repairing the rupture through the narratives of the past retold by the use of "imagination with precision" (SL 26). The novel anecdotally narrates an incident related to the Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar to show that a syncretic base of human society still exists, though in a limited space. The mosque is presented as a site of syncretism in the region since its holy relic, the "Mu-i-Mubarak," equally attracts Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists. [138] The narrator says: "This mosque became a great centre of pilgrimage and every year multitudes of people, Kashmiris of every kind, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, would flock to Hazratbal on those occasions when the relic was displayed to the public" (SL 247-248). This is one of the "proper stories" that should be chosen by the "precise" imagination to tackle the problem of communal disharmony the world is beset with.

Imagination produces new dimensions of understanding that counter a rigid world order shaped by coercive ideologies. Imagination involving stories allows people to cross their rigid ideological boundaries and feel what it is like to be in someone else's position to experiment with viewing the world as others do. About the importance and choice of stories the narrator's mentor-uncle Tridib says: "Everyone lives in a story…my grandmother, my father, *his* father, Lenin, Einstein, and lots of other names I hadn't heard of; they all lived in stories, because stories are all there are to live in, it was just a question of which one you chose…." (SL 201; the last ellipsis in the original). As the story of the Hazratbal mosque unfolds, temporarily the harmonious ambience of worship by cross-religious followers is disturbed due to the theft of the holy relic. Although the event of the temporarily missing relic triggers uncontrolled chain of communal violence for a considerable period of time in many parts of the Indian subcontinent, paradoxically, it brings "the various communities of Kashmir together in a collective display of mourning" (SL 249).

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[138] "Mu-i-Mubarak," an Arabic phrase meaning the sacred hair of blessing, is supposed to be the part of the beard of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon Him) although the orthodox Islamic scholars question the authenticity of the fact.

Similar expressions of communal sentiment on Kashmiri streets are repeated immediately after the restoration of the relic. The violence continues in other parts of the subcontinent; "[b]ut the city of Srinagar erupted with joy. People danced on the streets, there were innumerable thanksgiving meetings, and Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs marched together in demonstrations demanding that the conspirators be revealed" (SL 249). The violent reaction happening in other parts of the region is partially fanned by a colonially inherited sense of history that patronizes partition. But the Kashmiri reaction is an indication of human spontaneity in the expression of shared sentiments. The astonishment of various intellectuals observing this common expression speaks of the difference between official and objective views of inter-religious relationship. Regarding such astonishment Ghosh regrets the thinness of "our belief in the power of syncretic civilisations" (SL 249). Although the official version of history upholds the watertight partition among faiths, the human version proves the existence of the porous border among them. As the relic is equally venerated by followers of various religions in the region, it challenges the "Christian sense of the necessity of quarantine between doctrines" (SL 248). On the face of the disapproval by orthodox Muslims, the site has developed a kind of popular religion, a condition comparable to the status of many other Muslim shrines in India established by noted saints, as for example, the shrine of Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chisti, attended by cross-religious followers.

The tradition of practicing popular religion in India as exemplified above shows the close affinity between Muslim "Sufi" traditions and Hindu "Bhakti" cults. But this proximity loses much of its potential for generating syncretic energy as extremists of both religions, Islam and Hinduism, are hostile to these important traditions within their religions. In his essay titled "The Fundamentalist Challenge" Ghosh writes: "Muslim extremists in the Middle East are contemptuous of the traditional Sufi tariqas that have so long been a mainstay within popular Islam; the political leadership of the Hindu extremist movement treats traditional mendicants and ascetics as a source of embarrassment" (I&I 274). Although Ghosh considers only the Middle East as being involved in the debate on the relationship between popular Islam (Sufism) and doctrinal Islam, there is much heated debate on the issue in many parts of the Indian subcontinent including Bangladesh too. The opponents of "Sufi" Islam try to justify their position

from a strict theological perspective; but Ghosh finds a common ground behind the hostility to both "Sufi tariqas" and "Bhakti" cult: "this hostility has its roots in peculiarly bourgeois anxieties about respectability and rationality" (I&I 274).

The mode of Muslim reverence for the "Mu-i-Mubarak" at the Hazratbal mosque comes closer to Hindu practice in temples as gesture is made by some Muslims to the relic. As Muslims are essentially against idolatry, their overemphasising the importance of the relic by connecting its theft to their endangered identity appears to be paradoxical. As Ghosh puts it: "The [Muslim] religious authorities, usually so quick to condemn idolatry, declared that the theft was an attack upon the identity of Muslims" (SL 249). It indicates some kind of shared leanings at the unconscious level of people belonging to different faiths. Of course, Kashmir's climate of suspicion/violence, hinted at by Ghosh in *Countdown*, shows that the consideration of the Hazratbal site as a model of syncretism is not politically well grounded.[139] This, however, does not necessarily render Ghosh's stand on syncretism invalid or unrealistic. It only raises the point that Ghosh's view, as far as the incident at the Hazratbal mosque is concerned, cannot be uncritically accepted in its entirety. In the way of preserving some important historical experiences through writing fiction he has, to some extent, taken recourse to romanticization.

This emotional view of syncretic humanity is given a personal dimension in the depiction of the Kashmiri-Anglo-Indian poet Agha Shahid Ali in Ghosh's prose piece, " 'The Ghat of the Only World': Agha Shahid Ali in Brooklyn." Ghosh extols Shahid's inclusive and ecumenical religious outlook despite his apparently conservative Kashmiri upbringing. Once in his childhood Ali was sentimentally overcome by a strong desire to accommodate a small Hindu temple in his bedroom in Srinagar. He hesitantly shared the desire with his devout Muslim parents. To his utter surprise they responded to his desire with no less enthusiasm. They "brought him *murtis* and other accoutrements and for a while he was assiduous in conducting pujas at this [makeshift] shrine" (I&I 354). Ali tells this story as potent reply "[w]henever people talk to [him] about Muslim fanaticism" (I&I 354). According to Ghosh, this interesting real life story can teach an

[139] Amitav Ghosh visited the strife-torn site of Kashmir on a journalistic mission and as a member of the defence minister's entourage in the late nineties and has recounted his experience in the non-fictional work *Countdown.*

essential lesson to both Hindu and Muslim fanatics of the Indian subcontinent. Although this attraction for 'murtis" can be connected with the gesture made to the holy relic of the Hazratbal mosque, it is difficult to believe that this individual anecdote represents the general Muslim mindset of the Kashmir valley. This may be more a psychological case of atavistic tendency than a philosophical case of eclectic creed.

Although the tendency in a Muslim may surface at unguarded moments, the zealously guarded anti-idol frontiers of Islam may not be easily pushed back. And the case of Shahid Ali refers to his childhood whim which was fulfilled by the apparently indulgent parents. However, the syncretic force of the incident cannot be ruled out altogether as it is endorsed by the adult Shahid Ali living in a cosmopolitan American society and nurturing progressive-humanist ideology. In a similar vein Ghosh praises Akbar the Great in his prose piece, "Empire and Soul: A Review of the *Baburnama*," for incorporating different Indian religious traditions into the culture of his court. According to him, because he had a profound understanding of the Indian mind Akbar "synthesized various Muslim and Hindu traditions into a religion of his own devising, the *Din-i-Ilahi*, a creed that was, not unpredictably, centred on himself" (I&I 100). Although he was influenced by a number of powerful syncretic movements during the century preceding his accession to the throne launched by various religious reformers like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Namdeva, and Tukaram, his eclectic religious movement could not transcend political interest. It ended up as an ethical system rather than a newly coined creed, and triggered strong orthodox Muslim reactions. The adherents of the creed were very few, it included only one prominent Hindu disciple, and it did not survive Akbar.

Ghosh gives a global dimension of syncretism in his third (non-fictional) novel, *In an Antique Land,* through the instance of the historical blending of the Judaeo-Islamic cultural elements in some parts of ancient and modern Egypt, and through the story of the twelfth century Egyptian Jewish master Abraham Ben Yiju and his Indian slave Bomma. In their relationship intimate crossings between Judaism and Hinduism, Middle Eastern and Indian cultures took place. Ben Yiju married his female slave Ashu, a woman of Mangalore, outside his religion and class, and had two children with her, not because of love, but probably, out of a sense of the syncretic nature of human existence.

Ghosh says: "If I hesitate to call it love it is only because the (Geniza) documents offer no certain proof" (AL 230). In our time interfaith marriages do take place but they are considered to be, with a few exceptions, the result of love and reasons other than a syncretic view of human society. The twelfth century Egyptian and Indian societies seemed to be free from the strict religious rules in matters of social interaction and personal relationship.

But Ben Yiju's later decision to prevent his daughter's marriage to a foreigner seems to be a revision of his earlier view: "almost as though he were seeking to disown a part of his own past…[and] began to dream again of reaffirming his bonds with his family in the accepted fashion of the Middle East, by marrying her to her cousin" (AL 263). The "Geniza"[140] documents coming to Ghosh's rescue reveal that in twelfth century Jews, though "strongly aware of their distinctive religious identity," shared with Muslims the same greetings and invocation of the names of God in Arabic forms like "Allah," "inshâ'allâh, and alhamdul-illâh,"(AL 214). A similar example, at least at the surface level, appears in modern day interfaith exchanges of greetings. Sometimes in predominantly Muslim environments of the Indian subcontinent, minorities, including Hindus, use Muslim greetings and Muslim God's name while talking to Muslims. Conversely, in predominantly Hindu environments, minorities, including Muslims, sometimes use Hindu greetings and the names of Hindu deities while talking to Hindus. While exchanges of this type are generally a case of social interaction, the case of ancient Egypt was likely to bear a special sense of religious boundary crossings.

In modern-day Egypt, the tradition of the same mixture partially persists as is evident in the shrine of Sidi Abu-Hasira, a Jew turned a Muslim cabbalist mystic. As he seems to have broken the zealously guarded frontiers between faiths through his cabbalist philosophy, his "mowlid" (a popular festival celebrating the birthday of a

[140] "Geniza," as explained by Ghosh, is a Hebrew word from a Persian root, "ganj," which means storehouse and has become a common part of many place-names in the Indian subcontinent. Here it refers to a secret chamber in the synagogues where all types of correspondences, both personal and official, having the name of God on top were preserved in fear of accidental desecration, to be disposed of later with due ritual. Ghosh worked on the "Geniza" documents of the Synagogue of Ben Ezra in Cairo as part of his D.Phil research in ethnography under the University of Oxford. The novel *In an Antique Land* grew out of his research experiences related to the archival study of the "Geniza"documents and his field work stint in the rural Egypt. Abraham Ben Yiju and Bomma appeared in one of the personal letters found in the "Geniza" documents.

Muslim saint) is attended by many Muslims, Jews, and Christians of the region. Of course, the shrine as a metaphor for syncretism has some limitation also. The site's syncretic power may be questioned if we consider the non-religious intentions of many of the participants. That initiates another point: religious taking social turn in practice, thus contributing to the ethos of co-existence. It is evident, for example, in the attitude of the villagers when they urged Ghosh not to miss it: "The mowlid was a wonderful spectacle, I was told; there would be light everywhere, stalls with pistols and airguns, swings and carousels; the streets would be lined with kebab-shops and vendor's carts and thronged with crowds of sightseers. The tourists alone were a good reason to go, they said, it was not often that one got to see foreigners in a place like Damanhour" (AL 274). For many people the site is more a great source of recreation, sightseeing, and earning than a great marker of cross-religious sentiments.

Although we can treat it in Ghosh's own terms as a symbol of syncretism, the apparatus of the anti-syncretic forces contained within the site cannot be totally ignored. In his foray to the site of the shrine, Ghosh is arrested for his being an Indian with Hindu faith by a security man who appears to be a representative of the anti-syncretic forces. The man tells him: "But you're not Jewish or Israeli,....You're an Indian – what connection could you have with the tomb of a Jewish holy man, here in Egypt?" (AL 282). The security personnel's stance for considering Hindus as an anomaly in the fold of the Judaeo-Christian and Muslim theological triumvirate has resulted from "much success [of] the partitioning of the past" (AL 283). Ghosh explains the reason thus: "the remains of those small, indistinguishable, intertwined histories, Indian and Egyptian, Muslim and Jewish, Hindu and Muslim, had been partitioned long ago" (Al 283). The simultaneous attendance by Egyptian Muslims and Jews in "the mowlid of Sidi Abu-Hasira was an anomaly within the categories of knowledge represented by those divisions" (AL 283) and may be treated as a small but insightful defiance "of the enforcers" of divisions in the Eurocenreic historical scholarship that campaigns for a reductive identity for all.

The scattered models of interfaith exchanges like the site of Sidi Abu-Hasira cannot constitute powerful "redemptive narratives" to neutralize the massive effects of

the imperialist versions of "history as complicit in the communalist project" on the long tradition of the Judeo-Islamic cultural fabric. This failure along with the violence of the new Zionist discourse has turned the Middle-East into a physical as well as ideological battle-ground at present. Now, no one either from the communities involved in conflict or from the community of international intellectuals disputes the boundaries; rather they endorse them as a means of maintaining peace. Ghosh reveals in an interview that he would remain far behind in situating Arab Jewish history within a proper intellectual framework if he did not visit the Judeo-Islamic syncretic site in Egypt physically and study the Zeniza documents of Cairo for writing *In an Antique Land*. As the people of the Middle-East scorning the history of the region are not interested in the Geniza documents to discover their intertwined past, the Arab Jews consider their Arabness as an aberration, an anomaly.[141]

Ella Shohat in her article "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews" makes an elaborate analysis of the Eurocentric Zionist scholarship, the present status of the Arab Jews, and Arab nationalism. Her analysis of the nature of complexity of the existence of Arab Jews within Muslim space may supplement Ghosh's anecdotes about Muslim-Jew relation in Egypt. The Zionist version of the nation-state formed under a "rescue narrative," as we know, leads to dislocations of the Jews living in different Arab countries and also the fragmentations of the Palestinians. Grafting a nationalist discourse on the spiritual idea of Jewish renewal towards a ghettoized nationalist framework misdirects the mystically rooted Jew-Muslim relation in the Middle East through various transfer projects like transfer of Arab Jews to Israel and transfer of Palestinian Muslims to other Arab countries. As Israeli establishment, on the one hand, makes the Arab Jews redefine their identity on the basis of new ideological polarities, Arab nationalism, on the other hand, becoming a signifier of Muslim identity in a realignment of Ottoman definitions, forces the Jews uproot their Arabness. Consequently, they suffer from a terminological crisis to represent their core identity.[142]

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[141] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, op. cit., 219.

[142] Ella Shohat, "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews," *Social Text*, 75, 21.2 (Summer 2003): 49-74.

Ghosh considers the present condition of acute polarization on religious grounds tragic for the status of the Jews and destructive for the rich tradition of Judeo-Islamic Arab culture:

> Jewish history is profoundly tragic because it's a history that has been completely invented within the German academy in the nineteenth century. It comes out of German scholasticism, and out of a pressure to systematize history; it's essentially a Christianizing impulse. *More than two-thirds of the Geniza consists of magical documents and amulets, and none of that is ever dealt with. I think it's just regarded as non-Jewish. Similarly, all the Sufi stuff is traced back to a kind of proto-Jewish mysticism. I mean, the very fact of that interchange with Islam is completely disregarded*. Increasingly there are scholars working on this stuff. But Israel conceives of itself in such a Europeanizing way – basically that model of German scholasticism has become what Judaism is today. *You can just see today the erasure of what existed in the Middle Ages – of what that period represented.*[143]

Western scholasticism deliberately ignores the historical fact that Islam emerged as the latest addition to the Judaeo-Christian genealogical tree grown in the same ground having a common root and background narrative despite some core points of doctrinal differences. Because of the denial this affinity has become paradoxically the cause of conscious hatred, fuelled by the phobia of territorial encroachment.

Benazir Durdana has dealt with the nature of the conflict between Islam and Christianity very aptly from psycho-historical point of view in her work *Muslim India in Anglo-Indian Fiction*. She argues:

> Many Westerners have on occasion flirted with ancient, polytheistic religions out of curiosity or for spiritual challenge; however, the conceptual lines of demarcation being as prominent as they are between these faiths and Christianity, such ideological adventures have seldom resulted in deep spiritual crisis. Getting to know Islam, on the other hand, has caused extreme responses: conversion or moral repulsion.[144]

For the predominance of the latter emotion of repulsion, Professor Monier Williams, a western critic of Islam, even goes to the extreme position of giving Islam a "demon status," identifying the faith as "an illegitimate child of Judaism."[145] Edward Said,

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143 Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, op. cit., 219. Emphasis added.
144 Benazir Durdana, *Muslim India in Anglo-Indian Fiction* (Dhaka: writers ink, 2008): 157-158.
145 As qtd. by Durdana, op. cit.,157.

however, holds the lack of proper knowledge responsible for the development of "Islamophobia" in the West:

> How many people who use the labels ["the West" and "Islam"] angrily or assertively have a solid grip on all aspects of the Western tradition, or on Islamic jurisprudence, or on the actual languages of the Islamic world? Very few, obviously, but this does not prevent people from confidently characterizing "Islam and "the West," or from believing they know exactly what it is they are talking about.[146]

Said, moreover, considers the "enormous generalizations" about the West and Islam as having a long history of misunderstanding and therefore, they are capable of having adjustments in the continuous creative debates on the issue. To counter the "moral repulsion" between ideologies, the survival of syncretic sites like the shrine of Sidi Abu-Hasira can at once be a potential ground for defiance of the repressive forces of division and a means of soul searching and building counter-narratives of co-existence.

Along the same line of arguments Ghosh gives another instance of popular worship involving a Muslim name transformed into a Hindu spirit of worship, this time in the world of Bomma on the Malabar Coast of Mangalore in India. As a result of the Indian Ocean trade Hindu-Muslim exchanges took place on a regular basis in that region in the medieval period. In Mangalore, while searching for the trace of the memory of Bomma, Ghosh the researcher-novelist comes across one of the Bhuta shrines which represent a form of worship of the spirits of the dead. This form of worship has evolved over the years into a popular mystical religion called the Bhuta cult, different from Sanskritic Hindu Pantheism. The particular shrine visited by Ghosh is one of those shrines that were built by the Magavira community and were dedicated to the spirit deity Bobbariya. About the origin of this spirit deity Ghosh says: "the Magavira's links with the foreign merchants were commemorated in the traditional symbol of their distinctive identity – a deity known as the Bobbariya-bhuta, deemed by legend to be the spirit of a Muslim mariner and trader who died at sea" (AL 222). This Bhuta shrine is housed in a Hindu temple built, "at great expense, by community subscription" as part of their attempt at upward mobility to be merged with the mainstream Hindu community. To expedite the project they put the Brahmanical God Vishnu above the position of the spirit

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[146] Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam* (London: Vintage, 1997): 10.

of the Bobbariya-Bhuta in the temple whose "walls bore the posters of a fundamentalist Hindu political organization, an upper-caste group notorious for its anti-Muslim rhetoric" (AL 224). Gradually, the Bhuta spirit has been stripped of its legendary Muslim identity and is now treated as a Hindu deity.

Amitav Ghosh as an anthropological researcher becomes happy at the irony of the transformation of the Bhuta spirit. He says: "I had to struggle with myself to keep from applauding the ironies enshrined in the temple. The past had revenged itself on the present: it had slipped the spirit of an Arab Muslim trader past the watchful eyes of Hindu zealots and installed it within the Sanskrit pantheon" (AL 225). Of course, the Muslim identity of the Bhuta exists only at the folkloric level and does not have any link with the official version of the religion of the Muslims and therefore, does not express any strong case of syncretism. Still, from anthropological perspective, it does show the human tendency of acceptance of the deity of one community/faith by the other. The exchanges started in a remote medieval community of India and still appear in vestiges. What Ghosh says with regard to the existence of the shrine of Sidi Abu-Hasira in Damanhour of Egypt also applies to the context of the Bhuta-shrine in Mangalore of India: "It seemed uncanny that I have never known all those years that in defiance of the enforcers of History, a small remnant of Bomma's [syncretic] world had survived, not far from where I had been living" (AL 285). Again viewed from a different perspective, the total merging of the Bhuta-shrine with the Hindu temple may indicate an activity subversive of the spirit of syncretism. At one stage of his visit Ghosh observes: "It was not really a Bhuta-shrine any more, they explained proudly: it had become a real Hindu temple, and the main place in it was now reserved for Vishnu, the most Brahmanical of gods" (AL 224). The process of absorbing the Bhuta-spirit into the Hindu pantheon displays a hidden political agenda and the impact of the majority influence.

Ghosh has also explored the amalgamation of Hindu-Muslim elements at the folkloric level in *The Hungry Tide*. The novel probes into the fact that the enforcers of divisions could not penetrate isolated places like the Sundarbans islands of Lusibari and Morichjaphi where a kind of syncritic model exists through the legend of Bon Bibi (the Lady of the Forest), a deity protecting islanders irrespective of differences in castes and creeds. The cult of Bon Bibi narrated through the strange mixture of Bangla, Arabic, and

Persian words has been handed down through generations. The legend has the mode of mantra recitation at puja combined with Arabic invocations of God the Almighty. As the legend goes, Bon Bibi and her brother Shah Jongoli were born into a Sufi family of mendicant order in the holy city of Medina. They were ordained that they would travel a long distance to help humanity in distress: "When the twins came of age, the archangel [Gabriel] brought them word that they had been chosen for a divine mission: they were to travel from Arabia to the 'country of eighteen tides' – atthero bhatir desh – in order to make it fit for human habitation" (HT 103). With this divine assignment they, clothed in Sufi robes, set out for the mangrove islands of Bengal. Defeating the demon king Dokkhin Rai, Bon Bibi became the presiding deity of the Island.

Piya, having the idea of strict compartmentalization of faith in her western upbringing, was surprised to see the way Fakir and his son Tutul were praying or performing puja at the shrine of Bon Bibi:

> First they fetched some leaves and flowers and place them in front of the images. Then ... [they chanted] a refrain that occurred over and over again – it contained a word that sounded like 'Allah'. What Fakir was performing looked very much like her mother's Hindu pujas – and the words seemed to suggest otherwise. She (Piya) had not thought to speculate about Fakir's religion, but it occurred to her now that he might be Muslim. But no sooner had she thought this, than it struck her that a Muslim was hardly likely to pray to an image like this one. (HT 152)

The incantation contained in the legend rendered into English begins as "In Allah's name, I begin to pronounce the Word/ Of the whole universe, He is the Begetter the Lord/To all His disciples, He is full of mercy/Above the created world, who is there but He" (HT 246). The strange existence of the name of Muslim God "Allah" and the puja-mode of gestures indicate a transcultural mingling of Islamic and Hindu elements. The cultural syncretism of the legend of Bon Bibi also reflects the symbiosis of the land itself: "everything which existed was interconnected: the trees, the sky, the weather, people, poetry, science, nature" (HT 282).

This phenomenon of syncretism found in a smaller insulated island world defies the communal confrontations too often experienced by pre- and post-colonial India, the shadow of which engulfs the narrative in *The Shadow Lines*. This situation may clearly be treated as the outcome of a certain brand of Hindu-Muslim syncretism that can be

traced in different phases of pre-partition Indian history. The tide people nurture the brand as if they took revenge on their past as they were cruel victims of partitions in all respects. As they are denied a respectable identity being stamped as Dalits, they find themselves in an ideological vacuum to be filled in by cross-fertilization of multi-creeds. They come upon the ideal ground envisioned by Sir Daniel Hamilton[147] for the flourishment of an egalitarian society where people "could not bring all their petty little divisions and differences. Here there would be no Brahmins or Untouchables, no Bengalis and no Oriyas. Everyone would have to live and work together" (HT 51). The islanders have the sad experience of moving from one place to another in search of home. Their apparent rootlessness and freedom from the strict compartmentalizing tendency of the modern society make them embrace the cult of Bon Bibi.

Ghosh's syncretic view of human society bears the influence of many writers and philosophers from home and abroad. One distinct influence is Rabindranath Tagore's vision of global human identity reflected in his major writings and especially in *Home and the World*, *Four Chapters*, *Gora*, and letters and speeches. In his prose writings and interviews Amitav Ghosh mentions various Bengali figures influencing his artistic mind and philosophy. Tagore has a prominent place in the list of influences according to his confession: "Tagore is an obvious literary influence... [who] has in some important respect formed my way of looking at things."[148] Tagore envisions a world where human beings will be more bound by significant commonalities rather than being scattered by narrow ideologies. His understanding of the human race, living symbiotically and synergistically, has a spiritual basis of oneness of all human beings stemming from the "One." He believed that "inclusivism and synergic interaction between cultures would propel the world towards harmony and global fellowship, through the appropriation of *Santam* [the true peace], *Sivam* [the true goodness], and *Advaitam* [the true love], principles he borrowed from the *Upanishads*." [149]

The three-fold ideology of Tagore reminds one of T.S. Eliot's three-fold ideology of "Datta" (give), "Dayadham", and "Damyata" (control), taken from the *Upanishads* to solve

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[147] Sir Daniel Mackinnon Hamilton, a Scotsman, purchased ten thousand acres of the tide country from the British Government in 1903 to establish a new society based on cooperatives where everyone would be owner of the land . He started the project but died leaving the project unfinished.

[148] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, op. cit., 216.

[149] M.A.Quayum, "Empire and Nation: Political Ideas in Rabindranath Tagore's Travel Writings," *South Asian Review* XXVI.2 (2005): 1-20; 2.

the problem of spiritual barrenness of humanity irrespective of time, place, and creed in *The Waste Land*. Eliot here implicitly suggests a kind of syncretic remedy prepared out of the essence of Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, all aiming at obtaining peace and cohesion through charity, sympathy, and self-control. Ghosh's notion of syncretism has also Kantian roots. Immanuel Kant rejects the idea of religious difference as spurious argument: "Difference of religion – a singular expression! It is precisely as if one spoke of different moralities."[150] He conceives of religions not as discrete categories of values, beliefs, affiliations, and communities but as a universal human phenomenon. He adds: "There may be different religious texts (Zendavesta, the Veda, the Koran, etc.), but such differences do not exist in religion, there being only one religion valid for all men in all ages."[151] Thus religious differences are rejected by Kant as epistemological accidents devoid of any reflections of essentialism. But Ghosh has outgrown the influences he comes across to establish a distinct brand of syncretism of his own.

While Ghosh's humanist articulation of the world based on syncretism has been appreciated by many, it has also been seen as questionable by some critics. They are not convinced that syncretism has the potential of being a viable model for getting rid of sectarian conflict. They think that Ghosh, being too idealistic in his syncretic vision of human society, overestimates the willingness of human beings to show any actual interest in the creeds of "others." Taking a negative view of human nature they claim "that the history of social contracts shows…that people are very good at hurting one another and very bad at the kinds of 'generous imaginings' that connect rather than divide."[152] It is argued that Ghosh's concept of broader humanity accommodating inter-communal identities has not taken into consideration the strength and complexity of competing communal groups and their distinct ideologies. In the process of building broader humanity out of shared traits and tendencies, to quote Gauri Viswanathan, "the formative energy of identity and community gradually dissipates and is replaced by frozen icons of communal solidarity."[153]

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[150] Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* 54, Trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Liberal Arts, 1957): 31.

[151] Ibid., 31.

[152] Alice Brittan, "The Return of imagination," *Contemporary Literature* 53.3 (2012): 573-584; 574-575. Brittan here expresses the view of Elaine Scarry in "The Difficulty of Imagining Other People," *For Love of Country*. Elaine explains a vicious cycle of imagination's inability to leap into the fold of others. This concept can be connected with the arguments against Ghosh's notion of syncretism.

[153] Gauri Viswanathan, "Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge," *Stanford Humanities Review* 5.1 (1996): 19-34; 25. <http://www.stanford.edu.group/SHR/5-1/text/ viswa nath an.html>.

Comparing Ghosh's narrative voice for syncretism with Mathew Arnold's concept of culture Professor Gauri suggests that both are following the way of tackling the difference only by proposing a means to suppress it by a totalizing and homogenizing whole. She argues thus:

> As Arnold's ideal culture effaces class differences, so *Ghosh's syncretism denies the historical reality of religious difference*. That is why no matter how moving Ghosh's book might be, and no matter how appealing his humanist call for dissolving barriers between nations, peoples, and communities on the grounds that world civilizations were syncretic long before the divisions introduced by the territorial boundaries of nation-states, *the work cannot go beyond nostalgia to offer ways of dealing with what is, after all, an intractable political problem.*[154]

I, however, would contend that Gauri Viswanathan along with a few other critics has taken Ghosh's syncretic view of the world too critically. It is, in fact, a creative approach to multiculturalism where assimilation and distinction, unity and diversity, remain paradoxically together without affecting the essential characteristics of each other. Here, to quote Charles Stewart, "one might almost contemplate adopting the vocabulary of chemistry, where compounds, mixtures, and colloids are all objectively distinguishable."[155]

Ghosh cites the examples of many merchants of India and Egypt in the twelfth century when "people developed much more sophisticated language of cultural negotiation than we know today. They were able to include different cultures in their lives, while maintaining what was distinct about themselves."[156] Taking essential differences for granted, a common space can be created to hold constant dialogues between "self" and "other" leading to an apparently paradoxical coexistence of unity and diversity through nurturing creative balance. This creative mode of tackling the apparently "intractable political problem" of difference can neutralise the damaging effects of "the partitioning of the past" and the dangers of the much talked of civilizational clashes. While advancing the cause of syncretism Ghosh himself is not entirely free from the promptings of despair with regard to the total success of the project

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[154] Ibid., 20. Emphasis added.

[155] Charles Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture," *Diacritics*, 29.3 (Fall 1999): 40-62, 58. I am much indebted to this article in my dealing with the issue presented here. <http:/muse.jhu.edu/journals/dia/summary/v029.3stewart.html>.

[156] Amitav Ghosh, "Lessons from the 12th Century," Interview with Gretchen Luchsinger, *Newsweek* (Dec 1993): 52.

because currently the spiritual basis of religion, according to him, has given place to political and sociological ideologies. He gives voice to this doubt at the end of his essay, "The Fundamentalist Challenge":

> It is tempting to say no, that 'real' Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, and Muslims continue to hold on other values. Yet if it appears that the majority of the followers of a religion now profess ideas that are, as I have said, essentially political or sociological, then we must be prepared to accept that this is in fact what religion signifies in our time. (I&I 288)

He concludes the essay with an intimation of the direction the world might take:"I, for one, have swum too long in pre-postmodernist currents to accept that some part of the effort that human culture has so long invested in matters of the spirit will not, some how, survive" (I&I 288).

Therefore, it would be substantially misreading to posit that Amitav Ghosh is purely utopian in his delineation of syncretism. As a postmodern writer he only experiments with the possibility of retrieving the past model of syncretic society, rather than stipulating a definitive stand. Knowing full well that religion and culture are too complex and subjective phenomena to be objectively tamed by any subtle vocabulary, he, to use Linda Hutcheon's words defining the nature of a postmodern text, "tries to problematize and thereby, make us question."[157] The positive examples of syncretism from both the past and present are few and far between. On the other hand, the examples of conflicts along the lines of creeds and ideologies are numerous. History has both the "myth" of "interfaith utopia" and the dystopian "countermyth" of conflicts and persecutions.[158] What appears to be the symbol of syncretism may, in fact, be invisibly infected with anti-syncretic tendencies. The idea of syncretism is also applied by some people negatively with the application of force and a hidden agenda as some extremists, in the name of advocating syncretism, go to the extent of encroaching on other's territories.

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[157] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction (*New York: Routledge, 1988): 231.

[158] See Gaurav Desai, "Old World Orders: Amitav Ghosh and the Writing of Nostalgia," *Representations*, 85.1(Winter 2004):125-148; 132. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/ 10.1525/rep. 2004. 85.1125>.

Given the the reality of using the idea of syncretism for negative purposes, I contend that Gauri Viswanathan is right when she points out that

> The mercurial connotations of syncretism encode a set of relativised, partial, and often conflicting perspectives: *what Hindus would call syncretic coexistence of religious faiths* when they refer to "the Hindu way of life" *might be termed "forced assimilation" by Muslims*….[Therefore,] the use of the word syncretism effaces not only the aspect of domination but also the specific position from which certain interests are advanced, presumably in the name of a larger community of universal brotherhood.[159]

Just to cite an example of "forced assimilation," some ultra-Hindu nationalists tried to justify, in the name of syncretism, the demolition of the Historical Babri Mosque; perhaps they thought that Hinduism as a philosophy encompasses the faith (Islam) of their fellow Indian citizens. Or the Bosnian Muslims were forced to bear the identity markers of Serbs or Croats as they, in some opinions, had been Serbs or Croats before being converted to Islam foolishly or under coercion during the period of the Ottoman Empire.[160] Syncretism per se is productive, but it turns counterproductive when applied indiscriminately and under coercion.

In his exploration of syncretism Ghosh, no doubt, has succumbed to the seductions of romanticization and idealism to some extent. This could be because his emancipatory worldview is anxiety-driven and value-loaded. In his delineation of the Kashmiri instance of syncretism he has relied on the old national dailies which had the chance of giving the events a deliberate secular slant as required by the state for practical reasons. Nevertheless, even a utopian stance in the context of Ghosh's writing can act as a positive force to fight sectarian elements. Professor S. Ray aptly makes the point in his definition of utopia: "A utopia by definition is no where; it exists only in human imagination; but since it is conceived as a desirable alternative to the social order that exists, it is both a critique of that order, and an incentive to change that order. This is what makes utopianism, a dynamic force in human history."[161] In his advocacy of syncretism Ghosh has not taken any unqualified utopian project to rescue the partition-ridden world from falling apart. The Amitavian take on the issue seems to be centred on

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[159] Gauri Viswanathan, op. cit., 31. Emphasis added.

[160] See Charles Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture," *Diacritics*, 29.3 (Fall 1999):40-62; 54. <http:/muse.jhu.edu/journals/dia/summary/v029.3stewart.html>.

[161] S. Ray, *A New Renaissance* (Calcutta: Minerva, 1998):101.

its insistence on the possibility of permeability between utopian and dystopian worlds. And surely a continuous creative effort towards a balance between the two is most urgently required for the peaceful coexistence of all in a pluralistic world. As Edward Said puts it, only if we make a determined effort "to make a new kind of history based on politics of integration and inclusion, we can carry the day. *It is slow, hard work, but it is doable* and, I think, achievable in the best sense."[162]

Syncretism in Ghosh's ouvre appears as an antidote to divisions created either by the enforcers of the partitionist history or by the exponents of ultra-nationalism. The concept of national identity in the Indian subcontinent does not match with its often unexplored or overlooked history of the syncretic culture. The historically proved potentiality of syncretic identity in this part of the world naturally challenges the idea of nurturing "shadow lines" that rise in the wake of drawing boundaries by the nation-states. Colonial rule from the beginning had started suppressing the elements of syncretism for vested interests and in its withdrawal from the region it left behind the boundaries of nation-states which, contrary to the expected result, further the idea of communalism in the subcontinental reality. In the new situation people run after the immediate dividend of discrete identities without taking into notice the reality predating the empire. That still the preimperial syncretic reality persists in shreds in different parts of the map is overlooked by the post-independence nationalist leaders. Syncretism can also be considered as an alternative founding philosophy to the state or nationalist version of secularism that miserably fails to stop communal riots. However, it is also argued that the state version of secularism to some extent adopts the history and idea of syncretism as ideological supports to accommodate diverse identities under the umbrella of national identity. Therefore, the relationship between syncretism and the state version of secularism is at once oppositional and complementary.

Self-Reflexivity and Historiographic Metafictionality

As may be required to give adequate treatment to the issue of identity and history Ghosh canon is expansive, inclusive, and varied enough to qualify for several sub-genres – historical novel, fantasy, thriller, magic realist, political allegory, science fiction,

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[162] Edward Said, "Making History: Constructing Reality," *The End of Peace Process: Oslo and After* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003): 244-248; 248. Said makes the statement in the context of the Israel-Palestine peace process. Emphasis added.

autobiography, travelogue, and so on. Since his locales and styles are "distinctive and singular, while being at the same time closely enmeshed...in an intricate network of differences" (AL 200), many of his writings defy strict categorization – a distinct trait of postmodernism in him. Broadly speaking, the common categorization of his novels in relation to history and the novelist's involvement in the representation of it can be hitoriographic metafiction. It is a postmodern approach to writing a kind of fiction that contains fiction within the fiction itself and where fiction critiques its own nature of fictionality. As Meenu Gupta puts it: "Historiographical metafiction works, then, are novels that feature self-reflexivity and concern with history.... [They] are novels that are intensely self-reflexive but that also reintroduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the question of historical knowledge."[163]

Many of Ghosh novels not only open the possibility of an alternative approach to the evaluation of some chapters of history but also make the author step into the narrative to question the nature of historical truth and the role of the narrator. The presence of the novelist in this narrative role is easy to detect in *The Shadow Lines* through the character of the child narrator, in *In an Antique Land* through the direct participation of the novelist as a researcher in the story, and in *The Hungry Tide* through the character of the translator Kanai who is involved in translation in the literal sense as well as in the metaphoric sense of re-creating the world in artistic production. In some other novels the narrators or some key characters bear the biographical traits and ideological views of the novelist. As a result, in many cases the novelist is perceived by readers as impersonating the narrator or any other important character and thus his narratives reveal self-reflexivity in postmodernist terminology. Although Ghosh denies following any particular theoretical schools in writing fiction, his novels show alignment with many postcolonial and postmodern tendencies. Through the authorial intervention he reveals the problematic relationship between the real past and the seeming past; he tends to question the credibility of the interpretation of history which is found prone more to the expression of subjective interpretations rather than the objective.

Epilogue

To wind up this chapter on the Ghosh oeuvre, it has been evident that the novels, prose pieces, articles, and interviews of Ghosh extensively explore the issues/concepts which are encapsulated by the concepts of history and identity. His writings show an

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[163] Meenu Gupta, *Salman Rushdie: Re-telling History Through Fiction* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2009): 16.

aesthetic engagement with the issues related to the politics and paradox of identities as they connect to the question of historiography and the discourses of nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. What Ghosh narrativizes in fiction is sometimes commented upon by himself or appended with direct authorial insights in his prose pieces, personal essays, researched articles, and interviews. Retrieval of lost chapters or exploration of the twilight zone of histories, projection of syncretic view of human society and identity, envisioning a post-nationalist world-order based on the pluralistic view of humanity, minimizing the evils of globalization and maximizing its benefits in terms of better human relationship, and looking at the East-West interface not in the binaristic terms – all appear as interrelated issues in Ghosh's writing. Often he fictionalizes the lived world of the past to trace the evolution of human society up to the present with its diverse problems and attempted solutions. History in his narration projects both identity related violence and peaceful coexistence, the former predominating the latter**.** He has spinned his tales out of the fragments of history he comes across and accumulates in his archival study, field research, and extensive travels. For his tendency to deal with the issues troubling the past and present his "stories," to quote from Pamuk's *Black Book*, "were as real as the lives they described" (BB 301). His fiction combines commentary on the past and vision for the present, depending heavily on a research-based sociological-anthropological perspective in fiction writing.

Chapter Three
"Speaking to All Humanity": Reading Orhan Pamuk

> My father always said we should pay close attention to the gestures that make us who we are…a nation could change its way of life, its history, its technology, its art, literature, and culture, but it would never have a real chance to change its gestures. (BB 62)

A Glimpse into the Tradition of the Turkish Novel

As estimated by world literary critics and reviewers, Orhan Pamuk, on the basis of his English translated texts, can significantly be placed in the canon of world literature. Still, comparing Pamuk with writers of world literature without sufficient glimpse of the Turkish novelistic tradition may create scopes for misreading of his work. Most Turkish novelists preceding Pamuk like Ziya Gökalp, Kemal Tahir, Orhan Kemal, Aziz Nesin, H. E. Adivar, Peyami Safa, Y. K. Karaosmanoglu, Ahmet Agaoglu, Fuat Koprulu, and Yusuf Ackura were nationalist writers. These novelists mainly project one current in the social ramifications, that is, the emergence of a secular Turkish national identity cleansed of the Ottoman legacy and based on the western modernism and Enlightenment ideals. Even before this generation of writers started writing, Turkish novel had been basically concerned with depicting Islamic traditions of living and the bucolic Anatolia. It is with Ahmed Hamdi Tanpiner (1901-62) and Yashar Kemal (1922-2015) that the first significant departure was initiated.

Tanpinar as a culturally astute writer first ever in the history of Turkish literature articulates a core narrative of Turkey in transition from empire to republic, that is, from Ottoman/Islamic past to secular present/future. Another major departure from this generation is Yashar Kemal, a novelist of Kurdish descent nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1973, who depicts the voice of the dispossesed, the bucolic Turkish life, and also the modernist issues like a people's uneasiness to be poised between tradition and modernity, between a world struggling to be born and a world not dead enough to give place for the new. His protagonists, while primarily entangled in the dramatization of the universal themes like family, livelihood, suffering, and death, show struggles to adjust themselves to a fast changing world. Exploiting his country's rich tradition of foklore and creating legends out of his own experiences in the rural Anatolia Kemal, the

Kurdish author, creates a fictional dreamland named Cukurova, comparable to Gabriel Garcia Márquez's magical village called Macondo.

Contextualizing Orhan Pamuk

Pamuk is considered the greatest novelist in Turkish literature only next to Ahmed Hamdi Tanpiner and Yashar Kemal whom he generously recognises and extensively refers to in his writings. Orhan Pamuk starts, in a sense, from the unfinished project of Tanpinar in faithfully delineating the transitional cultural currents of his country. And similar to Kemal's concentration on a fictional dreamland, Pamuk's fictional lens traversing different locales of Turkey and specifically of the city of Istanbul zooms in on a semi-literary museum in Çukurcuma, a neighbourhood in Istanbul. The museum displays the gist of the narratives so far created in a contracted spatio-temporal form. His emerging as a literary icon in Turkey has been intertwined with the political and cultural evolution of the country. He started writing in the middle of the Turkish second Republic that stretched between the military coups of the 1960 and 1980 but he emerged as a ground breaking novelist of Turkey in the nineteen eighties in the wake of the major military coup in the year of 1980 that marked the starting of the third Republic in Turkish political history.

While the second Republic marked a period of serious political unrest and social problems, the third ushered in fresh ideas of transition from leftist-socialist to neo-liberalist worldview leading to the possibility of establishing Turkey's ties with wider global political and military networks.[164] As a Turkish writer of the post-coup generation Pamuk gets a socio-political condition favourable for attempting to project in literature a synthesis that has been underway in the society. The major trend of the time was to combine the Ottoman legacy and visions of progress and modernity in a new socio-political ambience as a significant portion of the populace did no longer consider the Ottoman legacy a potential threat to building modern identity of Turkey. The social urge for revival of Ottoman history and culture which may be called neo-Ottomanism offers him a writing space contingent on different unreconciled contextual frames including secular nationalism, Islamism, European modernist idiom and the Ottomanesque language, among others. Consequently his narratives bring to the fore the challenges the Turkish official (Kemalist) version of national identity faces.

[164] See Erdağ Göknar, "Orhan Pamuk and the 'Ottoman' Theme," *World Literature Today* 80.6 (2006): 34-38.

In writing novels in the complex cultural milieu Pamuk has to synthesize internal and external socio-political factors and literary influences. As the tradition of Turkish novel bears the heavy mark of French influence, Pamuk owes much to French novelists for his sense of modernism. Proust is an obvious influence in this regard. He also recognizes the influences of other traditions from Borges and Marquez to Mann, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Navokov on more than one occasion. Caught between oppositional currents, the nostalgia for the Ottoman cultural past and anxiety for the future of Turkish nationalism, his characters struggle to live out the question "To be, or not to be oneself" as they bear the burden of the Ottoman past, experience the psychological effect of the Kemalist cultural revolution of 1920s, and suffer from the sense of alienation from the West. He attempts to arrive at a composite worldview where the apparently contradictory ideals – eastern and western, traditional and modern, Istanbulite and Anatolian, Islamic and secular – may smoothly feed the identity of his characters.

Although at the initial stage of his writing career he has to tread on the path of his predecessors Tanpinar and Kemal, Pamuk has, with the writing of his third novel, surpassed his predecessors to break for himself a distinct ground that ultimately wins him the recognition of being the first Turkish novelist to have picked up the international idiom of writing, and hence he has become the most (English) translated novelist of his country. He has also earned additional credit in the tradition of Turkish novel by successfully projecting Turkish, purged of Arabic and Persian influences, as a literary language in his writings. He gives a new twist to the traditional historical novel writing in his country by introducing the themes of modern identity anguish and cultural conflict, by mixing memory of a glorious past and desire for a respectable present, and by questioning fictionality of historicity. In a word he has happily tailored Turkish themes to the postmodern style borrowed from the West. Although he writes in his native tongue ironically he has attracted more readerships from abroad than at home.

Despite accusation from some quarters for his exploitation and twisting of Turkish traditional and Islamic themes to win the sympathy and recognition of the West, translation of his major texts into more than fifty six languages and correspondingly quick sale of their copies in Europe and America, and even in the Indian subcontinent

testify to his universal craft and quality. The novelist categorically reveals his awareness of the growing global readership for his novels in an interview and that is why, as I have already mentioned, he generously gives his time and toil in the process of colaborating and endorsing the English translators of his books (OC 376). Keeping in view his growing global readership he astutely denies to have written in any tradition in the parochial sense. When asked in an interview whether he belongs to the tradition of Turkish literature or “Muslim fiction” he answers: “I am only working in the tradition of the [world] novel. I’m interested in the novelty, the recent experiments, the whole history of my craft.”[165]Despite his categorical claim to have written in the international idiom a comprehensive criticism of Pamuk should first take into consideration his native context and then locate him in the international canon.

The unique position of Turkey straddling Europe and Asia, oscillating between Ottoman-Islamic legacy and the twentieth century westernization drive, and becoming a Muslim majority nation with comparatively weaker economy in Europe is well known. This country deserves special attention in the study of the socio-cultural reality of the Muslim world as it was a centre of the Muslim Ummah (a pan-Islamic Muslim nation in the abstract sense) and now aspiring to join the European Union even by trying desperately to meet the ever increasing benchmark for entry. The country’s challenges as well as achievements in synthesising western secular values and Islamic culture provide positive models for other Muslim majority nations. In a word, understanding Turkey, as many political thinkers of both the East and the West would agree, can be an important window to view the intricacy of the Muslim political history and the present status of identity of people living in the Crescentdom. And Orhan Pamuk, through his literary-cultural texts, opens up the window to the outsiders to view the Turkish society which is successfully struggling to go ahead despite conflicting social impulses. Although Pamuk primarily stands apart as a writer for his literary excellence, his distinctive thematic concerns, his dissidence status created out of his writing against the state endorsed view of national identity, and the unique global geopolitical context of the country from which he writes play an important role in makeing him a popular, widely debated, and, sometimes, controversial figure in the contemporary world literature.

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[165] Orhan Pamuk, “Implementing Disform,” Interview with Z. Esra Mirze,” *PMLA* 123.1 (Jan 2008):176-180; 177.

Starting with the experimental family sagas like *The Cevdet Bey and His Sons* and *Silent House* Orhan Pamuk fixes on writing the kind of novels that cover history, culture, and identity related to his native city and country over a period of time ranging from the Ottoman period to the republican era with a view to examining the anguish and politics of modern Turkish identity in the land's broader historical context as well as in a global ambience. The country in the changing scene of apparent Europeanization prepares ground for such a literay projection since the early Turkish novels have by and large presented the issues from a narrow perspective and their principal concern has been the presentation of Turkish rural life and tradition. Pamuk in the tradition of Turkish novel has made significant efforts to explore and present an alternative or revisionist way of telling the history and problem of his country, but "not doing this as a life project" or "a Grand Project," to deal with the present questions of culture, religion, and identity.[166] Through his writings, as indicated in his "The Nobel Lecture," he plans to "dig a well with a needle," a well of problems and potentialities of his nation in particular and of the world in general (OC 407). His writings evince the potentiality of giving answer to questions related to young and old Turks and eastern-western approaches to Turkology and Turkification. In addressing the issue of misconceptions on the part of the western or external people about Turkey he can be compared with Edward Said for the latter's intellectual campaign for the authentic projection of the Orient.

While writing on his people who have to live in the shadow of identity anxiety Pamuk has to draw hugely upon the backgrounds and materials from his country's history that spans from the Ottoman phase to the early Republican era and show how their past feeds and qualifies their present. From his unique spatio-temporal fictional setting which entails a complex history of power and cultural transitions he narrativises issues related to the ambivalent condition of his country's identity which leads to the condition of East-West entanglements. Although rooted in Istanbul and concerned with exploring his own self and identity of his native people, he ultimately transcends national boundaries through his writerly "travelling in the West" (AL 193) and "speaking to all humanity" (*Snow* 277). Although the physical settings of his novels are fixed to various locales of Istanbul and Anatolia, the cultural component goes beyond Turkish territories,

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[166] Orhan Pamuk,"A Bit of Irresponsible Reading: Five Questions with Orhan Pamuk," Interview with Ahmet Karamustafa, op. cit.

to Persia, Central Asia, and some European cities like Paris, Frankfurt, and Venice. Root searching and troubles in adjusting to the changing demands of time, the basic engagements of the modern world literature, thus find a new dimension of representation in the work of Pamuk, as we can easily approach him in English Translation mostly done by Maureen Freely, in the context of a non-cololnized country with the legacy of ruling a significant part of the globe. The western postmodern style of story telling is creatively picked up and used in his fictional and semi fictional works to present the pressing issues of modern world related to historiography, nationalism, culture, and identity, taking Turkey only as a case in point.

Behind the representation of these wide-ranging and much debated issues around identity lies the cosmopolitan imagination of a writer like Pamuk engaged in the fictional rendition of the history of a world at the micro as well as macro levels, and thus he comes to address the "worldly" issues from multiple fictional perspectives for objective evaluation. In most of his novels he uses the Ottoman history and the contemporary history of modernizing his country with their violence, prejudice, and of course authenticity to craft for himself a wider critical perspective on the present world order riddled with the binary of "self" and "other," ruler and the ruled, conflict of faith and (ultra) secularism, colliding forces of ultra-nationlism and global human identity, traditionalism and modernism, and so on. In his evaluation of the Ottoman past with its glory and inherent decay he re-analyses the Orientalist discourses towards better understanding of the nationalist themes/crises. His project is not aimed at creating or visualizing an exotic world of the past with a view to glorifying or criticizing it but to arrive at a vantage perspective only to read and understand a present that is aggressively engaged with the question as to how far a people can have peace or quarrel with its past in the way of its forming a prestigious identity in the present. It seeks to see whether a people can go forward without objective appraisal of their history to know about their cultural roots as well as to learn from the mistakes of the predecessors.

Pamuk's Fictional Poetics

Pamuk, like Ghosh, holds a very high view of novel as a meta-genre, its generic promiscuity and elasticity being its main source of strength. In his practice he has proved how novel can easily fashion itself out of diverse literary and extraliterary discourses like

letters, newspaper columns, historical documents, autobiographies, anthropological objects, museum collections, visual art, photography, drama, and poetry. He puts to practice what Mikhail Bakhtin calls the polyphonic novel. To him a novel in its power of giving pleasure and accommodating past details in addition to that of the present evinces museum-like quality. Just as people go to a museum to get pleasure by viewing their past life, they read novels to get "facets of their actual life – the bus stop at the end of their street, the newspaper they read, the film they love, the view of the evening sun they see from their window, the tea they drink, the posters and advertisements they see…." (NSN 135-136). He also illustrates in his novels close links between novel genre and art of painting as words have the power of mobilizing readers' imagination to view past and present with their panoramas, pictures, and paintings. For him a novel can vividly recapture the past through evocative words and nostalgic characters. In this connection we can mention his novel entitled *My Name is Red* "where not only the protagonist but also the colors and objects have voices and speak aloud, [where the author] felt that [he] was entering a different world – a world [he] wanted to describe and reconstruct via painting" (NSN 100). In this novel he has elaborately described the 16th century old buildings he has seen and old paintings he has found in the books and archives of Topkapi Palace in Istanbul so that readers can relive the past with adequate vividness with the help of the representative visual details.

To define his distinct descriptic technique in novels Pamuk likes to use the Greek word "ekphrasis" meaning "verbal reproduction" of a past thing for the benefit of the readers who cannot witness it through their physical eyes but can visualize it better through the eyes of mind when the author using nice turn of phrase puts it in evocative words (NSN 101). As for example of "ekphrasis" he has refered to Auden's description of the shield of Achilles "The Shield of Achilles." Like Henry James who likes to call the narrator of his novels a painter and Proust who says "My novel is a picture," Pamuk believes that the urge for writing novels is largely mobilized by a strong desire "to express visual things with words" (NSN 102, 112). Therefore, Pamuk's youthful desire to become a master of painting, for which he claims to have "a far greater and a more natural talent," finds an alternative space of fulfillment in painting with words in novels. The canvas of this word painting consists of panoramas and pictures of past and present along with that of the imagined. In a word Pamuk's high theory of novel gives much emphasis on the genre's weakness for historicity as well as its affinity with painting.

Pamuk also harbours very high notion of the target readership of novels as has been expressed in the essay "Who Do You Write For?". As the rise of the novel coincided with the rise of the nation-state, it was considered in the past as a national art discussing matters of national importance for an emerging middle class. But today with novels' gaining the status of high art novelists do not confine target readership within the middle classes of their countries. They write more for readers of all over the world than for their national readers. To Pamuk the world readers are "literary readers" who enjoy reading "literary novels." This awareness also distinguishes him from many of his previous generation of Turkish writers who inclined to write on history and nationalism from the nationalist perspective without adequately exploring the national crises and "the black marks in their history" (OC 243). Attempting to write on history and nationalism from a non-nationalist perspective Pamuk does not hesitate to break a number of "national taboos" like pluralism, multiculturalism, military, religion, and sex. Fo his daunting project he incurs suspicion of certain quarters but his art gains in authenticity as well as elasticity.

Postmodern Distrust of Conventional Historiography

The intriguingly added preface to *The White Castle* expresses Pamuk's take on the politics of historical construction, his postmodern distrust of conventional historiography, and his recourse to fictional rescue of history. The preface linking the novel's seventeenth century Ottoman plot to the novelist's twentieth century Turkey torn with conflicts shows the presentness of the past as the past, to use the words of Elisabeth Wesseling in *Writing History as a Prophet*, "may also be set in the present whose shape has been determined by an alternate course of historical events."[167] This process indicates the novel's metahistorical nature. The writer of the preface, who is the other way manifestation of the implied author, is the historian Faruk Darvinoglu who is one of the history professors who were forced by the authoritarian regime to withdraw from the university. He takes shelter in Gebze where he rescues a seventeenth century manuscript, with the eye-catching calligraphic title "The Quiltmaker's Stepson," from a forgotten "archive" attached to the governor's office. It happens to be an autobiographical narrative of a Venetian captive living in Istanbul in the seventeenth century.

[167] Elisabeth Wesseling, *Writing History as a Prophet:Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1991): 100.

Becoming astonished by the narrative's "fundamental relevance to [his] contemporary realities, how through this tale [he has] come to understand [his] own time, etc," the historian ignores its historial time-setting. He sets out to consult sources available at hand to know about the author of the manuscript in a desperate bid to publish it after separating the manuscript's factual and fictional parts. Finding some discrepancy in the names and events used in the narrative he concludes "that the author, who clearly enjoyed reading and fantasizing, may have been familiar with [many] sources and a great many other books – such as the memoirs of European travelers or emancipated slaves – and gleaned material for his story from them" (WC 2). Out of strong distrust of history he decides "to concentrate on the story for its own sake, rather than on the manuscript's scientific, cultural, anthropological, or 'historical' value" (WC 1). Given the fact that the manuscript is written in the Ottoman script unaccessible to the modern Turks as a consequence of the Kemalist alphabet reform aimed at purging Turkish of its Arabic and Persian roots, he embarks upon the daunting project of translating the Ottoman manuscript into modern Turkish. And the novel *The White Castle* is based on this translational process, both structurally and thematically. He explains his translating or, to put it properly, transliterating method thus: "I nourished no pretensions to style while revising the book into contemporary Turkey: after reading a couple of sentences from the manuscript I kept on one table, I'd go to another table in the other room where I kept my papers and try to narrate in today's idiom the sense of what remained in my mind" (WC 3). His deliberate option for loose translation metaphorically represents his throwing challenge against the often claimed autonomous domain of history that insists on the objective reconstruction of the past.

Through the preface with its translational metaphor Pamuk throws light on a number of issues his writings generally uphold and deal with. Ottoman and modern are inextricably intertwined. History, as postmodernism professes it, is subject to personal and linguistic contruction. It entails the poststructuralist theories which view realities as being created and shaped by language, the signifier. That is why the disguised historian in the preface abandons his trust in his trade and embraces the trade of the fiction writer. He seems to agree with Bradbury that "writing history is more like writing novels than we often choose to think."[168] Moreover, his act of translation is postmodern in that it subverts the Turkish Republican project of suppressing the past. It is a revolt against the

[168] Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel* (London: Secker & Warburg,1993): 432.

state imposed project of erasing the past. The translator-historian's work covers the linguistic, temporal, and political geographies in the wake of the third military coup which triggers a wide spread socio-political change and re-assessment.

Suppression of history represented by the erasure of Ottoman-Arabic script can be effective for a temporary period of eclipse. Pamuk's fictional historian's attempt to rescue a forgotten text in an Ottoman archive through loose translation symbolizes a Republican historian's digging out a great crisis of Republican modernity delinked from the Islamic-Ottoman past.[169] Explaining the politically subversive nature of this historian's act in the period of the Republican modernity Erdağ Göknar explains:

> The very nature of a core Turkish identity is challenged and transformed by Darvinoglu's knowledge of languages, which in the archive becomes an intervention against the coup, itself a legacy of the cultural revolution. Set against the effects of Republican alphabet and language reforms that made the Ottoman script illegible to modern Turks and purged the language of Persian and Arabic vocabulary, Darvinoglu's work in the archive becomes subversive in a a number of ways: it is a critical commentary on the excesses of the cultural revolution, it makes the Ottoman context legible again and it unearths a buried Ottoman Islamic cosmopolitan culture centred in Istanbul.[170]

Like the historian in the preface the two main characters of the novel are found as translators translating and interpreting their mutual history to each other, coming out of their confines of identity to reassert Istanbul's multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual past. The metahistorical act on the part of the fictional historian and the characters of the novel problematizes and challenges the Republican project of effecting amnesia of history. Thus the preface to *The White Castle* becomes central to understanding Pamuk's take on writing history and identity politics.

Crisis and Swapping of Identity

Crisis of identity has its roots in the suppression and manoeuvring of history and seeks redemption in narratives of knowledge sharing, cultural exchanges, and past-present interaction. Such narratives ultimately deal with identity swapping which pervades the oeuvre of Pamuk as a leitmotif and connects to other issues. The motif is

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[169] Erdağ Göknar, *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism, and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel* (New York: Routledge, 2013): 92.

[170] Ibid., 101.

first taken up for detailed treatment in *The White Castle*, Pamuk's first English translated novel, which deals with the paradox and intricacy of individual and national identities against the historical backdrop of East-West entanglements and cultural clashes. Nowhere in the Pamuk oeuvre is the relation/exchange of "self" and "other" given more historical, anthropological, and psychological nuances than in this novel. In the story of the novel a young Italian scholar functions as the narrator who en route from Venice to Naples is abducted by the Turkish seamen. To protect himself from the possibility of doing manual labour he manages to use his intuitive power of understanding and the western knowledge of everyday science to cure common ailments in the court of the Pasha. To settle his fate as a captive he is taken to Istanbul, a place fit for the experiment on the exotic "other." Although the captive is not literally from an exotic land he is thought so for the lack of understanding and association with his place and people. In Istanbul he draws the attention of a Pasha who offers him as a prize-slave to his scholar friend called Hoja. The crisis of this new placement surfaces as, to a great wonder of both, the owner and the slave reveal uncanny physical resemblance to each other and therefore they find it hard to understanding their respective self and the self of the other. Their initial shock becomes the corner stone of building a mutually dependent state of recognition and relationship.

Hoja takes the opportunity of learning all he can about the "other's" science and mind from his slave who in return is given promise to be free to take decision either to stay with the master or to leave him once he accomplishes his teaching assignment. The Turkish master unlike his contemporary Istanbulite courtiers shows keen interest in exploiting western sources of knowledge because he finds the cause of the decline of the Ottoman Empire in lagging far behind its western counterpart in the race of acquiring modern technology and scientific knowledge. Thus the tale of antagonism turns into a tale of encountering the unknown leading to an intellectual sojourn where the opposites meet as the tutor and the apprentice. For the sake of self improvement the master as apprentice does not hesitate to embrace his temporary subordinate position for the ultimate gain. At one point of their journey, like intellectual twins, they become able to jointly carry out scientific experiments such as making fire work display, inventing remedy for plague, and manufacturing weaponry for the Sultan. These are actually allegorical representations of the possible achievements that joint forces can attain easily.

The master being habituated to such joint intellectual ventures for the aggrandizement of the self and the other for more than a decade of efforts repeatedly asks the deceptively simple question "Why am I what I am?" (WC 48).

The Italian Scholar comes forward to help exploring the answer to the perplexing question related to selfhood for his master and for himself. At one point of time, through mutually rewarding efforts to find answer to questions of selfhood, their identities become conflated and the answer remains shrouded in mystery. As one becomes the doppelgänger of the other in their daily study on the mirror, it becomes difficult at the end to say who is who or who is superior and who is inferior. They mirror-gaze "under the raw light of the lamp" at nights to be overwhelmed by their resemblances. The Venetian as narrator says:

> The two of us were one person!This seemed to me an obvious truth. It was if I were bound fast, my hands tied, unable to budge. I made a movement to save myself, as if to verify that I was myself. I quickly ran my handsthrough my hair. But he imitated my gesture and did it perfectly without disturbing the symmetry of the mirror image at all….He shouted that we would die together!(WC 71)

At the metaphorical level the story only proves that the contemplation of the "other" makes the external borders temporary and imaginary.

Like mirror-gazing in the process of blurring the boundary of self and other they also spend nights writing and telling their stories to each other. "Like two bachelors telling each other's fortunes to pass the the time on endless winter nights," the narrator says, "we sat at the table face to face, scratching out something or other on the empty pages before us" (WC 66). Exchange of stories is like the act of translation that situates the nationalized identity in an unstable position shuttling between the in-between space of "target" and "source," "self" and "other." Significantly, the characters of *The White Castle* are not given proper names to facilitate the ultimate merging of "Self" and "Other." In the historical context of East and West the "other" is always present within the boundary of "self" as either a threat or a potential tool of improvement. The boundary is at once inclusive and exclusive depending on how the partners involved percieve and utilize it like the selection and rejection of narratives on the basis of the individual's choice and the environment he lives in. As the boundary turns ultimately porous or at least transparent to them, the Turk behaves like a real scholar and leaves his country

permanently for Italy, and the Italian scholar abandons his passion for the aggressive western science and opts for living in the supposed eastern luxury of the Sultan's court.

In his growing insight into the nature of human relationship and in his unwillingness to go back to Venice due to his growing attachment to the court of Sultan through long-time-stay the Italian scholar appears, so to say, as an anthropological twin of Conrad's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. Although in both cases long association brings affinity and attachment, the Italian's experience leads him forward in terms of cultural understanding and Kurtz's experience involves a regressive psychological journey. Living for many years in the primitive jungle of the Congo and having rare glimses of his mind's innermost dark recesses that are full of primitive instincts and ideas the once civilized Kurtz becomes unable to go back to the civilized world of Europe. Similarly at the level of atavistic unconscious identifying with Hoja who in his turn believes that "everything was connected with the unknown inner landscape of [their] minds" (WC 105), the Italian sees no possibility of retrieving his former family and self in Italy with the position and environment he enjoyed in the past, his mother being presumably dead and his fiancée being lost after many years of anxious waiting. In a mood of despaired self-analysis he says: "I didn't want to think of them, they appeared less and less in my dreams; moreover I no longer saw myself among them in Venice...but dreamt of their living in Istanbul, in our midst. I know that if I should return to Venice I would not be able to pick up my life where I had left it" (WC 90). On the other hand, being tired of his Ottoman legacy and afraid of the western gaze Hoja wants to go to Venice in search of the modern life Europe stands for in his imagination as a consequence of his long time association with the Italian. People of each part of the world have equally strong desire for knowing the land and people of the other part and this mindset often brings to the fore the issues regarding the travel of culture, swapping of identity, and anxiety of influence.

Thus Pamuk's related themes of East-West entanglements and the identity swapping the citizens of his country face in the context of pre and post Kámalist history are first introduced in a semi-allegorical and detective vein in *The White Castle*. In "The *Paris Review* Interview" Pamuk elaborates on what he fictionalizes in this novel, the dilemma of his countrymen's national identity:

> [T]his theme of impersonation is reflected in the fragility Turkey feels when faced with Western culture. After writing *The White Castle*, I realized that this jealousy–the anxiety of being influenced by someone else–resembles Turkey's position when it looks west. You know, aspiring to become Westernized and then being accused of not being authentic enough. Trying to grab the spirit of Europe and then feeling guilty about the imitative drive. (OC 368)

The anxiety of the nation is also reflected in Pamuk in his vocation as a novelist which by default and by cultural definition turns him into a self-appointed carrier of the burden of articulating his country's voice and by necessity makes him appropriate the postmodern ways of writing novels originated in the West. Pamuk confesses in this connection:

> There is the problem of what Harold Bloom called "the anxiety of influence." Like all authors I had it when I was young. In my early thirties I kept thinking that I might have been too much influenced by Tolstoy or Thomas Mann–I aimed for that kind of gentle, aristocratic prose in my first novel. But it ultimately occurred to me that although I may have been derivative in my techniques, the fact that I was operating in this part of the world, so far away from Europe–or at least it seemed so at the time–and *trying to attract such a different audience in such a different cultural and historical climate*, it would grant me originality, even if it was cheaply earned. (OC 377; emphasis added)

Although it is possible for an artist to get rid of the guilty conscience resulting from trading identity or bearing external influences, the anxiety of influence is unavoidable at the level of national and cultural identity. Instead of effecting enrichment, imitation often leads to caricature and loss of one's basic markers of identity. But the characters in *The White Castle* prove themselves very skilled in mimicry, in stepping out of their rigidly drawn confines of identity to prove that the binary of "self" and "other" is a mental constract which can be removed by the properly channeled cultural exchanges.

Pamuk carries over the issue of identity swapping to the absurd story line of his novel of ideas *The New Life*. The novel bearing the influences of Dante in *La Vita Nuova* or *The New Life* in English begins with the sentence "I read a book one day and my whole life was changed" and closes with "I knew it was the end of my life. And yet I had only wanted to return home; I absolutely have no wish for death, nor for crossing over into the new life." The story shows how the dilemma of identity transformation through the exchange of old ways for the new way of living relates to the paradox of living and dying. The novel's

protagonist named Osman, a twenty two years old engineering student of a university, becomes fascinated with a wonder book he comes across in the hands of a seductive girl in the university canteen. The book, through a complicated journey in the city, helps him explore the mysterious nature of love and self in Dantesque pattern of the evolution of self through the experience of life-changing courtly love of a beautiful woman named Beatrice who works as his tour guide through heaven. Reading of the magical book puts him on a perilous journey of romance as well as gives him the realization that the book works "its influence not only on [his] soul but on every aspect of [his] identity... [making him] aware of the complete transformation of the world...." (NL 3). His elusive journey for soul searching ultimately departs from the line of romance as it evokes the life and history of a people precariuously moving between East and West, past and future, native tradition and borrowed modernism. The journey reads like an allegory of Turkishness uder the threat of foreign-fangled goods and ideas. Ultimately Turkey suspended between the irretrievable past and the incomplete present turns into the hero of the novel.

The novel shows how the life of the eastern/Middle eastern people is controlled by the things invented by the West. The main characters of the novel, while spending most of their time on bus journey, are engaged in watching western movies. The West is developing and creating a distinct identity by its intellectual and recreative products and the East, destined as it is to be at the receiving end, is passively consuming them at the cost of their authentic cultural logos which can be better reflected in the home-grown products they are supposed to be proud of. This East-West unequal exchange is projected metaphorically through the narrator's experience of things around him in the detective journey. The narrator's journey through the dark alleys of the little town on a mission to kill his fiancée's former lover symbolizes his country's forced and abortive journey through westernization that is likely to kill its original soul despite all frantic efforts on the part of some people at safeguarding it.

The local markets are saturated with foreign items – making unequal competition between old and new, local and foriegn, essential and luxury. If using old and local things means preserving natural identity and self knowledge, the local markets should be saturated with them. But the scene is the other way round. Local consumers evince irresitable desires to have the new and the far-fetched. As the disappointed candy man tells the narrator:

> Today we are altogether defeated....The West has swallowed us up, trampled on us in passing. They have invaded us down to our soup, our candy, our underpants; they have finished us off. But someday, someday perhaps a thousand years from now, we will avenge ourselves; we will bring an end to this conspiracy by taking them out of our soup, our chewing gum, our souls. Now go ahead and eat your mints, don't cry over spilt milk. (NL 290-291)

He hopes that one great day the history of consumer products will be rewritten in his country when the pitiful patriotic souls of the consumers will not "forget the poetry of [their] lives." But it is not that easy to get rid of the attraction for the West when there is a tendency of unknowingly succumbing to it.

Pamuk's typical postmodern novel *The Black Book*, considered by many to be his magnum opus, treats the identity related issues through the detective story of impersonating, hide-and-seek, and metaphysical quest. In the story the visionary lawyer Galip is in quest of his missing wife and cousin Ruiya who is reported to have eloped with her another cousin and a mysterious columnist Celâl Salik. The novel projects a "scary game in which everyone was impersonating someone else and everything was a replica of an absent original" (BB 300). This novel is structured around a never ending two-fold journey of the quest hero: one at the inner level through the reading of newspaper columns and the other at the metaphysical level in the city's mazy alleys. The protagonist's quest for his missing wife leads to discoveries about his own self and that of his strange cousin Celâl, the famous Istanbul columnist. Reading Celâl's writings makes Galip enter into the writer's self though his original purpose of reading has been to detect any possible involvement of the writer in the elopement plot. Reading means understanding that removes all barriers in the process of integration with others or reaching out to others' minds. That is why Galip's mind ultimately gives space to the suppressed selflessness through a life-changing journey. The story moving between Galip's quest and Celâl's articles blurs the line between personal and public spheres of living, and captures the wide panorama of Istanbul of both past and present, traditional living style and modern attractions. The questions of history, identity, modernity, and cross cultural encounters appear intertwined with the detective love story. While the past of the city stands for the merging of self with its "other" towards forming a collective entity, the present nurtures a tendency of forming diecrete entities. The past evokes the memory of vibrant cosmopolitanism and the present moves in the tide of separatism.

The novel presents a vertical illustration and analysis of Turkish identity based on the interplay of the various less discussed layers of history and various interpretations of religion conceived mystically and philosophically. With the collection of narratives, newspaper columns, articles, and Sufi anecdotes especially of Jelaluttin Rumi and Ibn' Arabi Pamuk here aims to expose the illusion in the self seeking journey and all the intertexts of the novel lead to prove the slippery condition of all phases of identity formation. In this novel the stories related to traditional Islamic institutions like Sufism and Hurufism are presented vis-è-vis Pamuk's complex position as a writer caught between two poles attracting and repelling each other – "a man committed to Western Cartesian rationalism" and interested in the eastern traditional literary treasure of the mystic texts. Galip's quest for his self or identity arising from his desperate search for his missing wife proves a futile yearning to recover the taken for granted meaning and purity of a self which actually does not exist. To explicate the nature of this quest, Pamuk, as an eastern writer and "a cultural Muslim," can easily exploit the metaphysics narrated in the Sufi tradition.

The melancholy in *The Black Book* results from the absence of identity. The novel illustrates that the secret of any identity is that there is no identity at all, to speak paradoxically. And the illusion of identity perpetuates through the creation of an "Other" as in the case of Galip the cousin Celal or his wife or "dream" (which is the meaning of his wife's name Ruiya) becomes the ever receding "other." He loses his selfhood when Celal and Ruiya cease to exist. If he is their alter ego, then why is he looking for them? Here Pamuk uses the anecdote of Rumi and his not so pious friend the Shams of Tabriz. Rumi metaphysically claims his friend's self within him and still madly searches for his friend from one city to another. The hard fact is that one has to accept "that no one in this world can ever hope to be [truly] themselves" (BB 203). The endless imitation-drive "would ease [a man] into this other person's skin and let[s] [him] begin a new life" (BB 203). We have self only in the never ending process of making, ending only with death. The process can be compared with Keats's definition of a poet as a "chameleon figure" who is always changing self and therefore appearing selfless: "A Poet...has no identity – he is continually in for [informing] – and filling some other Body."[171] The melancholy of

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[171] John Keats, "Letter to Richard Woodhouse," *Prose of the British Romantic Movement*, Ed. John R. Nabholtz (New York: Macmillan, 1974): 761.

this selflessness is the melancholy of losing one's identity to some one or some thing that is perpetually unattainable. By extension, it is at once the collective melancholy of losing one's national identity to the cultural and economic dominance of Europe and America, and the impossibility of having an authentic and pure identity in the cospmopolitical and globalized world, the anxiety of bearing other's influence and and failure to create one's own.

By presenting the principal characters of this novel as followers of Sufi poets in the Mevlevi tradition Pamuk questions the use of narrowly set parameters of religion in the formation of identity. He seems to repudiate, in the context of his country, the indiscriminate use of Islam as social glue in the construction of identity. His stance reflects what Amartya Sen foregrounds: "[r]eligion is not, and cannot be, a person's all-encompassing identity."[172] The adherents of a particular religion have to bear always in mind that they have myriad social, political, moral, and philosophical affiliations with their respective responsibilities which may not necessarily go with the requirements of his religious values. Against the restricting interpretation of Islam by some characters in *Snow* and *My Name is Red* Pamuk seems to support those who in *The Black Book* holds that Islam as understood through Sufism and Hurufism, the great Persian heritage, paradoxically, negates the notion of identity by advocating annihilation of self through its merging with the other and therefore it can easily encompass the followers of other faiths, at least mystically and philosophically. Commenting on this aspect of the Islamic notion of self illustrated in *The Black Book* Ian Almond says: "The secular western hero of the text – a comfortably middle-class lawyer – moves deeper and deeper into the book's Orient and its various Hurufisms and messianisms, not to find his identity but ultimately to lose it."[173]

As the figure of the hero Galip, whose name bears resemblance with the name of a great Sufi poet, shows his attraction with various Oriental stories of Sufis, Ottoman Dervishes, and Bizantine princes. His characterization can be treated as an allegorical representation of the modern Orientalist hero's quest for power and self- knowledge through an immersion in the past where self and other were constantly in a condition of

[172] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The illusion of Destiny* (London: Penguin, 2007): 83.
[173] Ian Almond, "Islam, Melancholy, and Sad, Concrete Minarets: The Futility of Narratives in Orhan Pamuk's The Black Book," *New Literary History* 34.1 (Winter 2003): 75- 90; 84.

mingling and inter-changing. Although the past cannot be literally restored, any effort to establish a new identity based on newfangled ideas should also consider the ethos of the past. Galip's state of mind reflects a reality of defeat and confusion in the present springing from the disregard for the past. He endlessly waits for Celâl and Ruiya without revealing their faces, characters, and voices as if these were secrets he did not like to divulge to anybody else. Similarly he does not like to reveal the names of the columnists he comes across in his quest for Ruiya. He is caught in the two directional pulls of self-aggrandizement and self effacement leading to a perpetual anxiety of existence.

This paradoxical situation is connected with the insoluble mystery involved in the contradictory urges faced by the hero in his journey for the targeted state of living. The goal remains unattainable for it is not defined. This effort of untying the mystery can be compared with the mysterious longing of Vladimir and Estragon while they are waiting for the unreachable Godot in the absurd play of Samuel Beckett *Waiting for Godot*. Like elusive Godot redemption of Galip with a new leader in a new state appears a far cry. So the crucial question in *The Black Book* is whether one can assign any definite meanings and markers to self/identity or whether we need a long awaited messiah who would set things right in a promised land. Thus the anxiety of identity in all senses – individual, mystic, collective, and political constitutes the central theme of the novel. This theme reveals the spirit of the nation which Pamuk "look[s] at through the layers of Istanbul and the enigmas of history [intertwined with] cultural truth in art."[174]

The Black Book examines the Turkish national identity through exploring the enigmatic historical powers playing on the city the characters are destined to live in. The city guide in the novel says: "These historical powers did not want to give our people the chance to be themselves" (BB 189). Showing Galip the underground passages of his grandfather's mannequins he comments "that, since the beginning of its history, Istanbul has been an underground city" (BB 189). In fear of the external invasion people of different ages treasured their valued possessions under the ground making a city of double entities – one beneath and the other above – supplanting each other in a continuous labyrinthine process. The guide further mentions: "each incarnation of this city – Byzantium, Vizant, Nova Roma, Anthusa, Tsargrad, Miklagrad, Constantinople,

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[174] Orhan Pamuk, "Writing and writing is my only happiness," op. cit.

Cospoli, Istin-polin–had beneath it the underground passages in which the previous civilization has taken refuge" (BB 191).

Thus history proves to be a power guided discourse of cultural identity shaped and reshaped by the competiting groups. In order to depict the predicament of the present dwellers of the city living under the impact of history Pamuk symbolically presents the theme of people's inability to articulate their own identities: a ruler dons the dress of a commoner but encounters a commoner disguised as a ruler, or women in a brothel pretend to be well-known film actresses to attract clients but without any success. Galip looks "into the faces of his fellow citizens and see[s] in them the city's long history," clues to point to a world of "a shared defeat, a shared history, a shared shame" (BB218. The inhabitants of the world the novel depicts fail to find a way to be themselves due to the dissatisfaction with the present status. They cannot accept the impossibility of ever changing one's "gestures that make us who we are … [for] a nation could change its way of life, its history, its technology, its art, literature, and culture, but it would never have a real chance to change its gestures" (BB 62). Their attempt to change gestures turn them into mimic men who entertain ambivalent identity.

Aborted Turkish Dream, Museum, and History in *The Museum of Innocence*

By way of presenting objects as conveyers of memory Pamuk has synonymously used museum, history, and art in his latest novel *The Museum of Innocence.* The novel is an attempt to look at the spirit and predicament of the nation through love and romance. It shores up "a heap of broken images" of the lived life "mixing memory and desire" with the application of the concept of museum in novel writing. Apparently, the novel is a discursive love story of an idle, rich Istanbullu named Kemal who courts Füsun Keskin, his distant poor cousin and a teenage shop girl. In their courtship they spend many days together and eventually part, the girl vanishing in the scape of their city of upbringing not to be traced again. To compensate for the loss of the beloved's fond memories many years later Kemal launches a museum project displaying objects, large and small, his missing paramour Füsun has touched − "a teacup, a forgotten hair clip, a ruler, a comb, an eraser, a ballpoint pen" (M1 178) or "a porcelain saltshaker, a tape measure in the form of a dog, a can opener that looked like the instrument of torture, a bottle of the Batanay sunflower oil that the Keskin kitchen never lacked" (MI 397).

The personal or family objects work like talismans to evoke not only their blissful days of courtship but also the socio-political pictures and memories of the nation. As Kemal talks of the decrepit waterside mansion or *yali* where they have spent many blissful hours: "The *yali* added gravity and historical depth to this doomed love of ours; our sorrow and defeat were so great that the vestigial presence of a vanished Ottoman culture could furnish what we had lost as lovers" (MI 204). The construction of the monument of love with these objects becomes an "objective correlative" to the reconstruction of the cultural history of the city of Istanbul the lovers are emotionally attached with. Turkishness, if it is considered as "imagined community" being based on memories and desires, has, through the silent house of memory, been turned into a museum that communicates through a vast array of mystified and memory-loaded objects signifying both pathos and pathology of the society.[175]

When Kemal presents the life and social circle of Füsun, in objects visualized through descriptive details, the entire city of Istanbul appears as a museum in words in *The Museum of Innocence*. In depicting the everyday life of a representative Istanbul family Pamuk here endeavours to give a comprehensive picture of a society which has substantially become dependent on far-fetched goods and ideas. Not unlike the condition of Füsun's middle class people the members of elite class in Istanbul enjoy skiing holidays, get parasols on beaches, and gather at lively rendezvous out of their notions of what they do abroad and being jealous of another life. The jealousy of and interest in others have the potentiality of producing positive effect if used with discretion. Pamuk explains the point thus: "We compare ourselves with those people. We are interested in this or that aspect of their lives, and we would like to be in those lives…To be attached to another life is to understand how relative our own lives are, while also unique" (OC 261). But practically it functions differently in the third world context. Instead of viewing their lives relatively the Turks, as projected in Pamuk, rather rebuke one another by calling "too a la Turca," meaning too much outdated.

Their acquired or borrowed faces and styles of living become more important markers of identity than the inherited ones. They consider things like an electric blender, a can opener and an electric shaver imported from Europe as proud possessions. Many of

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[175] Erdağ Göknar, "Secular Blasphemies: Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish Novel," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 45.2 (2012): 302-326; 321. <www.DOI10.1215/00295132-1573985 ©2012 by Novel, Inc>.

these electric items, the symbols of new replacing the old standard of living quickly turn into relics for want of spare parts and technicians to repair them. The desire for new status symbols becomes so strong that many Muslims do not hesitate to purchase Christmas trees. To exploit this mentality many business entrepreneurs adopt policy of filling local drink in freshly collected new brand bottles from Europe. Some members of the elite as well as the middle class attempt to have aesthetic synthesis of the opposites by symbolically using watches with "two faces, one in Arabic numerals, and the Roman" − showing a kind if "East-West" watch (MI 288). In a word, intimate details of their day to day life show a state of dissatisfaction with the status quo and aspirations for others' lives.

Even at the level of the character's behavourial pattern in the social drama they show odd mixtures and unrealistic aspirations. In the romantic strand of the story Kemal is officially engaged with Sibel, the daughter of a retired diplomat who has recently returned from France, a country noted for new developments in fashionable life style. And at the same time he is kissing Füsun in his apartment for he does not want to part with his opportunity of having easy access to his economically vulnerable cousin. But in the eye of the society Kemal and Sibel appear a perfect couple for their apparent devotion to each other. Kemal plays the dual role – meeting the expectations of the society as a good Turk in the traditional way he is engaged with Sibel and internally appearing a westerner in pursuit of unrestricted pleasure in secretly kissing his fiancée Füsun. But he or by extension his country does not have the capacity to have both at the same time, as it requires a difficult-to-reach accommodation with alien cultures. This confused state of mind can be traced in many places of the developing world in the form of blind imitation of the powerful instead of following the process of dignified cultural negotiations.

The novel *The Museum of Innocence* thus constructs a world which yearns to be modern but does not know how far it can go in the quest for modernity, or even does not know the definition of modernity appropriate for it as the definition is culturally relative. People inhabiting this world both disapprove of and hanker after the influx of things and ideas from the elusive modern world represented by Europe – be it disco music/dancing or pornographic movies/magazines, a porcelain saltshaker or a can opener. Most of the young men of the society have not seen with their own eyes, let alone having the real experience of, any intimate kissing or caressing scene off the cinema or television screen

even though they have irreistable desire to go to "high-class brothels" in which the girls are reported to look like western movie stars wearing miniskirts. The same is true to their beach culture: feeling embrassed to imagine women in their maillots and bikinis. Dissatisfied with Füsun's embarrassment Kemal passes a wry comment on the society: "Forty-five years after Atatürk's revolution and the founding of the Republic, the Turkish people had still not worked out how to go to the beach in bathing suits without embarrassment, and at times like this, it would occur to me how much Füsun's fragility reflected the bashfulness of the Turkish people" (MI 167). The young women are allowed to go on shopping trips to the European metropolis like London, Paris, and Frankfurt but they are advised not to follow women living in those cities; they are under constant social expectation to remain virgins on their wedding days.

To the dismay of the supporters of westernization, the strict moral code attending virginity in the society has not relaxed, let alone forgetting the concept itself. Regarding this moral code Kemal passes another wry comment on the society revealing in his own words an "unpalatable anthropological truth": "One thousand nine hundred and seventy-five solar years after the birth of Christ, in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the western and southern shores of the Mediterranean, as in Istanbul, the city that was the capital of this region, virginity was still regarded as a treasure that young girl should protect until the day they married" (MI 61). Westernized young men and women in the wealthy neighbourhoods cannot remain content without premarital sex as they have come to know how it is freely experiened in the West. Still they do not know how to find a partner to "flirt" with − the word "flirt" being non-existent in the dictionary of their native language. Their condition of uncertainties becomes more evident in the novel's engagement party held at the Hilton Hotel. Attending this grand tableau members of the Turkish elite society compete with each other in putting on best possible appearances, but internally they experience conservative pressures not to do anything extravagant. They are pulled between the two opposite worldviews, both having equal claim on them, one from inside and the other from outside, representing the perennial predicament of modern man's struggle for fixing the exact parameters of identity.

At one level of the integration of themes, characters, and identity it can be contended that the city of Istanbul becomes the central character of *The Museum of*

Innocence. The novel's characters being somewhat sketchy only find completion in merging their selves with the extensively delineated cityscape they are integral to. In traversing the city they become engaged metaphorically in their own soul-searching. Füsun merges with the city and Kemal finds his soulmate in it. Kemal as suggested at the end of the novel becomes, in turn, a mirror of the author's self, his alter ego or Borgesian "Other," a mark of metafictional self reflexivity. His journey back from the European cities to the heart of his native city is symbolized by his breaking engagement with Sibel and going to spend time with Füsun and her family in their old Keskin flat. Ultimately he comes to discover what he has neglected so far: the very essence of life and living in the poor neighbourhoods of Istanbul, "with their empty lots, their muddy cobblestone streets, their cars, rubbish bins, and side walks, and the children playing with a half- inflated football under the streetlamps"(MI 212). These details of the city symbolically project the similar essences of his life that he has missed for quite a long time in trying to live the "elegant European" life allowed by the wealth provided by his father's booming business.

Struck with melancholy induced by a sense of being out of place in a city of his roots, he wants to become unmodern in his own terms while walking down these streets and "seeking out [his] own centre" (MI 212). This shows that Kemal discovers his self by having recourse to searching old ways of life in exchange of the new, preferring courtly eastern romance to wild European passion, sacrificing aggressive modernity to cozy conservative position. He would like to favour past over present, coiling back to the cocoon from which he journeyed outside to have momentary relief from the angst of identifying "self" with "other." He has a sense that he is born too late to live the happy days of the empire which he can only relive by walking down the memory lane and wallowing in nostalgia. Because of this deep attachment with and passion for the past he feels incurable homesickness although he is living at home; he feels lonely although he is living in the midst of the Istanbul crowd. His emotional longing for the missing beloved merges with his nostalgia for the real or imagined past. The lovers walking backward hand in hand reflect the nostalgia prevalent in Pamukian oeuvre where past redeems the present and memory controls and qualifies the desire. This melancholic portrayal of the shifting identity of the city and longing for the lost glory of the past give voice to a condition of almost every cosmopolitan city of the third world longing to be global and local at the same time, searching for the lost self.

Kemal, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, plans to turn the old Keskin flat belonging to Füsun's family into a museum to be furnished with objects connected to their "deepest sentimental attachments and memories." Their individual possessions onced moved to museum automatically take on community colour as museum has the transforming power like that of art. The visitors admiring the objects will "honour the memory of Füsun and Kemal, with due reverence, they will understand that, like the tales of Leyla and Mecnun or Hüsn and Aşk, this is not simply a story of lovers, but of the entire realm, that is, of Istanbul" (MI 525). Subsequently, Pamuk starts translating *The Museum of Innocence* into an actual museum of 300sq.m gallery for which he procures a derelict building in Çukurcuma, a place close to his writing studio in Istanbul. Museum is considered by many a western craze for the West has first forced many precious historical possessions of the world travel to their museums like the travelling of Geniza materials from Cairo to Philadelphia as Amitav Ghosh tells us in *In an Antique Land*; but the innate human desire working behind the establishment of museums is the same everywhere, that is, a desire to transform Time into Space, a desire to make the present not sever its connections with the past. It is only a question of degree to debate on who has started the museum project in a systematic way.

Since Pamuk's proposed museum grows out of deepest sentiments in representing his nation's heritage, culture, and history it differs very substantially from the western practice of showing off glory, superiority, and pride through museum objects. The proposed museum is designed to have this novel as a guide to it and it will allow fifty visitors at a time against the western practice of allowing thousands pouring into the place to see the display of power, wealth, and knowledge. As Pamuk explains towards the end of the novel, the function and history of museums in the East vary from that of the West as in the East museum practice parallels the rise of nationalistic ideas unlike the western obsession with power politics through the display of far-fetched objects. The West's craze for museum is rooted in the politics of power for "museums are the repositories of those things from which Western Civilization derives its wealth of knowledge, allowing it rule the world" (MI 73). The politics relates to the formula that the West had seen the East before the East saw itself as well as its counterpart.

Kemal criticizes the museum craze of the rich people of Turkey in imitation of the West: "I'm afraid that this museum craze in the West has inspired the uncultured and insecure rich of this country to establish *ersatz* museums of modern art with adjoining restaurants" (MI 524). This sentiment actually reflects Pamuk's critical view of the Euro-American museum craze. His museum, not based on "bad imitations of Western art," not "displaying the Occidentalis fantasies of [their] rich," but displaying "their own lives," will "teach not just the Turkish people but all the people of the world to take pride in the lives they live" (MI 518). The objects that may otherwise generate in them a sense of inferiority if projected through the western perspective can be transformed into proud possessions when displayed in a museum of their own. Thus popularizing the museum concept under the cover of perpetuating the romance of Kemal and Fusun contributes to the explication of the intricacies of Turkish history, culture, identity, and East-West trope.

The consequence of the incomplete modernizing project of Turkey also works as a driving force behind the idea of establishing museums. As the precious possessions of past is ignored in favour of the newly acquired, museums can come forward to restore them so that the visitors can take pride in them in some favourable moments. Pamuk writes in this regard:

> Great as the desire to Westernise and modernise may have been, the more desperate wish, it seemed, was to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire… But as nothing, Western or local, came to fill the void, the great drive to Westernise amounted mostly to the eraser of the past; the effect on culture was reductive and stunting, leading families like mine, otherwise glad of Republican progress, to furnish their houses like museums. (IMC 27)

Violence on the past and prejudices of the present necessitate the existence of museum that can easily make one visualize the void left by socio-political transition and the past-present conflict. Both antique and modern items can sit together, sometimes even anachronistically, in the shelf of the museum in denial of the politics of polarity contemporary people are madly busy with.

Towards the end of the novel Kemal rules out the possibility of the presence of political motive behind the museum project for immediate gain. He holds that the museum contributes much to the transformation of the society on a higher plane. But upon close observation it turns out to be loaded with political values as the objects in the museum

cannot be divested of their political and cultural connections and connotations. Many of the objects of the museum refer obliquely to the violent post-imperial history of Turkey, the catastrophic military coup of 1980, and the subsequent arrest of 60,000 political activists suspected of subversive political activities over the span of three years. *The Museum of Innocence* reveals Pamuk's idea of a nonlinear history which not only depends on people's every day life stories developed on cause and effect pattern but also on the random collection and recollection of lost signs and objects. The objects to be displayed in the museum of innocence, the lost things revealed by the dried up Bosphorus in the imagination of the novelist as he "contemplate[s] the vastness of history and time" gazing down the ghosts of ancient ships (MI 196), and the pictures supplementing the texts in the autobiography-cum-memoir help build a non-chronological history. Some of the objects and photographs predate the narratives of Pamuk's texts but they contain the emotional atmosphere of the contemporary time depicted in the narratives as, to borrow the spiral or circular concept of time from T. S. Eliot, time present was present too in time past though we normally think of past's exixtence in the present only.

History and Identity through the Dilemma of the Miniaturists:

Pamuk's *My Name is Red*, modelled on Umberto Eco's murder mystery *The Name of the Rose*, knits a beguiling story-cum-art critique by appropriating motifs from Ottoman history and culture. The plot of the novel covers a period of twenty years after the battle of Lepanto in 1571 in which the joint Christian forces of the rising western powers defeated the faltering Ottoman power. Set at the critical juncture of history in Istanbul, a meeting ground of East and West, Islam and Christianity, this novel using the framework of murder mystery and portraying the dilemma and compromise of the Islamic miniature artists experiments with the ways of bridging two worlds and displays two opposite ways of viewing one's identity. The author in an interview explains the plan and purpose of writing this novel:

> I tried to tell my story...[in] two distinctive ways of seeing the world and narrating stories [which] are of course related to our cultures, histories, and what is our popularly called identities. How much are they in conflict? In my novel they even kill each other because of this conflict between east and west. But, of course, the reader, I hope, realizes that I do not believe in this conflict. All good art comes from mixing things from different roots and cultures, and I hope *My Name is Red* illustrates just that.[176]

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[176] Orhan Pamuk, "A Conversation," Interview with Alfred A. Knolf, *The Borzoi Rader Online*, Random House, 2003. <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/pamuk/qna/html>.

My Name is Red deals with the entanglements of East and West by re-writing the Ottoman history and Turkish culture through the portrayal of Ottoman miniature art and artists. The stories of these miniature artists who come in conflict with the Venetian artists in their artistic approaches and attempt to bring synthesis of the two styles display the postcolonial concepts of hybridity, in-betweenness, double-consciousness, and above all historical exchanges between the Orient and the Occident.

Enishte Effendi, the miniaturist commissioned by the Sultan to work on an illustrated manuscript, introduces readers to a hybrid art using eastern content in western form, eastern soul in eastern body. He plans to illustrate the Sultan's entire realm following the style of the Venetian masters but, unlike their product, his work will include the inner riches, joys, and fears besides the material contents. Master Osman, the director of the Sultan's workshop, complains that "magnificent works can no longer be made as they once were" (MNR 283), because the traditional miniaturists like Effendi have, under the influence of Venetian Frankish style, become "more pretentious than knowledgeable, more ambitious than intelligent" (MNR 286). This image of Effendi following the style of the Venetian art mechanically symbolizes the potential threat to the traditional Ottoman miniature art and calligraphy. The novel thus captures the miniaturists as they are caught in the dilemma of choosing or not choosing from two significant stylistic approaches to visual art. This dilemma is triggered by the murder of one who, without considering the positive side of borrowing, grows aggressively skeptical about the Frankish style. This abstract artistic dilemma is reflected in the social life where the fundamentalists, on the spur of the moment, burst into a coffee house for its being full of pictures depicted in a naturalistic way in line with the secular western narration. This leads to the murder of the storyteller who imitates a woman. Thus in a cobweb of murder mystery and art critique, tracing the source of the style of art ultimately leads to the identification of the murderers.

The novel's tale of romance, murder, and artistic pursuit ultimately concerns the East-West conflict and cultural negotiations. The East-West trope is emphasized by one of the Qur'anic epigraphs of the novel: "To God belongs the East and the West" ("The Cow," Verse: 115). The tale of the miniaturists reflects the dilemma experienced by people who are bound to breathe in a multi-cultured world but try to stick blindly to their roots and

traditions shutting eyes to the world outside. The novelist here challenges the madly pursued polarization between fundamentalism and secularism, traditional and modern, East and West. The pointlessness of human tendency to create binary that aims at supposed purity is made through a local detective story of art, murder, and love told with a universal tone in *My Name is Red*. Orhan Pamuk's discussion of Ottoman miniaturists' transformations and innovations in miniature painting serves as an allegory of the Ottoman-Turkish identity shifting from tradition to modernity. The act of transformation reflects what Bhabha states: "cultural boundaries of the nation...[are] containing thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased, and translated in the process of cultural production."[177] He also states in *The Location of Culture* that identities in the modern complex and pluralistic world are forged in "the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – [where] the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated."[178]

In writing postmodern novels Pamuk comes closer to those miniaturists who prefer hybridity in art**.** His novels present eastern content in the western form, making a sort of bridge and a Dadaist collage. He explains the purpose of assimilating ideas from different traditions:

> I quite agree that now this bridge metaphor is getting to be too worn out, too clichéd. Since it's a way of pointing out that my work, my books, my novels are nourished by the great Western art of fiction, novel-writing, and also traditional Sufi Islamic texts. If you put two things quite different together, there is always, if you're lucky, a sort of electricity between them. My work is, perhaps, that electricity.[179]

Following the Dostoevskian tradition of polyphonic novel, Pamuk also demonstrates this hybridity in regard to the use of perspectives in visual art. As Rezan Silku aptly comments: "Just like the experimental miniaturist who illustrates the objects, animate or inanimate, from the objects' own perspectives, Orhan pamuk also transgresses the traditional understanding of point of view in the art of Fiction and tells his story from different perspectives, including human beings, animals, colours, and corpses."[180] The product, here Pamuk's novel, defies any strict categorization of genre and challenges Master Osman's view that mixture of styles

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[177] Homi Bhabha, Ed. "Introduction," *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990): 4.
[178] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., 2.
[179] Orhan Pamuk, "Interview," With Jeffrey Brown, *News Hour*, Oct 12 2006.
[180] Rezan Silku, "Nation and Narration: Cultural Interaction in Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red*." <www.englit.ege.edu.tr/staff/rezzan_silku.html>.

produce miserable and odd product: "The desire to depict a tree as such, as the Venetian masters did, was here combined with the Persian way of seeing the world from above, and the result was a miserable painting that was neither Venetian nor Persian" (MNR 303). Rather it will produce the opposite effect as the Murderer (one of the narrators of the novel) says: "But as the methods of the Europeans spread, everyone will consider it a special talent to tell other man's stories as if they were one's own" (MNR 484).

Pamuk's Visual History

Besides novelising history Pamuk takes recourse to the mixture of textual and visual reprsentations by using photography as a mode of narrating non-linear history. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City* one third of the space is given to about two hundred personal and impersonal photographs to supplement and authenticate the written documents. The joint forces of arresting verbal narration and seductive pictorial proliferation take part in unraveling the past events and selfhood both horizontally and vertically. In the memoir the possible bias of Pamuk's subjective rendition of his city's self and history is renderd neutral by the addition of objective photographs that serve as the repository of collective memories. He uses photographic realism to retrieve the authentic identity of a historical city from the confusions of massive transformations over the centuries. The city's real face exists only in memories, the written texts of the travelers, and in the photographs. The photographs become the micro histories of the place and function as tools to invoke the desired emotions to be created by the narratives.

However, photographic representation of history is not new. Ara Güler, whose photographic archives are extensively exploited by Pamuk, claims himself as a visual historian. His views are worthy of being quoted in full in the context of Pamuk:

> We, photographers, are also historians who write the visual history of the century we are living in. When you glance at 19th century photographs, you learn about the century in the most 'realistic' way. While writing history, historians add some feelings and imagination into their writings. Whereas, a photograph only depics reality. A photograph is a living history. The arts are not real but false. Hamlet dies on the theatre stage every night. Why? Because theatre is false. However, when Hamlet dies, I would take his photograph only once; at the moment of his death. A photograph is nothing other than reality.[181]

[181] As qtd. by Z. Esra Mirze Santesso, "Vision and Representation: Photography in Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City*," *The Comparitist* 35 (May 2011): 152-160; 159.

Photography as an alternative mode of narrating decodes the hidden threads between the intangible memory of the narrator and the concrete geographical space of his native city Istanbul. Photography, as explained by Earl Hopper as a kind of defence against the fear of going into oblivion, rescues the author and his city from the anxiety of falling into "the anonymity of history."[182] The silence of the pictures paradoxically becomes more eloquent and narrates a lot by reminding the readers of the historical narratives of the city.

The apparently disjointed pictures of Istanbul taken at different times of different events, locations, and individuals help create a kind of psyco-physical harmonizing atmosphere like the one created by the assembling of the meaning-laden and culturally coded anthropological objects in *The Museum of Innocence*. The photography in Pamuk, as Walter Benjamin would put it, by using **"**close-ups of the things around [Istanbul], by focusing on hidden details of the [historical] objects, by exploring (cultural) milieus under the ingenius guidance of the camera," on the one hand sharpens readers' comprehension of the circumstances conditioning the lives of the Istanbullus, and on the other hand, triggers the immense field of psychological action.[183] The camera, introducing readers to the unconscious optics like psychoanalysis opening up windows to unconscious impulses, stirs the viewers deeply and gain historical and political significance like the written documents. Like the chapter titles of historical books the photographs in Pamuk's text bear unwritten captions and have meanings inscribed onto them.

East-West Interface and Occidentalism, *Snow* as a Case in Point[184]

For geo-political reasons conceiving things in terms of East-West interactions has become the lot of the major Turkish writers. Although East-West issue now sounds a cliché it gets a nuanced articulation in Pamuk's oeuvre because he is fated to deal with it in the latest phase of cultural history marked with fierce globalization and civilizational cold war. All other concerns in his fiction connect to this haunting issue that functions as a thematic grid in some way or other. His country/city's unique position of being flanked by Europe and Asia is responsible for this East-West obsession. However, this

[182] Earl Hopper, "Encapsulation as a Defense against the Fear of Annihilation," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 72.4 (1991):607-624.
[183] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978): 236.
[184] I published an earlier version of this section as an article with the title "Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*: East-West Interface and Occidentalism" in *Praxis* 5, journal of the Department of English, University of Rajshahi (Nov 2013): 80-102.

postmodern theme has been given new twist in Pamuk. His thesis of identity of his people discussed so far depends upon it largely. His presentation of history, either of Ottoman Empire or of Turkish Republic, either of the cosmopolitan Isatanbul or of its artists, hark back to East-West entanglements. Broadly speaking, he considers all politically constructed perceptions of East and West as generalizations. He laments that Turkey's intellectuals, media, politicians believe in "the westness of the West and the eastness of the East" too much and thus pave the way for social restlessness.[185]

While the East-West issue appears significantly in *The White Castle* in the form of a detective-allegorical story of identity swapping of two characters from the two apparently opposite parts of the world, *The Museum of Innocence* takes it to the world of love, romance, fashion, and museum craze. It is given a Sufi-allegorical treatment in *The Black Book* to illustrate the mutual quest of self and other, and a historical treatment in *Istanbul: Memories and the City* to evaluate the city of Istanbul and the narratives on it. *My Name is Red*, according to the citation of the judges of the 2003 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, invites us "to experience the tension between East and West from a breathlessly urgent perspective."[186] The issue as reflected in *My Name is Red* has been covered in my discussion on identity and the miniature art in one of the earlier sections of this chapter. However, in my opinion it is given more intensive treatment in *Snow*. Therefore, I deem it fit to explore Pamuk's delineation of the issue in *Snow* in at length.

Orhan Pamuk's overtly political novel *Snow* deals with the ways that a non-western and Muslim country must follow as it negotiates the forces of tradition and of modernity. In this novel the historical lens of the novelist zooms in on the present-day Turkey, microcosmically projected through the depiction of the remote Turkish-Armenian border city of Kars. For its presentation of current socio-political order of the globe Margaret Atwood rightly considers it "[n]ot only an engrossing feat of tale-spinning, but essential reading of our times."[187] This novel attracts significant critical attention for its disinterested and dramatic treatment of recurring burning issues such as

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[185] Orhan Pamuk, "Bridging Two Worlds," Interview with Elizabeth Fransworth, *The News Hour* (Macneil/ Lehrer Productions, 2002): 1-6; 3. <www.pbs.org/newshour/conversation/july-02/pamik_11-20.html>.

[186] <www.impacdublinaward.ie/2003/winner.html>.

[187] Margaret Atwood passes the comment in her review of *Snow* in *New York Times*. Taken from the inner flap of the text.

individual and national identities in Turkey, opposing worldviews, East-West dichotomy, and clashing cultures. Pamuk has visited Kars before writing the novel to investigate the city's suicide epidemic of girls over headscarf debate and to see the political tension between Islamists and followers of westernisation at the advent of the city's mayoral election.

Having firm root in reality, the novel deals with topical issues which, in some way or other, have engulfed the whole of the Middle East and also many other parts of the world. Viewed from historical and geo-political perspectives, Turkey is an important Muslim country for its being once at the centre of a vast Muslim Empire, for its rigorous reformative drive initiated by its founder father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and for its unique cartography straddling the borders of Asia and Europe. Moreover, for its possibility of inclusion into the European Union and acceptability as a model of moderate Muslim country despite having a religion-rooted party at the helm for the last more than one decade, Turkey is the most appropriate ground for the novelistic depiction of the East-West question, international and intra-national identity politics, and secularism-fundamentalism debate. Hence Pamuk's delineation of the East-West conflict in *Snow* is pertinent to our time and can add significant insights into political-ideological conflicts.

The plot of *Snow* revolves around the return of the protagonist Ka to Turkey, after twelve years of self-political-exile in Germany, to attend his mother's funeral and cover the suicide epidemic of girls in Kars for a German newspaper. To revive his missing romance in the city he also meets his former girl friend Ipek whose sister Kadife is implicated in fundamentalist politics. He finds the city a politically trouble-torn place where the young girls have been committing suicide for not being allowed to wear headscarf as Muslim women's identity marker in educational institutions and public offices. The Islamists are about to win the city's mayoral election, and the state machinery upholding secular and modernising views is getting ready for a crackdown on the Islamists in order to pre-empt their victory. Because of Ipek's connection with the suicide girls and his own journalistic interest in reporting political tension, Ka gets enmeshed in the perilous political events of Kars which has been witnessing power struggles and cultural conflicts for a long time since it was first an Armenian city, then was occupied by Russia, and finally remained annexed to Turkish territories. The city's history of cartographic, ethnic, cultural, and political incidents of violence is re-enacted

in the present scenerio through the confrontation between secularists and extremists, western and eastern values, mass and elite, past and present, and between periphery and centre. The narrator projects the conflict-ridden scene through the portrayal of his friend Ka's journalistic interaction with the warring groups who are found passionately following their ideological lines in violent action and media propaganda.

The novel, through the interplay of a series of contraries, allegorises radical nationalism, identity crisis, and cultural conflicts – issues which define the world we are living in. The characters of the novel can be categorised into two groups – the first upholding fundamentalism and traditional values, and the second trying to establish western ideals of secularism and modernism. Caught between them are the wavering ex-leftists, the Kurds sympathizing with the extremists out of their sense of deprivation, and the innocent "headscarf girls" falling on the horns of a dilemma. The first group is in favour of sticking to traditional values mostly based on religion and against the Kemalist project of modernising Turkey through imitation of the West which, according to them, stands for dehumanising cultural and military imperialism. The modernising drive after the western model in a way endorses the principles of neo-imperialism as explained by Eqbal Ahmad: "The principles of this system (that is, the white man's burden, the *mission civilisatrice*, or the Manifest Destiny) were based on the assumption of the inferiority of 'native' peoples, their lesser existence and diminished humanity. Devaluation of the colonized civilization, debasement of its cultural heritage, and distortion of native realities have been part of the moral epistemology of modern imperialism."[188] In indiscriminatingly using the werstern pattern of thinking in the self assessment the followers of modernism in Turkey create the scope of distorting the native reality by their own hands, not by the real or disguised colonizers.

Comparing their condition against a western scale, the characters of the novel following modernism experience the feeling of inferiority. To overcome this feeling, they try to imitate and join the West even at the cost of their cultural heritage. Turkey's application for membership of the European Union, though concerned with economic and political empowerment in the world stage, can be in a different sense considered a symbolic reflection of this desire which is also found in many other non-western nations that are in geographical proximity with Europe/the West. The traditional group on this

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[188] Eqbal Ahmad, "Islam and Politics," *The Selected Writings of Eqbal Ahmad* (New York: Columbia UP, 2006): 160-178; 162.

symbolic ground oppose the country's oddly visible move towards the West. Now the question arises as to which group better represents the national and cultural identity of the country. Even a character like Necip, a student from a religious high school, attempts a reconciliation between the traditional culture based on faith and western notions of progress and secularism. To him giving up faith in God means the kind of loneliness and nothingness the West embodies. Yet he feels fascinated by western notions of progress and harbours a "fairytale" image of the West. His attempt to resolve the conflict is symbolically represented by his hidden project of writing a science fiction tale which can create a space for the cohabitation of tradition/fairy tale, science, and modernity.

Like Necip, some characters from both groups appreciate and criticise things done in their society on the scale that "that's how they do it in Europe" (OC 210). For them the concept of the West is used for its viability as an instrument for an upwardly mobile lifestyle and not for its intrinsic values. In his essay titled "A Private Reading of André Gide's Public 'Journal'" Pamuk writes:

> When we use [the West] as instrument we participate in a kind of "civilizing process." Because Europe has it, we want something that does not exist in our own history and culture, and legitimize our demand by appealing to Europe's prestige. At home in our own country the concept of Europe justifies the use of force, radical political changes, and ruthless severance from tradition. From improvement of women's rights to violation of human rights, from democracy to military dictatorship, many things are justified by an Occidentalism, which stresses the idea of Europe and a kind of positivist utilitarianism.[189]

The transference of western model to the eastern setting creates much space for misuse of power, and instead of controlling further worsens an already anarchic condition. The Europhiles support the western model mostly under the illusion of quick progress; partially, their vested interest and motive of revenge against the opponents also work behind their stance.

The revolutionary actor Sunay Zaim leads the secularists and the Europhiles, and historically he represents Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In playing the role of a leader he arranges two inset plays entitled "My Fatherland or My Headscarf" and "A Tragedy in

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[189] Orhan Pamuk, "A Private Reading of André Gide's Public *Journal*," Trans. Mary Isin, *Social Research* 70.3 (Fall 20030): 1000-1014; 1009. <www.jstor.org/stable/40971651>.

Kars" to show people the "royal road" to modernity and progress. He believes that the role of theatre in bringing social change is historically proved. He says:

> It was Hegel who first noticed that history and theatre are made of the same materials… Remember that, just as in the theatre, history chooses those who play the leading roles. And just as actors put their courage to the test on the stage, so, too, do the chosen few on the stage of history. (*Snow* 202)

History is made by those who can intervene in moments of crisis to bring sustainable changes in society. Similarly the performers of play have to ensure audience engagement for bringing social changes in a context specific way. If the actor-director Zaim fails to read the pulse of the audience, he will not be fully successful in attaining the reform goal. He tries to boost the audience morally and inject visceral dislike for people belonging to the opposite ideology:

> You've embarked on the road to enlightenment and no one can keep you from this great and noble journey. Do not fear. The reactionaries who want to turn back time, those vile beasts with their cobwebbed minds, will never be allowed to crawl out of their hole. Those who seek to meddle with the republic, with freedom, with enlightenment will see their hands crushed. (*Snow* 158)

Stage allows him to use strong terms to demonize the adherents of the opposite ideology. It is done by exaggeration as in a comedy people's shortcomings are brought to the notice of the audience in order to bring quicker change in the society.

Even Sunay Zaim is strongly in favour of employing the state machinery or army to initiate a crackdown on the reactionaries. He openly puts forward the following proposal: "If we don't let the army and the state deal with these dangerous fanatics, we'll end up in the Middle Ages, sliding into anarchy, travelling the doomed path already travelled by so many tribal nations in Asia and the Middle East" (S 207-208). This proposed or real dependence on army in many countries to implement westernization project or to suppress so-called backwardness has backfired. The winning of the national election by conservative parties in Turkey in the last few decades or the same symptom evident in countries recently liberated in "Arab Spring" from military dictatorship through bloodshed and placed on the road to democracy supports the view. Pamuk also becomes critical of this army safeguard or dependence of secularism/westernization in "The Paris Review Interview": "The power of the secularists in Turkey comes from the army. This

destroys Turkey's democracy and culture of tolerance. Once you have so much army involvement in political culture, people lose their self-confidence...." (OC 374).

It is difficult for people living under coercion or depending on external interference to allow their identity evolve in a spontaneous way. The supporters of coercion like the actor Sunay Zaim identify the western culture as a culture of civility, humanism, and enlightenment though this culture of enlightenment can also be developed in an eastern way in an environment of freedom and negotiation. Here the West appears better not because of the western claim of superiority, but because of the eastern feeling of inferiority derived from the observation of the West's quick progress in science, technology, and public institutions. In this context we can quote the Middle Eastern political analyst Mark Silverberg: "When [the Muslims realized] that the greatness of their medieval Andalusian Caliphate had been eclipsed both culturally and militarily by the West, they chose to portray themselves as victims, searching for scapegoats and excuses, rather than confronting their own inadequacies."[190] The critics of Orientalism mainly focus on the western project of cultural domination but remain silent about the West's superior accomplishment in modern science, technology, and military strategy. Oriental characters often relive their past of scientific and military supremacy to counter the present sense of inferiority. The actor Zaim in *Snow* believes that Turkey should take the new identity of enlightenment and overcome the sadness emanating from the loss of past glory. He intends to change Turkey's present backwardness by implementing westernization projects. For reformers like Zaim the concept of the West is not accepted for its intrinsic values but for its viability as an instrument.

Not all characters in *Snow* share this view or sentiment. The Islamists in particular believe that any move to put on European garb will turn them into caricatures as the soul will remain unaffected. A proud young Islamist exclaims: "we can never be Europeans! They might try to roll over us with their tanks and spray us with bullets and kill us all. But they can't change our souls" (*Snow* 284). His sentiment is reinforced by that of a passionate Kurd: "You can take possession of my body but never my soul" (*Snow* 284) .They seem to echo Frantz Fanon: "Humanity is waiting for something from us other than such an imitation [of the Europeans], which would be almost an obscene

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[190] Mark Silverberg, "Paradise Lost: The Decline and Fall of Arabia," *The New Media Journal* (US, 2006). <www.newmediajournal.us/staff/silverberg/10102006.html>.

caricature."[191] They hold that European culture and identity will be extrinsic and imposed, and identify the intrinsic culture as the bedrock of their identity. That their ideas have been gaining ground is proved by the prospect of the fundamentalists' winning in the mayoral election of Kars despite contrary campaign in favour of modernity in European terms. The success of the conservative camp is due more to the failure of the modernising camp than to their intrinsic logic.

This situation has larger reflection in the success of right-wing parties in Turkish politics from the late eighties and the diminishing effect of the Europeanizing slogans launched by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk more than half a century ago. His initiative, successful at the beginning in strengthening his country against foreign conspiracies, could not ultimately reach the heart of the majority that had been holding tightly to tradition and living mostly in rural areas. Blue, the terrorist-cum-visionary Islamist, echoes the Kurdish boy when he warns Ka about the result of being Europhile whether in Europe or in one's native country. According to him, to follow the Europeans means self-abasement: "It doesn't matter where you live – here or in your beloved Europe – You'll always be grovelling" (*Snow* 357). To heal their wounded pride and preserve their unique identity from apish imitation of the West many people in Turkey, as the novel suggests, opt for extremism in the form of either nationalistic chauvinism or Muslim fundamentalism.

The novel *Snow* narrativizes competition between two different worldviews. In the words of Akbar Ahmed the conflict is "a straight fight between two approaches to the world, two opposed philosophies... [the one] based in secular materialism, [and] the other in faith."[192] But it does not ultimately remain only at the level of intellectual/philosophical debate. It is playing a far reaching role in many global political events of the present such as "the war on terrorism," Palestine problem, Turkish application for EU membership with the consequent reactions at home and abroad, and the political destabilization and the prospective rise of conservatism in Arab politics. Although this conflict of broader consequences is presented in most Pamuk novels, it is

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[191] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, op. cit., 315.

[192] Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1993) : 264.

given a broader human face by the characters in *Snow* at the micro level in the remote Turkish border city of Kars which, as a character of the novel predicts, "might one day have a role to play in world history" (*Snow* 277). This city is chosen for the enactment of the conflict because of its "important" past. As the narrator says: "Kars was an important station on the trade route to Georgia, Tabriz and the Caucasus; and being on the border between two defunct empires, the Ottoman and the Russian, the mountainous city also benefited from the protection of the standing armies each power had in turn placed here for that purpose" (*Snow* 20-21). Like Istanbul it has been home to various peoples like Armenians, Persians, Greeks, "Georgians and Kurds and Circassians from various tribes" (*Snow* 20). Therefore, the city has the capacity to present in microcosom what is happening in the country as a whole or even in the larger world.

Of course, the conflict is not always between the upholders of faith and materialism. Ultimately, in many characters of *Snow* it turns into a conflict between European identity and non-European identity. It surfaces by finding an opposite which becomes necessary for formation and understanding of identities. According to Said, "the formation of cultural identities" should be understood as "contrapuntal ensembles, for it is the case that no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions: Greeks always require barbarians, and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etcetera."[193] This idea is put through the mouth of one of the youths who would stick to traditional ways of life when he says:

> I'm proud of the part of me that isn't European. I'm proud of all things in me that the Europeans find childish, cruel and primitive. If the Europeans are beautiful, I want to be ugly; if they're intelligent, I prefer to be stupid; if they're modern, let me stay pure. (*Snow* 285)

These words, reflecting a mind deadly against imitation, echo the following words of the Black Man in Fanon: "If the white man challenges my humanity, I will impose my whole weight as a man on his life and show him that I am not that "sho' good eatin'" that he persists in imagining."[194]

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[193] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., 60.
[194] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, op. cit., 178.

But the pride of the youth in Pamuk's novel also contains its opposites—shame and humiliation. Pride is expressed as a kind of fierce but vain defence against opposite sentiments. Pamuk elaborates on this issue in his essay "In Kars and Frankfurt":

> When we in Turkey discuss the East-West question…or when we prevaricate over our country's relation with Europe, the question of shame is always lurking. When I try to understand this shame, I always try to relate it with its opposite, pride. As we all know, wherever there is too much pride, whenever people act too proudly, there is always the specter of their shame and humiliation. For wherever another people feels deeply humiliated, we can expect to see a proud nationalism rising to the surface. (OC 231)

Pamuk's thesis on shame and humiliation evokes the well known point of the psychology of offence and defence. Any aggressivity against the opposite views turns out to be a self defence mechanism and shows self weakness. Besides pride or shame, Pamuk's character's preference for purity is not instigated so much by faith as by repulsion of the West. In this regard we can quote Fazlur Rahman who thinks that previously Muslims "were engaged by the West through attraction, [but at present] the neorevivalist is equally haunted by the West through repulsion."[195]

National pride also works in the nationalist effort to get freedom from European influence. As the Islamist Blue says: "Where they're concerned, all I want to do is step out of their shadow" (*Snow* 280). At the same time, he also realizes the difficulty of the act: "But the truth is, we all [have to] live under a shadow" at least for some critical times of transition (*Snow* 280). It is "not just Islamists who take pride in this country. Republicans feel the same way" some times (*Snow* 278). They all feel that "Europe is not [their] future….As long as [they] live [they will] not imitate them or hate [themselves] for being different to them" (*Snow* 278). Contrary to this view, one character points out that if some of these characters are given free European visas they would, without giving any second thought, empty the town. This is, one can argue, the common case in third world countries where people suffer from the dichotomy of attraction and repulsion in their view of the West. Many third world intellectuals are highly critical of American hegemony or what they call new American imperialism. But they do not hesitate to seize the first opportunity

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[195] As qtd. by Akbar S.Ahmed, op. cit.,160. Dr.Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988) is a Pakistani born influential Muslim reformist thinker of the second half of the twentieth century. He served as professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago and was much criticized by traditional Islamic scholars (ulema) for his "modernist" interpretations of Islamic beliefs and practices.

to visit or permanently settle in that country. About this duality Pamuk writes in the context of the European writers' and tourists' pen pictures and photographs of the (in)glorious panoramas of Istanbul: "With the drive to westernise and the concurrent rise of Turkish nationalism, the love-hate relationship with the western gaze became all the more convoluted.... [because] a Western writer voicing even a mild objection *would break their hearts and wound their nationalist pride*" (IMC 213; emphasis added).

Paradoxically, the two extremes with regard to the perception of the West are linked. In his essay on "André Gide" Pamuk writes:

> [B]ut the two states of mind – the disdain and admiration – are strongly linked. Viewed from my window Europe is an idea that plays upon both. My image of Europe or the West is not a sunny, enlightened, grandiose idea. My image of the West is a tension, a violence born of love and hate, longing and humiliation. (OC 209)

As a postmodern text *Snow* does not attempt any resolution of this "love-hate," "attraction-repulsion" dichotomy. The novel only problematizes the issue for readers' consideration. Inadequate mutual knowledge can be substantially responsible for such a sorry state of affairs. Hence Edward Said rightly observes that only a very few among those who are using the labels "the West" and "Islam" aggressively or assertatively can claim "a solid grip on all aspects of the western tradition" or on all "the actual languages of the Islamic world." But unfortunately all pretend that they know accurately what they are talking about and tend to characterize "Islam" and "the West" very confidently.[196] Their pretension leads to a destructive perception of West-Islam relation. The historical attention to the subject surfaces very naturally in the literary portrayal of certain people and places.

In the context of Pamuk's oeuvre, the East-West binary is integral to the existence of the Turk's "divided self," engendered historically and geographically. Any historical understanding of Turkey's "national life" emphasizes that duality or diversity is at the root of the cultural identity of the modern Turks. They are labouring under the illusion that they will establish an insular identity which cannot go beyond the fold of the religion they belong to. The West has also ironically contributed to the concept by repeatedly lifting the benchmark for EU membership of Turkey arguably on the ground of the country's Islamic affiliation. The tendency to treat religion as the exclusive basis

[196] Edward Said, *Covering Islam* , op. cit., 10.

for identity construction, as the Nobel laureate Economist and philosopher Amartya Sen puts it in his thought-provoking book *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, "not only diminishes us all, it also makes the world much more flammable."[197] To save the world from the flame of identity conflict, Sen contends, all identity groups should recognise that an individual is a composite of diverse affiliations and in a given context he must make the right choice as to which affiliation can be given priority without affecting the essential character of the other. Failing to practise this paradigm an individual or a community will only lead to internal or external violence and he or she will run after an illusive destiny.[198]

While this insight is generally applicable to all societies in the "global village," it applies particularly to Turkey. Hence, the East-West tension in Turkey is a crisis which calls for an accommodation with others through acquiring mutual knowledge to facilitate the country's smoother transition from Ottoman to Republic to European Union. Tanpinar, one of the leading modern novelists in Turkey, calls this possible coexistence a "third source" which can initiate an accommodative re-writing of the national narrative as attempted by Pamuk where Ottoman legacy, religious tradition, cross-cultural influence, and European modernism will have a peaceful share. I cannot here resist the temptation of quoting Tanpinar in fuller:

> We can consider the East or the West only as two separate sources. Both exist for us, and quite extensively; that is to say, they are part of our reality. However, their presence alone can't be of any value, and remaining [separate] that way, they are an invitation to create a vast and comprehensive synthesis, a life meant for us and particular to us. For the encounter and fusion to be fruitful, it must give birth to this life, to this synthesis. And this is possible by attaining the vital third source, which is the reality of the nation.[199]

Although Pamuk theoretically supports this conceptualization of East and West, the reality his characters inhabit does not correspond to it fully. Being bereft of Ottoman glories and living with a self-generated sense of defeat and marginalization they suffer from "hüzün" – a condition of collective heartache, deep-seated sadness which is

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[197] Amartya Sen, op. cit., 16.
[198] Ibid, 16.
[199] As qtd. by Erdağ Göknar, "Ottoman Past and Turkish Future: Ambivalence in A. H. Tanpinar's *Those Outside the Scene*," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003): 647-661; 659.

characterized by Pamuk as "end-of-empire melancholy."[200] They live under the shadow of the "spectre of comparisons"[201] which makes them busy with fighting a competitor who is real and imagined at the same time. They cannot easily gain confidence to stand up to the "western gaze" and retrieve their past self.

Instead of drawing inspiration from the "third source," the eastern characters in *Snow* feel the need to Occidentalize the West in order to assert their distinct individuality. Pamuk enjoys depicting "intricacies of identities in a country that straddles East and West" (OC 355). Nowhere in Pamuk oeuvre do the intricacies appear more convoluted than in the characters of *Snow.* Their need to resist the impact of westernization refers back to Pamuk's own experience with the West. He seems to argue that his characters must cling to their roots although for survival they need to engage openly with Occidentalism. Wish for western approval may destroy a person's pride and cause humiliation. As the passionate but humble Kurdish boy in the novel says: "there's no avoiding humiliation [in Europe] except by proving at the first opportunity that you think exactly as they do. But this is impossible, and it can break a man's pride" (*Snow* 284). Although they oppose the West, they must occidentalise, "acting as if [they]'re so much smarter and worthier than Westerners" (*Snow* 286). Even if the West "start[s] handing out free visas," they would "do the honourable thing and stay here [in Kars]" (*Snow* 286). It is precisely the "Othering" of the West that provides them with the necessary space for exercising the spirit of individualism. This is reflected in the words of the Islamist revolutionary Blue: "I'm standing up against the Westerners as an individual. It's because I'm an individual that I refuse to imitate them" (*Snow* 331). By criticizing the West they gain momentum in their project of self-fashioning. A passionate Kurd makes the point strongly: "[if] the first Western man I met in the street turned out to be a good person who didn't even despise me, I'd still mistrust him, just for being a Westerner, I'd still worry that he was looking down on me" (*Snow* 284).

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[200] Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Trans. Maureen Freely (London: Faber and Faber, 2005):6. "Hüzün," as explained by Pamuk, is an Arabic-rooted Turkish word connoting a special type of melancholy which characterises his humanised native city Istanbul and Istanbullus (inhabitants of the city). However, the term can well indicate a dominant mood of the citizens of Turkey. "Hüzün" is born out of the bitter memories of lost glories and desperate yearnings to regain them. It is at once psychological, spiritual, and aesthetic; it is not negative or pathological.

[201] Benedict Anderson, op. cit.

Such self-fashioning can be interpreted as an attempt at once at distancing one's own self from the "other," creating one's own distinct identity, and acknowledging the possibility of underlying identification with the "other." In this regard we can take recourse to Frantz Fanon's view "that the disavowal of the "Other" always exacerbates the "edge" of identification, reveals that dangerous place where identity and aggressivity were intertwined. For denial is always a retroactive process, a half acknowledgement of that Otherness which has left its traumatic mark."[202] The Kurdish boy who is publicly critical of the occident harbours, paradoxically, a hidden desire to be accepted by the West. In fact, all the characters in *Snow* have the latent desire to be treated by the West as individuals, not as "brainless lazy, dirty, clumsy fools...from [a] poor country" (*Snow* 283). Their resistance to the forces of westernization paradoxically correlates to their suppressed desire for western acceptance. Although they are strongly saying "we will never be Europeans" (*Snow* 284), internally they feel sorry for being otherwise: "I'm so sorry I'm not a Westerner" (*Snow* 285).

Turgut Bey, a former Marxist and father of the two central female characters of the novel, represents the characters who unequivocally feel badly the need for western acceptance: "I wish to prove to the Europeans that in Turkey, too, we have people who believe in common sense and democracy" (*Snow* 279). He thinks that if the West comes to realize that the people of East in many ways resemble them, the East will get legitimacy, and will not be treated as the "Other." The passionate Kurdish boy links this western acceptance with the irresistible urge to be embraced cordially by the West as he desires to see the following statement printed in a Frankfurt paper: "We're not stupid, we're just poor! And we have a right to insist on this distinction… [and] the biggest deception of the past thousand years, is this: to confuse poverty with stupidity" (*Snow* 282). This need to be acknowledged by the other is connected with the need to have their culture certified as legitimate, not exotic, that is to say, a culture having a rational basis and historical root. Thus their cultural identity again appears to have connection with the tendency towards Occidentalism.

The curious paradoxical position of some *Snow* characters in showing the love-hate relationship with the West proves at once the need and the fallacy of stereotyping. Stereotyping the West may help asserting individuality of these characters upto a certain

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[202] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, op. cit., xxxiii.

extent but ultimately it incurs the costs of othering the "Other." The hate notwithstanding, their love or attractrion for the West foregrounds the potential for proximity. They occidentalize the West to prove how different they are but ultimately the differences turn into similarities, as the same means contain forces of distancing and nearing. It proves that intricacies in identity do not actually separate people, but in effect bind them. The issue of stereotyping the West also comes up in the comparative analysis of writings by the West and the non-West. Said in the context of the establishment of the first American department of comparative literature in 1891 at Columbia University says: "Academic work in comparative literature carried with it the notion that Europe and the United States together were the centre of the world, not simply by virtue of their political positions, but also because their literatrures were the ones most worth studying."[203] This kind of notion meets with resistance in what a character of *Snow* says about literary democracy: "When they write poems or sing songs in the West, they speak for all humanity. They're human beings – but we're just Muslims. When we write something, it's ethnic poetry" (*Snow* 286). Blue is strongly influenced by this sentiment to be heard "not just in Kars and Istanbul" but in the world beyond. He would like to feel proudly: "We're not speaking to Europe...We're speaking to all humanity" (*Snow* 277).

In a similar vein while explaning his own position as a writer in a global context, Pamuk speaks about the manipulation of a non-western author's identity:

> Internationally, I am perceived to be more Turkish than I actually see myself. I am known as a Turkish author. *When Proust writes about love, he is seen as someone talking about universal love. Especially at the beginning, when I wrote about love, people would say that I was writing about Turkish love*. When my work began to be translated, Turks were proud of it. They claimed me as their own. I was more of a Turk for them. When you get to be internationally known, your Turkishness is underlined internationally, then your Turkishness is underlined by Turks themselves, who reclaim you. *Your sense of national identity becomes something that others manipulate. It is imposed by other people.* (OC 378; emphasis added)

The West's universality is established partially by the East's excessive emphasis on the eastern writer's background as is done by the Turks about the identity of Pamuk. Moreover, the West may claim a kind of legitimacy to represent the universal by

[203] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., 54.

emphasizing the point of hidden similarities of all human beings. As Terry Eagleton contends in the context of culture: "Western culture is potentially universal, which means that it does not oppose its own values to those of others, merely reminds them that its own values are fundamentally theirs too. It is not trying to foist an alien identity on others, simply recalling them to what they secretly are."[204] Still, questions remain about the operation of a hegemonic politics behind the universality of the West.

When it comes to the representation of female identity in the East Pamuk's portrayal covers beauty, terror, and courage unlike the view of the orientalists who tend to portray eastern women as merely sex dolls confined to harems. One of the central woman characters of *Snow*, Ipek is smart, dynamic, and politically conscious but she is also first and foremost a paragon of beauty. The narrator confesses to have struggled hard to "fathom its depth" (*Snow* 422). When her sister Kadife, another central woman character and leader of the "headscarf girls," removes her head scarf in the second inset play to assert her individuality and independent spirit, "all of Kars gazed in awe at [her] long, beautiful, brown hair, which the cameraman finally summoned the courage to show in tight focus"(*Snow* 412). But after the baring of her head her facial expression reflects hidden consternation caught in the close focus of the cameraman. When the cameraman "had found the nerve to zoom in on her face, it became clear that Kadife was deeply embarrassed, like a woman whose dress had come undone in a crowded public place. Her very movement bespoke a terrible pain" (*Snow* 412).

Of course, there is a definite line of demarcation which she, as a sexually liberated and politically oriented eastern/Muslim woman, cannot cross. The line again refers to the normative value of the West and its unconscious acceptance by the East. Being directed by the inset play director she emotionally unveils herself on the stage to assert her identity as an unveiled modern woman capable of withstanding the "western gaze," although she, in normal circumstances, would not desire to be seen as a devil with the blue dress on, like the woman of a European film who "was wearing a blue dress that revealed her shoulders" (*Snow* 288). She fails to recognize that miniskirted girls can be a

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[204] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 73.

common sight on the streets of both East and West. In her rebellious spirit and revenge motive, and in her stance against patriarchal authority she is modelled on Belimperia as the inset play is an adaptation of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. Moreover, she appears in many respects as a literary twin of Sophocles' Antigone. They are comparable with each other in their unqualified respect for their fathers, interest in public matters**,** and view of suicide as a means "to gain something…to escape all forms of punishment," and " to show their pride"(*Snow* 406). That Kadife, in addition to having links with Belimperia as a manifestation of the influence of the Renaissance drama on Pamuk, is deliberately or unconsciously modelled on Antigone indicates, as would be utterly unimaginable by the occidentalist characters of *Snow*, the sustained Greek influence on Muslim intellectuals that started right from the Golden Age of Islam.[205]

In the dystopic world of *Snow* the independent spirit manifested through acting in the inset play puts Kadife on the horns of a dilemma – the choice between upholding religious principle or inviting political trouble – or as the novelist puts it: "faced with two important decisions – one about baring her head, the other about committing suicide" (*Snow* 403). Her attempt at self-construction is again evident when she keeps in mind the audience while preparing a statement for the German paper. First she says: "I have a few things to say to the German paper, too. Please write them down…[beginning as] 'A young woman of Kars'-" (*Snow* 288). Then correcting herself she says: "no, don't write that, say, 'A Muslim girl who lives in Kars'- "has covered her head for personal religious reasons but also wears the scarf as an emblem of her faith. One day this girl is overcome by a sudden revulsion and pulls the scarf off her head" (*Snow* 288). Her addressing a meeting for the German paper becomes an unusual spectacle to people who were not ready "to seeing a woman addresses a political meeting with such confidence" (*Snow* 276-277).

When she is advised to sign the collective "statement to the West" as a representative of "Muslim feminists," she jumps to foreground her position as a distinct individual and declines to appear as a type categorically. She explains her stance thus:

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[205] The Age started with the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750 AD and lasted until the fall of Baghdad, the then centre of the Abbasid Caliphate, in 1258 AD at the hands of the Mongols. The period witnessed unrivalled intellectual achievements by the Muslims.

> I have no wish to represent anyone….If I'm going to stand up to the Europeans, it will be on my own, to tell my own story – my whole story, with all my sins and my foibles. You know how sometimes you'll meet someone [unfamiliar]…and you're tempted to tell him everything, your whole life story – the way it seemed the heroes told their stories to the authors of the European novels I read when I was a girl. I wouldn't mind telling my story like that to four or five Europeans. (*Snow* 241)

In her efforts towards fashioning a unique role for herself, Kadife eventually offers a timely service to her faith by projecting its compatibility with modernity, individualism, and feminism. Her decision to unveil can be construed as a show of solidarity with the modernizers and her decision to veil can be construed as her way to prove Muslim women's head covering, if used out of self will, as, to quote Leila Ahmed, "the uniform not of reaction, but of transition…[both decisions taken simultaneously] signaling entrance into, and determination to move forward in, modernity."[206]

Many characters in *Snow* connect the East-West question with the "headscarf debate" and tend to stick to their traditional culture to maintain purity and distinction of their identity. The "headscarf girls" consider the scarf as the marker of their culture based on faith and an emblem of their identity. When they are forced not to wear that marker in educational institutions and public offices they take recourse to suicide as the only tenable means to save their wounded pride and identity. People who follow the spirit of the Kemalist cloth revolution in Turkey in the first half of the last century consider headscarf as an obstacle to the country's modernising project. The angry girl Funda Eser tearing and burning her headscarf in the inset play "My Fatherland or My Headscarf" projects that Kemalist cloth spirit. The narrator constructs the meaning of her terrible action thus:

> When the angry girl tore the scarf off her head, she was not just making a statement about people, nor about national dress; she was talking about our souls, because the scarf, the fez, the turban and the headdress were symbols of the reactionary darkness of our souls, from which we should liberate ourselves and run to join the modern nations of the West. (*Snow* 155)

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[206] As qtd. by Mary Jo Kietzman, "Speaking 'to All Humanity': Renaissance Drama in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 52.3 (Fall 2010): 324-353; 339.

People following the perspective of Funda Eser overlook the point made by many of the “headscarf girls” that wearing headscarf is a complex and multi-dimensional issue involving Islamic doctrinal implications, psychology and emotion of the users, and perspectives of the onlookers within and outside the fold of the faith. Benazir Durdana in her book *Muslim India in Anglo-Indian Fiction* explains the doctrinal position: “Doctrinally, purdah is intended to give women freedom from their sexual identity, so that they can engage in constructive social activity without attracting undue [male] attention, for Islam allows a woman free movement in the outside world, as long as purdah is maintained in her attire.”[207] In her efforts to show the enlightened face of Islam she holds that if a Muslim woman in the absence of a situation requiring defencive strategy of purdah relaxes this doctrinal imposition of cloth upto the point of keeping modesty only it does not go contrary to the demand of the doctrine. The writings of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a victim of veil in her childhood turned into an emancipator of Bengal’s Muslim women imprisoned in home and harem, support Durdana’s view.[208] In the picture of Pamuk the headscarf has accumulated political implications apart from the doctrinal dimension. That item of human attire in his country has been politicized by Islamists and secularists alike “who think of the headscarf as a symbol of ‘political Islam’” (*Snow* 16).

The position of the supporters of modernity in favour of forcibly unveiling modern Muslim women and the fundamentalists’ pressure on women to wear the veil are equally condemnable. Both cases may excite passions leading to violence and mayhem. Amartya Sen’s comment on the “reductionist” theory of identity politics can be applicable to this context. He says: “the reductionism of high theory can make a major contribution, often inadvertently, to the violence of low politics.”[209] While the “reductionist” theory of secularists does not take into consideration the intrinsic logic of Islam acceptable to many Muslim women, fundamentalists’ “reductionist” theory does not consider women as individuals having right to choose from multiple options/ideologies of lifestyle and dress code. Although there are many significant sites to inscribe their ideologies on, both parties unfortunately choose the female body/cloth as an ideological battleground. In his interview with Z. Esra Mirze, Pamuk laments this

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[207] Benazir Durdana, op. cit., 110.
[208] Ibid., 111.
[209] Amartya Sen, op. cit., xvi.

unexpected turn of events in the ideological drama of his country: "I wish that headscarves were something that both secular and political Islamist parties weren't aware of. I wish that this (Turkey) was a country where some people wore headscarves, some people didn't, and no one noticed. But unfortunately it is at the heart of the political struggle between political Islamists and so-called seculars."[210]

Unlike the one-sided and extrinsic perspective of western writers on the headscarf issue, Pamuk in *Snow* projects an insider's enlightened view which treats the issue psychologically and paradoxically through the portrayal of the "headscarf girls." If one considers the western liberal view of head covering for women it appears as a repressive tool. If Islam's intrinsic logic as accepted by many wearers of scarf is considered it may have totally different connotations. Let alone the outsiders' view, Muslim women themselves are widely divided on the point of accepting or rejecting the intrinsic logic of their faith on the issue of head covering. Headscarf is not an essential cultural identity marker to many Muslim women characters who prefer western identity as a way of achieving progress in governance, human rights, and technology. To a greater extent their view comes out of the fear of the "spectre of comparisons" or the fear of the "western gaze." They equate the headscarf with other traditional identity markers that are to be judged against western standards and suffer from the anxiety of finding it below these standards. To be on a par with the West even with their different identity markers Islamists put forward a proposal of mediation in the form of their "Islamic version of democracy." But they are in doubt about its western or universal approval. Thus Blue asks rhetorically: "Can the West endure any democracy achieved by enemies who in no way resemble them?" (*Snow* 233). He expects that the western agenda of "democracy, freedom, and human rights" will allow an equitable space for Muslims and the debate over the use of identity markers will be resolved democratically.

To Blue, acceptance by the West is important because it has attained the prerogative of "speaking to all humanity" (*Snow* 277) while the rest of the world is supposed to speak to a limited audience. How to reverse the condition or, at least, redress the balance is a difficult task to perform. It may be done by assimilating the western narratives with their own as proposed by the protagonist-poet Ka or the inset play actor

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[210] Orhan Pamuk, "Implementing Disform," op. cit., 179.

Sunay Zaim, or partially by author Orhan Pamuk himself through writing postmodern novels. Or it may be accomplished by reviving the near forgotten eastern narratives like the Persian stories of Firdevsi, Rumi, or the stories of "the Arabian Nights" which "[o]nce upon a time, millions of people knew...by heart–from Tabriz to Istanbul, from Bosnia to Trabzon – and when they recalled [these] stor[ies], they found the meaning in their lives'(*Snow* 81). The thousand-year-old story of Rüstem and Suhrab "spoke to [the eastern world] in just the same way that Oedipus' murder of his father and Macbeth's obsession with power and death speak to people throughout the Western world" (*Snow* 81). According to the Islamist Blue, the West has deliberately made the East forget these beautiful stories for the sake of western stories in a desperate bid to uproot the anchor of his people's identity. He complains: "because we've fallen under the spell of the West, we've forgotten our own stories. They've removed all the old stories from our children's textbooks" (*Snow* 81).

Pamuk realizes the near forgotten status of the eastern canon and makes efforts to revive it in his own way. In "The *Paris Review* Interview" he makes a noteworthy point in this connection:

> [T]here is another canon. It should be explored, developed, shared, criticized, and then accepted. Right now the so-called Eastern canon is in ruins. The glorious texts are all around but there is no will to put them together. From the Persian classics, through to all the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese texts, these things should be assessed critically. As it is now, *the canon is in the hands of the Western scholars*. That is the centre of distribution and communication. (OC 371; emphasis added)

Manipulating the value of the eastern canon the West has created a myth of superiority of its own canon, as (in)famously projected by Thomas Babington Macaulay: "a single self of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."[211] Now the renaissance of the eastern canon is not possible without exploiting developments in the West. Pamuk is doing this when he appropriates postmodern techniques developed in the West to deal with eastern themes and issues. Contrary to the stance of many characters of *Snow* to conceptualize East and West as mutually exclusive and irreconcilable, Pamuk creates a finely balanced intertextual background through

[211] Thomas Babington Macaulay, op. cit., 241.

drawing on both eastern and western sources. Here we can mention Pamuk's adaptation of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* in the novel's second inset play "A Tragedy in Kars" and his adoption of the technique used by Kyd and Shakespeare.

It becomes now clear that the ideologically warring groups in Turkey nurture unawares an identical spirit contained by Occidentalism. And Occidentalism keeps under cover the shame, fear, and anger which some characters express publicly and others acknowledge privately or keep in the corner of their minds. Pamuk sums up the condition succinctly in his essay "A Private Reading of André Gide's Public 'Journal'":

> The Occidentalist is first of all ashamed because he is not European. Then (but not always) he is ashamed of what he does to become European. He is ashamed that he has lost his own identity in the endeavor to become European. He is ashamed of having and not having his own identity. He is ashamed of the shame itself, which sometimes he erupts against and sometimes accepts with resignation. He is ashamed and angry when these shames are bared.[212]

The complex condition of a mind under the grip of shame manifests itself in various ways in different individuals under different circumstances. Ultimately it reveals an underlying similarity despite the show of apparent difference. Thereby, the East-West question in Pamuk lends itself towards the formulation of a psychological theory which is termed "difference as sameness" in the analysis of Sibel Erol. "It started as a specifically local Turkish issue," expounds Sibel Erol, "then was cast as global phenomenon, only to be finally turned into an abstract and theoretical inquiry into the very mechanism of the conceptualization and representation of difference."[213]

The East-West opposition eventually remains as a problem of perspective and the result of human tendency to create binaries. People who advocate a policy of exclusion only deny the reality of our essentially mongrel identity. By showing both sides of the issue Pamuk advocates a postmodern hybrid space that subsumes different sides of the binaries: East-West, secular-religious, and modern-traditional. His take on the issue with respect to his country is anti-monochromatic, that is, favouring a demand for the creative

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[212] Orhan Pamuk, "A Private Reading of André Gide's Public 'Journal,'" op. cit., 1013.

[213] Sibel Erol, "Reading Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* as Parody: Difference as Sameness," *Comparative Critical Studies* 4.3 (2007):403-432.409. Drawing on Derrida's definition of difference Sibel discusses East-West opposition in relation to the novel's technical aspects like parody and intertextuality. In this article the concept of "difference as sameness" has been used thematically to project the characters' responses to East-West correlation.

combination of East and West. In an interview he explains his position with the help of the medical metaphor of schizophrenia:

> Turkey should not worry about having two spirits, belonging to two different cultures, having two souls. *Schizophrenia makes you intelligent.* You may lose your relation with reality – I'm a fiction writer, so I don't think that's such a bad thing – but you shouldn't worry about your schizophrenia. (OC 369; emphasis added)

That as a representation of the hybrid space the novel *Snow* is successful is proved by the fact that it was attacked equally by Islamists and secularists.[214] It creates an in-between space where the East and the West can continuously transform each other and religiously oriented and secular citizens can enter an ongoing dialogue through art.

And surely a continuous creative effort towards a synthesis of the opposites is an urgent requirement for the peaceful coexistence of all in a pluralistic world. If any positive transformation is to be reached, it can be achieved through artists and not by politicians. In his interview with Elizabeth Fransworth Pamuk says:

> I've been saying to my readers that what is important is not clash of parties, civilizations, cultures, East and West, whatever. But think of that other peoples in other continents and civilizations are actually exactly like you and you can learn this through literature. Pay attention to good literature and novels and do not believe in politicians.[215]

While the politicians for their narrow and immediate dividend tend to uphold the anthropological view of identity that stresses the difference in human nature, the artists for attaining universality uphold the philosophical tradition of identity that stresses the mutual reflection in the mirror of human nature.[216] As Pamuk "believed in the art of the novel," *Snow* "was [his] way of doing something political" where the politicians fail (OC 372). The novel opens up a forum of intellectual and political engagement equally accessible to the secular elite, middle class Muslims, and the masses who have no other platform but novels for the representation of their voices (OC 372). In this way a novel like *Snow* can show a way that can reverse the course of our ever-shrinking world by

[214] Ibid., 373. Pamuk says about the Turkish reaction to *Snow*: "In Turkey, both conservatives—or political Islamists—and secularists were upset (by the novel). Not to the point of banning the book or hurting me. But they were upset and wrote about it in the daily national newspaper."
[215] Orhan Pamuk, "Bridging Two Worlds," op. cit., 6.
[216] See Homi Bhabha, "Interrogating Identity," *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., 57-93; 66.

rendering East-West and secular-spiritual issues a little more tractable than people generally conceive them to be.

Representation of Subalternity

Apparently Pamuk is more concerned with upper class people as he belongs to the elite class of the Istanbulite society. But he believes that novel can create a common space of interaction for the elite and the subaltern and as a result the poor neighbourhoods of his native city come alive in his memoir and novels. Minorities and marginalized people with their problems and quest for identity are portrayed in his writings. His portrayal of the ethnic minorities in *Snow* an*d Istanbul: Memories and the City* shows his sympathy for the less empowerd. His criticism of nationalism, which I shall discuss in the next section, for its suppressing the minor voices also evinces his subaltern consciousness. Most of the Islamist characters in *Snow* belong to the lower class and they are worried that their annals will be unrecorded in the power-patronized history. The Kurdish characters discriminatorily called "mountain Turks" have been given significant space in Pamuk's fiction. This does not, of course, mean that he does have a subaltern project like some Indian writers writing in English.

Critique of Ultra-nationalism, Nation-state, and Empire

Before considering Pamuk's take on the ideas of Ultra-nationalism, Nation-state, and Empire, some historical context-analysis is pertinent here. The French Revolution first triggered the emergence of the sense of nationalism in different ethnic groups living in the Ottoman Empire. While the majority group decided to maintain a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire, nationalism became important for the minorities. Only after the empire's final defeat in 1918 did the majority Ottomans in the face of the victors' move to dismember the empire come to the realization of the need of nationalism. After the creation of their Republic in 1923 they carefully coined its official name territorially as the Republic of Turkey, rather than ethnically as the "Turkish Republic." Coming to Pamuk's context, "Türkiye Cumhurieti" is often construed erroneously as the "Turkish Republic," not the "Republic of Turkey," and correspondingly the legislature as the "Turkish Grand National Assembly," not the "Grand National Assembly of Turkey." Similarly controversy arises over the practical treatment of the people of the state as "Turks" or "Türkiyeli," the former being fit for the

ethnically Turkish and the latter patriotically including all living in the land – Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Circassians, etc. The term "Turk" constitutionally remains with the same kind of connotation as "British" or "American."[217] For universal acceptance of the territorial state of Turkey the early nationalists, quite aware of the terminological limitation of the term "Turk," started the inclusive project of founding the nation of Turkey and the Turk. However, the project remains, as is the case with many nationalist movements across the world, partially materialized.

In additition to the historical conflict, Pamuk focuses on the present nationalists, west-opposing tendency, use of religion as national marker, and the state's injustice towards ethnic minorities. He critiques ultra-nationalism, nation-state, and empire for their negative effects on identity formation. In his autobiography in the context of his country he says: "When the Empire fell, the new republic while certain of its purpose was unsure of its identity" (IMC 215). To give the newly founded national identity a monolithic foundation "the ideologues of the Turkish state...expressed their nationalism in unlovely and unadorned authoritarian rhetoric," and "were happy to forget the Greeks, the Armenians, the Jews, the Kurds and many other minorities" (IMC 225-226). As a result of the project one can see in Istanbul and other cities "row[s]of the houses abandoned by Greeks, Armenians and Jews as a nationalist state bore down on minorities" (IMC 231). The Islamic mindset of the majority people is also responsible for the massive crackdown on minorities to solidify the Turkish nation-state through the impractical philosophy of Turkism which cannot assimilate the non-Turks. As for example, the Kurds despite belonging to the same religion cannot merge with the majority people.

Taking religion as the basis of ultra-nationalism many of the Islamist characters in Pamuk try to alienate the West as "other." When the protagonist Ka in *Snow* says that he like the Europeans once wanted to reject the Muslim God asking "women to wrap themselves up in scarves," a nationalist character reacts: "Do they have a different God in Europe?"(*Snow* 99). Such questioning implies an ideological vision of making the whole world worshiping the identical God. This position shows the possibility that the Islamic faith in many Turks may ultimately overrule their loyalty to a nation-state in

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[217] See Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003): ix.

favour of a larger Islamic nation (Ummah). Amitav Ghosh in his article "The Fundamentalist Challenge" tries to explain the relation of extremist religious movements and nationalism in the Muslim majority states: among the major religions Islam is doctrinally least territorial and least nationalized, yet it is more than a coincidence that despite the critique of nationalism in some branches of radical Islam, radical Islamic movements often lapse into patterns belonging to nationalist movements. Therefore. at the heart of the Islamist characters nationlist activities within the framework of nation-states sometimes overlap with the pan-Islamic concept leading to radical movements (I&I 279). (Turkish) nationalism from two extremes, ultra secular and ultra Islamist, appears untenable to Pamuk. In *Snow* he deals with the question of reconciling religion as identity marker with the identity construction of the secular nation-state. The sense of Turkishness of most Pamuk characters who tend to judge themselves against the scale of Europe shows one of the manifestations of "[n]ationalism [as] a reaction of peoples who feel culturally at a [point] of disadvantage."[218]

Questioning Border and Cartographic Violence

Like Ghosh's delineation of the cartographic issue, Pamuk's major novels show the treatment of the apparently concrete but inherently transparent and porous borders. He talks about cartographic violence with its human and cultural costs and hints at the means to correct the wrong done by the violence. To him, the East-West division of his country does not pose any problem in healing the cartographic wound. In *The Black Book* the journalist Celal articulates Pamuk's fascination, like the narrator of Ghosh, with the sameness of maps of different countries: "the extraordinary similarities between the maps of Damascus, Cairo, and Istanbul" (BB 267). If we extend the analogy, he implies the similarity of cityscapes all over the world and of the mind of the dwellers, be it in the East or the West. To use "the looking glass" concept, Istanbul, one of the centres of eastern/Islamic art and culture, vis-a-vis the West can be treated as "the inverted image of" Venice, one of the centres of western art and culture. This proposition is supported by Pamuk's extra fascination with the Italian city of Venice especially in *The White Castle* and *My Name Is Red*, though he is perpetually obsessed with Istanbul with its rich culture and heritage. The cityscapes resemble each other and thereby denote a

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[218] Alan Lawson, "The Discovery of Nationality in Australian and Canadian Literatures," *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, Eds., Bill Ashcroft, et. al. (London and New York, 1995): 167-169; 169.

potentiality of proximity in history and heritage which can be competitive, complementary, and dialogic in Anderson's sense. The disintegration of the world by the explicit and implicit lines can only be successfully countered by the potentiality of this sense of similarity. The attempt of Pamuk's miniature artists in *My Name Is Red* to have an aesthetic combination of eastern and western styles of art by putting Istanbullite content in Venetian form can be an example of this possibility/potentiality.

In his novels and autobiography Pamuk mourns as well as celebrates the divided nature of his native city Istanbul straddling the West and the East. While in most cases divisions drain energy, his city's division paradoxically supplies energy from two sides. Artistically conceived, the two mutually opposite markers appear as one to him and act as a strengthening factor rather than a weakening one. Exploiting the divide he would like to make a fertile ground of literary creation for he believes that interaction of contrary states generate energy for advancement. His *The White Castle* and *My Name is Read* can be cited as brilliant examples of literary pieces based on the divide in politics as well as art. Of course, he also narrates the negative effect of arbitrary partition on people's life and culture. His portrayal of the Turkish border city Kars in *Snow* shows the cartographic wound of partition affecting the Armenians. As the Armenian city after changing hands of different powers is now annexed to the territorory of Turkey the Armenian churches and cultural edifices have to undergo a process of painful transformation. Partition, instead of solving the problem, adds fuel to the delicate issue of minority-majority as the ghettoization of the ethnic Armenians in Kars proves. Even in the context of the "Turkification" of Contantinople Pamuk draws attention to the impact of cartographic aggression through the narratives of the "Muslimification" of Haghia Sophia and cruelties on minorities – Greek or non-Muslim inhabitants in Istanbul and their reverse in the Greek city of Salonika and the Greek Cyprus. He comments that both Turkey and Greece have been guilty of making their respective minorities victims of geopolitics (IMC 157).

(Colonial) City Embodying History and Identity

Interest in geopolitical issues leads Pamuk to become obsessed with his city. In a way can be called "a writer of the city." Like James Joyce's Dublin, Charles Baudlaire's Paris, and Gunter Grass's Danzig, Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul, the most non-European of

European territories, becomes more than a birth city of the author in his writings. Historically Istanbul, at once the "center of the world" and a city of "Chekhovian provinciality," as Pamuk defines its dual status in his Nobel Lecture, provides him with a unique locus to project the ambivalent and paradoxical condition of the "Self" and "Other." Deriving on Freud's iconic discussion of city and psyche in the context of "the eternal city" of Rome in *Civilization and Its Discontents* the astute Pamuk critic Erdağ Göknar considers Pamuk's Istanbul as "a second Rome" projecting "a psychic space of cultural memory and cultural history" of Turkey.[219] Istanbul being once upon a time one of the civilizational centres of the world with its myriad marks of the history of power struggles and cultural encounters is presented in diverse shades in the work of Pamuk. All his fictional works except *Snow* have their settings in Istanbul which becomes the metaphor for his country in its history and identity, and the metaphor for the author's self. His overtly political novel *Snow* is set in the Turlikh border city of Kars which, like Istanbul, has a checkered history of struggles for power and of cultural confrontation. If Istanbul in comparisons to the western city centres is now considered to be in the periphery, Kars in its connection to the cosmopolitan Istanbul represents the periphery in the Turkish context. Both the centre and the periphery in Pamuk are involved in the projection of the Turkish identity drama enacted in history.

Pamuk's autobiography-cum-memoir *Istanbul: Memories and the City* focuses on the correlated identities of the city and the author. The book discusses the issues of national identity, East-West relation, cultural syncretism or clash, and the metamorphosis of history with the direct touch of the author's voice. As a non- fiction without any linear story line this book extensively uses the images of the historical city itself – the famous waterway Bosphorus, the Galata Bridge over it, the historical church turned Mosque and then Museum called Hagia Sophia, and the records and pictures of the visits of the famous European authors and travellers to this city. In narrating and commenting upon the travel details of the European writers this book becomes the history of travelogues as far as Istanbul is concerned, in addition to being an insider's travelogue itself. The polyphonic presentation of the city becomes more vibrant as the narration is accompanied by nearly two hundred photographs which constitute one third of the book.

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[219] Erdağ Göknar, *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism, and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel* , op. cit., 228.

The historical self of the city jumps out of the pages of the book as a protagonist with a distinct trait called "huzun" which also characterises Pamuk's major characters, locales, and at large Turkish national identity appearing in his major novels.

In the travellers's accounts as well as from Pamuk's perspective Istanbul is microcosmically represented throug Hagia Sophia or "Aya Sofya" in Turkish meaning "Church of Holy Wisdom." This great architectural emblem has been considerd a symbol of Istanbul's cosmopolitanism in diverse degrees from the Byzantime time century to date. This unique structure served as the spiritual centre of Byzantium Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire, and at present it functions as the nerve centre of the city's tourism and history. This originally orthodox basilica having mighty powers invested in its construction and maintenance, and combining the science of engineering and esthetics of taste, embodies borrowing, innovation, and eclecticism – a process Pamuk recommends in the formation and understanding of Turkish identity. In this regard Pamuk says in an interview that the Turks should "strive to create an Istanbul culture that would be an organic combination of East and West...invent a strong local culture, which would be a combination – not an imitation – of the Eastern past and Western present."[220] Haghia Sophia, the microcosm of the city of Istanbul, symbolically brings the Turkish and the Byzantine, Muslim and Christian, eastern and western, past and present to a close shot so that the cultural elements defining the parameters of identity can be judged relatively.

In portraying the author's self as well as the collective self of the city dwellers at present Istanbul appears as a humanized city. The divided self of the city falling between East and West represents the divided self of Pamuk, entailing the root in the native culture and aspiring to pursue European modernism, a kind of assimilation he could put into practice though his country cannot do it so easily. Having "West in its head but East in its soul, [his city has become a laboratory] of the alchemy between place and self."[221] If Pamuk is away from this native city, he finds his well of imagination drying up. He is unlike the authors like "Conrad, Nabokov, Naipaul ... [who migrating] between languages, cultures, countries continents, even civilizations… [find their] imaginations...fed by exile, a nourishment drawn not through roots but through

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[220] Orhan Pamuk, "Orhan Pamuk, the Art of Fiction," Interview with Angel Gurria-Quintana. <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5587/the-art-of-fiction-no-187-orhan-pamuk>.

[221] David Mitchell, *Guardian*. As qtd. in the first page of *Istanbul: Memories and the City.*

rootlessness" (MIC 6). This is probably the reason why Pamuk has to divide his time between Istanbul and New York instead of becoming a diasporic writer proper, a condition akin to that of Ghosh. The split character and checkered past of his native city provide him with the necessary writerly materials and environment. His periodical stay away only provides him with better perspective to understand this bond. He succinctly summerizes the condition: "I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am [and] Istanbul's fate is my fate" (MIC 6).

Pamuk's autobiography-cum-cityvision starts with a philosophical contemplation upon his identity crisis – his pursuing the "ghostly other" and concentrates on the city's paradox of identity as it has lost its past glorious identity and the present identity is caught between internal and external gazes. This uneasy condition determines the nature of the book's delineation of individual city dwellers' history, historical narratives on the city, and the issue of cultural identity transformations. The narrator's obsession with the use of "my": "my twin," "my double," "my ghostly other," and "my pillow, my house, my street, my place in the world" (IMC 4) in the first chapter of the autobiography expresses his obsessive dweling upon the question of identity. The repeated use of the pronoun "I" or "me" or "my," viewed from psychological perspective, expresses either the excessive self-esteem or the excessive "anxiety of identity." Here the latter interpretation is more applicable if we consider the identity issue in the broader context of the other Pamuk texts. His account of the events and people of Istanbul turns into an unconscious mechanism of avoiding or at least minimising such anxiety.

To have better understanding of the nature of this identity anxiety he compares his vision of his native city with that of a number of European writers like Nerval, Gautier, and Flaubert who paid the city such attention which according to him very few native writers could give. There is no denying the fact that a greater part of the city's existence in literary representation depends on the observations of the European writer-travellers. Pamuk discovers his fixation with their thoughts which helps him construct his own identity. He says: "It's partly that many times I've identified with a number of them (Nerval, Flaubert, de Amicis) and – just as I once had to identify myself with Ultrillo in order to paint Istanbul – it was falling under their influence and arguing with them by turns that I forged my own identity" (IMC 260). When they are absent from a particular scene of representation he "become[s] [his] own Westerner" (IMC 260). Thus the

insider-outsider gazes become one towards an objective portrayal of the city and its dwellers' self. The insider author comes to the strange realization that "the 'Western traveller' is often not a real person–he can be [his] own creation, [his] fantasy, even [his] own reflection" (IMC 260). This again refers to the tendency of some characters of *Snow* to Occidentalise the West in order to realize their individuality.

In the portrayal of Istanbul Pamuk even like the identity swapping of Haja the Turkish master and his slave the Italian scholar in *The White Castle* tends to merge with the western traveller-writer: "I will often feel that I've become one with that Western traveller, plunging with him into the thick of life, counting, weighing, categorising, judging and in so doing often usurping their dreams, *to become at once the object and subject of the Western gaze*" (IMC 261; emphasis added). This tendency of mind indicates the need of creating the phantom "other" even if the real one is absent from the scene for constructing one's self. Pamuk is not worried about the role the outsiders play in the construction of the images of his city. He is rather happy for another reason, that is, the binary of colonialist-native does not fit into his context. His writerly perspective significantly differs from that of the other writers hailing from the once colonized third world. Upon this point, he elaborates: "Istanbul has never been the colony of the Westerners who wrote about it, drew it, filmed it, and that is why I am not so perturbed by the use Western travellers have made of my past and my history in their construction of the exotic" (IMC 261).

The Bosphorus, a waterway with the Galata bridge dividing Istanbul between Asia and Europe and also connecting both sides, is used by Pamuk as an apt metaphor in his illustration of identity constructed by the apparently opposing roots. Sitting on the Bosphoras one can have a complete picture of the city with its beauty and melancholy, its present and past. Pamuk draws writing energy from the East-West division of the city which itself "draws its strength from the Bosphorus" because if "the city speaks of defeat, destruction, deprivation, melancholy and poverty, the Bosphorus sings of life, pleasure and happiness"(MIC 43). This waterway carries the traces of history through the historical mansions and edifices along its embankments, and through the remains of the vanished civilizations deposited on its bottom. Whenever the narrator is attacked with the "end of the empire melancholy," (IMC 6) and "whatever [sad] happens, [he] takes[s] a walk along the Bosphorus" and realizes that "life can't be all that bad" (IMC 54). When on board the

boat he finds himself in an in-between space belonging to neither the westernized neighbourhood of Nisantasi nor the city's poor neighbourhood riddled with the residues of the vanished glory of the old-empire-days. When, through the window, he looks at the Galata Bridge over the Bosphorus water, he fancies himself as the bridge fecilitating the cultural exchanges between the East and West. Although the bridge metaphor has become a cliché, Pamuk gives it a new twist by using it as a means of negotiation to fight cartographic aggression and to benefit from cultural contact zone. A bridge does not belong to a single territory; it belongs to two territories that are only apparently separated. So it reflects the multidimensional identity of author as a culturtal ambassador**.**

The very characteristic identity marker of the city is melancholy or "end-of- empire melancholy" to use Pamuk's own qualification of the term. It is manifest in the humbleness and simplicity of the black-white topography of the city. In line with the city the inhabitants feel comfortable to wear pale, drab, shadowy clothes shunning "the vibrant reds, greens, and oranges of their rich, proud ancestors," at least so the author's imagination captures. To get the proof of it one need only apply the tool of comparison by flying from a rich western city straight to the crowded streets of Istanbul. To foreign visitors such sartorial habit appears deliberately constructed with a view to making a moral point: "This is how you dress in a black-and-white city, they seem to be saying; this is how you grieve for a city that has been in decline for a hundred and fifty years" (IMC 38-39). This is the outcome of a special kind of melancholy which can only be expressed through the Turkish word of Arabic origin "huzun." It takes its root in memories of pride and is nurtured in the air of decrepit. The intensity of "huzun" is "caused by the history of the city following the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and – even more important – the way this history is reflected in the city's 'beautiful' landscapes and its people" (MIC 93). And "the beauty of a landscape resides in its melancholy" as Pamuk uses this quotation from Ahmet Resim as the epigraph of his book.

Therefore, it can be said that the melancholy of Pamuk is not negative and pathological; rather it is highly aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual at the same time. Although it is born of the deep-felt sense of the glory lost, new elements of beauty emanate from it towards better structuring of the future. Upon this productive and honourable aspect of "huzun" Pamuk elaborates eloquently. Huzun teaches one how to endure poverty and deprivation and how to read life and the history of the city in

alternative ways. It inspires the Istanbullus to accept "defeat and poverty not as a historical endpoint but as an honourable beginning fixed long before they were born" and finally it proves itself not as an incurable illness spreading throughout the city, but as a self defining mental state to be recognized with honour (MIC 94). In short "Huzun" paradoxically mixes up shame and pride, defeat and honour, loss and gain; it works as the protective shield against the pressures of comparison.

Pamuk as a writer is not the first to trace the inextricable link between melancholy and the glory and decline of empire. He expresses his indebtedness to the nineteenth century French writers-travellers: "What I am trying to explain is that the roots of our huzun are European: the concept was first explored, expressed and poeticized in French" (IMC 210). At one point he refers to the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss's definition of this type of sadness with the word "tristesse" in his *book Tristes Tropiques* (1955). Finding it in the ex-colonies Levi traces it as the legacy of the western colonization and attaches a political note to it. Pamuk, of course, draws heavily on the nineteenth century French writers like Théophile Gautier and Gérard de Nerval in their perspectives on Istanbul. The last century marked the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the consequent impoverishment of Istanbul opposite to the thriving condition of the European colonial centres, especially French and British. The French writers drawn upon by Pamuk could share with him some new insights into Istanbul since they could compare the different European colonial centres. But the present plight of Istanbul bears comparisons of sorts with the former European colonies, not with the colonizers, since the European power centres continue enjoying their dominance in different forms of neo-colonialism – economic, cultural and military which Istanbul is denied to enjoy.

Since Istanbul as a former imperial centre does not compare well with its European counterparts it has to wear the affective mood of "huzun" rather as a protective mask. The humanized city and its representative author while struggling with the mood remains suspended between the pathological reaction to the missing glory of the past and the potentialities of the future in terms of cultural achievement and material influence. Pamuk explains the condition:

> Still the melancholy of this dying culture was all around us. Great as the desire to Westernise and modernize may have been, the more desperate wish, it seemed, was to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire: rather as a *spurned lover* throws away his lost beloved's clothes, possessions and photographs. (IMC 27; emphasis added).

The image of the "spurned lover" applies to all the Istanbullus and the Turks in general as the "huzun" transpires to the ambience of entire city or the country: "We begin to understand "huzun" as, not the melancholy of a solitary person, but the black mood shared by millions of people together" (IMC 83). The westernizing project of the Republic grew out of the conscious effort to have ruthless severance with the traditional past. But the past like a stubborn ghost visiting the relatives of the deceased could not be put down, nor could the present build an adequate identity independent of the past. Failing to make peace with the past they find themselves, to quote Arnold, "[w]andering between two worlds, one dead, / [t]he other powerless to be born,"[222] and the inhabitants lacking firm grip on the roots in the past remain prone to follow others. This condition reminds one of the overly used term "mimicry" for the representation of colonial relations.

Although Turkey, as I mentioned earlier in a different context, cannot be marked as the colonizer or the colonized in the usual sense of the terms, the Istanbullus in particular and the Turks in general illustrate the colonial theory of mimicry in that they try to retrieve their lost imperial glory by imperfectly imitating the West, they experience the kind of cultural displacement one notices in the formerly colonized nations, and they have to struggle hard to go beyond an ambivalent identity. The mimicry of the colonized can be an imitation of as well as a protest against the deceptive civilizing mission or "the philanthropic pretence" of the colonizer. In the case of Turkey it turns out to be an imitation without protest since the Turks through it intend to go back to their former colonizing self. This duality in their attempt at mimicry demonstrates the condition of ambivalence in Turkey's identity. All their efforts become self-defeating as "the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and 'partial' representation rearticulates the whole notion of identity and

[222] Mathew Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," *Mathew Arnold's Poems* (London: Everyman's Library, 1965): 318-325; ll.85-86.

alienates it from essence." [223] In Pamuk's multi-perspectival representation Istanbul and its inmates for their shifting status become at the same time the subject and the object of self surveillance and of the "western gazes." And as a result they suffer from a kind of distance between their true and acquired images and the Bloomian anxiety of influence seems to remain as their perpetual lot.

The anxiety of identity grown out of inferiority complex, sense of defeat and loss, and cultural colonization or colonization of mind leads to a kind of inner exile. Hanging between past and present, and "mixing memory and desire," the Istanbullus experience a kind of displacement within their own culture, a self inflicted inner exile in addition to their already acquired displacement in the European context. The condition is very aptly projected by the following lines:

> Caught as the city is between traditional culture and Western culture, inhabited as it is by an ultra-rich minority and an impoverished majority, overrun as it is by wave after wave of immigrants, divided as it has always been along the lines of its many ethnic groups, Istanbul is a place where, for the past hundred and fifty years, no one has been able to feel completely at home. (IMC 103)

Pamuk himself moves mentally between old part and new part of the city as a writer with strong empathy with the dwellers of both. He, though geographically /physically at home, finely articulates his mental state by confessing "I was never 'at home' at home" with reference to Adorno.[224] Adorno says "it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home," a dictum Said also refers to in his "Reflections on Exile."[225] Unlike the condition of Said Pamuk sometimes has to live in a self-imposed mental exile while living in the same neighbourhood, the same street, the same house for more than half a century to liberate his mind with a view to having proper aesthetic perspective on his city.

In a frantic effort to have cultural survival the inhabitants of the city want to reclaim a cultural identity that is lost and has to be painfully regained in a new combination. "Huzun" is the emotional emblem of this environment of exploring true identity which would be essentially multi-rooted. The sadness it carries is also the inner

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[223] Homi Bhabha. "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse," *The Location of Culture*, op. cit**.,** 121-131; 127.

[224] Orhan Pamuk, "Implementing Disform," op. cit., 179.

[225] Theodor Adorno, *Minimia Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life,* Trans. E.Jephcott (New York: Verso, 1974): 247.

exile's essential sadness which cannot be avoided since the exilic identity "carries with it ... a touch of solitude and spirituality," to quote Edward Said.[226] It also derives some comfort from global connectivity since it is based upon the notion of cosmopolitanism, collaboration, and joint investment of the East and the West. Pamuk in his autobiography inspires his fellow citizens to use the inner exile or the condition of cultural displacement created and characterized by "huzun" as a source of solace, power, and energy. With grand thinking one can create sources of pleasure out of the stuff of sadness as, in the words of Milton in *Paradise Lost*, "The mind is its own place, and in itself/ Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n." In his literary attempts to do so Pamuk historicizes the role of a writer in the complex world – not to be an artistic loner in the tradition of the nineteenth century, but to be fully engaged with burning issues concerning the lived world.[227]

The city projecting the positions of Pamuk and his fellow inhabitants becomes humanized and places Pamuk's autobiography in the line of "national allegory." In the chapters entitled "Another Orhan" and "Fights with My Elder Brother," Pamuk's competitive and jealous relationship with his better performing elder brother allegorizes Turkey's relationship with the West and enacts the drama of "the spectre of comparisons" the emerging third world countries are engaged with.[228] In *The* Paris Review *Interview* Pamuk terms this competitive instinct either in individual or in nation as "schizophrenic" identity "having two spirits, belonging to two different cultures and having two souls"– one strengthening, not killing or weakening, the other (OC 369). In presenting the city Pamuk also shows his two spirits–one identifying with the western gaze and the other with native response. As he says: "Everyone is sometimes a westerner and sometimes an Easterner – in fact a combination of the two" (OC 370).

Thus all the relevant issues of Pamuk under this study are found in a unique polyphonic presentation through the author's memories, western writers-travellers' observations on the city, and evocative photographs of people and the cityscape in *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. Of course, one may question that Pamuk as a representative of the elites may not have been able to give the total identity of the city, as the teeming millions suffering in poverty have little scope to think of the present divided

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[226] Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, op. cit., 181.

[227] Edward Said says that a writer's worldliness deriving from exile, a condition of mind, not necessarily a physical dislocation, involves him in the local and the global, and makes the text play a performative role. "The Text, the World, the Critic," *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 8.2 (Autumn 1975): 1-23.

[228] See Benedict Anderson, op. cit..

self or past glory. But the chequered history and half-extinguished grand topography of the city give credits to what Pamuk has presented in his autobiography and novels. Although he hails from an upper middleclass family in the Nisantasy district of Istanbul, he was a frequent visitor of the poor neighbourhood of the city, belonging mentally to neither part as a writer not feeling "at home at home." The ambivalent position provides him with an aesthetic vantage point to write on the city authentically.

Self-Reflexivity and Historiographic Metafictionality

In reflecting the chemistry of the city and history and identity of his nation or characters of his fiction the author's self sometimes takes part in the stories and historical narratives merge with fictionality. Thus his fiction turns self-reflexive and questions the nature of its fictionality. As in the autobiography the writer appears directly in the historical presentation, in most of his novels he merges with the narrators using his partial name "Orhan." His merging with the narrators may prompt one to ask whether his stories are real life documents or imaginary. We see that the distinction between reality and fiction obliterates when the museum of lovelorn Orhan Kemal Bey in *The Museum of Innocence* merges with the author's real museum in Istanbul. Similarly, in the narration of the story of identity swapping between a Turk and an Italian, who become alternatey narrators for most part of the story, in *The White Castle*, the author "Orhan" takes the narrator's part towards the end of the novel. Like Ka, the hero of his novel *Snow*, he "discovered how it felt to have to leave one's beloved city for a time on account of one's political views" (OC 238).

He is often asked how much of him there is in Galip, the hero of the master piece *The Black Book* because his "life's minor details – shopping trips, looking at Alaaddin's shop from the window, talking to the real Kamer Hanim, spending nights alone,walking the streets at night**…**resemble Galip's" (OC 256). Kara in *My Name is Red* has in him bits of the author who therefore feels closest to him, among other characters in the book. Shekure in the novel has in her bits of Pamuk's mother who had the same name and his brother in the novel is Şevket whom Shekure scolds. Many other details are copied from the author's life because in the highest possible degree he gives himself over to the task of addressing the great questions of "self" and "other" in the novel which, according to Pamuk, has the strange and magical power of making everyone feel as if they can see in the novel the mirror image of their own families, homes, and cities (OC 227). Thus the fictional and the real interact and the past comes to the present making a situation where the historicity of a plot questions it's very nature of fictionality or the vice versa.

Epilogue

To wind up this chapter on Pamuk oeuvre, it has been evident that the novels, prose pieces, articles, and interviews of Pamuk address the questions related to history and identity in Turkish as well as global context. His writings show an engaged projection of the problematics of Turkish identity with reference to the resurrection and reassessment of the Ottoman history, effects of imperialism and nationalism, the East-West question lurking in the background, use of imperial city representing the metamorphosis and melancholy of the self, exploitation of the Sufi ideas as a literary treasure, and the craze for museum projecting nation's history and aborted dream. His multiperspectival narratives supply a discursive site for viewing and re-viewing Turkish identity that has in the main been portrayed by other authors of Turkey from the nationalist perspective. Neither the apish imitation of the western models nor the unqualified criticism of the West adds to a sense of "us" in a Turkish context or for that matter in any non-western context. All his books are found to have been enriched by the amalgamation of eastern and western methods, habits, and histories. Both eastern and western canons supply him with the narrative archetypes.

A concomitant effort towards a critical assessment and glorification of the Ottoman past and Ottomanesque language, Pamuk oeuvre suggests, is what Turkey needs most to evolve as a unified nation and make headway against the tide of twin extremism, of the religionists and the secular ultra-nationalists. His narrative focus shuttles between the realms of past and present not only to see the present in the light of the past but also to evaluate the past from the perspective of the present. In dealing with the politics of polarity and the tendency to see things in binary oppositions he makes innovative use of mysticism derived from his extensive search of the eastern canon. In many cases he brings intimations of autobiography to his imperio-national historical narratives because, to him, narratives allow us to shed our identities by putting ourselves in another's shoes through imagination and empathy, leading to the freedom of the self from its rigid confines. Thus the history of the novel turns into a history of human emancipation from the cocoon of the narcissistic self. As Pamuk holds a high view of the novelist in possession of the potentiality of being a consummate cultural translator or interpreter his novels are usually considered the right window to view Turkey from the outside. He shows that the journey of the novel as cultural text starts from the point of politicians' failure as negotiators between "self" and "other."

Chapter Four
Transverse Worlds: Sites of Contact and Convergence

Comparison and analysis are the chief tools of the critic.[229]

Projection of the Transverse Worlds

That Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk show a transverse world with myriad sites of contact and convergence is the basic premise of my line of argument as I explained in the introductory chapter. In dealing with history and identity many of their texts share similar contents and ways of representation. The literary projection of the world of one author can be a mirror image of that of the other. The actors, the locales, and the mode of storytelling may differ but their views tend to share significantly similar grounds and features. This reflects the well-known saying, great minds, especially literary, think alike if they are engaged with issues that are identical in the broader sense of the term. Since literature is the mirror of the predicaments of individuals and society, literary mirrors created by diverse hands of a particular phase in human history are likely to have points of convergence along with the points of divergence. Besides, when measured against the West the writers selected for my study fall into an identical category, eastern or postcolonial in the broad sense. Probably for this reason Pamuk in many personal statements about his country prefers the use of the phrase "my part of the world" to "Turkey." The previous three chapters of which one introducing the area of the thesis and the other two separately dealing with the texts of the two authors have prepared the ground for a comparative study of them in this fourth chapter that constitutes the core of the thesis. While comparing the authors and their texts this chapter will first make general statements on the points of convergence and divergence, and support those by particular references to the primary sources as analysed in the forgoing chapters and sometimes by referring to the theoretical sources when deemed necessary.

Blurring Boundaries

The spirit of blurring boundaries is at the centre of the literary craftmanship of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk; they evince a tendency of blurring academic and

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[229] T. S. Eliot, "The Function of Criticism," *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961): 23-34.

genre-boundaries in their careers as well as in their literary representations of contemporary pressing issues. They have fully exploited the possibilities and potentialities of the novel genre which is by nature more accommodative and discursive than any other genre of literature. Many of Ghosh's writings do not lend themselves to clear categorization. In many cases the creative artist, the ardent anthologist researcher, and the inquisitive journalist merge. His much acclaimed book *In an Antique Land* is at once considered a history, ethnography, travelogue, memoir, and non-fictional novel. He did not, according to his revelations, write the novel with a specific category in mind. He was writing a memoir of the remote Egyptian villages, La□aîfa and Nashâwy where he spent his fieldwork stint for PhD research. This effort, to the surprise of both the authors and his readers, results in *In an Antique Land* which he cannot consciously claim to be a novel; but he says in an interview that Homi Bhabha, who teaches the book in an American university, has told him once that it is philosophically a novel.[230]

This pattern of crossing genres continues over some other novels. Grown out of a cobweb world of computer technology, archeology and tropical medicine *The Calcutta Chromosome* becomes a medical thriller, science fiction, and a detective novel at the same time. *The Hungry Tide* is a novelistic study of humans and ecology where translation is used as a dominant mode of presentation. Along with his positioning himself in an "*interstitial* space" between his native India with colonial legacy and America with the stamp of being the present-day world imperial centre Ghosh's own carrier is a proof of the postmodern tendency towards transgressing career boundaries. A Professor of comparative literature at Columbia, he started his career as journalist in *The Hindu*, and has his formal education and training in history, sociology, and anthropology. Quite likely, most of his novels show a double commitment of a researcher and a novelist.

A similar postmodern boundary-crossing tendency can be traced in the writing and career of Orhan Pamuk. Initially a student of architecture and finally a student of journalism, an enthusiast of art and painting, Pamuk turns a full time novelist and a part time professor of creative writing at Columbia University. Most of his writings have

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[230] In his interview with Claire Chambers Amitav Ghosh comments on the generic nature of *In an Antique Land*, "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation,"op. cit., 28. Here he categorically says that by intention it is not a novel since it grew mostly out of his experience as a doctoral research student in Anthropology with fieldwork stint in the remote Egyptian villages. This is a unique example of how a book is naturally grown into a novel without the expressed intention of the writer.

multi-generic marks as is his present position between his native Istanbul, a now defunct imperial centre and New York, arguably a centre of present-day "neo-imperialism." Intermingling space and text *Istanbul: Memories and the City* appears as a double portrait of the writer and his native city with a polyphonic presentation – plain narrative, travellers' accounts through their writings and letters, all interspersing with photographs which constitute one third of the book. So the simple denomination of autobiography does not give an adequate sense of the book.

His recent novel *The Museum of Innocence* has the elements of anthropology and cultural studies representing the author as a "museum man," an ardent seeker after anthropological objects and antiquities. In an interview Pamuk confirms that he means the book to be a guide to an actual museum project which now literally exists in Istanbul. Pamuk has trodden a new ground in his novelistic pursuit by writing a novel of objects to be displyed in a museum. This is indeed a rare achievement in blurring the boundary between objects and text in a way that redemarcates the contour of novel as a polyphonic genre. Similarly *My Name Is Red* has the double claim of being a novel and an illuminating art critique of Islamic miniature that can be considered as text book for university fine arts course. Apart from being a novel *Snow* lends itself well to a socio-political reading. This genre crossing also relates to these authors' themes and challenges the traditional concept of linear narrative and generic purity.

Many novels of Ghosh and Pamuk can be considered as historiographic metafiction. As they deal with history, they question both the fictionality of history and historicity of fiction. Denominated as self-conscious texts of fiction they explicate the identity of the novel as a self-defining genre. In this connection Patricia Waugh says: "By studying metaficion, one is, in effect, studying that which gives the novel its identity."[231] As we know, more than any other genres, novel has been variously attempted to be defined; still it notoriously defies definition. In a conventional novel the omniscient narrator assimilates the variety of voices in the story and thereby resolves the conflict between language and the voices. But an unconventional (metafictional) novel defies any possibility of resolving the conflict. Again to take the help of Patricia Waugh: "Metafiction *displays* and *rejoices* in the impossibility of such a resolution and thus

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[231] Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001): 5.

clearly reveals the basic identity of the novel as a genre."[232] Enjoying this elusive, indefinable nature of novel Ghosh and Pamuk write metafictional novels where the boundary between author and characters, facts and fiction often disappear. In their deep engagement with the burning issues of the present-day world their novels become social texts in addition to their affiliation with the aesthetic and are supplemented by their non-fictional works, interviews, and public statements.

History in Fiction

Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk undertake, though they deny having done it consciously, a fictional project of narrating history from the alternative perspective, i. e. doing it on the basis of experiences of the subjects shown empathetically in literary representation. They believe in humanizing history by presenting historical materials through fictional characters, adding flesh and blood to the bare bones of history unearthed by the traditional historians. However, Ghosh's oeuvre being "enmeshed in differences" reflects a broader spectrum of history than that of Pamuk who prefers to show in microcosom what prevails in a larger world. Ghosh aptly explains the entertwined nature of histories of different parts of the world through the metaphor of weaving in *The Circle of Reason*: "It is a gory history in parts; a story of greed and destruction. Every scrap of cloth is stained by a bloody past. But it is the only history we have and history is hope as well as despair" (CR 61). Weaving stands for hope by once making the world one through the hands of unsung cloth traders binding continents together in the bountiful trade. It stands for blood by spawning empires, greed, and cruelty, as Ghosh tells us, "the hunger for Indian chintzes and calicos, brocades and muslins…led to the foundation of the first European settlements in India" (CR 60).

Like that of weaving, two strands of history, hope and despair, cultural connectivity and conflict, equally dominate the discourse of history in Ghosh. His thrust is for exploring the silent chapters, throwing light on the twilight zone of history related to colonial and postcolonial India, South Asia and the Middle East. In the first two of the Ibis Trilogy, to cite as example, he uncovers a subject of the British Indian history which very few historians have dealt with in any considerable detail. As the British institutions still heavily influence the writing of Indian history, there is for obvious reason no

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[232] Ibid., 6.

mentionable attempt on the part of the historians to delve deep into the opium chapter of the colonial history of India. The Indian historians do not like to deal with it probably for shame or guilt and to forget the contribution of that drug towards building the nineteenth century India.[233]

The historical novelist in Ghosh comes forward to take up the human responsibility not discharged by the official or academic historians properly. In discharging such responsibility his project also involves a process of writing history from below depending on personal narratives when archival sources fall short of materials to answer some basic questions. The process turns into a sort of subaltern project the proponents of which have strong connections with him. He emphasizes the act of telling the history of individuals who remain overshadowed by the collective and the influencial who dominate the official historiography. He often feels an urge to fictionalize those events that, for strategic reasons, fail to attract state investment for archiving. As for example, Ghosh, impersonating the no-name narrator of *The Shadow Lines*, fails to find incidents of communal violence in Dhaka and Calcutta he experiened as a boy in the old newspaper archives of the Neheru Memorial Library, New Delhi. He comes "across dozens of books about the Indo-China war of 1962…faught in a remote patch of terrain, far removed from major population centres" without much "repercussions outside the immediate area," whereas the long standing incidents of violence within the subcontinent affecting "many major cities" and causing "extensive civilian casualties" are put outside "the discourse of history" to be vanished "from public memory" (I&I 317). His project seeks to break such imposed silence with words since surrendering to silence shows one's indifference to the dark side of history and by extension means his complicity in it.

Certain incidents remain non-covered by the local and national newspapers as they are deemed private, not public and therefore inconsequential, not worth mentioning. This type of (private) incidents if documented may sometime lead to threaten the unity and the assumed secular character of the state. National history forces the individuals go into the historical anonymity, contributing to the creation of the artificial and constructed homogeneity of the nation-state. If certain story of individuals or of community contributes to the interest of the nation it is hyped up in the media with priority under state sponsorship. Thus the incident of syncretic reverence shown to the holy relic of the

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[233] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Angiola Codacci, op. cit.

Hazratbal Mosque in Kashmir could be found in the old newspapers by the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* while the incident of the syncretic religion in the Sundarbans island of Morichjhape could not be traced out in any archival sources because the latter instance is not likely to contribute to the unity and administration of the state.

Pamuk also shows his concern over suppressed histories and postmodern revolt against official narratives as expressed in the politically charged preface he ties at the beginning of *The White Castle*. For the decoding of the past texts he is in favour of resurrecting the Ottomanesque language, which was erased by the the republic as part of the aggressive secularizing processes. His interest in Ottoman history is politically subversive of his country's westernizing ideology which seeks to turn the subjects of the Ottoman history ahistorical by undertaking various reform projects like the alphabet reform replacing the Arabic with Latin in 1928-1929. As a result the historical records kept in old alphabet remain inaccessible to modern Turks. In writing *The White Castle* the attempt of his fictional historian Faruk Darvinoglu to transcribe an old Ottoman text into contemporary Turkish symbolically represents the implied author's stance for rescuing the suppressed texts for denial breeds confusions. In *The Black Book* the quest hero Galip's search of old newspaper columns and exploring the obscure alleys of his city Istanbul go with the same spirit. For the multiperspectival portrayal of the past of Istanbul in *Istanbul*: *Memories and the City* he draws in the sources of eastern and western Turkologists because a single perspective may overlook some hidden chapters of the city's past.

He is more inclined to use historical materials to form a frame to situate the cultural identity of Turkey and his native city Istanbul. For him "the past does not merely exist as repetitions, social habits or unconscious casual chains, but precisely as history."[234] And history does not simply mean a repository of things past; it refers to things present also as they are constantly qualified by the past, like the present identity of Pamuk's countrymen. As his context demands he has to combine in his literary projection different/contradictory strands of history–the invented history required by a nation to be born, imposed history required by the state to compare well with others, and finally, of course, the personal narratives of history.[235] Therefore, sometimes he has to

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[234] Simon During, *Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, eds. Iain Robertson and Penny Richards (London: Arnold, 2005): 52.

[235] Orhan Pamuk, "Author in the Classroom," Interview with Pinar Batur, *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 41.1 (2007): 8-15; 13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23063189>.

come up with a romanticized, sugarized version of the past which may be termed "hyperhistory," easier to explore and more appealing to nurture in memory. At the same time, he is not blind to "the black spots in his country's unspoken history" because, in his view, any Turkish novelist failing to imagine the country's dark chapters or neglecting them would "produce something hollow" (OC 229). Like Ghosh considering silence as complicity, he believes "that what denigrated a country's 'honor' is not the discussion of the black spots in its history but the preclusion of any discussion at all" (OC 238).

Unlike Ghosh's direct delineation of historical materials Pamuk has intermingled space and time by appropriating the trope of museum, narrated the history of the dilemma of the miniature artists to allegorize the past and present of his country, and added photography as a form of visual history. Although both are based on vast research and scholarship, they vary in the degree of using ornamental forms in literature. It is due to the fact that Ghosh belongs to the Anglo-Indian novelist tradition which encourages direct delineation of historical truths. That is why many historical-political figures like the last Burmese king Thebaw, the Burmese nationalist figure General Aung San, democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Indian nationalist leader Subhas Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi appear in his narratives. On the other, hand, Pamuk, though heavily influenced by the western tradition, could not sever his tie with the highly ornamental tradition of the Perso-Turkish literature. Of course, in his prose pieces and interviews he is direct in commenting on the historical issues like the Armenian massacre, Kemalist movement, Islamist revival in politics, Kurdish question, and military intervention in politics.

Nation-state and Nationalism

The narratives of both Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk hold creative debate on the concept of the nation-state as a space for building disticnt identity. A nation is characterised by a large group of people sharing a common geographic boundary, common laws, customs, and language. The nation-states in the Third World mostly result from the dissolution of the empires and the rise of discrete political identities, and their imposed borders do not take into consideration the reality of small tribal, ethnic, and linguistic groups. While a nation-state externally solidifies the bond of a large community, internally it suppresses diverse minority and dissenting voices. Ghosh talks about the creation of three nations namely India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (as part of

Pakistan since the story was set in 1960s) in *The Shadow Lines* and regrets that it does not stop the communal unrest of one country affecting the other because the question of majority-minority interests in the creation of several nations out of one is addressed only erroneously. There is no denial of the fact that within their geographical boundaries diverse identities cannot exist without harmfully affecting each other. In India, as depicted in *The Hungry Tide*, the members of the Dalit class are not assimilated in the process of national identity formation. Even sometimes their right and existence are deliberately denied with conscious administrative motive. The condition of ethnic minorities in other nations of the British India which Ghosh has not covered in this novel is more or less the same.

However, Ghosh is more critical of ultra-nationalistic discourse than nation-state. In absence of any better political system at hand nation-state should prevail with inclusive philosophy. Drawing the example of Burma he warns how the absence of inclusive nation-state can give place to warlordism. Although in *In an Antique Land* he floats the idea of a federal system in a wider region with a centre like India known as Al Hind to the ancient Arab traders, he does not insists on its practicability in the postcolonial context. Of course, in an interview on the relevant issue he tries to call the European Union as a modern day equivalent to that system.[236]But it is more an economic forum of countries with more or less equal economic status than a platform to designate a new political identity. Like many writers he illustrates the imaginary foundation of a nation. Based on the notion of “imagined community” he gives the picture of a floating India in *Sea of Popies* through the travelling characters on the Indian Ocean. Similarly there can be a diasporic India or diasporic Bangladesh in Europe, America or the Middle East. When territorial reality becomes only subordinate to mental consciousness of oneness like home constructed by the exilic mind, nationalism may be less harmful. In case of insurgency it may take a different turn as Ghosh refers to Burma’s Karenni refugee camps: “together they form a minuscule, tight-knit nation-on-the-move consisting of six thousand people…shuttl[ing] constantly between the five camps” (DCOE 82). Similar groups prevail in many modern nation-states indicating the pitfalls of nationalism.

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[236] Amitav Ghosh, “Interview,” With Rahul Sagar, op. cit.

Pamuk’s position on the imaginary basis of nation and nationalism shares some ground with that of Ghosh. Although he identifies the imaginary philosophy of Turkism as the corner stone of the Turkish nation he does not experiment with it in an extra-territorial way by setting some of his fictional characters outside Turkey. He deplores the ‘invention” of the Turkish nation at considerable cost to many heterogeneous groups. In Pamuk’s Turkey the ardent followers of the westernizing project in their making caricatures of the black-scarved women and bearded people “reminded [one] that the nation-state belonged more to [the rich] than to the religious poor” (IMC 165). Besides, that nation-state is created ignoring the ethnic identities of the Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks. The Kurds who constitute a sizeable portion of population are denied their distinct Kurdish cultural-linguistic identity and are given the label “mountain Turks” as part of the process of forced assimilation and “ethnic cleansing” in a bid to constitute “an imagined community.” The dispersed Kurds bearing their well-knit nationhood in the imagination are still fighting in different neighbouring countries to ahieve their nationalistic goal. Sometimes, they are also (mis)used by the key warmongers of the world as it is seen in the latest development of the Middle-eastern turmoil.

Breaking the state sponsored taboo Pamuk talks publicly about the violence inflicted on the city of Kars and its inhabitants, tortures inflicted by the state machinery on the Kurds or Mountain Turks by relegating them to the periphery on a mad drive to purifying the nation through fierce westernizing campaign, the Armenian killings, torture on the Greek minority in Istanbull, and the forced transformation of the historical edifice Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Especially for pointing out the Armenian and Kurdish massacres during World War I in an interview to the Swiss magazine *Der Tages-Anzeiger* he was brought under the charge of sedition called “insulting Turkishness” in the legal term of the country – a sense of insult deeply connected with the “anxiety of Turkishness” which I have previously explained. The anxiety is the visible proof that Turkism is nothing but an effort to create “an imagined community.” But later he was relieved of the charge through the joint pressure of media and intelligentsia both at home and abroad.

In *Istanbul: Memories and the City* Pamuk obliquely criticizes the Turkish nation-state for ethnic cleansing project to achieve the so called purity of the nation: “After the founding of the Republic and the violent rise of the Turkification, after the

state imposed sanctions on minorities – measures that some might describe as...ethnic cleansing – most of these languages [Greek, Armenian, Italian, French, and Spanish] disappeared" (IMC 215-216). Pamuk further says that he "witnessed this cultural cleansing as a child, for whenever anyone spoke Greek or Armenian too loudly in the street (you seldom heard Kurds advertising themselves in public during this period) someone would cry out, 'Citizens, please speak Turkish!'"(IMC 216). This reminds us of the failed project of the then Pakistani authority in 1952 to impose Urdu on its majority Bangla speaking citizens.The recent racial and political conflict as depicted in *Snow* is a result of the unrealistic imposition of identity marker under the pretext of bringimg all under the identical umbrella of nation-state. Bacause of the pride-generated anxiety of identity the Turks as depicted by Pamuk uphold chauvinistic nationalism. Both the novelists combat nationalistic chauvinism by emphasising the ambivalence of the position of their nationalistic characters. As Ghosh speaks for a nation independent of territorial boundaries, Pamuk speaks for a nation accommodating diverse identities, cultures, and histories.

Placed at the in-between spaces of past and present, empires and nation-states, Ghosh and Pamuk tend to dismantle and reconfigure the prevalent narratives of identities. In their major texts nation and identity are narrated in a new vein as they find them misrepresented historically. These texts as narratives of people in struggles show cultural and national identities always in the process, changing and contested through contrary elements and tendencies. The last few decades of the last century witnessed fundamental changes and challenges in the formation of cultural identities. In line with that changes and challenges the third world countries as projected in the oeuvres of Ghosh and Pamuk have adopted an exclusionary national identity on the basis of ethnicity, religion or language. To understand the hegemonic nature of nationalism in today's world we should consider that the idea of nation in the third world grew out of the resistance created by the anti-colonial nationalist movements in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The hegemonic and exclusionary orientation of nationalism has its seed in the anti-colonial nationalist movement. The negative nature of nationalism was always present. While it was not focused in the anti-colonial era for the greater political reality of getting independence from the shackles of colonial rule, its negative aspect cannot be suppressed in the present age. The deep fissures and conflicts

in the imagined unity of nations were less evident in the early twentieth century nationalism which developed around revolution against imperialism and colonization. [237]

While the nationalist element of resistance against imperialism applies directly to the context of Ghosh's India, in Pamuk's Turkey it applies indirectly. From the early twentieth century Turkey paradoxically started showing indirect resistance to the West in its very westernization project through the imitation of the West. And a fairly good portions of the Turks who feel more affinity with the Islamic and the Ottoman past display direct resistance to the West. About the ethics of exclusion and separation created both by anti-colonial nationalist movement and the emergence of the third world nation-states Edward Said has given a nuanced analysis:

> As the struggle for independence produced new states and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order for their intransigence and obdurate rebelliousness. And in so far as these people exist between the old and the new, between the old empire and the new state, their condition articulates the tensions, irresolutions, and contradictions in the overlapping territories shown on the cultural map of imperialism.[238]

What is suggested by Said is that the movements seeking independence did not represent the voices of all the ethnic/minority groups living within the territories of a nation. This view echoes what Ghosh criticizes in the arbitrary drawing of cultural and political maps in *The Shadow Lines* and *In an Antique Land*, and what Pamuk in *Snow* directly criticizes in the arbitrary move of the Turkish modernizing project without considering the experience of history and without providing equal space to all ethnic groups. In *Snow* Pamuk also indirectly criticizes the historical act of annexing the city of Kars to the territories of Turkey leading to the uncertainty of identity of that section of the city dwellers who are Armenian by origin. Hence, conflicts, divisions, and migrations in the third world nation-states remain as an unhealable historical wound.

Empire, Imperialism, and Colonialism

Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk explore how the legacies of imperial past have impact on the construction of identities in the post-imperial era. Their fictional locales

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[237] Eric Hobsbawm, op. cit., 54 -57.
[238] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., 402-403.

are eastern but they are differentiated by the connections with two different empires – the British Empire and the Ottoman Empire respectively, the first impacting an alien people's psyche and the second impacting the psyche of its own people. The Third-World narratives in Ghosh partially grew out of the reaction to imperialism and are largely based on the urge for the root searching in the imperial and the post imperial eras. But those of Pamuk are influenced by the memory of the glory of an empire and the present confusing struggles to attain the standard of modernity on a par with the West. About the postcolonial situation of India and Turkey it is apt here to quote Pamuk in an interview: "the suppression that Turks suffered was self-inflicted; ... that self-imposed Westernization [which] brought isolation. Indians [on the other hand] saw their oppressors face to face" (OC 370). Under certain circumstances the Indian themselves also become colonizers as in the case of the Indian immigrants controlling bussiness in Burma and Indian soldiers helping the expansion of the British Empire as shown in *The Glass Palace*. Rajkumar, the protagonist of the novel, gives evidence to this effect in his accounts of the British conquest of Burma.

While critiquing empire they are not blind to some positive contribution of empire to compare it with the negative effect of nation-state. While empire in its expanding territories accomodated hybrid identities, nation-state tends to impose singular identity. What these writers are actually critical of is imperialism which can be distinguished from empire. Imperialism functions on the false basis of underestimating the identity of certain people and upholding the superiority of the other; it depends on the essentialist position that one should rule and the other be ruled. While empire primarily hinges on deterritorialization, imperialism denotes global dominance in diverse forms. To make distinction between empire and imperialism we can take the help of Stephen Ross:

> In contrast to imperialism, empire establishes no territorial centre of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries and borders. It is a *decenterd* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colors of the imperial map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow. [239]

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[239] Stephen Ross, *Conrad and Empire* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2004): 9.

Of course, the difference is not absolute; it is relative and qualitative. Although the empire ceases to exist in our time, imperialism continues in diverse forms. While many characters of these novelists indict empire they sometimes unknowingly feel attracted to imperialism.

Any empire is by default and by definition based on cruelty, exploitation, and double dealing. “Empires always profess,” argues Ghosh, “and sometimes even believe in noble ideals: the problem lies wih their methods, which are invariably such as to subvert their stated aims and ends.”[240] Their processes of conquest and control create certain realities that work as extenuating factors for the subversion of the professed ideals. However, history shows that the use of pretext has closer connection with imperialism of the West than that of the East. The main difference between the western and the eastern empires is that the western powers uphold their imperial projects under the pretext of the Machiavellian principle of a noble end justifying the immediate cruel means and those in the East implement their projects using cruel means without any pretext of civilizing missions. About the impact of colonialism on Burmese society the last Burmese queen Supayalat in *The Glass Palace* utters her very clear-sighted prediction:

> They took our kingdom, promising roads and railways and ports, but mark my words, this is how it will end. In a few decades the wealth will be gone – all the gems, timber and the oil – and then they too will leave. In our golden Burma where no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to write and read, all that will remain is destitution and ignorance, famine and despair. (GP 88)

To implement the ironical project of progress the royal personages are imprisoned and humiliated first with millions following them. She also foretells about the ineluctable judgment of history: “A hundred years hence you will read the indictment of Europe’s greed in the difference between the kingdom of Siam and the state of our enslaved realm” (GP 88).

In *Sea of Poppies* when the British were preparing for the Opium Wars on China they showed the humanitarian concern over the plight of opium producing farmers of the then Bengal Presidency, tactfully ignoring the inevitable serious health hazard of opium

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[240] Amitav Ghosh, “Confessions of a Xenophile,” (5). <www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?239275>.

to the Chinese population, suppressing the poppy producing farmers' better alternative of producing food grains, and leaving the local users of the product in a state of intoxication so that the threat of revolt against the colonial rule could be minimised. They try to establish "that there are times when war is not merely just and necessary, but also humane. In China that time has come: nothing else will do" (SP 260). They decide to carry on the destructive trade under the pretext of humanitarianism and Christian charity. Thus the matter is put very simply through the motto: "Jesus Christ is Free Trade and Free Trade is Jesus Christ" (SP 116). The western traders want to dupe the concerned people into belief that "it is God's will that opium be used as an instrument to open China to his teachings…" (SP 116). Of course, sometimes dissenting voices also arise among the western people involved in the process of preparation for war for reasons of guilt or shame or whatever. Captain Chillingworth in *Sea of Poppies* is such a type. Thus he gets involved in self defeating confessions:

> The truth is, sir, men do what their power permits them to do. We are no different from the Pharaohs or the Mongols: the difference is only that when we kill people we feel compelled to pretend that it is for some higher cause. It is this pretence of virtue, I promise you, that will never be forgiven by history. (SP 262)

But such dissenting voices far from being taken into consideration by the policy makers are silenced in underhand ways. Even sometimes they are brought to face the charge of apostasy and persecution. Like the Burmese queen these dissenters have to draw satisfaction by giving the burden of judgemrnt to history.

The pretence of virtue underlying the imperial projects of the past is being repeated in the forms of neocolonialism of the West. The pretended piety: "we are doing good for the world" is tagged with almost all the western war discourses to camouflage their intimate connections with most horrific thirst for wealth and blood.The worried world citizens are fed up by the slogans of "just wars" which fail to ensure either justice or peace in the long term. No effective steps would be taken to resolve the long standing conflicts the world is acutely suffering from because that will not help implementing the hidden agenda each major power player of the world has in respect to their political hegemomy and economic gain. As history repeats itself, the judgment and teaching of history has become an important focus of the postcolonial writers. While Ghosh talks about the judgement with extensive illustrations from Indian or South Asian history,

Pamuk deals with it with only passing references to the cruelties of the Ottoman Empire because he does not fit into the category of the postcolonial in the way Ghosh does. In Pamuk's novels the empire just does not write back for he writes from the centre of a former empire; his novels refer to Istanbul, in a sense the symbol of colonizer, as a viable cosmopolitan site to cast into sharp relief the limitations of new nation formation.

Partition and Cartographic Violence

Contemporary literature cannot but reflect the process of redrawing the global cultural map and re-forging the identities with the cartographic change of the world in the post imperial era. Although Amitav Ghosh's engagement with the theme of partition has broad historical, cultural, and philosophical implications, geographically it relates to the Bengal partition executed by the departing colonial authority with the collaboration of a section of local leaders who did not arguably represent the majority opinion. This historical incident of partition mainly took into consideration the conflict of religion based identity while there were other areas of conflict too. The colonial authority and a section of native leaders got the immediate dividend of partition: self rule and temporary settlement of the communal conflict, but mass people have to endure the perpetual wound. In Ghosh's narration the afflicted part of the body politic, if medical metaphor fits here, should be treated with holistic remedy and it proves whimsical and self-destructive to cut it into pieces.

Pamuk's cartographic concentration relates to the formation of the Turkish republic through desolution of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the World War I. He mourns the divided status of the Turkish-Armenian border city of Kars, the "depopulated cosmopolitanism" of Istanbul due to the city's changing hands, and the denial of a separate homeland for the Kurds through their dispersion in different neighbouring countries like Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. It is, as Pamuk dares to show in his autobiography-cum-citybook, the cartographic violence that results in the Turkification of Constantinople and the consequent tortures the city's non-Muslim inhabitants, mostly Bazantine Greeks, have to suffer. As a repercussion the Muslim inhabitants in some Greek territories including the Greek Cyprus after the departure of the British have to undergo atrocities in the hands of the Greeks (IMC 155-158). In Pamuk's unbiased assessment "both the Turkish and the Greek states have been guilty of treating their

respective minorities as hostages to geopolitics" (IMC 157). The counter-effect riots in certain Turkish and Greek territories, as projected in Pamuk, bear resemblance of sorts with some related riots of Calcutta and Dhaka, as a narrator in Ghosh tries to understand: "I could not have perceived that there was something more than an accidental connection between those events…in Calcutta, and those other events in Dhaka, simply because Dhaka was in another country" (SL 241). However, in Ghosh's case the states are not involved in making people "hostages to geopolitics": they are guilty in that they often keep a discreet silence about the facts and figures of violence (I&I 317). The cartographic aggression in Pamuk's context relates to the power sharing of the major players in world politics in the wake of the world wars. While Ghosh's stand against partition goes on the verge of obsession, concentrates on human cost, and campaigns for a borderless world, the thrust of Pamuk's partition narratives relates the heavy cultural cost, East-West conflict, and identity dilemma.

Despite the differences in degree, location and context, in dealing with partition and cartographic violence Ghosh and Pamuk share some significant commonalities. Towards a total understanding of history they give emphasis on the portrayal of the dissection of cultural cartography along with the wrong drawing of the geo-political borders. They hold that though the history of partition begins at the point of the withdrawal of the colonial rule, it is executed in the nation-states by the narrow outlook of the people in creating artificial borders out of mistrust, selfishness, and radicalism in the name of religion, colour, and geo-linguistic origin. That shadow lines and circles within the official borders divide people more painfully appear as a recurring theme in the work of Ghosh. The title of his master piece *The Shadow Lines* has become a leitmotif found in most of his writings. His narratives critique the complicity of western historiography in the creation of partition. To his understanding history of the world has become synonymous with the history of partition.

Looked at culturally and philosophically, partition is treated in the oeuvres of these writers as a potent tool in western project of continuing hegemony. In Ghosh context the "divide and rule" policy goes beyond the British Indian political context and applies to the broader cultural context of the world. In *In an Antique Land* he mourns the missing cultural links between two civilizations – Indian and the Egyptian and the

missing cultural-mystic links of Islam and Judaism in the Middle East only to be discovered in archives. His criticism of the western scholarship in handling the Jewish question wrongly in the past is relevant to finding answers to many partition related questions in today's world. These broader issues appear in a microcosmic way in Pamuk in the treatment of the world's once cultural hub Istanbul. While he treats the partition theme explicitly in both cultural and political senses in *Snow* and *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, the issue appears implicitly in other novels. Both the authors treat the violence done on the cartography as a reflection of the violence done on the mind of people. However, Pamuk's context also shows that the violence of cartography, by helping to create mental map, can also give one strength and insight to understand their roots like the enabling power of the exilic condition.

Leaving the small borders uncharted and holding people under a broader umbrella of identity, imperial rule, despite the lots of evils, allowed people undivided cultural space. Imposition of borders through nation-states creates ground for erecting further invincible stone walls or boundary of barbed wires, and multiplies invisible lines of separation among peoples. One division triggers another division in a no-ending chain of reactions. The works of Ghosh and Pamuk show that cosmopolitanism in the present world of economic and cultural globalization through mass migration and easy communication can be a partial compensation for the cartographic violence. While Ghosh mainly relies on medieval ocean trade as a symbol of cosmopolitanism, Pamuk harps on the past status of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism of his native city Istanbul. They turn to the past not to find a prescription to heal the present cartographic wound because "that was a historical moment and it passed… [but] to evoke the desire and hopes that animated it."[241] Taking lesson from history can be the starting point in a mission to remove barriers from physical and psychological maps and that can be an effective step forward to prevent further cartographic violence. To counter the partitionist philosophy of the ultranationalists and the neo-imperialists both the novelists attempt to foreground the need of nurturing ordinary "people's mental maps," to borrow the phrase from Joel Migdal.[242]

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[241] Amitav Ghosh, "Confessions of a Xenophile," Op. cit.

[242] Joel Migdal, "Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints: Struggle to Construct and Maintain State and Social Boundaries," *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Identities in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel Migdal (CUP, 2004): 3-23; 7.

Identity and Violence

Identity issue in Ghosh and Pamuk extends from the predicament of individuals to the crisis of nationhood and ultimately to the global politics of cultural hegemony. Although the issue of identity was present in the philosophical discourses of the precolonial period it appears prominently in the colonial period and in the world of nation-states, globalization, and free market. Identity related violence, either at the micro level communal or macro level, appears as a dominant motif in both Ghosh and Pamuk. Their creative minds have been shaped by their direct or indirect experience of sectarian violence. Ghosh in several essays explains how experiences of witnessing riots in Calcutta as a child and in New Delhi as a mature man along with the impression created by the "remembered stories" of riots told by his mother have a tremendous effect on his development as a writer (I&I 45; 316). Similarly, Pamuk in *Istanbul: Memories and the City* explains how he has been sensitized to the consequence of sectarian politics by the accounts of the "conquest fever" driving the mobs of Istanbul "to rampage through the city, plundering the property of Greeks and other minorities" (IMC 157). He cannot forget the accounts of the rioters' cruelties creating "the city more hellish than the worst orientalist nightmares [under] the state's support" (IMC 158). He explains: "because my family told long stories about these riots for years afterwards, the details are as vivid as if I had seen them with my own eyes" (IMC 158-159).

Quite naturally in these writers' literary projection the history of the world turns into the history of identity related violence, be it of high intensity or low intensity. Ghosh's first novel *The Circle of Reason* shows violence in shaping man's destiny and identity in the remote Bengal village of Lalpukur and in the distant Middle Eastern imaginary city of Al-Ghazira. *The Shadow Lines* depicts many incidents of communal riots in the wake of the emergence of the two nation-states in the Indian subcontinent. We find the incident of violence in *The Hungry Tide* in the denial of the existence of the "Dalit nation" within the framework of Indian identity. Pamuk in *Snow* deals with the incidents of secret killing for ideological reasons, military coups and their theatrical representations in a society torn by conflicting ideological elements. In *Snow* he criticizes genocide as the tool of ethnic cleansing when he refers to the absence of the Armenians in Kars and the transformation of their churches into new structures. In the same context, he speaks in his much quoted interview with the Swiss Das Magazine

(2005): ‘‘Thirty thousand Kurds and a million Armenians were killed in thsese lands [Turkey]. And almost nobody dares to talk about it. So I do.’’

In Ghosh’s world violence erupts around the fault lines of religious difference between Islam and Hinduism in the Indian context or Islam and Judaism in the context of the Middle East as depicted in *In an Antique Land*. In Pamuk violence erupts overtly within people belonging to the same religion, between its extreme adherents and the extreme secularists, and covertly around the fault line between the Islamic world and its adjacent Christian world. In both cases theopolitical ideas tend to replace the ideas of nation and nationalism. The two writers have given specific historical incidents of massacre as a result of powerful ultranationalist discourse. Amitav Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* historicises the Morichjhãpi massacre sponsored by the state in a drive to cleansing national identity, paradoxically in a period when the communists governed the West Bengal. In the novel the ulterior motive of violence is nature conservation but the actual reason is the problem of assimilating the settlers who were “Dalits” (HT 118) with the mainstream Indian identity. The *Bhadra* identity of metropolitan based people is revealed through their romanticized notion of giving more preference to nature and wild life preservation than the survival of the landless poor.

Orhan Pamuk’s critique of the Turkish massacre of Armenians and other minorities in his writings and interviews also connects with cartographic violence that I have discussed in the previous section. Unlike Ghosh’s dealing with genocide Pamuk’s criticism of it in fiction is rather oblique. As for example, Pamuk in *Snow* describes a pastry shop which “had been an Orthodox church until 1967, when the door had been removed and gifted to the museum ...[which] commemorated the Armenian massacre” (*Snow* 32). However, the sting of his criticism becomes pointed in his short essays and interviews. In interviews Ghosh too appears more free and frank in commenting on sensitive issues. When he is questioned about his accepting the prize of the genocide-tainted Israeli establishment he retorts that he is well aware of “what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip” and, at the same time, refers to his own country’s context: “Who in India can seriously deny that terrible things have happened in Kashmir and the northeast, but am I going to say India should be boycotted? No.”[243] These writers,

[243] Amitav Ghosh, “Interview,” With Tim Teeman, op. cit.

however different in their degrees of frank delineation of the politically delicate identity related incidents of different countries, converge on the point that literature, instead of supporting the culture of embargo, boycotting, and legal persecution, promotes the culture of bridging minds through aesthetic and empathetic understanding.

Violence, sometimes, results from a kind of unrealistic and self-defeating competition, which, in Anderson's words, can be termed "spectre of comparisons."[244] In vying with each other to achieve the prominent position of role playing, people tend to give importance to petty differences over significant commonalities, a tendency having its root in the psychology of conflict. Violence also results from the process of eliminating the elements of impurity from ultra-national identity. The types of violence as we find in the writings of Ghosh and Pamuk continue to operate in covert and overt ways in all modern nation-states. According to Fanon, it is the result of nationalism's transformation into chauvinism and racism.[245] The fast spreading belief in singular and exclusive identity in negligence of the essential sameness underlying the apparent diversity in humankind is throwing the world into flame.[246] To counter the destructive trend creative writers like Ghosh and Pamuk play the role of peace activists through their value-loaded portrayal of characters and social scenes. The idealist figure Nirmal through his dedicated stance for the Dalit in Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and the idealist poet Ka in his involvement with the affairs in Kars in Pamuk's *Snow* can be comparable in this connection. Both the characters rely on poetic intertexts for inspiration: Nirmal on Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and Ka on his own poetry. Ghosh in his delineation of the project of syncretism and Pamuk in his thesis on East-West interface and Occidentalism have tried to illustrate that human beings are at the same time diversely oriented and essentially the same. The remedy for violence lies in the understanding of this paradoxical nature of the human race.

They identify two kinds of extremism based on the profane language of difference – religious exrtremism and nationalist extremism, behind the incidents of violence. Ghosh in his essay, "The Fundamentalist Challenge" has discussed the point with reference to different countries and religions. What he noticed in Cambodia is the

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[244] Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons*, op. cit.

[245] Frantz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," *The Wretched of the Earth*, op. cit.,156.

[246] Amartya Sen, op. cit., xvii.

reduction of the Khmer Rouge ideology to a nationalistic form of racism that leads to the organized killing of the Vietnamese in general and the Vietnamese speaking minority in Cambodia in particular. The followers of the ideology thinks that all Vietnamese must be killed, including civilian men, women, or children, for they are soldiers disguised as civilians showing potential threat to grab the land. According to him, the Khmer Rouge language is comparable to that of the Hindu extremists. The latter demolished the Babri Mosque in the city of Ayodhya for they held that the mosque had replaced a temple in the birthplace of Sri Ram. The demolition was followed by a wave of pogroms of Muslim-minority communities in India and reverse repercussions in Bangladesh and Pakistan. The extremist groups of diverse orientations borrow the language of historiography and draw on the sources of the demographic statistics and the archaeological data concerning which community is growing fast to become a majority and who came first or last to a region showing a stronger or weaker claim on the land**.** It flashes on Ghosh, "reading reports from Bosnia, Croatia, Sudan, Algeria, Sri Lanka, and other strife-torn lands," that the reason of the pogroms does not lie with "religion, race, ethnicity, and language," but with a demonic ideology he would like to call "supremacism" for lack of a better word (I&I 278-279).

The same mistaken philosophy of "sumpremacism" works behind the killing and suppression of the ethnic minorities in Pamuk's Kars and Istanbul. It is the practice of this philosophy which is mainly responsible for propagating "the image of the Terrible Turk world-wide" (OC 239). The Armenian churches are transformed in Kars out of the nationalist motive of erasing the memory of the demographic and archaeological data supporting the once majority status of the Armenians in this Turkish-Armenian border town facing the contesting claims over it on the part of thr neighbouring countries (S 32). Pamuk here could not go to the socio-political details of the issue for it is not allowed by his fictional purview and, besides, he enjoys lesser writerly freedom than Ghosh due the qualitive difference between their background countries. Nevertheless, he supports the open discussion of the"black spots" in his countrey's history, the "black spots" comprising the issues of Armenian, Greek, and Kurdish minorities, to get out the destructive nationalist supremacism the country suffers from (OC 238). Like Ghosh's global awareness, he thinks, "the grotesque and inscrutable drama" unfolding before us is not "peculiar to Turkey; rather it is an expression of a new global phenomenon that we

are just coming to acknowledge and that we must now begin, however carefully, to address" (OC 239). In line with the argument he compares Turkey's authority's discreet silence about the killings of the Armenian and Kurdish minorities with China's "discreet ethnic cleansing of Uighurs"—both are maintained by brandishing a virulent nationalist agenda and by nourishing state sponsored contradictions. He deplores that the western model of tolerance and equal rights cannot show any convincing direction to others for "these days the lies about the war in Iraq and the reports of secret CIA prisons have so damaged the West's credibility in Turkey and in other nations" (OC 240).

Mongrel Identities

Ghosh and Pamuk show that neither the colonialist nor the nationalist version of identity has the full potentiality of representing identity. They plead for mélange identity which is now at stake because of the madness of ultra-nationalism and the significant revival of religion in the global political stage giving increasing pressure to see identity, to quote Croucher, as "fixed and organic, something pregiven, predetermined or natural."[247] Narrating the pitfalls of jingoistic and chauvinistic nationalism both the authors show the essentiality and practicality of mongrel identity to make modern nation-states viable. Human beings are multi-identitied having problems and potentialities created by competeting parts. In a given situation an individual is made to highlight one part, but not undermining the other parts. The ethnic identities can in no way be incompatible with the broader national identity. To be at peace with their histories dating back to the pre-partition phase, as these writers emphasise, human beings should ensure peaceful coexistence of various layers of identities.

In Ghosh's delineation the term Indian may include myriad entities of major and minor groups with their distinct marks and must provide everyone with equal space to be proud of being a Hindu/Muslim/Buddhist besides being Indian at the same time. Similarly, his exploration of Geniza materials in *In an Antique Land* reveals the historical truth that the term Egyptian in the twelfth century provided everyone with equal space to remain proud of being a Jew/Muslim/Christian and an Egyptian at the same time. In the ideal focus of Pamuk's narrative, there should not be any discrimination among the Armenians, the Greeks, the Jews, the Kurds, and the Muslims living in Turkey. In Turkey, the process of divesting

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[247] Sheila Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Lanham:Rowman and Littlegroup , 2004): 36.

the nation of its long inherited mongrel identity and culture has proved self-defeating. In the Indian subcontinent, as a consequence of creating three nations out of one geographical and historical identity, the nations are facing threats to their principle of plurality. The duality or multiplicity should be at the core of new patriotism in any nation-state if it has to survive. But what is deplorably noticed in the present state of affairs of the world is the repressing thrust towards the majority identity markers and the marginalisation of minority. Discrimination in terms of caste, creed, ethnicity, and geo-linguistic origin is posing a constant threat to the existence of the modern nation-state which tends to hinge on homogenizing spirit impractically. To counter the threat these writers seem to advance the "unity in diversity" model where commonalities will be foregrounded while admitting paradoxically the essential differences, striking a golden mean between the ideal and the real.

Novel as the Subaltern Space

In portraying the condition of the suppressed identities Ghosh and Pamuk use novel as a space for the subaltern voice**.** A considerable number of their characters belonging to the "subaltern" in the broader sense of the term testify to the fact that the rise of novel as a genre parallels the rise of democracy and movements for equal right. As an elastic and discursive genre novel can accommodate people of all rungs in the society and discuss all issues under the sky. Now crops up the question as to which segment of the society plays a major role in the development of human civilization and deserves the dominant space in novel. Selection of characters depends on the writer's individual choice and social orientation. In many of his writings Ghosh displays his particular interest in the less empowered and deplores that the official annals do not record those who do the spadework in the building of civilization. In *In an Antique Land* he appears as a subaltern ethnographer by retrieving a subaltern character, the Indian slave named Bomma, from the "anonymity" of the mainstream history. While staying in Egypt he identifies himself with Bomma and he also becomes a subject of inquiry for the Egyptian villagers he has to live with for ethnographic purposes. Thus the discoverer himself becomes discovered, a situation challenging the western paradigm of ethnographic research where the ethnographer occupies the all time superior position. For the author's ideological identification the subaltern Bomma even gets more prominence than he deserves as postmodern historical novels, Elisabeth Wesseling

argues, “do not merely foreground groups about which official historiography tends to remain silent, but also allot them more power than they actually possessed.”[248]

In *The Calcutta Chromosome* the subaltern researchers Laakhan and Mangala are presented as the catalyst behind the Nobel winning discovery of Sir Ronald Ross. His fourth novel *The Hungry Tide* is mostly about the cause of the subalterns consisting of the poor islanders in Morichjhãpi of the Sundarbans. These social outcasts were denied land and respectable identity within the restrictive framework of a nation-state. Their dream of building a Dalit nation based on egalitarianism as conceived by one idealist named Hamilton in the colonial period is aggressively denied by the enforcers of the dominant identity. The novelist shares philosophy with his idealist character Nirmal who spends the prime of his life in the islands as a champion of the underdog. By arguing for them he challenges the apparent impartial role of the nation-state to ensure security for all.

Ghosh’s first novel *The Circle of Reason* is primarily about the subalterns who, being marginalized in the discourses of nationalism and globalization, are pushed on the move from one palce to another, ending up in an oil-rich Middle Eastern city. The subaltern group on the move is represented by the central character Alu who is infused with the idealism of helping the poor by his uncle Balaram who in the early phase of the novel derives the humanitarian passion to save the subalterns by forming a circle of reason in the remote Bengal village from the stories of Pasteur’s motivation behind the discovery of germ. Pasteur did not come to science by thinking about great things like the Cosmic Atom but by thinking about the plight of the helpless like his father who was a poor tanner. Once the poor brewers of France asked him about the reason behind their beer rotting. The question of the simple people led to the discovery of the “infinitesimally small” or the Germ. Balaram gives another anecdote of Pasteur’s motivation:

> Who did the silk farmers of Europe go to when disease struck their silkworms and whole provinces lay devastated and groaning in misery? Who did they go to with their children hungry at their breasts and their livelihood wasting in their fields? Who but Pasteur? They went to him and they said: Save us. And when he saw their wretchedness not all the powers on earth could have kept him from answering. (CR 52-53).

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[248] Elisabeth Wesseling, *Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1991): 162.

Thus most of the credit of great scientific inventions should go to the poor whose tales of suffering make the scientists feel a strong passion for building a better future for mankind. They work behind the screen for all great human achievements. This sentiment that the poor and ordinary are the main carriers of great things in human history appears as a significant discourse in many Ghosh novels. When the official annals include only those who play the role from above and ignore those who do the ground work for building civilization, novel in the hands of writers like Ghosh comes to their rescue from the oblivion.

Although Pamuk like Ghosh does not adopt a novelistic rescue project for the poor, his novels nonetheless gives significant space to the subalterns. The intensity of the project in Ghosh has roots in his attachment with the Indian subaltern studies tradition. Pamuk, however, does not have any tradition like this and subaltern space in his novels is purely the outcome of the romantic gravitation of the artist in him towards the powerless. In the context of his country the less empowered and the non- influential groups who do not conform to the aggressive westernizing project and do not have scope to directly take part in nation building can be called subalterns. While broadly dealing with the life and predicaments of the upper middle class living under the spell of the West Pamuk's novels also give voice to the uninfluential and the ethnic minorities in Turkey like the Kurds, the Armenian, and the Greek. The dominant view coming out of his oeuvre is that the westernization project in Turkey has failed because the marginalized poor who constitute the majority of the population do not have support or participation in it.

Through the projection of the uninfluential character he unearths the fact that the Kemalist republican project with cosmetic covering could not survive the class discrimination deep wthin the society. The subaltern perspective in Pamuk is clearly expressed by the Islamist character Fazil who in *Snow* says to Ka, the poet and journalist:

> We're poor and insignificant....Our wretched lives have no place in human history. One day all of us living here in Kars today will be dead and gone. No one will remember us; no one will care what happened to us. We'll spend the rest of our days here arguing about what sort of scarf women should wrap around their heads, and no one will care in the slightest as we're eaten up by our own petty, idiotic quarrels (*Snow* 294).

The complaints of this character of Pamuk reflect the condition of the uneducated or half educated peasants living out tradional life in the peripheries of the country and the traditionally educated Islamists who are denied to have respectable positions in the structure of the modern state. For their sticking to tradition and non-contribution to the modernization of the nation they will have no place in the official history of the nation. In the decades before 1950 the Turkish authority did not even allow the backward citizens like them to walk on the streets of the major cities of the country so that they could not distort the picture of the newly adopted style of living and project a poor image of the nation to the world outside.

As a continuation of that situation the headscarf girls in Kars are not allowed to put on scarves in schools and public institutions. The Islamist groups predominantly composed of the backward section of the society, and especially the headscarf girls, who have little or no voice in decision making in the conservative and patriarchal social set up, constitute alternative groups. In order to define them Ulker Gokberk has used Nancy Fraser's term "subaltern counter publics," as opposed to the dominant public composed of the ruling elites and the patriarchal figures.[249] Accordingly, the conflict in *Snow* appears to be the drama of ideological conflict between the secularists and the Islamists and between the dominant public and the "subaltern counter publics." The latter's assertion of conscious identity politics through the adoption of their traditional dress style challenges the authority of the ruling elites to impose any other dress/life style upon them "because [according to the authority] the scarf, the fez, the turban and the headdress were all symbols of the reactionary darkness in [their] souls, from which [they] should, liberate [them] selves and run to join the modern nations of the West" (*Snow* 155). This subaltern group complains that Pamuk does not have the right to write about them since he belongs to the other class and does not have association with it. But the fact that the other class has brought against him the similar charge of partiality with the "subaltern counter publics" proves that he is aesthetically distanced from both the groups and has every right to write on them.

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[249] Ülker Gökberk, "Beyond Secularism: Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* and the Contestation of 'Turkish Identity' in the Border Land," *Konturen* 1(2008): 1- 25; 17. <www.konturen. edu/volume1/ Gökberk final2.pdf>.

East-West Entanglements

As the issue of East-West entanglements underlie the discourses of history and identity at the global level it appears as an identical issue in the writings of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk. Through their narratives they question the essentialism of traditional East-West binary and show how this has projected the world through the wrong end of the historical telescope. However, the East-West trope becomes more pervasive and central in the oeuvre of Pamuk than in Ghosh. Ghosh focuses on the issue more in the colonial context. Pamuk's focus is more on the present world context of globalization and cultural conflict. Again most characters of Pamuk being Muslims often tend to see the East and the West as rivals facing each other uneasily along the line of religious war. While many characters of both the novelists argue for hurling defiance at the West by being reluctant to accept it as a reference point of excellence whether in the field of history or in art, some characters suffering from Europhilia show strong fascination with the West in a bid to become "modern." The anti-West characters feel the need of othering the West as the the process of othering by putting their identity into sharp focus helps them assert their individuality.They take recourse to occidentalization to fight out their inferiority complex as the West takes recourse to orientalism to rationalize and continue its hegemony over the East. Even some characters display the paradoxical position of love-hate, attraction-repulsion in their view of the West.

In *In an Antique Land* the local Imam of an Egyptian village asks Ghosh about the rationality of burning the dead in India through his normative reference to West: "You've been to Europe; you've seen how advanced they are. Now tell me: have you ever seen them burning their dead?" (AL 192). When Ghosh wryly replies that "they do burn their dead in Europe...they have special electric furnaces meant just for that," the Imam further gives the view of the West held wrongly by millions around him: "They don't burn their dead in the West. They're not ignorant people. They're advanced, they're educated, they have science, they have guns and tanks and bombs" (AL 193). Here Ghosh finds one point of identification between himself and the Imam: "We were both travelling, he and I: we were both travelling in the West. The only difference was that I had actually been there, in person: I could have told him a great deal about it, seen at first hand, its libraries, its museums, its theatres, but it wouldn't have mattered" (AL 193). The West matters to the common masses only for its mass destructive weapons and military achievements: "tanks

and guns and bombs.” On the basis of this partial knowledge of the West the ordinary people of the East have a strong desire to be like the West.

In Pamuk’s oeuvre the Europhiliac characters and those who are not scathing critics of the West are more impressed by the lure of fashionable life and individual liberty the West is supposed to offer. To mention a typical character, Muhtar in Pamuk’s *Snow* like the Egyptian local Imam in Ghosh’s novel feels sad for not being like the westerners. He feels as if he was erased from history and banished from civilization because he even cannot imitate the so far away civilized world represented by the West in his understanding. Finally he desires to have a child to fulfil his wish: “God wouldn’t even give me a child who might do all the things I had not done, who might release me from my misery by becoming the Westernised, modern, and self-possessed individual I had always dreamed of becoming” (*Snow* 55). Although the Islamist characters in the novel internally feel attracted to the West they are in public found vehemently castigating the West for being Godless without realizing the fact that “there could be a God who was different from the God of the” Muslims who themselves are often considered “the bearded provincial reactionaries” by their country’s liberals who like the Europeans cannot reconcile “with a God that required women to wrap themselves up in scarves” (*Snow* 98).

Some Pamuk characters from the liberal camp ascribe their country’s mounting tension between religionists and secularists to the influence of the West though it is mainly their home grown internal conflict rooted back in the early republican days. Of course, the model of the republican modernism aimed at giving the country a prestigious identity right in the beginning was the West. Some other characters oppose the West just for asserting their individuality as is expressed through the voice of the revolutionary Islamist character Blue: “I’m standing up against the westerners as an individual. It’s because I’m an individual that I refuse to imitate them” (*Snow* 331). Both the Islamist and the modernist groups in Pamuk have attraction for the West for two different reasons, weakness for comfortable life and preference for progressive ideas respectively, though they manifest their desires in different degrees and ways.

While opposing the West the anti-West characters in Ghosh’s novels have the colonial history in mind. The West is also critiqued in Ghosh through showing the way

of writing, in a sense, alternative narratives, challenging western power- patronised historiography. Pamuk unlike Ghosh has carried the East-West debate further to the elaborate thesis on miniature painting and comparative debate on western-eastern canons. The miniaturists as portrayed in *My Name is Red* in their meditation on lending and borrowing as strengthening or weakening factor in the artistic style capture the tensions netween East and West. Pamuk broaches the ussue of the ruins of the eastern canon under the spell of the West. The treasure of eastern literature "from the Persian classics to all the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese texts," has fallen in the hands of the western scholars who have become the centre of distribution and communication because of the unawareness on the part of the East (OC 371)**.** Such unawareness inspires the denigrating comments like the one made by Macaulay on the superiority of European literature over the literatures of India and Arabia**.**[250] A character of *Snow* thus gets involved in the diagnosis of the problem: "because we've fallen under the spell of the West, we've forgotten our own stories. They've removed all the stories from our children's textbooks" (*Snow* 81). In the essay "Black Pen" Pamuk echoes the same feeling: "We have been stripped of our stories and our identities" (OC 326).

While investigating his love-hate relationship with *The Thousand and One Nights* in the essay "To Read or Not to Read: The Thousand and One Night" he identifies his country's westernizing spirit as the only reason behind his early distaste for the "great sea of stories." Young Turks like him under the spell of western modernity considered the reading of the eastern classics as following a dark road to an impenetrable forest. At the mature stage he came to the discovery: "Now I think that what we lacked was a key – a way into this literature that preserved the modern outlook but still allowed us to appreciate the arabesques, pleasantries, and random beauties" (OC 121). Because of the difference in their (colonial) past Pamuk unlike Ghosh often encounters the Bloomian anxiety of influence of the West.[251] But in the ultimate analysis, these writers have not employed the idea of the West to prove the weakness of its opposite, the East or the Third World, where people often have to live the anxiety of identities. They appear to speak like Fanon: "But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to

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[250] Macaulay, op. cit.,241.

[251] Pamuk confesses to have experienced the problem of what Harold Bloom called "the anxiety of influence" in "The *Paris Review* Interview," *Other Colours,* Trans. Maureen Freely (London: Faber and Faber,2007): 353-378; 377.

bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries."[252]

The West has done things both good and bad, progressive in one respect and regressive in another. The Third Wordlists have to start from the ending point of the West's contribution to the advancement of human race. At the same time they should keep positively in mind the "crime against humanity" perpetrated by the West to prevent history repeating itself for, as we know from Edmund Burke the fierce critic of British imperialism in India, those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Among the evils done by the West, according Ghosh, "partitioning of the past" is the most damaging since it has planted the seed for a substantial number of conflicts around the globe. This charge of partitioning brought against the West is put forward by Fanon very aptly:

> It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget Europe's crimes of which the most horrible was committed in the heart of man, and consisted of the pathological tearing apart of his functions and the crumbling away of his unity.[253]

The writers under discussion in dealing with the East-West thesis cross paths with Fanon in the assessment of Europe's contributions and the responsibility of the Third World.

The East-West division in a sense becomes the division in time with respect to human achievements in different phases of history. In Ghosh the past refers to both the pre-partition past and the colonial past, and the present stands for independence and new possibility of retrieving the pre-partition past. In Pamuk's context the past represents the native tradition while the present represents advancement in line with the Europeans. He expresses his condition with reference to his iconic predecessors "who drew their strength from the tensions between the past and the present, or between what Westerners like to call the East and West; they are the ones who taught [him] how to reconcile [his] love for modern art and Western literature with the culture of the city in which [he] lived" (IMC 99). A synthesis of of the positive attitudes of East and West, or by extension past and present, needless to say, is a need of the time to create a new world order.

[252] Frantz Fanon, The *Wretched of the Earth*, op. cit., 315.
[253] Ibid.

Clash or Exchanges of Civilizations/Cultures

The East-West binary has larger political implications in clash or exchange theory of civilizations and cultures. In different ways both the novelists present different civilizations shuttling between "combat zones" and "contact zones." The American political thinker Samuel P. Huntington has given the well known and overly discussed theory of clashes of civilizations. Critical discussion of literary portrayal of the civilizational and cultural exchanges readily brings the Huntington thesis in mind. Huntington opines that the world would remain with a "fault line" between the combatting civilizations or ideologies as it previously remained under the bipolar world of constant Cold War. As counterpart to western civilization he generally considers the eastern civilizations/cultures taken as a whole, and the Islamic civilization particularly. In the western eye, according to Said, "other great civilizations of the East – India and China among them – could be thought of as defeated and distant and hence not a constant worry."[254] Since Islam is geographically "[c]loser to Europe than any of the other non- Christian religions, the Islamic world by its very adjacency evoked memories of its encroachments on Europe, and always, of its latent power again and again to disturb the West."[255] As a case in point Huntington mentions Turkey to have the potentiality of taking the leading role as a core sate of the Islamic civilization for its imperial past, modernising drive in the present, and its geographical proximity to Europe. He also claims that the non-western civilizations would never advance in the way the westerners are previlleged to do. Hence he can be considered as a proponent of a thesis that runs counter to what writers like Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk are advancing.

The way Ghosh and Pamuk narrativise the issue make us feel that Huntington has oversimplified the relations between civilizations and that his approach to the present and future world (dis)orders is rather politically biased, monolithic and belligerent. These novelists rather appear to agree with Said that "Huntington's thesis…amounts to a blanket declaration of war against all civilizations that do not conform to Western values."[256] Western values cannot enjoy normative standard as values of all cultures demand equal treatment. In many narrative situations in Ghosh and Pamuk the idea of

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[254] Edward Said, *Covering Islam*, op. cit., 5.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Edward Said, "The Campaign against Islamic Terror," *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and* After, op. cit., 44-50; 49.

"western standard" comes up only to be repudiated in the final analysis. Contradicting the concept of the Egyptian Imam who wants to give credit to the western civilization for superior destructive weapons Ghosh means to say military supremacy does not mean cultural supremacy. Amartya Sen also in his philosophical work *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* gives a counter thesis to the clash-theory. Sen says that Huntington shows a myopic view of the world seen as standing on fault lines. In Sen's analysis conflict is artificially created in the world which in the past could well accommodate multiple identities which can still enrich rather than impoverish people.

In line with Sen's thesis Amitav Ghosh in *In an Antique Land* hints that the present clash of civilizations is due largely to western hegemony and neo-imperialism. Even the conflict between/among eastern civilizations is created more by the western political discourses favouring "the partitioning of the past" that came as an outcome of the imposition of colonial rule. The pre-imperial past recorded the peaceful coexistence of people of different regions, cultures, and religions. The coexistence model can be revived in the present by excavating the past and creating similar ground for non-warring diversities. Through the story of Ben Yiju and Bomma the long tradition of exchanges between Indian and Egyptian civilizations is shown. After deciphering the content of the Geniza documents of the Synagogue of Ben Ezra in Cairo Ghosh gives the strong evidence of the past existence of links between Muslims and Jews in the Middle East, quite obverse of the present state of visceral conflict. The Jewish history as we all know today is represented and manipulated by the German scholasticism. History narrated by the West has been complicit in the creation of the battleground in the Middle East.[257]

In Turkey as a case in Pamuk the conflict with the western civilization is due to the reactions of people to the loss of the Ottoman imperial glory, the feeling of the inferiority complex, and the present fear of the western gaze. So the conflict does not necessarily have root in belonging to a different culture or civilization, but to a deep-seated sense of inadequacy. This condition of mind is worsened by the secular state's imposition of the western modernism which majority of the population, belonging to lower middle class, interpret as cultural aggression with the pay of the Christian West. If there is any strong resistance to following the western civilization as we find in the

[257] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, op. cit., 219.

Islamist characters of *Snow*, it is more a fear-induced reaction than real antagonism. The fear of being divested of their Muslim identity is symbolized in this novel by some women's attaching unusual importance to the headscarf as they commit suicide for not being allowed to wear that piece of human attire. This head covering of girls is not allowed in many western countries and in some parts of Turkey of the time as projected in *Snow.* Although doctrinally it is important for Muslim women, any prohibition on it is not a convincing cause for anyone's committing suicide. This reveals the truth that apart from scriptural reasons psychological and sociological factors play the significant role in the creation of ruptures along the line of religions. Ghosh too in the context of Hindu-Muslim rivalry in India and Bangladesh speaks of the danger of political and sociological ideas engulfing religious belief. (I&I 288).

Third Space and Hybridity

The novels of both Ghosh and Pamuk take the characters and their readers beyond the broadly generalized East-West divide and situate them in a "third space" where the petty differences are overlooked in order to reach a harmonious condition out of the blending of diverse cultures. The Bhabhaesque "third space" in these novels is concerned with the negotiation between past and present, local and global, East and West. In Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* the characters begin their journey in a remote Bengal border village and find the transformation of their life in the third space provided first by the ocean journey and then by the imaginary Middle-Eastern town of Al Ghazira where the first journey ends for the renewal of their lives. The similar space we come across in the first two of the proposed "Ibis" trilogy. In *The Shadow Lines* some of the actors taking part in the scenes of Dhaka and Calcutta find the third space in London for the resolution of the conflict of relation and identity. Beyond the division of history Ghosh creates an imaginary third space in *In an Antique Land* through the fictional version of the lives of the Indian slave Bomma and the Tunisian Jewish merchant Abraham Ben Yiju.

Similarly, all the characters in Pamuk's novels have their conflicts resolved in the third space. The characters of *The White Castle* resolve their identity paradox in the redemptive third space, provided by imagination with the application of storytelling. Galip of *The Black Book*, in his pursuit of resolving the mystery of the whereabouts of

his missing wife, gets the solution in the detective newspaper columns of his cousin Câlal. The identity dilemma of the Istanbul dwellers in *Istanbul: Memories and the City* finds their solution in the psychological space designated by the distinct psychological concept "huzun." The crisis of the miniaturists in *My Name Is Red* is resolved in the artists' arriving at the prospect of synthesizing different styles. In *Snow* the enactment of the political drama of conflict between the secularists and the Islamists is taken to the "third space" of art provided by the inset play for an imaginary solution. In the inset play "My Father Land, or My Head Scarf," a rewritting of an old play, Kadife bares her head in public and at the same time does not want to look like the European girls with bare shoulders. The apparent dilemma or contradiction in her character shows that the choice should be left to women to wear or not to wear the scarf as identity marker. It is equally wrong to force women to veil or unveil.

Through the "third space" Ghosh and Pamuk seem to campaign for a hybridized world in which divergences are not only tolerated but are enthusiastically celebrated as a means of producing cultural novelty and intellectual enrichment. They advocate for a pluralistic world with unity in diversity. In the fast changing globalized world, their writings question the notion of purity and problematise the concepts of home, culture, and nation. Amitav Ghosh shows that hybridity is not only the product of the present-day global economy, mass migration, and electronic communication, it also existed in the past through ocean trade and man's insatiable thirst for travel and knowing each other. In *In an Antique Land*, through the relationship of Bomma and Ben Yiju, he exemplifies the cultural exchanges and syncretism between the Egyptian, Jewish and the south Indian Tulu cultures in twelfth century. Through the Cairo Ganiza materials he shows the exchanges that existed between the Jewish and Islamic cultures in the ancient times, and the vestiges of the mixture still exist in common greeting words shared by the Egyptian Muslims and Jews and in their attending some common holy places in the Middle East. Through the manipulation of Jewish history by the western powers this redemptive space of exchanges between them is contracted to the point of extinction.

Ghosh illustrates the historical validity of hybridity through the polyphonic discourses of the postcolonial history. In his approach to rewrite the history he incorporates an infinite variety of experiences, lives, cultures, and perspectives that make

up the postcolonial and postmodern world we live in. Ghosh, like many other postmodern novelists, advocates the pluralistic vision of history against the western vision of linear, progressive, and reductionist history which justifies the dominance of certain people and the subjugation of the others. To Ghosh, a kind of hybridized and open ended historical version can help people come near the truth of self and expose the superficial bases of different binaries that lead to many misunderstandings. In the national narratives also Ghosh embraces hybridity. He condemns the idea of nationhood where diversity is subjugated to the need of unity. The idea can be tenable only when the hybridity is accepted and the question of accommodating diversity is properly addressed. Any attempt at imposing cosmetic unity must trigger violence and repression. The representation of violence in many novels of Ghosh testifies to this view. The declaration of a leader about the nature and character of a nation can never be absolute as such declaration is likely to repress diversity.

Ghosh also promotes hybridity in the use of English Language in multilingual settings. In many novels he has made the utmost use of the elasticity of English by mixing with it a huge number of Indian vernacular words and phrases. He even does not hesitate to use transliterated slang and curse words. He uses different varieties of English particularly in his “river/ocean novels” where the ship with it’s multilingually oriented characters appears to him as a “floating dictionary.” By using the heteroglot English he challenges the binary relationship of Standard English and non-standard English, imperial English and the third world English. He holds that English as a truly global language should essentially become a hybrid language like the hybrid identity, hybrid culture, and hybrid nationality. Ghosh finds it easy to practise hybridity in the use of English Language because it has been a globalized language for a long time with a rich reservoir of dialects and registers.

Pamuk in his novels and autobiography upholds hybridity with respect to history, culture, identity, nation formation, and the geography of his native city or the country as a whole. He is proud of being a native of a city which has a rich heritage of cultural diversity. He criticizes the ultra-Turkish nationalism which, in contradiction to the land’s pluralistic heritage in ethnicity and language, denies the proper space of the ethnic minorities like the Kurds, the Armenians, and the Greek. He thinks that Turkey, being

geographically situated in between the two continents, can be highly benefited by assimilating the elements of different cultures. In rewriting the Ottoman history in the fictionalized form he has introduced multiple perspectives in delineating the cultural and political themes. Istanbul or its icon the Hagia Sophia is presented in his writings from the Roman, Ottoman, and the modern Turkish perspectives. He reflects the reality of his people through hybridity in the discourse of miniature art and artists as depicted in *My Name Is Red*. Hybridity appears in this novel in the mixture of Venician and Islamic tradtions of creating miniatures.

Dynamics of Master-Slave Relation in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* and Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*[258]

Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* and Ohan Pamuk's *The White Castle*, in treating the age-old subject of master-slave relation, have portrayed various implications and dimensions of self-other relations connected with many common pressing concerns of our time. A comparison between these two important works of the writers provides a wider perspective to view the theme of human relationship in the form of master-slave interaction by going beyond the context of one culture and literature and adds signifinant insights into the comparison of Ghosh and Pamuk. They cross ways in their dealing with the trope of master-servant relation through which the issues of identity formation and cultural confrontations/negotiations are given a human face with a mystic dimension. As I intend to use the master-slave relation in the two important texts of the these authors as an important structural link of comparision a good number of areas discussed separately in this chapter will appear in this larger section.

Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* develops two apparently different narrative strands. The first strand − the bulk of the text – concerns the events related to the novelist's field work as an anthropologist in two Egyptian remote villages. The second strand which directly relates to the issue under discussion involves the novelist's historical and imaginative reconstruction of the lives of twelfth century Indian slave Bomma and his Tunisian born Jewish master Abraham Ben Yiju. The characters themselves do not actively appear in the story; they appear through the narrative interventions of the writer.

[258] I published an earlier draft of this section as a book chapter with the title "Transcendence in Bondage: Dynamics of Master-Slave Relation in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* and Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*" in *Musings Post Colonies*, ed. Maswood Akhter, (Rajshahi University: Chinno, 2012): 83-106.

The materials of this master- slave relationship were found in some business and personal letters preserved in Cairo Geniza, world's largest archive of the Middle Eastern documents of the medieval period. Ghosh also elaborately analyses the source and context of the story in a historical article titled "The Slave of MS. H. 6."[259]

Pamuk's *The White Castle* set in the seventeenth century Istanbul tells the story of an Italian scholar turned slave and an Ottoman master called Hoja. The source of Pamuk's story, as the author in the guise of a fictional historian named Faruk Darvinoglu (son of Darwin) tells us in the preface of the novel, is discovered in an archive in Gebze, an industrial city in the Cocaeli Province of Turkey. The manuscript of the story is found among bureaucratic papers. It is reported that manuscripts like these were available in old houses of the city and were left venerated and unread as they were often considered old scriptures. This source of story has similarity with the archived letters found in the chamber of the Synagogue of Ben Ezra, later known as the Cairo Geniza – the source of Ghosh's story. Both the stories are based on materials dug out of archives showing happy intercultural exchanges and negotiations in the past in contrast to the present condition of confrontation. The writers rely on the past, on the archival souces to build a sort of redemptive narratives that run counter to the narratives of rupture the present world appear to be obsessed with.

The institution of slavery, a common subject in human and social sciences, has been exploited in works of literature in diverse forms and degrees. Many images and metaphors are derived from the concept of slavery. The meanings of master and slave shaped in one cultural-historical context may not entirely apply to another. In fiction their meanings are often delimited within the cultural structure that serves as the background of a particular text. Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk have articulated the relation of master and slave in special frames of meanings in their novels *In an Antique Land* and *The White Castle* respectively. One straddling India and the Middle East and the other straddling Asia and Europe explore the notions of boundary and, identity at multiple levels. In these two slave fictions[260] slavery is not treated strictly as a historical

[259] MS.H.6 is the catalogue no. of the letter found in the Cairo Geniza in which the Indian slave Bomma appears first.

[260] Slave fiction is used here in a broad sense to mean any fiction involving the terms 'slave' and 'master' in any form – pretended or real, indentured or consensual.

phenomenon covering colour conflict and indentured labour. The approaches of the writers towards the subject are more anthropological and philosophical than historical. The ambiguous and overlapping identity moves the slaves of their narratives to blur, question and even alter the demarcation between the master and the slave.

The image of bondage as conceived and illustrated in these texts is “the paradoxical embodiment of perfect freedom; the image that represented the very notion of relationship, of human bonds, as well as the possibility of their transcendence” (AL 214). Their thought provoking rendition of the theme confounds the general understanding of the concept of slavery as the process of transcendence in different forms and degrees works behind the relationship. Slavery as reconceptualized by these authors covers material, spiritual and psychological bonds. It involves deep mutual knowledge which turns the question of superiority and inferiority immaterial. In the guise of master-slave relationship they shed light on a number of concerns like intercultural communication, civilizational clashes, identity issues, notion of boundaries, power-knowledge nexus and the liberating power of imagination/story. Here the slaves being characterized by ambiguity, varying personality traits and fluid role tend to question and alter the demarcation between the master and the slave. In both the stories the writers as cultural negotiators hide themselves explicitly or implicitly behind the personae of the masters and slaves.

In Ghosh’s story, slavery is introduced in the form of recruitment in the business management bringing transformation of the recruiter and the recruit through mutual dependence. Abraham Ben Yiju, a Tunisian born Jewish merchant based in Cairo, passed eighteen years or more of his life in Mangalore in India for business and personal reasons. He owned an Indian slave named Bomma who represented his master in business and travelled back and forth between Mangalore and Eden. The terms and conditions under which Bomma served Ben Yiju were different from those generally used in slavery. In their relationship the idea of slavery gradually blurs the boundary of bondage and freedom. Beginning as master and slave they end up as patron and agent. The slave gradually permeates the boundaries of his master’s household and functions as a family member. The slave becomes indistinguishable from the master. Their belonging to two different religions, cultures and countries does not hinder the evolution of the relationship.

In Pamuk's *The White Castle* slavery is introduced in the form of abduction leading to a transformation of both the captive and the captor through mutual knowledge. Here a young Italian scholar who is also the narrator is presented in the position of the slave. He en route from Venice to Naples is abducted by the Turkish seamen. To save himself from having to do manual labour he manages to use his western knowledge and common sense to cure illness. As a captive he is taken to Istanbul where he draws the attention of a Pasha who presents him as a slave to his scholar friend Hoja.To the wonder of both the master and the slave reveal uncanny physical resemblance to each other and therefore cannot behave like master and slave in the strict sense. The master decides to learn all he can about western scientific advances from his slave who, in return, is promised to be set free once he has accomplished his tutorial assignment.

The tale of piracy and slavery turns into an intellectual journey where the master and slave become the tutor and the apprentice. The master as apprentice reluctantly embraces his subordinate position for his own ultimate gain. As intellectual twins they carry out scientific experiments like making fire work display, inventing remedy for plague and manufacturing weaponry for the Sultan. The master being despaired of intellectual improvement even after more than ten years of efforts repeatedly ask the deceptively simple question "Why am I what I am?" (WC 48). The Italian Scholar is asked to help him explore the answer to the perplexing identity related questions for his Tukish master and for himself. Through joint efforts towards this end, like a mystic journey, their identities become conflated and the answer remains ever elusive. In the end it is difficult to say who is who or who is superior or inferior. Trading places and positions, the Turk becomes a real scholar and leaves permanently for Italy, and the Italian scholar abandons science and lives in the eastern luxury of the Sultan's court.

The master-slave relation as delineated in these texts lends itself to the explanation in terms of the Sufi allegory about the quest for the unattainable hidden self. According to Ghosh, the term bondage, usually used in a derogatory sense, can generate "metaphors of perfect devotion and love strung together in an intensely charged ... spiritual imagery" when it reaches the highest level of perfection bringing transcendence (AL 215). Bondage for Bomma and Ben Yiju gives birth to a mystical longing for each other's self. At one level the relation of them takes on a paradoxical turn. The master

slipped unawares to the position of “the slave of his slave.” To give the point historical nuance the novelist tells the 11th century legend of Sultan Mahmud’s faithful soldier cum slave Ayaz who instead of chasing the mythical bird Huma hid in the shadow of his master though he knew the kingdom conferring power of Huma’s shadow. For him the bird could not confer better kingdom than the one presented by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Such pure love of slave “works a miraculous spiritual transformation and the world-conquering Mahmud becomes the slave of his slave” (AL 215).

Transformation like this was possible in *In an Antique Land* because the master as a widely educated man was aware of Judao-Islamic Sufi tradition in the Medieval Arab and “Bomma [was] intimately acquainted with some of that great range of popular traditions and folk beliefs which upturn and invert the categories of Sanskritic Hinduism”(AL 215).Their familiarity with counter beliefs and traditions outside the rigid frame of the orthodox religions help them eventually come on “a small patch of level ground between them [and they] would otherwise seem to stand on different sides of an unbridgeable chasm”(AL 216). This probable “unbridgeable chasm” between master and slave is bridged more in a psychological and philosophical sense than a mystical one in Pamuk’s *The White Castle.* In Pamuk’s context the Italian slave and Hoja listen to each other and come closer, “making [themselves] uneasy while bringing [themselves] together with an unaccountable feeling of brotherhood” (WC 69). The slave “began to believe that [his] personality had split itself off from [him] and united with Hoja’s, and vice versa, without [their] perceiving it”(WC 102). In the last chapter of the novel he waxes eloquent about his love for Hoja and uses capitalized “Him” for Hoja in an attempt at deification. He says “I loved Him with the stupid revulsion and stupid joy of knowing myself; my love for Him resembled the way ... I understood the thoughts which everyday echoed the walls of my mind and died away, the way I recognized the unique smell of sweat from my wretched body,” (WC 140). The similar urge is created in the master but he does not articulate it. Since they exchange places and positions, the slave speaks for both himself and his master, his other self.

Both the narratives highlight the issue of cultural relativism, civilizational conflicts, and cultural contacts. According to Huntington “The great division among mankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.” [261] To resolve or

[261] Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” *Foreign Affairs* 72. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-36; 22.

minimise the conflict and to repair the cultural or civilizational "fault lines" a revised perspective to view the world is needed where the West will be required to build up a thorough understanding "of the basic religious and philosophical assumptions underlying other civilizations and the ways in which people in those civilizations see their interest" from their own perspective. Such effort will help identify elements of commonality between western civilization and its counterpart. Since in "the relevant future, there will be no universal civilization but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others."[262] Altghough Huntington talks about potential antagonism between the West and the others it can be between non-western civilizations also. Ghosh's narrative concerns exchanges between two non–western civilizations and Pamuk's story concerns the same between the West and the non-West. These two texts "identify elements of commonality" in diversity. They present two cultural meeting places or "contact zone[s]" in the words of Mary Louise Pratt[263] – Indian Ocean in Ghosh and Istanbul in Pamuk. Indian Ocean was a site where many superseded civilizations interacted for many centuries in the form of trade and travel. And Istanbul was a cultural hub with influences and marks of many civilizations.

In Bomma-Ben Yiju story the tie of two ancient civilizations –Indian and Egyptian – is shown. Unlike the story of Pamuk their relationship does not show any initial shock. Bomma becomes easily acculturated to the Middle-eastern culture and Ben Yiju easily adapts to the culture of India in Mangalore. In their merging of selves religious, cultural, and geographical barriers disappear. In the primary strand of the novel the anthropologist-novelist as an Indian represents Bomma in two Egyptian villages where he has field work stint. Ghosh says in the prologue of the book "I knew nothing then about the slave of MS.H.6 except that he had given me right to be there, a sense of entitlement" (AL 8). To quote Shirley Chew, "We can assume that the attraction of the Slave for Ghosh is his probable racial identity."[264] The novelist as a character becomes the main link between two strands of the story. The Egyptian villagers represent Ben Yiju as they cultivate intimate relation with the novelist as researcher. Thus the slave

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[262] Ibid., 36.

[263] Mary Louise Pratt in "Arts of Contact Zone," *Profession* (MLA, 1991): 33-40;34, defines the phrase as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other." .<http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/praxis/?q=node/97>.

[264] Shirley Chew, "Texts and Worlds in *In An Antique Land," Amtav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives*, Ed. Brinda Bose, op. cit., 109.

story transcends temporal barrier and involves the authorial self in the process. The tale of quest moves between the past and the present, between the slave's self and the author's. Though the villagers and Ben Yiju belong to different religions, at one level in Egypt there was cultural overlapping of Judaism and Islam. In this context the novelist says "Distinct though their faith was, it was still a part of the religious world of the Middle East" to have a common invocation of the name of God and to have common greeting words by all religious communities (AL 214).

The case of this overlapping is illustrated by the novelist's visit to the shrine of Sidi Abu-Hasira, a holy site of cultural and religious syncretism visited equally by Jews and Muslims as the saint "belongs to a famous line of zeddikim—the Jewish counterparts of Islamic marabouts and Sufi saints" (AL 285). This tale of religious and cultural syncretism extends to Ben Yiju's stay in Mangalore where he takes a Hindu wife named Ashu and embraces Tulu culture.[265] Besides, Bomma is also incorporated into Ben Yiju's household and cultural root. So the story displays the interlacing of different times, places and religions having reciprocal impact on each other. To have a rewarding glimse into human history such a vision is indispensable. In this context Edward Said says "that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future. These territories and histories can only be seen from the perspective of whole of human history".[266] Ghosh comments that in the present world things are falling apart because of the lack of proper narratives to show intertwined histories in cultural discourses. That is why he came forward with a "rescue narrative": "Here I was writing a book about Hindu, Muslims, and Jews. I have come to be convinced that behind the conflicts lay not just a failure of imagination but also an inadequacy of narrative."[267] To Ghosh imagination used in proper narrative or in the words of his character Tridib in *The Shadow Lines* "imagination with precision" (SL 26) can be a liberating force to overcome different types of shadowy lines and boundaries imposed on people by the newly constructed world order of nationalism.

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[265] A local culture of Tulunad, a place in Mangalore where Bomma was born. In this culture the devotees worship spirits called Bhuttas who share many features with Sanskritic deities.

[266] Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., 72.

[267] As qtd. by Michele Alperin in "Ghosh on the Geniza documents", *The Jewish State* (A Newspaper for Central New Jersey's Jewish Communities), 11 April 2008.

Pamuk's narrative deals with the East-West and Muslim-Christian dichotomies and explores the possibilities of bridging the cultural gap. John Updike writes in this regard that the story is about the "interplay of East and West – of fantastic faith versus aggressive science – and at a deeper level the question of identity." [268] The Italian slave and Turkish master by exchanging identities blur the boundary between East and West. This conflation of identities reflects Pamuk's firm conviction about the essential equality of East and West and the shadowy boundary between the two, created by the politicians and to be removed by the artists/novelists. Contrary to common tendency he derives creative energy from the traditionally erected wall in his country "between East and West, between modernity and tradition" that still exists. All "the artists and the intellectuals of previous generations have had an idea of Turkey, which would be either Eastern, or totally Western, totally traditional or modern," but he wants to see these two spirits of the country as one and the eternal fight between East and West as a source of strength.[269]

This cultural mission is first executed in *The White Castle.* The master-slave story in this novel is one of his attempts to dramatize the eternal East–West entanglements in a historical setting. The slave represents modernity and the master represents tradition. The master tries to match his intellectual level against the European standard of the slave and comes up short. He becomes haunted by what Benedict Anderson in his observations on Southeast Asian nations has called the "spectre of comparisons."[270] Initially the Italian slave assumes superiority over his Turkish master for his advanced scientific knowledge. The master on the other hand tries to assume superiority over his slave by ridiculing his past faults and weaknesses. The models of the heliocentric and geocentric universes are also symbolically used to represent their opposite views of the world.

Their conflict tends to be resolved when, sitting across a table, they share their intimate knowledge by exploring each other's pasts for hours together. In order to realize their relative positions they start writing stories about each other with the figment of imagination. The narrator thus visualizes the experience with the help of a simile: "Like two bachelors telling each other's fortunes to pass the time on endless winter nights, we sat at the table face to face, scratching out something or other on the empty pages before

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[268] John Updike, *The New Yorker*, 24 June 2011.< http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/pamuk.htm> .
[269] Orhan Pamuk, "Turkish Divided Character," op. cit., 20.
[270] Anderson, op. cit.

us" (WC 66). They decide to live temporarily in the space used in their stories. In a similar situation the narrator of Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is told by his uncle Tridib that all people live in stories and they differ only in their choice of stories (SL 201). Choosing and stringing together the facts and features of one's life in narration indicates one of the effective processes of identity formation. The master and the slave become fascinated with this process of identity formation and discuss "how the ideal story should begin innocently like a fairytale, be frightening like a nightmare in the middle, conclude sadly like a love story ending in separation"(WC 82). This pattern of story telling aptly describes their relationship. They can exchange identities only through appropriating each other's stories. Like lovers they may be physically separated but at one level they are the same. They combine, as in a love story, union and separation, distance and proximity.

Thus by the power of precise imagination in spinning tales, as Ghosh has pointed out, these two writers attempt to resolve the question of superiority or inferiority and get out of the East-West entanglements. Pamuk also echoes the same point in a conversation: "Other peoples in other continents and civilizations are actually exactly like you and you can learn this through literature." [271] Through stories the two characters ultimately play out the role of interpreters in the dialogue between civilizations. In the dramatization of the conflict Pamuk, like Ghosh, partakes of the characteristics of these interpreters. In writing fiction from "glocal" perspective he appears as representative of the "Turkish Divided Character." In his interview with Elizabeth Farnsworth Pamuk refers to this role as novelist when he says "I want to be a bridge in the sense that a bridge doesn't belong to any continent, doesn't belong to any civilization and a bridge has the unique opportunity to see both civilizations."[272] Besides, the repeatedly asked perplexing question of the master and the slave "Why am I what I am?" has an echo in the author's statement about his own fate as a novelist at the beginning of *Istanbul: Memories and the City*: "this city ... has made me who I am" (IMC 6). This authorial projection through characters first begins when the author in the preface hides himself behind the imaginary Turkish historian Faruk Darvinoglu (son of Darwin) who is supposed to discover the manuscript of the story in the governor's archive. Then the Italian slave appears to be the

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[271] Orhan Pamuk, "Bridging Two Worlds," op. cit.
[272] Ibid.

author of the book. At last this assumption is overturned in the last chapter to establish Hoja as the actual author of the manuscript. In fact, Pamuk means to consider these personae as different authorial projections.

As it concerns the empowerment or upward mobility of people, the master-slave relationship of the two novels also relates to the articulation of subaltern voice in a repressive social structure. Bomma in *In an Antique Land* is the subaltern who lived on the margins of history. Ghosh the novelist as subaltern ethnographer unearths the life of Bomma, as Guttman says "That Ben Yiju's letters both reveal and conceal Bomma, the Indian subaltern whom Ghosh yearns to make the centre of his narrative, makes Ben Yiju an ambivalent subject."[273] I would contend that Ben Yiju's letters do not conceal Bomma, and Ben Yiju is not made "an ambivalent subject." For Bomma's inclusion in the annals of history the first credit goes to his master as he has provided the researcher with the clue found in the letters. Had he not mentioned Bomma frequently in his letters he would never have come to light. Therefore Ben Yiju cannot remain as "ambivalent subject" when his slave, through his primary efforts, goes to the centre. Through the imaginative reconstruction of his life in the hand of Ghosh, Bomma sheds his colour of subalternity and occupies a position in the centre of history.

The repressed subaltern existence is liberated through the imagination of the novelist who comes to the realization that the story of the slave

> happens to come to us from a time when the only people for whom we can even begin to imagine a properly individual human existence are the literate and the consequential: those who have the means to inscribe themselves upon history. The slave of MS. H. 6 was none of those things. (I&I 169)

History, as we know, mostly deals with the rich and educated who can easily impact on time by changing its course according to their plan and interest. But there are "other" people also, the less influential, who are inseparable part of history and therefore have valid claim to adequate space in the historical records. To ensure fair projection people should be allowed to have their histories or narratives written by themselves or by authors who can easily identify with them. This mode of thinking impels the novelist to reconstruct the slave story by piecing together the shreds gathered from the margins of

[273] Anna Guttman, "The Jew in the Archive: Textualizations of (Jewish?) History in Contemporary South Asian Literature," *Contemporary Literature* 51.3 (Fall 2010): 503-531; 510.

Ben Yiju's and his friends' personal and business correspondences. His name, religion, and place of birth are worked out through ethnographical research and inference. He thinks that as a business agent Bomma may have intervened in many historical moments on the Indian Ocean and in the Middle Eastern trade centres. Thus Ghosh's second narrative strand turns into a way of giving voice to the unimportant and the marginalized.

In Pamuk's narrative Hoja appears initially as a queer "other" to the Italian slave whose country has anthropological curiosity about "the Turkish people, [their] customs at court and at war,[a] curiosity about the exotic Orient ... among aristocrats and especially well-bred ladies"(WC 142). Through long conversations, study, and writing of their pasts they swap identities leading to equal standing. Through Hoja's leaving Turkey for Italy the periphery goes to the centre. The Italian remaining in the court of theTurkish sultan makes the centre come to periphery. In the European idiom Turkey is often considered a periphery housing the "Muslim other" living in proximity to Europe but unworthy of being assimilated with Europe. The relationship of the Italian slave and the Turkish master mimics and subverts this stereotypical thought-pattern and gives the narrative centre in the hand of the less influential.

The dynamics of slave-master relation presented in the two novels can be explained through the frame of Hegelian master-slave dialectic. Hegel in *Phenomenology of Spirit* explains his famous dialectic of master and slave as a comlex process in which the self consciousness of the master as the controlling authority depends on the slave's recognition which ultimately ends the essentially antagonistic perception of the master-slave relation. The slave is a recognizing self and the master is a recognized self, paradoxically the latter depending on the former. The master possesses his own entity and that of the slave because the position of the master depends on that of the slave. If the slave does nothing for the master the master ceases to exist as a master. Therefore, it is the slave who enables the master to have a higher position. And the master is bound to recognize the slave as an inextricable part of his existence. In the process the division between the master and the slave becomes naturally blurry. They become equally in need of each other.

The slave-master interdependence works behind Ben Yiju's overlooking of Bomma's lapses. That is why Ben Yiju's friend "Madmun's complains" about Bomma's "drunken revelries" and other excesses "do not appear to have excited an

excess of wrath in Ben Yiju" (AL 218). Rather, these two friends in their later letters were "always careful to include a word of friendly greeting for Bomma" (AL 218). Ghosh further mentions that "as Bomma's role as business agent grew in importance, Ben Yiju's friends in Egypt came to regard him with increasing respect, and [some] even began to prefix his name with the title of 'Shaikh'"(AL 218).Thus in their relationship the centre of authority ceases to exist. It is in this context that Ghosh calls the relationship between Ben Yiju and Bomma as paradoxical one. Ghosh conceives it in both material and spiritual senses. Bomma becomes an alter ego of Ben Yiju and runs business independently for his master in Eden. Ben Yiju on the other hand fills up the gap created by Bomma's absence in Mangalore. A kind of exchange takes place through the need of mutual dependence and recognition.

This dialectic of relationship operates differently in Pamuk's narrative. Here it is related to the interaction of knowledge and power. The superiority of the western scholar psychologically depends on the recognition by the "other." Unless he is used as a point of reference in the assessment of the "other's" knowledge he fails to relish his intellectual supremacy. On the other side the Turkish scholar must gain acceptance from his western tutor or slave. As a result of this mutual dependence they work symbolically together on pseudo-scientific projects. Both sides seek recognition which primarily involves conflict and comes to mutual recognition ultimately through knowledge. The resolution of conflict is reached through exchanges of knowledge leading to the trading of positions and secrets. This equation of interdependence relates to Foucauldian power/knowledge dyad.[274] According to this model any group can impose their worldview on the other if they possess superior knowledge. Knowledge always functions as a form of power and can be used to regulate the behaviour of others as is done by the Italian.

Hoja fails to shape his slave's conduct because his knowledge is not up to date and produces no real power. While the Italian is concerned with modern technology Hoja is concerned with confused "cosmography, producing theories for a new system: perhaps the moon revolved around the Erath, and the Earth around the sun; perhaps the centre was Venus" (WC 24). His position generated power is coercive and the slave's

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[274] I have drawn upon Shelley Walia's discussion of Foucault's power/knowledge relation in *Edward Said and the Writing of History* (Cambridge: Icon, 2001): 23-31. Foucault has propounded the theory in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings1972-1977* and *The Archeology of Knowledge*.

knowledge generated power is non-coercive. Again this non-coercive power through knowledge cannot be exercised without knowing those upon whom it will be exercised. Knowledge is a source of power and at the same time it is a means of using power. Therefore, the Turkish and the Italian overlooking their positions as master and slave sit at the two ends of the table and try to know each other regularly by mutual observation and engaged conversation. Observation will produce new knowledge to be used by the master. Thus a balance between the two persons will be established. It is reflected in the narrator's words: "Hoja gradually ceased to use the word 'teach': we were going to search together, discover together, progress together" (WC 23).

Both the stories in the guise of master-slave relation reflect the global politics of identity which as a contemporary topical issue bears different implications for the East and the West. The major socio-economic developments of Europe in the decades immediately before the publication of Pamuk's The *White Castle* in 1985 (the original Turkish version) led to a concept of coherent identity which also entailed suppressed contrary tendencies, as Kobena Mercer puts it, "when something is assumed to be fixed, coherent, and stable, [it] is displaced by doubt and uncertainty."[275] This reflects Turkish position in Europe: the country is outwardly given the European marker for geographical reality but inwardly rejected for cultural difference. In Pamuk's story set in the quasi western context, physical resemblance of the master and the slave is emphasized because the image of human identity as conceived by the western culture is deeply based on the signs of resemblance. The West seems to have obsession with finding analogy through visual perception, not through indepth understanding. [276]

Keeping in mind that western obsession the visionary character Blue in Pamuk's *Snow* asks a pertinent question about the possibility of the West's approval without resemblance: "Can the West endure any democracy achieved by enemies who in no way resemble them?"(*Snow* 233). Physical and geographical resemblances are considered the basis of identification of selves in the West. So the Italian slave and the Turkish master could come to a point of resembling each other. And they have to meet in a place like Istanbul which stands on the crossroads of the East and the West. But Ghosh's story set in the East does not require any physical point of resemblance as a condition for

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[275] Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle* (London: Routledge, 1994): 259.
[276] See Homi Bhabha, "Interrogating Identity," *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., 57-93; 70.

identification. Though geographically they are born in two distinct places – India and the Middle East they belong to the Orient and share mental resemblance and a tendency of mystic effacement of self. In the Orient identity politics is absent or easier to tackle. So the process of coming together of two persons like Bomma and Ben Yiju has been carried on though they have been unaware of it.

The identity issue in these texts involves anthropological and philosophical approaches. According to Bhabha there "are two familiar traditions in the discourse of identity: the philosophical tradition of identity as the process of self reflection in the mirror of (human) nature; and the anthropological view of the difference of human identity as located in the division of Nature/Culture."[277] Looked at from anthropological perspective the masters and slaves in Ghosh and Pamuk's stories show national and cultural differences. But the differences disappear when their backgrounds are considered philosophically. They show how bondage changing into freedom creates new dimensions of identities. These new dimensions may relate to Bhaba's "inbetween space … that carries the burden of the meaning of culture .... And by exploring the meaning of this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves."[278] People belonging to this identity display a kind of "hybridity" which appears to offer a syncretic worldview.

According to this worldview, no fixity or essentiality of identity exists in the true sense of the term because borrowing and interpenetration are in the very nature of culture. Edward Said says in this context "all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic."[279] The syncretism of Bomma and Ben Yiju accommodates differences of colour, race, religion and economic standing. The Italian scholar-slave and Hoja experiment for a long time to acquire this worldview. In both cases syncretism and assimilation or acculturation coexist, as James Clifford thinks that syncretism does not disappear when assimilation takes place.[280] Bomma and Ben Yiju or the Italian and Hoja merge with each other, and at the same time, remain individualized.

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[277] Ibid., 66.
[278] Ibid., 56.
[279] Edward Said, *Cuture and Imperialism*, op. cit., xxix.
[280] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988): 14-15.

The foregoing analysis studies the way the two slave stories written in two very different styles and contexts can prescribe the formula to prevent the widespread social ramifications of the self-other adverse relation in the present world bound with binaries. The eradication of the traditional binary of the ruler and the ruled as shown in these stories points to the possibilities of eradicating all binaries splitting the world apart. These stories work as "objective correlatives" to various historical and cultural issues which are basically created due to the human tendency to frame everything within binary. The philosophical and mystic rendition of such issues through master-slave metaphor in these stories calls for a "paradigm shift" to review and restructure human and cultural relationships. The master-slave relationships in both the texts show the possibilities of transcendence in various forms and degrees and highlight mutual respect, dependence, negotiation and recognition.

Now, it should be clearly stated that the idea of transcendence in bondage does not validate one's dominance over the other either in politics or in economics, either in the colonial time or in the postcolonial world. The idea philosophically challenges the western obssession with masterhood and attempts to remove the eastern anxiety about the "western gaze." As parables of identities these narratives stress the need of eliminating the ruler-ruled dichotomy at the political level and superiority-inferiority perception in human relation**.** Since all are interdependent and equally significant in carrying the world forward, the characters of the stories ultimately appear as pseudo masters and pseudo slaves. They challenge the fixity of positions in any relationship. They create in each other their alter egos. They turn into split selves having dialogues with their mirrored selves. The Italian and his master's self-study on the mirror show their mutual reflection. Bomma, in Eden and other Middle Eastern business centers, works independently for Ben Yiju as if they were the same person.

In Ghosh bondage brings transcendence normally through different cultures coming in contact and in Pamuk the process of transcendence results from conflict, negotiation, and recognition. The power of narrative contributes to the process of transcendence in both cases. This power functions implicitly in the text of Ghosh because here the ethnographer-novelist, relying on the archival study of the long forgotten documents and inference from the surroundings connected with the lives of the

master and slave, does the work of narrating on behalf of the characters involved. The role of narrative is explicit in Pamuk as the characters themselves are involved in imaginative reconstruction of their pasts to overcome the predicament of the present. Depending on the time and circumstances slavery has myriad and changeable layers of meanings. Although both the writers have explored the layers according to their individual contexts and choices, their treatment of the subject shows many common thematic and theoretical leanings. Transcending the existing fold of identity through deep understanding is the main focus of both the narratives.

Mystic Dimension of Identity

Both Ghosh and Pamuk in some novels and their characterisation give their preference to using the ideas of mysticism in dealing with human relationship to fight racism and xenophobia. Ghosh in *In an Antique Land* illustrate that all religions consider the concept of human beings held together by an inexplicable and invisible bond as the bedrock of piety. He derives the concept from the Muslim mystical Sufis and Hindu Vachanakara-poets in their longing to identify with their Lord. The mystical ideal of union with the "Other" is aptly exemplified by the relationship of the Egyptian master and the Indian slave who can trade places with each other through their deep mutual longing. Their dimension of relation is compared with the eleventh century legendary relationship of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and his faithful servant Ayaz. Ayaz prefers staying with Mahmud to pursuing the shadow of the mythical bird Huma, the expanding shadow being taken for covering the area the pursuer will be able to rule, because to him his master stands for all kingdoms. Their mystic relation reminds one of Donne's metaphysical lovers who representing two hemispheres find the whole universe in their little room.

The mystic dimension of relation is also found in *The Hungry Tide* where an unpremeditated union of "self" and "other" takes place in the relation of the illiterate Fakir and the Indian born American researcher Pialy Roy. In the Sundarban islands the myth of Bon Bibi itself in its binding together Hindus and Muslims is mystic in nature. When Eric Walberg asks him in an interview whether his attractions for mysticism are connected with the renewal of xenophilia Ghosh replies in the affirmative. In a sense he considers xenophilia and mysticism as synonymous. He explains that "in eastern

traditions the beloved is even called ‘Aznabi’ in Arabic” meaning foreigner, which leads him to Rumi. He emphasizes the exploring of xenophilia in the eastern connotation of love as the reaching out to the foreigner, to drive out xenophobia (and racism). He deplores that instead of nurturing this connotation of love people around the world are fed on “a false xenophilia of empire and capitalism, a false cosmopolitanism of Macdonalds and Holywood culture.”[281] He emphasizes that through the exploring of mystic elements in the eastern canon the gap between self and other can be narrowed.

Pamuk also deals with the ideal of the mystical union of the self with the other with extensive references to Rumi, Ibn’ Arabi, Seykh Galip, Fazlallah Astarabadi and the ideas of Sufism, and Hurufism in *The Black Book*. Before writing this novel he, according to his confession, read “lots of Sufi stuff with the help of Borges and Calvino [who] liberated [him] from the immense weight of religion.”[282] *The Black Book* is a brilliantly constructed mystery where Pamuk puts the three main characters Galip, Câlal, and Rüya on a mystic journey of finding about their tangled selves, stambling upon “the most important question in life[:] whether to be, or not to be, oneself” (BB 416). The conclusion coming out of their entangled journeys is that the image of the self is always found in the other. Quite fittingly the names of Galip and Celal derive from Mevlevi Sufis Seykh Galip and Celaleddin Rumi. His delineation of the relation between the Turkish master and the Italian slave which has been elaborated in the middle of this chapter has also mystical overtones. To get rid of the dilemma and boredom of mundane existence they seek redemption in story telling and analyzing their mirror image. *The New Life,* according to the author himself, is essentially Sufi Text, that is, inspirational, dealing with the definition and realization of self.

Mysticism, symbolized by snowflake, appears in the poetic inspiration of Ka in *Snow*. Ka, the long time secularist poet living in self-exile in Germany, visits the snow covered city Kars and surprisingly feels the presence of Allah through poetic inspiration. For Ka each point in the snowflake becomes the title of a poem. Snowflake in Kars symbolizes a repeated intersection between the sublime and the mundane, the mystical and the material, faith and reason, religion and state. It represents the suspended status of

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[281] Amitav Ghosh, “The Quest for the Other,” Interview with Eric Walberg.<http://ericwalberg. com/ index.php>.

[282] Orhan Pamuk, “A Bit of Irresponsible Reading,” op. cit., 3.

Ka's poetic self between forces of secularism and Islam, European modernism and Turkish tradition. In most Pamuk novels the mystical experiment of transcending the barrier between "self" and "other" in order to reach the true knowledge of self is tagged with the mystical romance of a quest hero searching for his missing beloved, his "Aznabi" representing self knowledge. The Venitian slave in *The White Castle*, Rüya in *The Black Book*, Janan in *The New Life*, Ipek in *Snow*, and Füsun in *The Museum of Innocence* appear as absent beloveds who take their otherwise unsuccessful lovers in the material sense to a mystical space where the quester and the quested become one through the acquiring of self knowledge making the material object of quest irrelevant. Erdağ Göknar rightly says that many of Pamuk "novels seek to broaden the scope of literary representations to include marginalized figures who find themselves on a quest to transcend their confinements as *homo secularis*… [an] in the process, the novels become increasingly more mystical in scope."[283]

Art in the Exploration of Identity

Both Ghosh and Pamuk have used monumentalization of architectural site and visual art as the matrix of history and identity as the history and cultural memory of a people rest on the space of monument, visual art, and performing art. Ghosh has shown in *The Glass Palace* how the Burmese bind their identity with the eponymous edifice and in *Dancing in Cambodia and other Essays* how the Cambodian identity rests on the historical edifice of Angkor Wat and the tradition of Cambodian dance and music. Simon Gikandi holds that people torn with the conflicts of difference have to take recourse to art to affirm their universal identity as humans.[284] This view finds an apt expression in Ghosh's portrayal of Suu Kyi who combines politics and art – which we may call "aestheticization of politics" – in her charismatic personality. In Burma people of diverse ethnic affiliations, suspending their sense of difference, gravitate towards her to find a way out of the impasse their country is stuck in.

[283] Erdağ Göknar, *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism, and Blasphemy: The Poolitics of the Turkish Novel (*New York: Routledge, 2013): 205.
[284] Simon Gikandi, op. cit., 347.

Similarly, Pamuk has shown the influence of art in the shaping of identity politics. However, like Ghosh he has not invested artistic symbol in any political leadership to illustrate his point though he could make use of the Atatürk cult. Perhaps, in not using the Atatürk figure he took into consideration the cultural cruelty associated with that figure. But he has extensively used visual art either in painting or in architecture as indicator of identity roots. He has shown in *Istanbul: Memories and the City* how the identity of Istanbul and its dwellers rest on the Hagia Sophia, in *Snow* how the roots of the Armenians in Kars rest on the old Armenian Churches and other architectural remains preserved as monuments of art, and in *My Name is Red* how the miniaturists and their followers consider the old style as the anchor of their distinct identity and find the potentiality of threat in the Frankish style imported from Venice. In the exploration of the Bosphorus he tags the wooden waterside mansions owned by the Ottoman Pashas as maker of obsolete identity disclaimed by the citizens of the republic: "The *yalis* – the splendid waterside mansions built by the great Ottoman families during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – came to be seen, in the twentieth, with the advent of the Republic and Turkish nationalism, as models of an obsolete identity and architecture" (IMC 43). Thus in both the novelists' art as visual history provides people with space to rethink their way of building an authentic sense of cultural identity. Therefore, any violence to art and monumentalized architectue is construed as attack on identity.

City Embodying History and Identity

Both Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk use colonial cities of their origin, namely Calcutta and Istanbul, as templates to construct the ideas of history and identity. Calcutta was the first capital of British India where exchanges between British and Indians were very intimate. The colonial Calcutta as a special hybrid site was deeply divided with a predominantly Hindu area in the north, area of the white people in the south, and the middle for Muslims, Marwaris and people of mixed origin. The spatial seperations made the city a ground for cross-fertilization of different cultures giving birth to the Bengali Renaissance.[285] This background of the native city has played a tremerndous role in the making of Ghosh's

[285] See Sherry Simon, "The Translator in the Plot of Cultural Theory: Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*," *Journal of Translation Studies* 9.1 (2006): 125-144; 139.

creative mind as he reveals it in some of his interviews and prose pieces. Pamuk's native city Istanbul has a more extensive site, chekered history, and divided character which influence his creative mind tremendously. Both the novelists use city as emotional anchor and as indicator of the convoluted growth of human history and shifting identity.

They only differ in degree not in kind. While Ghosh uses it partially, Pamuk uses it quite extensively. Ghosh usually gives priority to story over place. In his essay titled "The March of the Novel through History: The Testimony of My Grandfather's Bookcase" Ghosh compares the place-based western novel with the story-based eastern epics like *The Thousand and One Nights*. Preferring the second he says: "In these ways of storytelling, it is the story that gives places their meaning" (I&I 298). While Pamuk comes closer to Joyce and Faulkner whose novels would be unimaginable without giving special weight to their settings, Ghosh, while giving importance to his native city in many of his writings, comes closer to the story-dependent eastern model of oral narration which can be fit in more than one place. In his interview with Claire Chambers Ghosh expresses his choice of the Bengali model of oral or conversational mode of telling stories particularly exemplified by Syed Mujtaba Ali, a noted Bangla writer and "a real exemplar for [Ghosh]." As Ali wrote a famous book on the basis of his travel in the North West Frontier Province in Pakistan, Ghosh writes his famous book *In an Antique Land* on the basis of his travel in Egypt.[286] The funny tone of oral story telling found in *In an Antique Land* persists in his other novels also.

However, as far as Calcutta and Istanbul are concerned, in both Ghosh and Pamuk colonial cities appear as the loci of crossing socio-cultural forces and historical trajectories. Pamuk in his autobiography goes to the point of indentifying his authorial self with his city of birth. Besides Istanbul, Pamuk has used the Turkish border city Kars as a marker of historical transformation in demography and geography. And many of Ghosh novels like *The Shadow Lines*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, and *Sea of Poppies*, because of the prominence of the Calcutta City in their plot lines and because of rich array of mixed characters produced by Calcutta, are called Calcutta novels and Ghosh himself admits, as mentioned earlier, the importance of the city in shaping his creative

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[286] Amitav Ghosh, "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation,"op. cit., 35.

mind. Ghosh has used another city namely Cairo as a metaphor for a nation's history and identity in his outstanding book *In an Antique Land*: "Cairo is Egypt's own metaphor for itself. Everywhere in the country except the city itself, Cairo is Egypt. They are both spoken of by the same name, Masr, a name that is appropriate as well as ancient, a derivative of a root that means 'to settle' or to civilize" (AL 18). Another interesting place in Ghosh, Canton (Guangzhou in China) in the" Ibis" novels plays the role of characters in the historical plot of opium narrative. The novelist endorses the point: "the city of Canton itself is a character in my recent novels."[287]

Colonial cities can be used as "inverted laboratories"[288] in the research of history and identity. These authors provide ways to explore and turn the city laboratories inside out to reveal pride and melancholy determining identity at present. Their projection of city supports the proposition that deeper perception of past becomes impossible without the touch of pride and melancholy. Pamuk in the depiction of Istanbul finds the distinct melancholy called "huzun" engulfing the city and its dwellers. Ghosh's major works, as Thompson puts it succinctly, "gesture towards total patterns in which Calcutta becomes the emblem and enabling environment for a consciousness rooted not simply in a singular real time but, as we will see, in pasts apprehended melancholically and futures seized mutationally."[289]

Portraits of Authors as Worldly Men

As novelists Ghosh and Pamuk cannot help being engaged with "worldliness"; they cannot remain aesthetic loners living in the ivory tower and overlooking the predicaments suffered by individual beings. Edward Said relates "worldliness" to "an appreciation not of tiny, defensively constituted corner of the world, but of the large, many windowed house of human culture as a whole."[290] It can, in addition to its intimation of universality, refer to a writer's engagement with the problems of the lived world in contrast to aesthetism or representation of an easthetic world of verisimilitude.

[287] Amitav Ghosh, "Between the Walls of Archives and Horizons of Imagination," op. cit.,13.
[288] See Hilary Thompson, "The Colonial City as Inverted Laboratory in *Baumgartner's Bombay* and *Calcutta Chromosome*," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 39.3 (Fall 2009): 347-368; 350.
[289] Ibid., 350.
[290] Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, op. cit., 382.

The fame of Ghosh and Pamuk stems from their aesthetic traits in writings as well as from their public stance through writings and awareness programmes on certain pressing issues, both domestic and international, like freedom of press, minority rights, environments, genocide, and democracy.

Through writings these writers effectively play the role of public intellectuals who, as Ashcroft speaks of Said, can speak bitter truth to power without having any conscious alighnment with any particular party line. Consequently, they often find themselves excluded by different opposing partisan camps at home and abroad.[291] Ghosh is sometimes marked as pro-Muslim for his favourable portrayal of the Egyptian Muslims and sometimes severely attacked for supporting Zionism through accepting the Israeli Dan David Award. Pamuk, on the other hand, is attacked as pro-Islamist by the secular-leftists of his country for his apparent sympathy for the religionists, and he is attacked too by religious fundamentalists for, according to their reading of his texts, portraying them ridiculously for "foreign consumption." The varying reader responses prove that they do not actually show any sympathy for or antipathy towards any particular group. This paradox of acceptance and rejection on the part of the readers becomes a common fate of the writers if their writings merge with public intellectualism.

The issues of political and cultural studies coming around history and identity abound in their fictional and non-fictional writings. Their writings well prove that literature can accommodate pressing political and social issues without damaging its main purpose of providing aesthetic pleasure to the readers. Quite rightly, Pamuk says in an interview that he is "a citizen who has some moral concerns" and who happens to be a writer. In French culture there is the Zola-Sartre tradition that he is probably influenced by. As a socially concerned author, he cannot help addressing political issues in both covert and overt ways though they are very hard to address openly under the authoritarian political system in his country.[292] Although he addesses political issues, he is not essentially a political person. He has been making it clear for so many years in his public statements that he is primarily a storyteller. Similar to the paradoxical position of Pamuk, Ghosh has

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[291] Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, *Edward Said: The Paradox of Identity* (London and New York Routlrdge, 1999): 8-9.

[292] Orhan Pamuk, "Interview," With Jeffrey Brown, *News Hour* (May-June 2007): 19. The interview was given on 12 Oct 2006, the day after the announcement of his name for the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature.<www.pbs.org/newsour>.

"to resolve a dilemma, between being a writer and being a citizen" because as "a writer, [he has] only one obvious subject: the violence" (I&I 59-60). To him, a writer's responsibility is heavier than that of a citizen: a citizen can choose between keeping distance from "the horror of violence" and creating resistence to it as a means of expressing "the affirmation of humanity"; a writer has to choose both simultaneously.

Ghosh in his essay "The Ghosts of Mrs Gandhi" explains a writer's critical condition with respect to the conventions of representations with the help of what the Bosnian writer Dzevad Karahasan in a famous essay called "Literature and War" writes on the startling link between the aestheticism of modern litereature and the indifference to violence shown by the contemporary world. Ghosh quotes Karahasan: "The decision to perceive literally everything as an aesthetic phenomenon—completely sidestepping questions about goodness and truth—is an artistic decision. That decision started in the realm of art, and went on to become characteristic of the contemporary world" (I&I 58-59). Writers like Ghosh, Pamuk, and Karahasan living in the "troubled parts parts of the world, in which violence appears primordial and inevitable" have to go beyond the dominant aesthetic of indifference (I&I 60). He also speaks of his worldly involvement through literary career in an interview with the Iranian-American writer Lila Azam Zanganeh. He thinks that "all important writing comes out of some passionate engagement with the world around it" and to support his assertion he refers to Proust who has been so much engaged with the famous Dreyfus case "that was so central to everything he did." Put simply, he considers the political world very important as background in writing. Thus he concludes his views on being interested in politics on the part of an Indian writer: "that's also a part of being Indian. Whenever I'm in India, just growing up in India, half your conversations are political, as it must be with Iranians."[293] When in the same interview he is asked straightforwardly whether his writing is "innately political as well," he categorically replies in the affirmative: "It is."

However, Ghosh and Pamuk do not consider it fit or interesting to write with an expressed purpose of establishing a political vision which aims at replacing the existing one because, in politics, there are certain undesirable things and unpalatable truths which may affect the universality of art. Still issues dealt with in their writings have political associations as the nature and socio-historical background of their literary enterprise

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[293] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Lila Azam Zanganeh," *The New Yorker* (May 2011): 7.

requires. The writers like Ghosh and Pamuk have no escape from portraying the burning issues of our time like racial conflict, cultural conflict, ideological violence, cartographic violence, and the violence of history. Inevitably the issues they deal with hinge on history which has shaped the crises men face in the present. One of the pressing concerns of the modern time is the issue of identity at myriad levels. Therefore, literature in the hands of these writers tend to cross disciplinary boundaries and deal with political, cultural, and sociological issues. If literature is the mirror of the time their works perfectly function as the mirror reflecting both local and global issues.

Coming Closer to the Journalistic Tradition

Worldly engagements of these authors bring them closer to the journalistic tradition, i.e. visiting the locales of the plots when possible and essential, doing archival work when necessary, and interviewing the real-life counterpart of fictionalized people, speak of their genius for combining the worldly with the aesthetic. Ghosh has extensively visited many locales of Burma and interviewed people from the cross-section of the Burmese society including the insurgent camps in the deep forest as well as on the other side of the border before embarking on writing *The Glass Palace*. The journalistic flavour in *In an Antique Land* is evident in the conversational tone and the interactive way of exploring an alien land. He had to visit the locales and the people behind the plot of *The Hungry Tide* the substantial part of which is developed through reporting from the diary of a deceased idealist who observed many incidents of the plot as an active participant losing his life in the process.

Pamuk did not undertake journalistic visits for the background study of his plots except in one novel because he is a born witness to his grand fictional locale, the city of Istanbul. Before writing *Snow* he had to visit the trouble torn city of Kars under the identity of a journalist to interview certain sections of the city dwellers who are projected in the fictional plot. Besides, he has identification with the character Ka who as a poet and journalist in the novel visits the suicide afflicted city of Kars to cover the psychological epidemic. To greater extent modeled on the author's character, the central character of *The Black Book*, Celâl the popular columnist has left behind old columns that lead the quest hero Galip to the discovery of his secret identity and history of his country. In Pamukian oeuvre journalist or columnist is a common figure who shows the metafictional self- reflexivity of the author.

Especially, in the non-fictional pieces their snapshots of the troubled zones of the world verge on the process of journalistic reporting. Ghosh's first hand experiences as a member of "a party of journalists" with the then Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes's "tour of inspection" of certain war zones in the Karakoram mountains in August 1998 went into the making of the essay *Countdown.* He felt gravitated towards the minister for the latter's anti-nuclear stance and past career as a "campaigner against human rights violation of the army" whose operation he is on record to have once described as " 'a naked dance of a bunch of sadists and criminals in uniform' '' (CD 25). From many other examples we can also mention his spending a month with UN officials and volunteers in Cambodia in 1993 to discover with his own eyes the country's range and nature of conflict and the success or failure of UNTAC (United Nations' Transitional Authority in Cambodia) as "arbiter of ethnicity" and "instrument of containment" covered in the essay "The Global Reservation: Notes towards an Ethnography of International Peacekeeping." Such writerly engagement with the troubled parts of the globe also relates to his Miltonic stand against curbing the freedom of expression with particular reference to the predicaments of certain writers from across the world. In "The Fundamentalist Challenge" he defends the three (Muslim) authors, namely Naguib Mahfouz, Salman Rushdie, and Taslima Nasrin against their critics in their countries of origin as well as in the outside world. Ghosh, however, is fortunate not to have such experience of bitter attack or criticism and he could come out quite successfully defending himself against the charge of accepting the Israeli Dan David Prize.

Pamuk records his own experiences and those of others. In his essay "On Trial" he explains the troubles he faced for the misunderstood charges of "publicly denigrating Turkish identity" through newspaper report and exoticizing his country's image for foreign favour, the ordeals the Turkis-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink was put to, and the attacks by nationalist extremists the great Japanese writer Kenzaburo Oe faced for stating that "the ugly crimes committed by his country's army during the invasions of Korea and China should be openly discussed in Tokyo" (OC 240). Once in Seol with a journalistic zeal he talked to this Japanese writer about Japan's stand on the question of apology. Disagreeing with Japans's ultranationalist and conservation politicians Kenzaburo thinks that Japan should apologize for it's past crimes. Pamuk by way of his facts finding discovers that Koreans like Turks are very curious about what image the outsiders make of them, like Turks they are "grappling with issues of national identity

and nationalism" but the miracle of economy in recent time has reduced the former's anxieties about identity, making them more tolerant about their history. Besides journalistic curiosity, Pamuk reveals a personal reason behind his interest in Korea. He spent his childhood listening to stories about Korea from his uncle who faught in the Korean War.[294] The catalogue of the attacks on freedom of expression given in "On Trial" also includes the Russian state's intolerance of the discussion of the human rights conditions of the Chechens and other minorities, the Chinese state policy on maintaing silence on certain issues, and the attitude of the Hindu nationalists in India.

This identity switching between a novelist's self and a journalist's self does not detract from the artistic value or character of a novel. Rushdie in the introduction to *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing* criticizes Amitav Ghosh on the ground that his novel-writing has too much journalistic leaning.[295] In an interview Ghosh answers this controversial charge brought against him and at the same time gives illuminating reflections on the productive boundary-crossing between the careers of a novelist and a journalist. He defends his position with reference to Marquez "who is a great journalist, and so much of his work comes from everyday life and everyday sources." To him it should not even be interesting for any reader to wonder "whether it's a novel or not a novel" when things presenterd are directly sourced in everyday life. He goes to the extent of saying that this tendency to express doubt about the nature of novel "reveals the limitations of the person who's thinking about" boundaries between novel writing and journalistic writing in strict terms "because all the *really* interesting work that's come out in the last 30 or 40 years comes out of the boundaries between these things – Calvino, Primo Levi – so much interesting work in contemporary fiction comes exactly out of those boundaries."[296] Following the tenet of the worldly engagement of writers Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk look at the lived world around them with its complex problems and find inexhaustible fund of materials for writing fictional and non-fictional texts with the acumen of a journalist. The only difference from the journalist is that they add figures to the bare facts by the use of imagination.

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[294] Orhan Pamuk, "First Impressions: Korea from the Outside," Trans. Jessica Ji-Eun Lee, *Azalea*, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/azalea/voo1//.pamuk.pdf>.

[295] Amitav Ghosh, "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation,"op. cit., 33. Rushdie makes the controversial claim that Amitav Ghosh as a writer has more predilection to journalism and non-fiction than to novel writing and, therefore, he is going to end up as a journalist.

[296] Ibid., 33.

Self-Reflexivity and the Related Theoretical Leanings

Postmodernism points to the possibility of the existence of embedded worlds in a piece of fiction making the author keenly aware of the questions: "How can I interpret (or project) this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?"[297] These questions foreground the pluralistic and unstable position of the author in his fiction and the flexible relation between the fictional and the real universe. In dealing with history and addressing these epistemplogical-ontological issues the authors under this discussion write a kind of fiction that sometimes questions the nature of both fictionality and historicity: the fictionality of history and historicity of fiction. Exploiting the potentiality of the discursive nature of the genre, they write metafictional and self-reflexive novels to accommodate social, historical, philosophical, and psychological issues in a single text. They draw upon the texts of other writers and sometimes their earlier texts are reflected in the later texts. As metafiction their novels create fictional illusion and question the nature and process of that illusion. Thus they become self-conscious, self-critical, and self-reflexive, combining literary creation and criticism.

Following the distinct postmodern trait called metafictional self reflexivity, both Ghosh and Pamuk appear as narrators or characters in many of their novels. While Ghosh appears directly in one novel namely *In an Antique Land* and indirectly in some novels in different names, Pamuk appears as Orhan/his doubles in many of his novels. The child narrator in Ghosh's master piece *The Shadow Lines* is the reflection of the authorial self. The Delhi based translator Kanai in *The Hungry Tide* is modeled on his creator Ghosh whose expertise in leading languages of the world is evident in his texts. Besides, in his novels he uses the translation metaphor in the representation of the characters and their society. While he himself appears directly as a cultural and linguistic translator in *In an Antique Land* in other novels he appears as translator indirectly in the use of Indian words and in the presentation of local reality in a global language. Sometimes, his ancestral experiences infiltrate into fictional plot. The racial conflict in the British-Indian Army as portrayed in *The Glass Palace* is sourced in his father's experiences of fighting in the same army in Burma in the Second World War.[298]

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[297] Dick Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes towards a Theory of the New Arts* (New York: Vermont, 1978): 101.
[298] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Tim Teeman, op cit.

The mysterious journalist Galip and the popular newspaper columnist Celâl in *The Black Book*, Osman the narrator in *The New Life,* and Olive, a story teller in *My Name is Red* are different manifestations of Pamuk the author. In some of his novels his daughter's name "Ruya" meaning "dream" is used as a character-name and a theme (the ideal self) at the same time. The competitive relationship with his elder brother with their constant friendly fights, quarrels and negotiations as revealed in his autobiography is used as an objective correlative to the East-West relationship in the context of his country. In some of his novels the anecdotes of the lonely mother and her son's relationship, and the names of his mother and brother have autobiographical resonance. By furnishing his historical novels with details of his childhood he likes to give them a personal dimension as he believes that the "challenge of a historical novel is not to render a perfect imitation of the past, but to relate history with something new, enrich and change it with imagination and sensuousness of personal experience.[299]Ghosh seems to hold the similar view when he carries the details of his family and biography into the space of historical fiction.

But these writers also differ on certain points in their use of metafictional self-reflexivity. While Pamuk uses it as a plot device Ghosh uses it as thematic requirement. Pamuk's authorial self has pervasive presence in his texts as he appears as an active part in the history and identity of his city and country explored in his writings. As his stories are "enmeshed in differences" Ghosh maintains greater distance in reflecting his self in his writings. As "a happy postmodernist," a theory enthusiast by his own confession, Pamuk follows the postmodern traits of self-reflexivity and metafictionality wholeheartedly. Ghosh on the other hand appears postmodern by chance as we can deduce it through his conscious revelation that he is not too much theory conscious. I contend that Pamuk, though reluctant to sever tie with the tradition, is here influenced by the present circumstances of his own country running in a sesperate mood to follow the Europeans, whether in art and culture, or in science and politics. Ghosh, though well aware of the western experiments in art, feels more akin to the native tradition of the great masters, namely, Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Roy, according to his own confession.

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[299] Orhan Pamuk, "A Conversation," Interview with Alfred A. Knopf, op. cit., 3.

From National Allegories to the "Universal"

Nationalism, according to Jameson, becomes significant for the third world people to protect "their radical difference" in the new political and cultural spheres of postcolonial societies; difference, forcefully extracted or naturally born, becomes their mainstay against the fast changing cultural scenario of the globe. Hence the discourse of the evolution of identity, and the related themes like globalization, cultural clashes, and the East-West trope appear with reference to its historical evolution in the Third World novels. The narratives discussed above stage incidents which initially illustrate what Jameson has termed "national allegories"; but they ultimately transcend national/regional boundaries, to become allegories of men in general, as a character in *Snow* challenging the western writers' previllege to enjoy the status of universality claims to have power to "speak for all humanity" (*Snow* 286). Besides, national issues necessarily involve the global ones as the world is now a global village holding all nations inseparably, not only for economic reasons but also for identical cultural quest and mutual security.

The branding of national allegories broadly characterizes the Third World literature in a very particular way as Jameson explains at length in his much discussed essay "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." He particularly means the discursive genre of novel which has predominantly western root in its use of the tools of representation. Even those texts "which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society."[300] Unlike the modern and postmodern western novels the Third World novels, for their thematic roots in turbulent history and embattled present, depict social and historical themes by turning the personal story into "the tale of the tribe" that in the final analysis becomes the tale of humans having the same problems everywhere in the world. Therefore, Ghosh and Pamuk cannot help being simultaneously global and local or "glocal."[301] They are found to follow the well known principle "think globally, act locally."

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[300] Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text: Theory /Culture/Ideology* 15 (Fall 1986): 69.

[301] The term "glocal" is a blend of global and local meaning the exchanges and synthesis of the two forces. The term was modeled on the Japanese word *dochakuka* which means adapting farming technique to local and global market conditions. It got currency in the West in 1990s firstly as a commercial term

Third World countries projected in Ghosh have suffered the experience of colonialism and imperialism. Pamuk's Turkey fits into Jameson's characterization of Third World countries since it is not economically and culturally free from the influence of the capitalist West, and it suffers from the crisis/anxiety of establishing national identity, that is, "Turkishness." Broadly speaking, the national/political themes presented in Pamuk novels correspond to Jameson's theory. But his deeper focus, like Ghosh's, on predicaments of individuals also challenge Jameson's generalization. As is required to merit the name of art their works certainly give voice to every society of the world torn between the past and present, local and global, and between conflicting ideologies and classes. Their novels are interesting because they start with particularities and end with universalities. Pamuk argues: "Everyone is the same in the end. Whether it is a reader from Buenos Aires or Bombey or Seoul, Korea, they can understand a person from Istanbul, they can understand what is eternal."[302]

Pamuk in his essay "Mario Vargas Llosa and Third World literature" expresses his take on the issue by drawing on the definitions of Third World literature given by Edward Said and Fredric Jameson. He appreciates Said's nuanced articulation of the concept over Jameson's loose categorization. Said highlights "the richness and the range of the literatures on the margins and their relation to non-Western identity and nationalism" whereas Jameson by using the (slightly disreputable) phrase "national allegories" simply expresses "a polite indifference to the wealth and complexities of literatures from the marginalized world" far from the the established literary centres of the world (OC 168). According to him, if anything gives distinguishing marks to Third World literature, "it is not the poverty, violence, politics, or social turmoil" of the writer's location" but rather "the writer's awareness that his work is somehow remote from the centres where the history of his art" has been written (OC 168).

Compared to Ghosh, this awareness of geographical or psychological distance is more acute in Pamuk as he sometimes reflects upon the distance between literary centres and peripheries in his work. The speculation of a character in *Snow* to write a science fiction after the western model or another character's doubt regarding his achievement of

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and finally as a cultural term. The popularization of the term "glocal" and its noun forms "glocalisation" and "glocalism"is attributed to Professor Ronald Robertson, a sociologist and theorist of globalisation at the University of Pittsburgh.

302 Orhan Pamuk, "Writing and writing is my only happiness," op. cit., 5.

reaching a global readership if he can write any piece of poetry speaks of their writer's sense of geographical distance or the fear of "being a perpetual foreigner" to "other" readers. Pamuk's more use of personal details in the art of the novel than that of Ghosh also explains the reason of his anxiety of the distance between a writer and his global readership. Besides, Pamuk reveals his experience of feeling the "Bloomian anxiety of influence" at one stage of his career (OC 377). Ghosh, however, has expressed his debt mostly to his native writers, some writing in Bengali and some in English, and therefore, he seems almost free from the sense of anxiety found in Pamuk. With regard to centre-margin question in the practice of the art of the novel, unlike their respective positions in other thematic asspects, Ghosh and Pamuk differ significantly.

Chapter Five
Conclusion: Overlapping Cultural Cartographies

> Once upon a time, not so very long ago yet not so recently, everything imitated everything else…[and] the worldly realm was repeatedly presented through the same stories and pictures, as if time did not flow. (MNR 85)

In the previous chapters I have dealt with the oeuvres of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk separately as well as in a comparative mode to find the extent of their crossing ways in dealing with history and identity. By way of drawing conclusion, it can be asserted that the study of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk together give new insights into the novelists in particular and the study of postcolonial/postmodern fiction in general. Their very different literary, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds do not create any barrier to the comparative study of their texts since they are actually working on a transverse world with intersecting historical trajectories. Sharing some postmodern characteristics like self-reflexivity, intertextuality, and hybridity, they write on two apparently different histories and identities. In their fictional canvases they switch between local and global, and touch upon almost all the dominant discourses related to fictional representation of history and identity in the colonial and postcolonial eras.

Both are socially engaged writers narrating the problems and prospects of the modern world while at the same time showing the history of the nations and the empires through the alternative lens of literary telescope. They prove themselves as consummate literary interpreters of East-West question, clashes of cultures, globalization, nationalism, and identity politics/paradox. Their writings covering the interlacing and the clash of cultures and civilizations foreground the possibility of crossfertilization of differences. The locales and action of their narratives tend to converge on what Mary Louise Pratt terms as "contact zones," denoting "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination." [303] The difference of their backgrounds is only apparent in degree, not in kind. Their broad categorization is as non-western and the ideology harboured by their principal fictional characters can be broadly termed as non-Westernism, yet without harbouring any animosity towards the "western other."

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[303] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992) : 7.

Imperialism and nationalism come under due criticism in their writings for bringing division and distance in human relationships. They dismiss imperialism and nationalism as begetters of egoism, chauvinism, jingoism, and violence. These concepts create deep fissures among human beings and lead them to "combat zones" instead of bringing them to "contact zones." Both the concepts of imperialism and nationalism contribute to the East-West divide which ultimately turns the world into a constant philosophical and economic battle ground without any possibility of creating a global cultural confederation attainable through creative exchanges, continuous dialogues, and meaningful negotiations. Empire and nation have the identical repressive political structures which are based on the binary of self and other. This binary only gives rise to a culture of irrational hatred, baseless discrimination, and ruthless exploitation. While excavating history both Ghosh and Pamuk find imperial arrogance and its huge capacity for cruelty and injustice in the world. Focusing on the present world they find to their utter dismay the same effects of imperialism in the form of parochialism and chauvinism nurtured by ultra-nationalism.

The imperialists invaded other countries out of "patriotism" and pride for their own countries. The nationalists, out of excessive love for their own people and countries, harbour ungrounded hatred for the "other." By confronting this "other" through the invasion of the colonized nations, the European could assert their national identity. In the newly constructed nation-states people tend to realize their identity by confronting the "other" in the ex-colonialists who are now becoming neo-colonialists. While in India this confrontation has historical basis, in Turkey it is psychologically created out of ultra-competitive mentality and deep-seated inferiority complex. The past and present conditions of the sub-continental India, Burma/Myanmar, middle-east, and Turkey as depicted in Ghosh and Pamuk testify to these twin evils of imperialism and nationalism. Like Renan, Fanon, and Anderson these writers portray nationalism more as a socio-political construct than an inherent constituent of identity. The spirit of nationalism was necessary to get rid of the evils of imperialism and provide the world with a tolerable social and intellectual ambience. But nationalism has lost its moral authority in the present day world since it fails to establish freedom, equality, and fraternity among various groups. That is why Ghosh and Pamuk through their writings seem to urge readers to search for a global dimension of identity to free the world from the cage of

nationalism and neocolonialism where "self-interest is the end; brute force is the means; conscience is taboo."[304]

The people depicted in Ghosh's corpus carry the historical, political, linguistic, and cultural legacies of colonialism. And the people portrayed in Pamuk have to encounter a colonization of the psyche when they set out to tackle problems related to economic dependence, cultural aggression, and political hegemony of the world super powers. Crossing genre-boundary and adopting interdisciplinary approach to dealing with socio-political issues in literary texts as permitted by the concept of the aesthetic give a distinctive mark to their literary projects. Both use their native cities namely Calcutta and Istanbul as inverted colonial "city-laboratories" reflecting submerged historical power struggles, cultural encounters, and hybrid identity. Within their writings cities should be examined like countries as there remains a striking mutual reflectivity between the city and the nation, the city projecting the wider national crisis microcosmically while at the same time offering a distinctive version of the crisis. Particularly, Pamuk's engagement with the politics of Turkish identity and history is expressed through a distinctly Istanbulite optic. They look into past intensely and their critical examination of the past reveals the ways their native lands, namely India and Turkey, suffered from external and internal imperialism respectively. They share keen interest in noting how people ruminate on the changing courses of history and adjust themselves to the fast changing scenes of globalization. However, while Ghosh gives preference to showing how individuals in diverse landscapes undergo the changes in history as he has pointed it out in an interview that his "real interest is in the predicament of individuals,"[305] Pamuk, on the other hand, gives preference to showing the predicament of a nation hanging between tradition and modernity, past and present.

Their reflections on partitions and cartographic aggression follow the identical line of arguments. While some people they portray, despite occupying physically distinct cartographies, come in contact with others living on the other side of the boundaries through "the looking glass border," some other people entertain further invisible lines and circles within the geographically demarcated boundaries. Every nation is beset by the conflict within due to the difference in opinion in respect to drawing or lifting

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[304] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (Baroda: Good Companions, 1961): 163.
[305] Amitav Ghosh, "Interview," With Frederick Luis Aldama, *World Literature Today* 76.2 (2002): 86.

cartographic lines. These writers diagnose the cause of this conflict in the wounds inflicted on cartography due to the quick formation of the nation-states in the wake of the withdrawal of imperial authority or as in Pamuk in the wake of the world wars. Cartographic wounds by destabilizing tangled cultural roots and shared historical legacies affect people's thinking process. To counter the corroding effects of cartographic wounds, these writers seem to suggest, free movement of human beings across the globe can be a potent antidote to the tendency to bring divisions of all sorts.

However, Ghosh's canvas is broader than that of Pamuk. While Ghosh has taken into consideration the wider map of the eastern world after the dissolution of empires, Pamuk rather prefers working on a microcosm of the macrocosm as he particularises mostly on his native city Istanbul, once centre of a vast empire, and the Turkish border city of Kars, historically belonging to different countries and ethnic groups in different times. But their general focuses converge on the comparable problems of people living in the present world of identity anxiety. Although the decline of empire and the rise of the nation-states lead to partition, in the trajectory of both the novelists the most prominent boundaries of the present world system are found to be economic and religious rather than territorial or political. The partition of the Indian subcontinent as dealt with in *The Shadow Lines*, as we know, is mostly due to the religious division. *In an Antique Land* also portrays the divisions of men along the line of religions. On the other hand, the major stumbling block in Turkey's way to the integration with Europe is implicitly the distrust born out of the gap between the Christian West and the Muslim Turkey though both sides do not spell it out to maintain discreet silence for the sake of sealing bitter memories of the past. Such consideration of religion working in a covert or overt way works behind many state level decisions like signing treaties, joining cooperative or security organizations, and sending peace keeping troops to a conflict-ridden region reflects what Amitav Ghosh has lamented at the end of the essay "The Fundamentalist Challenge," that religion has left its private domain of spirituality and taken over sociological and political turn in the modern world (I&I 288).

Ghosh and Pamuk have written historical novels on the basis of extensive archival research and journalistic tour to the settings of their stories though they do not like to call their work academic. The meticulous research background of Ghosh's extraordinary novel *In an Antique Land* is self-evident. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is also

a product of extensive reading and research in the life and history of the Nobel winning scientist Louis Pasteur. Much research and archival study also went into the making of Ghosh's "Ibis" novels. The same is true to many texts of Pamuk. A meticulous research underpins his autobiography of which a major part is covered by documentary photographs searched out mostly from the home-studio-archive-museum of the famous photographer and art collector of Istanbul named Ara Güler. To be true to the historical details Pamuk had to work very hard in writing *My Name is Red*. While writing this novel for six long years he "spent a lot of time reading books and looking at picture," and the Ottomans' great tradition of record keeping provided him with much scope to explore "the records of the governor of Istanbul."[306] A more or less similar pattern underlies almost all his novels. But the research for historical accuracy in the production of art does not make the novels of Ghosh and Pamuk drily academic. Their novels provide the readers with due aesthetic pleasure and they do not, while reading, feel the heavy research going into the making of the novels. It reminds one of W. B. Yeats's theory of effortlessness in writing poetry as he explains it in "Adam's Curse" that a poem must be a result of strenuous labour but the final product should not bear any trace of the toil: "A line will take us hours may be;/ Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought, /Our stitching and unstitching has been naught."[307]

What these writers ultimately do is to complicate their narratives by leading readers to the transgressive landscapes of reality and fictionality in line with the distinct postmodern trend. Writing on historical and political issues they have set out to go partially against this dictum of Aristotle's poetics: "the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen."[308] In narrativising historical-political issues they illustrate the point made by the Marxist literary theorist Georg Lukács: "What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act as they did in historical reality."[309] To a greater extent this boundary crossing between academic history and historical fiction leads their works to blur the boundaries of genres.

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[306] Orhan Pamuk, "A Conversation ," Interview with Alfred A. Knopf, op. cit., 3.
[307] W. B. Yeats, "Adam's Curse," *Selected Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1962): 21; ll.4-6.
[308] Aristotle, *On the Art of Poetry*, Trans. Ingram Bywater (London: Oxford Clarendon, 1974): 43.
[309] Georg Lukács, op. cit., 42.

While Ghosh consciously conceals his interest in the theory of post-modern fiction Pamuk who considers himself "a happy postmodernist" overtly reveals his fascination for theory and his deep indebtedness to it. Admitting the indispensability of the influences of the works of both eastern and western masters of storytelling on his own Pamuk synthesises both western and eastern literatures in the composition of his novels. This is aptly reflected in the words of Black in *My Name is Red*: "All fables are everybody's fables" (MNR 484) and fiction reveals a cosmos where, in the words of Stork in the same novel, "[o]nce upon a time, not so very long ago yet not so recently, everything imitated everything else" (MNR 85). As in the context of miniature artists who argue for mixing eastern and western styles the speaker/narrator of the novel says: "All illumination is God's illumination too" (MNR 484).

In line with T. S. Eliot's view of having a writer's text imbedded in the fabric of tradition, both Ghosh and Pamuk in writing their fiction draw upon texts produced in the past.[310] In this case Pamuk appears more aggressive than Ghosh when he says: "I make collage. I borrow many things from many books, but this does not make me feel very bad….However as James Joyce states, this functions only as a bridge….I create a work of art with my own will….I do not mind what I have borrowed.[311] According to him, putting together various texts creates a space of emotional charging which fuels the creation of rich literature. His novels grow out of the synthesisis of the western and the eastern traditions. Ghosh follows the similar ethos, albeit, less aggressively. We have seen how extensively refrains from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elygies* are used as intertexts in *The Hungry Tide* for thematic purposes. Studying Ghosh and Pamuk together, thus, goes with the point made by the following definition of comparative literary study given by M.M. Enani: "Any study of parallelism claims that there are affinities between the literatures of different peoples whose social evolution is similar**;** regardless of whether or not there is any mutual influence or direct relation between them."[312] Although Ghosh and Pamuk do not bear any mutual influence – which we can well assume from their utterly different backgrounds of writings – they share grounds for the worlds they portray have more or less common records of socio-cultural and political evolution.

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[310] T.S. Eliot in his famous essay "Tradition and The Individual Talent," *English Critical Text : 16th Century to 20th Century*, Eds. D. J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera (London; Oxford UP,1962): 293 - 301, says that no writer can write being separated from the tradition which consists of all the writings hitherto produced by the previous writers.

[311] Orhan Pamuk, "Red Armchair*,"* *Interstar TV* 23. 10. 1994.

[312] M. M. Enani, *Theories of Comparative Literatures* (42). <www.svu.eg/links/ictp/e...THEORIES>.

Both the novelists show in their characterization in fiction and social commentary in non-fiction a keen awareness of the ontological anxiety of the contemporary conflict-ridden time. Under the fabric of their stories they probe into the identity crises and paradoxes resulting from the prejudices and violences of the contemporary history, and deal with the difficulties and pitfalls of drawing the distinction between "self" and "other." By writing a sort of redemptive narratives where the culturally confused mind may search for right directions they add new insights into the overly discussed East-West binary and the clashes of cultures/civilizations. They fictionally project alternative ways of looking at the world by dismantling traditional binaries. Their novels infuse the readers with the idea of an emerging new world order – post nationalist, post secular, and post spiritual – that may develop after the failure of the nation-states based models to tackle the divisionist trends of the current world. The proposed world will be based on the founding tenets of the pre-imperial and the pre-partitioned world.

By making literary attempts to converge the aesthetic and the real politic, the local and the global, they offer a prescient vision of a post-nation-state world order flourishing under the spell of cultural and economic globalization. To support their arguments they trace the effects of the memory of the past and the experience of living in a bewilderingly variable present world on the psyches of the individuals involved in searching roots. Their literary efforts reveal a longing of the concerned people for the golden past which did not bear the scars of partition and sectarianism. Their narratives converge "on an imaginative canvas that invites the reader to wander in psychological and historical descriptive dimensions of literature that rethink subjectivity amid multicultural and societal characterizations that disrupt (ordinary) language and human way of knowing."[313]

The works of Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk foreground the space for unity in diversity through the practice of the syncretic worldview. Their advocacy for the cultivation of mélange identity comes out of the contemporary reality of the conflict-ridden societies they depict. They would like to realize its full potential to free the world from the violence associated with identity and make the lives of all turn better through

[313] Mehnaz M. Afridi and David M. Buyze, ed. *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 2. The editors write the above comment on Pamuk in the introduction of the book. The comment can very well apply to what Amitav Ghosh writes as these writers are concerned with history and politics with a view to introduce a new world perspective.

building a perpetual source of what the Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam and others call “social capital.”[314] They seem to offer a revisionist reading of history and cultural politics through narratives which question and challenge the power-induced historiography of the West that carries a partitionist agenda. To fight against xenophobia and racism the world is badly suffering from, they infuse philosophicality in the treatment of human relationship by way of introducing the mystical ideals like transcendence in bondage, reaching out to what is foreign/unknown, and annihilating self through transferring knowledge and trading positions.

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[314] See Amartya Sen, op. cit., 2.

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