

Between Memory and History: The Dynamics of Space and Place in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

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Abstract:

Memory and history just as space and place seem to intrigue Amitav Ghosh profoundly, as evident from their conspicuousness in most of his fictional works in the last years. This article seeks to focus on the twin dynamics of memory and history with reference to space and place in Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* as one of the most important postcolonial novels since its publications thirty years ago. Ghosh's unnamed narrator locates his family history in different time periods and continents in order to highlight not only the cross-border contacts of his family and nation as a 'fictional entity', but the ambivalence of creating borders and lines, which tend to destroy human contacts as well as human beings. While narrating a family and generational saga, Ghosh brings out the political and cultural dilemmas of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as new nation-states; thus, the article underlines the significance of political events, shaping and influencing private lives within the domain of postcolonial historical fiction. Lastly, it shows how such a form of fiction plays a significant role in recovering lost histories.

Key Words: Memory, history, place, space, Bengali imagination, cross-cultural contacts.