

IT

# PROJECT WORK

2nd Assignment

3rd Sem English

HOME ASSIGNMENT

ON

ENGLISH

9/10 (Overall)

TOPIC:

1. Comment on the idea of Partition in the novel *The Shadow Lines*.
2. Analyze the importance of Matthew Arnold as critic with reference to *The Study of Poetry*.

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1.

Amilkar Ghosh presents the hollowness of partition which plays a very crucial role in knitting the frame of *The Shadow Lines* (1988). He upholds the theme of partition to be the cause of human suffering through the character of Tha'mma. Ghosh's primary argument in the novel is that the frontiers are constructed to separate one nation from another and these frontiers are not real but mere shadows. Many historical events like the freedom movement in Bengal, the Second World War, the Partition of India in 1947 and the communal riots in Bangladesh and India are alluded to in this novel to emphasize the theme of partition. The futility of the border lines is presented through these events. Borders or boundaries are always the cause of partition.

Ghosh's second novel '*The Shadow Lines*' is divided into two parts - 1) Going away. 2) Coming Home. The novel exhibits the story of two families inhabited in Dhaka, Calcutta, London - three different places of three different countries of the world namely Bangladesh, India and England respectively. The narrator provides a sketch of the differences of

of the experience of culture, religion and nationality of the generation of the difference of the experience two families. The narrator examines the effect of the communal riots. Ghosh tries to sketch out that riot is a very crucial cause for the creation of border which is created by men against men.

There are many characters in this novel and they are connected to each other through the relationship or family or friend. The narrator has his grandmother who is known as tha'mma and his parents. Mayadebi and her husband live in England. They have three sons - Jatin, Robi and Tridib. Tridib had experienced a greater span of his life in Calcutta. The narrator sketches the character of Ila who is the daughter of Jatin. The name of the first section of the novel is 'Going Away' in which the narrator presents the relationship of two families - The Datta Chaudhury of Bengal and The Price family of London. The second section of the novel is 'Coming Home' begins with Tha'mma retirement from the post of head mistress in 1962.

She had worked twenty-seven years as a teacher and six years as a head mistress. The narrator becomes fascinated with the stories of old days at her ancestral home of Tha'mma.

Through 'The Shadow Lines' my aim is to uphold various types of barriers like personal identity, border, partition etc. can't be a barrier in case of a person's freedom. The first section of the novel provides the concept that one has the ability to go beyond any kind of barriers or boundaries. Borders are meaningless and don't have the power to restrict human emotions. A border may separate the people of two countries geographically but it does not have any power at all to separate the people of two countries psychologically. Borders create struggle for people. The second section of the novel upholds the concept of national identity. When Tha'mma wants to visit Dhaka to bring back her uncle, Sri Ghostobihari Bose, she practically realizes the impact of partition. Though Tha'mma thinks that she can easily go to her ancestral home which is situated in Dhaka, but after partition it is not so easy to go Dhaka from Calcutta for Tha'mma because she has to follow the rules for going outside the

country. Tha'mma <sup>really</sup> understands this <sup>really</sup> when it is needed to mention the name of her birth place on the passport from which is required to be filled up properly in order to go to Dhaka and it is at this very moment that Tha'mma realizes the socio-political situation.

There are many symbolic references like Houses old and new, maps and mirrors, borders and boundaries in this novel and these are associated with the concept of man's search and quest for individual identity. The novel depicts not only the suffering of Tha'mma but also the sufferings of everyman and here, the character of Tha'mma is representative of those men who are victims of Partition. However, Ghosh does not provide any solution to come out from these sufferings. Here Ghosh through the character of Tha'mma shows that all borders and boundaries are nothing but only shadows and also puts an important question which is related to our individual identities. The concept of division or border leads the people to psychological sufferings of homelessness. As a result, the people are always in a dilemma of belongingness.



2.

Matthew Arnold is an important critic of English Literature. Before him, English criticism was in fog, and whatever criticism we find, is more based on personal notions than on any consistent methods. It is in Arnold that English literature could have a critic of real nature, who laid down certain principles following which poetry could be criticized. Herbert Paul very pertinently remarks, "Mr. Arnold did not merely criticize books himself. He taught others how to criticize. He laid down principles; if he did not always keep the principles he laid down. Nobody, after reading 'Essays in Criticism' has any excuse for not being a critic."

The originality and importance of Matthew Arnold lies in the fact he laid down principles and brought criticism to stand on a solid ground. He did not claim or wish to probe to the "metaphysical depths" as Coleridge did because this could have obscured the lines of his criticism. He took the help of an empirical test, one which could be applied after long experience with beautiful poems and ideas. He advises critics to "give themselves great labor to draw out what is the abstract

constitutes the characteristics of a high quality of poetry. The characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed there, because he thinks, "there can be no more useful things for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent and there do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry." and this principle should be borne in mind in making a real estimate of a poem.

Arnold's views about poetry are elaborately stated in his "Study of Poetry". He is confident that poetry has a great pleasure and has to play a very dignified role in the life of mankind. For Arnold poetry is not meant to delight, it is meant to provide food to soul. He defines poetry "as a criticism of life under the condition fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". For Arnold 'criticism of life' means the noble and profound application of ideas to life and the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty as truth and seriousness to substance and matter, and felicity and perfection of diction and manner. Arnold belie

ves that poetry does not present life as it is.

Thus for Arnold poetry has a great role to play. In fact he makes the moral purpose of poetry as the integral function. He says, "a poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life." He utters a moral idea. Poetry therefore to utter such moral convictions must be of highest order. It ought to be excellent both in matter as well as in manner. It must have universal truth and high seriousness for matter and the natural felicity of a superior order that blends harmoniously with the matter.

The greatest poets and philosophers of all ages have believed that the ethical view of life is the essential view of life and Arnold also believed the same. It had become all the more important in his own age when materialism had dominated the life of people, and when religious values were crushed due to the development of science. Arnold knew the melody of his age and therefore, protested vigorously against it. He wanted to renew



the permanent ethical values of life and re-construct art on its time basis. He believed the poetry embodied in ethical values of life and reconstruct ~~art~~ on its time basis. He believed the poetry will save man from meeting disasters resulting into hollowness of life. Therefore, he insisted on the union of the best subject and the highest expression in poetry. Only such could achieve its ultimate end.

#### Reference:

Gill, Richard: Mastering English Literature:

Palgrave Macmillan, England, 2006.