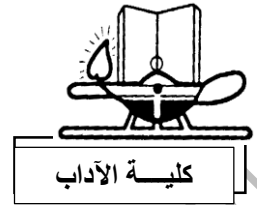




Ain Shams University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English
Language and Literature



Cosmopolitanism in Selected Novels

By

Amitav Ghosh and Ibrahim Abdel Meguid

A Thesis in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Master's Degree (MA) in Comparative Literature

Submitted by

Riham Hassan Ibrahim Elhawary

Under the Supervision of

Professor Dr Ahmed Gamal Eldin

And

Associate Professor Dr Maha Emara

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English Abstract

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English Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore cosmopolitanism as a perspective in terms of its different frames of space, identity and language in *The Shadow Lines* (1988) and *In An Antique Land* (1992) by the Indian novelist-cum-anthropologist Amitav Ghosh and *No One Sleeps In Alexandria* (1996) and *Birds of Amber* (2000) by the Egyptian novelist Ibrahim Abdel Meguid. Cosmopolitanism is examined as a perspective of diversity rather than polarity and hybridity rather than binarity, a structural conceptual and cultural frame that supersedes any bounded and reified constructs of ideology, identity or geography. The thesis thus joins contemporary post-colonial and cultural studies debates on the need to formulate a middle ground between Eurocentric universalism and liberalism on the one hand and cultural relativism and absolutist essentialism on the other. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the tension of difference across the various categories and levels of the national and global, the metropolitan and peripheral, the urban and rural, the public and personal, the sacred and secular, the high and popular, the masculine and feminine, and the historical and fictional, can coexist in a hybrid cosmopolitan model of conviviality and diversity.

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List of Abbreviations

The Shadow Lines (**SL**)

In An Antique Land (**IAAL**)

No One Sleeps in Alexandria (**NOSA**)

Birds of Amber (**BA**)

External Narrator (**EN**)

External Focalizer (**EF**)

Character-bound Narrator (**CN**)

Character-Focalizer (**CF**)

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﴿Preface﴾

﴿to the Studied Authors﴾

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Preface to the Studied Authors

Born to an Indian-Bengali Bhadrakol (middle-class) family, Ghosh studied history in India, obtained his PhD in Social Anthropology at Oxford University, and taught short courses in anthropology and creative writing at Columbia and New Delhi. Keeping his global readers in mind, his writings tackle the South Asian Diaspora across the globe, individual forms of European and Asian cosmopolitanism and climate change. His oeuvre critiques the 1947 India-Pakistan Partition into secular and fundamentalist states and their negative projection on identity formation. His fiction and non-fiction include: *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *In An Antique Land* (1992), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), and The Ibis trilogy – *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015) – in addition to non-fictional essays collected in *The Imam and The Indian* and his latest *The Great Derangement* (2016). In an interview by Aldama (2002), he mentions that Ghosh's work blends both "travel and ethnographic research" (88) with fiction to voice silenced histories in lieu of official historical narratives.

Born to a working-class family, Abdel Meguid "studied at the School of Technical Studies... [and] worked at the Marine Arsenal (1965-74) while studying [philosophy] at the University of Alexandria." (Abdel-Messih N. pag.). A prolific writer in contemporary Egyptian