

## Exploring Multiple Themes in the Novels of Amit Chaudhuri: A Thematic Analysis

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### Abstract

The present paper aims to study multiple themes in the select novels of Amit Chaudhuri: *A Strange and Sublime Address*, *Afternoon Raag*, and *A New World*. Amit Chaudhuri is a prestigious literary figure in the modern Indian diasporic writing. Indian diaspora literature has blossom into an academic field during the era of multiculturalism and transnationalism. It thrives through the contributions of Indian-origin authors who have migrated to various nations for diverse reasons. This literary galaxy is adorned by distinguished male and female authors who illuminate the trials and complexities of life abroad through their fictional works. This paper delves into thematic concerns from a diasporic perspective, exploring emotions of affiliation and nostalgia, including childhood, friendship, love, cuisine, and family matters. It also examines themes of identity crisis and loneliness, encompassing cultural, traditional, political, and social discussions, as well as songs. Additionally, the paper addresses the themes of dislocation and alienation, highlighting superstitions prevalent among local people and aspects of city life.

**Keywords:** Novels of Amit Chaudhuri, Nostalgia, Identity crisis, Loneliness, Dislocation, Alienation.

## 1. Introduction

Amit Chaudhuri, born in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in 1962 and was brought up in Bombay (now Mumbai), is a distinguished novelist, essayist, poet, and literary critic of contemporary times. In addition to his literary pursuits, he also excels as a music composer and singer. Chaudhuri pursued his undergraduate studies in English at University College, London, where he graduated with First Class BA Honours. He continued his academic journey at Balliol College, Oxford, completing his doctorate on critical theory and the poetry of D.H. Lawrence, supported by the Dervorguilla Scholarship. His father, served as the first Indian CEO of Britannia Industries Limited, while his mother was an acclaimed singer. Chaudhuri's spouse is a distinguished literary historian and critic.

As literature reflects society, contemporary literary artists are increasingly directing their focus towards India's rich traditions, aiming to preserve and exalt them in their works during the postmodern era. Amit Chaudhuri, as a dedicated regionalist his writings also reflect the endeavours to portray realistic narration of life in both Calcutta and Mumbai. His writings revolve around the essence of these cities, including their customs, habits, characteristics, and the lives of their people. Novels, written by Chaudhuri, encompass various aspects of the regions they depict, including physical features, societal norms, language, traditions, and more. It's important to note that regionalism goes beyond mere photographic reproduction, aiming instead to capture the spirit and essence of a particular place.

## 2. Aim of Present Study

Amit's novel contains elements of romance, politics, social commentary, history, personal experiences, childhood memories, refined storytelling, familial dynamics, intriguing portrayals, and deep insights into character psychology. Such endeavours aim to engage the reader and draw them into the sequence of events.

The novels delve into the dynamics of relationships among characters, serving as a primary theme. Sub themes explored include childhood, friendship, love, culture, cuisine, family matters, and the superstitions prevalent among local people, songs, etc.

This paper explores thematic concerns from Diaspora perspective such as...

- 1) Emotions of affiliation and nostalgia such as childhood, friendship, love, sex, cuisine, family matters

- 2) Themes of identity crisis and loneliness such as cultural, traditional, political, social discussions, songs ...
- 3) The themes of dislocation and alienation such as superstitions prevalent among local people, city aspects

However, the present study is limited to the novels *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1), *Afternoon Raag* (2), and *A New World* (3).

### 3. Diaspora Perspective

The term 'Diaspora' originates from the Greek words 'dia,' meaning 'through,' and 'sparian,' meaning 'to scatter. In contemporary usage, 'diaspora' encompasses the migration of any individual or community from their original homeland. Diaspora literature shares common themes, including alienation, identity crisis, socio-cultural conflict, racial segregation, homelessness, rootlessness, memory, nostalgia, and displacement. The expression of these themes in diasporic writing is captivating, as authors skillfully portray the traumatic experiences of diaspora hamlet in their fictional works.

Amit Chaudhari has significantly showcased India, its essence, and Indian culture in his creative works. Authors of Indian origin such as V.S. Naipaul, A.K. Ramanujan, Vikram Seth, Ved Mehta, Rohinton Mistry, M.G. Vassanji, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Kamala Markandeya, Uma Parmeshwaran, Sujata Bhatt, Anita Desai, Meera Syal, and Sunetra Gupta have enriched the landscape of Indian diasporic literature with their diverse perspectives (4). Through their works, they have not only brought visibility and consciousness to the diasporic experience but also have contributed significantly to the development of "diaspora literature" as an academic discipline.

### 4. Emotions of Affiliation and Nostalgia

Diasporic literature often explores themes of homeland affiliation and nostalgia, reflecting the experiences of individuals living outside their native countries. In the present novels under study here, Amit Chaudhuri infuses their narratives with rich cultural heritage, capturing the emotional journey of diasporic communities navigating between their roots and the adopted lands. Through vivid storytelling, he explored the tensions, challenges, and profound connections of both past and present, offering readers a deeper understanding of the human experience across borders.

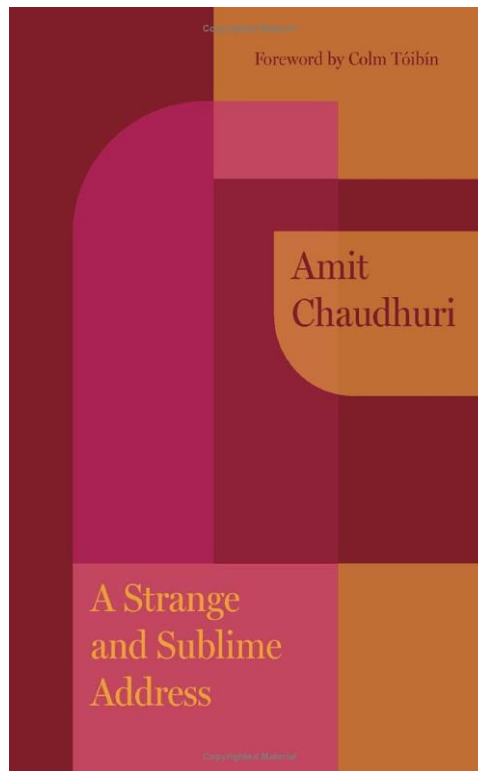
## 5. Themes of Identity Crisis and Loneliness

Diasporic literature often delves into the themes of identity crisis and loneliness, portraying the struggles of individuals caught between cultures. Through novels, Amit Chaudhuri explored the complex process of forging one's identity while navigating between the homeland and the adopted country. The characters grapple with a sense of displacement and isolation, seeking a sense of belongingness amidst the cultural diaspora.

## 6. The Themes of Dislocation and Alienation

In Amit Chaudhuri's novels, themes of dislocation and alienation are intricately woven into the narratives, reflecting the experiences of diasporic individuals. Through his prose, Chaudhuri explores the profound sense of displacement felt by characters living between cultures.

## 7. Thematic Analysis in *A Strange and Sublime Address*



Courtesy: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The novel starts with a 10-year-old protagonist Sandeep visits his maternal uncle, *Chhotomama's* house in Calcutta with his mother. Here Amit Chaudhuri visualized all the scenes through the eyes of Sandeep. The small family makes its home on the twenty-third floor of a twenty-five-floor very modern apartment building in Bombay. Every year, during his summer and winter vacations, his mother takes him to visit her brother's family, who

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lives in a small house in Calcutta. This novel chronicles two such visits a year and a half apart—one in the summer when *Sandeep* is ten and one in the winter when he has turned twelve. For *Sandeep*, Calcutta is a completely different world from Bombay. The story begins with the description of Chhotomama's house focusing on recreating in minute detail the atmosphere of Calcutta as experienced by a young boy visiting his extended family over summer and winter holidays. The novel ends with a mild heart attack of Chhotomama. He took to the hospital. When he was in the hospital bed, many relatives visited him with great wonder, if there is any chance of him to survive, but it was a small attack that he was well and fine. The visit of relatives there was much fun in the situation that all the guests came to hospital to meet Chhotomama but they discussed so many other matters in the hospital only. The novel ends with the sound of the kuku bird, children tried identifying the bird in the tree but they could not recognize the bird, here Amit Chaudhuri ends his novel with the thought that sometimes human life is also like the bird. The bird moves from one tree to another in search of food but human beings move towards the search of peace and happiness.

**(i) Emotions of Affiliation and Nostalgia**

The author beautifully captures the emotion of tradition in receiving guests and distributing gifts to relatives. Mamima, Sandeep's uncle's wife, warmly welcomes them, while the two cousins, Abhi and Babla, excitedly run into the house. Sandeep's mother presents gifts to Abhi and Babla, and offers Mamima saris, despite Kolkata's own renowned sari tradition. Mamima graciously praises the saris brought from Mumbai, finding them particularly appealing.

a) 'Oh but these are beautiful,' replied Mamima, unravelling a sari, which broke into a galaxy of hand-woven stars, a cosmos of streaking comets and symbolic blue horizons (P5).

Affiliations towards tradition are beautifully described by author with day-to-day activities. Sandeep, after accommodating himself with the household of his uncle begins to enjoy the household chores done by *Mamima*, servant-maids namely *Saraswathi* and *Chhaya*. Sandeep loves the mustard-oil massage (its aroma) and the subsequent cool-water bath done on him by the maidservant. Even he compares the washing done by hand and the 'shhhh' sound of *Saraswathi* is compared to the washing done by the washing-machine of his Mumbai flat. Indeed, *Sandeep* is the author's character who lauds tradition.

b) A Sharp aura of mustard-oil flowered, giving Sandeep's nostrils a faraway sentient pleasure-it wasn't a sweet smell, but there was a harsh unexpectedness about it he liked (P7).

c) Babies are soaked with mustered oil..... . With their frantic miniature limbs and their brown, shining bodies, they look like little koi fish caught from the Hooghly river, struggling into life (p8).

d) But it was clean; each afternoon, each night, Sarswati wiped it with a wet, dirty-looking rag, which, in spite of its appearance, was actually clean too, clean like the soul of a wronged criminal (p29).

### **(ii) Themes of Identity Crisis and Loneliness**

Amit depicts the middle-class life of Calcutta of 1980s accurately with its flavour and colour. The cricket commentary, film songs, radio-broadcasting news, screening of films in the open space with the help of a projector; fireflies flying in the field emitting light, old Ambassador car which could be regarded as a prestigious possession, household having two servant-maids, no freedom given to children for their choices, spending Sunday evenings in relaxed manner by making small round trip around the city in an old Ambassador car, and the head of the family seemingly the father who alone is toiling for the sake of the whole family and for which he is given all significance by the family members are some of the attitudes and events that occur in every middle-class family of Calcutta.

a) They went past the bridge in Dhakuria..... its colonial building, vacant and proud looking on Sunday evening like a black and white photograph of another era (p19).

b) He was sitting at the steering wheel of the old Ambassador, one arm casually hanging outside, one arm on the wheel (p37)

The young psyche of *Sandeep* correlates his modern house in Bombay and the conventional house in Calcutta and that makes a sort of nostalgia for his *Chhotomama's* house in him.

c) Once or twice, Sandeep remembered Bombay and felt oddly unhappy without knowing why. Alone in the big apartment on the twenty-third floor, he was like Adam in charge of paradise, given dominion over the birds and fishes; he was too much in the foreground (p35).

### **(iii) The Themes of Dislocation and Alienation**

*A Strange and Sublime Address* represents the alienation, exile, aloneness suffered by the boy and also it represents the description of the local, familiar spaces, people, their behavior and experiences.

a) A bhelpuri vendor ..... like a Malaysian fedora, on his head (p36).

b) Pottering about for new pyjamas and vest, he looked like the chieftain of some undiscovered, happy African tribe (p64).

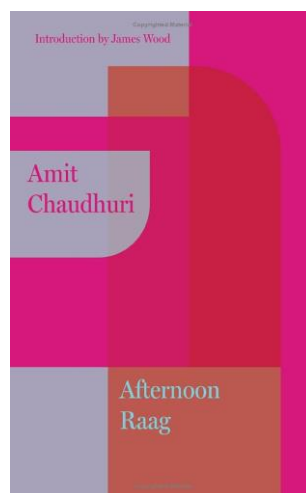
Amit Chaudhuri compared the life of two cities and also mentioned about how the boy becomes unhappy with being alone in the house though it was very big. He feels alienation on the big city he felt alone in the new city when his father migrated from Calcutta to Bombay. Here we come across the details of both the cities.

c) The other room was facing the background, there were a few palm trees, and the puja room was given much importance. Many gods and goddesses stretch out or stood in various positions in the puja room (p41).

The novel's most striking feature is its lack of a conventional plot. Instead, it is a series of vignettes capturing everyday moments: morning baths, meal preparations, afternoon naps, children's games, the uncle's noisy car departures, visits to or from relatives, and neighborhood walks.

The novelist highlights a child's perspective on the social, political, psychological, and moral concerns of middle-class families. Readers feel they inhabit two worlds: day-to-day reality and imagination. Chaudhuri captures the child's imaginative landscape, blending it with reality in *A Strange and Sublime Address*.

## 8. Exploring the Themes in *Afternoon Raag*



Courtesy: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

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*Afternoon Raag* is a semi-autobiographical novel by Amit Chaudhuri. It consists of twenty-seven very short chapters exploring the search for identity by an Indian male student during his three-year stay at Oxford for studies. It significantly portrays his casual involvement with two female students, nostalgic memories of his parents staying in India, and his fond recall of the classical music (Hindustani 'raag') teacher in India. The novel delves into his state of mind, loneliness, and friendships with Sharma, a North Indian with an accent, as well as Mandira and Shehnaz, fellow students at Oxford. He struggles to choose between the two women and his memories of growing up in India. The narrative shifts between Oxford, Bombay, and Calcutta, reflecting the narrator's contemplations (5).

**(i) Emotions of Affiliation and Nostalgia**

The emotions and affiliations described in this novel, centered on everyday experiences such as waking up early, bathing, reading the newspaper, having breakfast, and visiting friends and relatives, truly capture the essence of Indian life and its people. This is particularly evident with the influence of Westernization on these aspects. His comparisons about family life, food, dress and relationships always show that he is very proud of his culture, and he always wants to be a representative of that. For instance,

- a) As I am used to the sound of crows in the morning, this absence of noise would fill me with a melancholy which was difficult to get rid of because it seemed to have no immediate cause. (p10).
- b) He says, "I would feel an at-homeness and pleasures in their rhythm. (p11).

The writer's efforts to describe sweepers, magazine vendors, and the Ambassador car as if they were exotic artifacts needing explanation generate a strong emotional connection with the reader. For instance,

- a) The Ambassador is a spacious box-like vehicle with a Taurean single-mindedness and a rickshaw's tenacity. It is known as a 'family car'; on Sundays, cousins and aunts on outings will sit perspiring, inside it; I myself associate its hot floorboards, its aching gear pulley, its recalcitrant pedals, with domesticity and the social events of childhood (p32).
- b) Two sisters, Chhaya and Maya, take turns cleaning the bathrooms in our house in Bombay. I have seen the younger one, Chhaya, a girl with two protruding teeth who leaned wistfully between chores against a door to listen to my mother practice or ran to snatch the bag of rubbish from Ponchoo, grow to a young woman with kaajal around



her eyes, and unexpected breasts, two small, painless swellings. On the festival of Raakhi, she ties a thread around my wrist with a crazy silver flower upon it (p60).

Nostalgia is vividly conveyed through the narrator's feelings. While their parents were in Bombay, they felt uncomfortable with their lifestyle there. However, in Calcutta, they feel safe and secure despite their son not being with them.

(i) Coming back from school, which was nearby I would see her there as a silent composition of loved details: the deliberate, floral creases of her sari, the pale orange-brown glow of her skin, the mild ember-darkening of her lip stuck mouth, the patient, round fruition of her bun of hair, and the irrelevant red dot on her forehead. Seeing her was like roaming alone in a familiar garden (p30).

(ii) By the time my parents decided they could no longer live in Bombay, and in those months of waiting for the flat to be sold, until at last when they packed up everything, leaving every room with crates full of possessions, the character of the lane had changed perceptibly (p114).

#### **(ii) Themes of Identity Crisis and Loneliness**

The novel explores themes of identity and loneliness, using music as a tool. Music is presented with poetic sensitivity, focusing on minute details. A raag, a piece of classical Indian music, sets specific intervals to evoke moods (6). In this story, the mood created is one of drifting through a unique phase between childhood and adulthood, characterized by fleeting yet meaningful relationships and artistic pursuits.

The narrator aspires to become a great classical singer and starts practicing with his mother to establish his identity. He buys his first tanpura from a shop on Rashbehari Avenue with his guru's help. Under his guru's guidance, he learns to play the tanpura, tune it, and hold it correctly.

a) Later, we sat on the floor in my room, and my guru taught me to tune the instrument.

The tanpura can be held vertically on the lap or next to the upraised knee as it is played (p44).

Before finishing his musical lessons, the narrator goes to Oxford for higher studies, taking his tanpura with him. Whenever he feels lonely or homesick, he plays the tanpura and practices ragas, which brings back memories of his homeland and his guru. The raag 'Maand' in particular, reminds him of his guru, his brother Mohan, and his brother-in-law Sohanlal, as it embodies the essence of their region.

- b) When I hear the raag Maand, I think of my guru and his brother and Sohanlal, for it bears the characteristics, the stamp, and the life of their region (p141).

When the narrator is in Oxford, he gets the news that his guru is dead, and he is no more; he feels lonely, and he feels that hereafter he will not get any opportunity to sing in a public gathering. The narrator feels that after his guru's death his ambition to become a singer will not be fulfilled. Thus, the narrator's identity as a Classical singer remains unfulfilled.

### **(iii) The themes of Dislocation and Alienation**

The narrator develops an intimate relationship between two girls- *Mandira* and *Shehnaz* as the name indicates the first is a *Hindu* and the second a *Muslim* girl. In the beginning of the novel the narrator is in a dilemma in choosing one of the two girls. Through this Chaudhuri also agrees that the age around thirty, is the age which has all options and opinions which do not make them choose their wants and needs.

*Shehnaz* is an Indian girl who goes to Oxford for her higher studies. Like the narrator, she also feels lonely and homesick and wants to get rid from this alienation. She is also in search of the right company in Oxford. *Shehnaz* got married once and got divorced, to overcome her loneliness or depression; she is in search of good company who can console her. Later their friendship develops into a relationship as lovers. They both love and she offer herself to him. Though they loved each other, the narrator was confused that he is not emotionally attached with *Shehnaz*, because at that time he falls in love with *Mandira*.

- a) We liked each other but were occupied, like children, with other things to do. Sometimes I am nostalgic for that make-believe busyness, full of innocence, of having 'Other things to do,' the prelapsarian background of lectures, bookshops, friends, our lives spent generously and routinely like rain-showers, stopping and starting again (p35).
- b) On one occasion, I remember, I had been out for several hours; she had come twice to my room and gone away. When she came for the third time, I was in Sharma's room, and we saw her from his window, coming down the road. As she rang the doorbell, entered, and then climbed up the stairs, Sharma said, 'Quick, hide in the cupboard!'; it was something he himself loved doing, a bad but endearing habit, surprising me by stepping into my closet when I was not there, and then coming out and taking me unawares. (p138).

*Mandira* is also an Indian student in Oxford, like Shehnaz, to drive her alienation out: she got the narrator's introduction as a friend later this relationship also developed as a lover. He makes many promises to her but fails to fulfill them; he fails to satisfy her demands. While *Mandira* realized that the narrator is not the right person for her love, she got depressed and postponed her final exams and left the college. Through this, his relationship with *Mandira* comes to an end. He keeps on changing his mind between these two girls. He is in dilemma about his love for *Mandira* and *Shehnaz*, which he is not able to choose. *Shehnaz* is in love with the narrator while the narrator is in love with *Mandira*. Caught in the love triangle his alienation is driven from Oxford, but he is not sure in his relationships with both the girls.

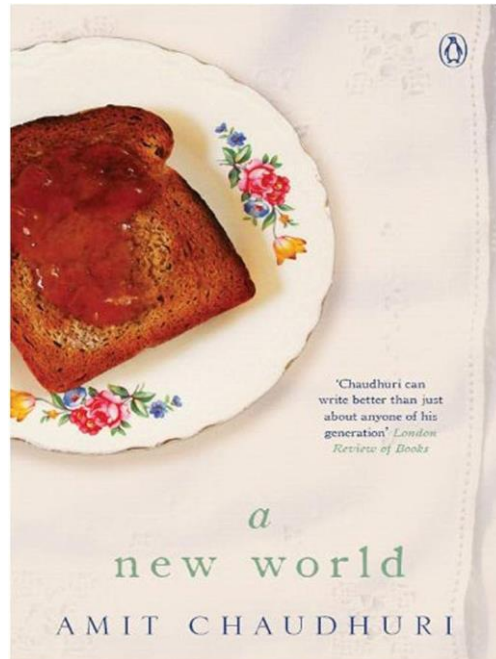
In this novel, the narrator's love failure has no specific cause. Consequently, he fails to achieve his ambitions and his quest for identity, both as a classical singer and a successful lover. His identity as a singer remains unfulfilled due to his guru's death. Similarly, his identity as a lover is unfulfilled because of his indecisiveness. Here are some narrations from the novel.

- c) The thought of parting, of never meeting again, of having repeat to each other that they will see each other in December, of knowing that he will start again; Oxford wearies her. Just to study here, and go to the library, and walk up the stairs and come down again to have a sandwich at lunch time; she could do that forever. (p165).

Amit Chaudhuri vividly portrays the attitude of the current generation, which treats love and life with a certain nonchalance. Despite their nostalgia, immigrants dominated by Westernization do not adhere to Indian culture, even though they long to be an Indian. They fall prey to Western fantasies, leading to an identity crisis. Chaudhuri's *Afternoon Raag* highlights this struggle, reflecting the stark reality present in society.

## 9) Thematic Analysis in *A New World*

A *New World* novel is about Jayojit Chatterjee, an economics Professor in the American Midwest, travels to his native home at Calcutta with his young son a year after his divorce, to spend with his parents. Jayojit loved a girl called Amla, married her and settled in America with her. After a few years, Amla lost interest in Jayojit and she left him and went to live with her new boyfriend, who was a gynecologist.



Courtesy: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

After fighting in both American as well as Indian courts Jayojit got the custody of his son Vikram (Bonny) not exceeding the summer holidays. Jayojit's parents tried to remarry but Jayojit didn't agree with his parents. After some time, he thought of the second marriage and tried also but it could not happen. Jayojit was unhappy with his life, and not even happy with his parents. He feels strange in his native place, his own place becomes unknown and his own house becomes exiled.

Thus, *A New World* novel of Amit Chaudhuri has dealt with the themes of change and transition in relation to the family, the middle classes, and economic changes affecting employment and lifestyle, which are the hallmarks of the Indian society and culture. The book merely spans Jayojit's visit, beginning with his arrival into his old world and ending with his departure from it.

#### (i) Emotions of Affiliation and Nostalgia

Jayojit himself has had too many new emotions to be able to return to the past. For instance, when he asked his mother for a glass of water his mother replies,

a) 'Of course , baba, I'll bring it right now.' This made him remember that his father had never called him 'baba' as many Bengali fathers their sons the age-old, loving, inexplicable practice of fathers calling their sons 'father'-but always called him Jayojit (p29).

b) “Bloody taxi driver took an extra money for me” said Jayojit with a large smile, and then to touch his father’s feet. “Pranam karo Bonny” he said. The boy had been slipping of his rucksack so he might put it on a chair” (p6).

He is indeed a different person from the child. For example, though his mother takes great pains to cook food he once liked, Jayojit has been so strongly influenced by American notions about diet and health that he cannot enjoy his meals. When he realizes that he is gaining weight, he begs his mother to stop tempting him, but she will not listen.

b) In America he’d imbibed clear ideas, while having no idea that he had, of what to eat and what not to (p52).

Chaudhuri was trying to do here - a portrait of Bengali family life sounds like something I want to read, but the unconvincing speech and dialogues, the needless emphasis on food, digestion, it’s related troubles (no clue why the author goes on about this) and the characterless protagonist, all of them made for a pretty listless read. There's a lot of food being discussed in the book - gur, luchis, fish, daal, sandesh, slivers of pumpkin and potatoes fried with onions and black jeera, parshe, lightly buttered toast, kissan marmalade freckled with orange rind.

d) His father was having, as he did from whenever it was Jayojit’s memory could stretch back to, a soft-boiled egg and dry toast. That toast had been subject to vicissitude, once it was lightly buttered, and sometimes covered with aa skin of Kissan marmalade, freckled with orange rind; this had been the taste of breakfast, in war and in peace (p47).

e) so the boy stood up and peered at his grandfather’s at the long Pabda bone and fish head which is eyes lying on the spoon” (p17).

For the author, the protagonist is not only an element in a story but also evening, room, wall, smoke, care, are other possible ones

### **(ii) Themes of Identity Crisis and Loneliness**

A *New World* novel is almost uneventful, concentrating instead on the small events of daily life: eating, visiting the bank, interacting with neighbours, servants, acquaintances, and relatives. Calcutta- and indeed all of India- is no longer Jayojit's world. His relationship with his parents has also changed, influenced by both the physical distance and his divorce. He navigates these familiar yet altered surroundings tentatively, unsure whether he is trying to recapture the past or move forward into a new future.

- a) He pressed the doorbell, which was really a buzzer with a prolonged droning sound which he associated with immemorial middle-class contractedness.” (p4).
- b) The city irritated him-yet he had decided that it would give him the space for recoument (p51).

To invoke a Bengali way of dwelling in a global context the diasporic ‘local’ one could call it that is both performative and many layered. Chaudhuri’s homesickness incantation of Calcutta and Bengal (through the metonyms of ilish and parshe maach, Nazrulgiti and Rabindrasangeet, ramshackle homes, and black and yellow Ambassador taxis, Ganashaki and Ganatantra, loving elderly relatives and surly domestic maidservants, and so many more), as not just a narrative of times and places left behind, but as something that creates possibilities for living in the diasporic present.

- c) Jayojit’s mother was certain she had been chattering downstairs with her friends. ‘Always acting the innocent,’ she muttered. Her name was Maya—Jayojit had overheard his mother call her this (p35).
- d) ‘I hear they give ilish sometimes,’ said his mother. (p195).

### **(iii) The Themes of Dislocation and Alienation**

Amit Chaudhuri touches on several issues of city such as poverty, poor administration, unemployment, and the impact of economic liberalization. He remarks on the decline of small and native industries and enterprises, the dire state of health and hygiene in the metropolitan area, and the significant problem of overpopulation in Calcutta. Social life in the city has become increasingly difficult.

- a) During the time of the Rajiv Gandhi government, when the Prime Minister had been gathering advisors around himself, mainly from among his Cambridge friends, someone had recommended Jayojit, who was teaching at Buffalo. Jayojit had sent him a plan, suggesting gradual liberalization; thus he had been there, in a sense, at the beginning (p34).
- b) That morning, he read an editorial in a damp newspaper about how economic liberalization was urgently required, but how, too, if introduced without caution, it might lead not only to the loss of what was seen to be Indian culture, but to uncontrollable economic disparity (p131).

In his novel *A New World*, Chaudhuri explores themes of alienation, dislocation, and change, particularly within the context of family, exile, and the creation of a new world. He

focuses on the lives of the middle class, the concerns about family, and the economic changes in India that affect employment and lifestyle. Employment and lifestyle are depicted as the main pillars of Indian society and culture.

- c) He read the papers twice, bored the first time, with the writing and with life in India (p92).
- d) It was a mind that had little tolerance for ambiguity; each time it looked at things, it also looked into the mirror of certainties that had shaped it (p93).
- e) Even the other day, when he'd caught his parents returning from their walk early in the morning, he'd said: 'How quaint of you two!' Explaining, he'd continued, 'You know, in the States, no one walks anymore. They drive and once a week, when they want exercise, they go to the gym' (p93).

The novel captures the Bengali life, customs and tradition very well in this novel. **The bottom line of the novel is emigration and man-woman conflict and problems of dislocation.** The novel in fact touches the reader's heart and creates the dilemmas in reader's mind. It discusses **exile, dislocation, loneliness, and man woman problems.**

- a) 'You know Bengalis,' the doctor had said in his shy, lambent diction, 'they only come out during the pujas. Then you'll see them --- heh, heh --- bowing before Ma Durga! (p97).
- b) Jayojit and Amala had married eleven years ago; eleven years and seven months precisely. That was when that evening pleasantness had set in, the month of Hemantha on the Bengali calendar. They had been divorced at the end of the yaer before last in a bright, clean Midwestern summer (p106).

## 10. Conclusion

Chaudhuri realistically explores themes such as many aspects of day-to-day life in relation to culture, tradition, music, food etc. (7). By doing so, he has presented a true picture of middle-class families of India especially Calcutta. This study aims to address a gap by examining all his writings through the lens of diaspora, highlighting how these aspects vividly and effectively characterize his work.

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