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### THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN AMIT CHAUDHURI'S *A NEW WORLD*



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#### **ABSTRACT**

*A New World* is one of the best novels by Amit Chaudhuri. The paper is focused on the Cultural conflicts and Social issues in *A New World*. Jayojit Chatterjee is the protagonist of the novel. He loved a girl and married later settled in America but after a son was born he divorced her because she fell in love with a Gynecologist. Joyjit failed in family life but he got his son Vikram from custody in the summer holidays by the court order. Jayojit's father and mother cancelled their visit to America after knowing the divorce of Jayojit and Amala. Joyjit took his son Vikram to Calcutta to meet his parents and spend the summer vacation with them. Amit Chaudhuri highlights the cultural and social issues.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Culture, Tradition, Uncomfortable, Divorce, Marriage

## RESEARCH PAPER

Amit Chaudhuri is an Indian English writer and Academic. He was awarded the ‘Sahitya Akademi’, India's highest literary honor in 2002 for his novel *A New World*. He is currently a Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia. Chaudhuri won the Infosys Prize for Humanities Literary Studies for his imaginative and illuminating writings which reflect a complex literary sensibility and great theoretical mastery, along with a probing sense of detail. Chaudhuri married Rosinka Chaudhuri, she is a Professor of Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. She is a daughter of Shiva Ranjan and Sreelata Khastgir and granddaughter of Satish Ranjan Khastgir.

Amit Chaudhuri portrays the cultural and social issues in the *A New World*, we come across an Indian man how he becomes uncomfortable in his own house after returning from a foreign country. Dr Jayojit Chatterjee is the protagonist, he marries Amala, a Bengali woman, he falls in love with her and married and settled in America and she gave a birth to a boy, later they divorced each other. When his parents heard about their sons divorce they feel very bad as the Indian traditional family. Dr Jayojit Chatterjee wanted to spend his summer time with his parents so he took his son Vikram to Calcutta. When Dr Jayojit Chatterjee came to Calcutta, he feels uncomfortable in his own house.

Dr Jayojit Chatterjee wanted to convince his parents about his divorce but as the Indian traditional family and his father Admiral Chatterjee and his mother Ruby was not agreed to his son. Actually Admiral Chatterjee and Ruby wanted to go America to meet their grandson but when they heard about their sons divorce they cancelled their visit to America, it shows how Indians oppose the love marriage as well as the divorce. The Indians or Indian parents think that the marriages are made in heaven and the marriages are continued in the next life also. Indian parents also think that love marriages always end with a divorce and they get married because of attraction not because of true love, they think that even boy and girl can love each other after the marriage. When Admiral Chatterjee and his mother Ruby heard about their sons divorce they cancelled the visit of America. Here in a novel we come across how culture changes from country to country and generation to generation.

Admittedly, Jayojit has every reason to feel unsettled. After falling in love with her Gynecologist, Jayojit's Bengali wife, Amala, she put her husband through a divorce, gained custody of their young son, Vikram, or “Bonny,” and took him with her to San Diego. Now

Jayojit can take Bonny with him only during his school vacation, which begins in April and ends in August. Since his father, Admiral Chatterjee, and his mother Ruby have not seen their grandson for some time when they cancelled a trip to the United States of America. When they heard about the divorce Jayojit felt obligated to take Bonny to Calcutta as soon as he could. *A New World* begins with the arrival of Jayojit and Bonny at his parents' apartment and ends with them on the plane from Dhaka to New York, "Careful, don't hit the door, said Jayojit as Bonny began to play on that side of the corridor. His son looked up at and continued to improve his little game" (Chadhuri 51).

Here Jayojit cares his son too much because he was not aware of the Indian environment. Amit Chaudhuri views how Indian fathers take care of their children and they never allow their son to play. He was worried about his arrival, to feed his son. Jayojit was worried about the food of his son because a cereal which his son was eating that was not available in Calcutta.

Amit Chaudhuri narrates the mind set of young and old generations, when Jayojit wants to buy a washing machine for his mother but his father objects. His mother was disappointed, but can't show her disappointment and can't raise voice against her husband. Jayojit's parents' marriage was a traditional Indian marriage, his father doesn't even always speak to his wife though both of them really depend on each other.

Amit Chaudhuri narrates social issues in *A New World*, Jayojit's mother wanted to take care of her grandson very well and she wants her grandson to stay some more time in the city but Jayojit must return to America in the same time here as a Indian grandmother Jayojit's mother took care of Vikram very well but court ordered to return Vikram soon after the summer vacation. Jayojit's mother had a great love on her grandson but she was helpless to take care of the child more time here it shows the grandmother and grandsons relationship of India and in India so many children will grow up by listening the folk stories of grandmother and the grandmothers of India are the great story tellers but we cannot see the same in the Western country like America. Here Jayojit's mother requested Jayojit to stay more time in Calcutta but Jayojit could do anything and he must go back in time or soon after the summer holidays otherwise the court could not allow the child to stay with his father in the next summer holidays.

Although the first and few chapters of *A New World* are uneventful, there are hints that the summer will not pass without incident. Any family get together can produce a quarrel and knows that his parents are troubled about the divorce, which has limited their access to their grandchild

about their son's failure to marry again, if their son agrees for marriage they will get grand children, Ruby Chatterjee always reminds her son that Vikram may fall ill or he may not stay with Joyjit that mean she always insist her son for the preparation of second marriage but always Jayojit neglects his mother's words.

However, the months pass by without any change. Every day is much like another. Bonny plays with his small cars, trucks and his Jurassic Park dinosaurs; the admiral checks on his investments and takes his naps; Ruby dusts, cooks, and complains about her shiftless servant; observes the neighborhood, thinks about working on a new book, eats his mother's dishes.

All we get to know about Jayojit will how he spends his day, how he gets up, takes bath, takes breakfast, goes to market, talks to acquaintances, spends time with his son and parents and so on. Neither anything romantic happens in spite of his faint desire for a second marriage and interest in Arundhati, his uncertain interest in girls at the bank and unexpected desire to meet the salvation, Army girl on his next visit to India. In fact, Chaudhuri's protagonists are hesitant to enter this violent and stormy zone. Things happen as they happen in life with no planning and no expectation, "Ha!" he said, waving one hand, declaiming to the balcony.' No thank you! No, I don't think I'm quite ready to take on the Calcutta traffic..." (Chaudhuri 109).

When Jayojit wanted to take his son to the place Gariat, his mother advised not to go by bus suddenly Admiral Chatterjee said to take his old Fiat car. He also said that the car was still in good condition. But Jayojit refused to take the car as he may not drive in the Calcutta traffic. Amit Chaudhuri knew the Calcutta traffic over crowded, and for unknown people it's very difficult to drive. The rules and regulations of traffic may differ from country to country.

Jayojit's failed in his life his wife left him and his is living with him only in summer holidays. He is neither of Calcutta or India nor of America. However, he looks inquiringly at the airport to find some Bengalis who are known to him. This desire to be in the company of habituate Bengali fellow points to his own Bengaliness, and his rootedness in local Bengali culture:

It is evident from the foregoing analysis of *A New World* that 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. It has been possible through an examination of the worldliness of this novel, and through affiliation to other domestic novels in terms of style and themes to explore how the family and

the home are important in symbolizing middle class values. The new world represents the old middle class and raises issues about the particular sections of society.

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