

# Genealogy and Cultural Versatility in Amit Chaudhuri's *A New World*

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## Abstract

*The paper attempts to critically analyse the representation of cultural versatility about tradition, rituals, family, class and identities through the lens of Amit Chaudhuri's novel A New World. By shedding light on culturally significant locations like Kolkata's streets and markets as well as cultural components like cuisine and music in Bengali society, he hopes to study and re-examine the city's past while portraying its present. The Indian immigrant Jayojit Chatterjee and his son Bonny's hybridised sense of identity, dislocation, and alienation would be further discussed in Genealogy and Cultural Versatility. A New World does not substantively explore the struggle to conquer life in his new world. Instead, the novel is a celebration of the old world Jayojit has left behind.*

**Keywords:** Alienation, Cultural Versatility, Dislocation, Hybridized, Tradition

Amit Chaudhuri is highly applauded worldwide for his writings and his love for the Indian classical music. His books stand out and appeal to readers on a deep level. His works imitate the Indian values following simplicity, Bengali sensibility, and distinctiveness of language. The lyrical writing of the novelist places him firmly in the frontline of the contemporary Indian English Literature. Indian values and Bengali ethos are the primary concern for Chaudhuri. He started his career with poems, and it was followed by novels. Some of the main themes of his writings are cultural versatility, tradition and identity.

Amit Chaudhuri presents a framework for cultural domination in his novel *A New World*. He won the Sahitya Academy for this debut novel. It conveys the dilemma of how native Indians, alienated from their country, culture, language, parents and wives, thrive in a post-colonial world. He carefully illuminates the expression of the wonderful things hidden in ordinary things. Images by Chaudhuri are derived from his extensive exposition of real life experience that is so meticulously observed that they are poetically portrayed.

Instead of using a unique story or plot, Chaudhuri uses items and events from his everyday life to fill out his novels. From all of these factors, it is clear that he has viewed his writing as a platform for sharing his opinions on a variety of events. He discovers uncommon charm in something ordinary that not everyone could recognise, hence he exploited minute elements from everyday life in his writings. He makes commonplace things spectacular.

Beautiful images are frequently used to cover the novels. For Chaudhuri, the images are essential because they give both the author and the audience a chance to have a visual experience. Despite the fact that people are familiar with them, he polishes them to make them appear fresh and exciting.

“Nothing can escape from the writer; he can handle all the things till his last extended view. In his books, he manipulates our senses such that they respond to sounds, tastes, and smells. Additionally, through his words, he allows us to feel both the breeze and the storm.

The major plot of Chaudhuri’s novel, *A New World*, is very explicit. The novel’s protagonist, Jayojit, travels to Calcutta with his seven-year-old son Vikram to see his parents during the month of April. The plot of the story is quite straightforward. He wishes to forget about his recent divorce with Amala, “He had come back in April, the aftermath of the lawsuit and court proceedings in two countries still fresh, the voices echoing behind him. But he felt robust”(6). Bengali economist Jayojit, who teaches in the United States. He recently separated from his wife. She split up with him and eloped with an American gynaecologist; she is also a Bengali from Calcutta. The Indian Navy’s retired Admiral is Jayojit’s father. The elderly guy and his wife carefully monitor their diminishing savings after a life of retirement. As a result of his inability to continue paying a chauffeur for his dilapidated old car, the retired admiral is a type of thrifty individual who frequently travels to the bank by bus.

The novel shows how perceptions differ, especially between people of different generations. For example, the Admiral is opposed to buy a washing machine but Jayojit is very much eager to purchase it, the Admiral is just against that though. The goal is to make his mother’s life easier. Traditional and modern thoughts are juxtaposed in a very subtle conversation. Admiral was shocked to discover that he still had doubts and hesitance about buying shares. Despite being an economist, Jayojit had knowledge of global trends and markets in developing nations that went beyond the purview of his field.

The new worlds created by such events extend beyond the individual because both the nation they left behind and the one they enter alter. This is how Amit Chaudhuri was able to make such a detailed portrayal of everyday life in this book. As Sagarika Ghose rightly points out “Chaudhuri nicely captures the timbre of life, the quality of the sunlight, the deadening but stable marriage of Jayojit’s parents and the way quite lives confront incomprehensible changes”

The novel continually highlights the differences between traditional Indian living and modern western culture. Western children have a strong sense of independence. Bonny looks shy and says he can take a bath by himself when Jayojit’s mother asks him to. Bonny believes that Chaudhuri has revealed by this minor instance that grandparents satisfying the children are only a peculiar practise found in India. Thus, he contrasts Bonny’s response, which is contemporary, with the grandmother’s wish, which is an old-fashioned custom. The contrast between the two cultures is exemplified by Chaudhuri in Bonny’s thoughts and emotions. This indicates the importance of culture and tradition that Chaudhuri places on passing down to the next generation through his grandson Bonny and his feelings of nostalgia for a past circumscribed by diaspora. In *A New World*, Chaudhuri illustrates the interaction between the parents and children in a lovely way.

Similar to how in the USA, where society and neighbours won’t even contemplate and gossiping about the issue, divorce is a common occurrence brought on by mutual understanding, in India, neighbours and family members are very willing to swing on other people’s issues. The most of the time, Jayojit’s parents don’t socialise much with family or friends. To avoid being questioned about Jayojit’s divorce, they cut themselves off from the world of constrictors. Despite not being the cause of their divorce, they feel guilty. The way the Admiral and his wife behave is depicted by Chaudhuri, who also highlights how traditional Indian families in India actually heal. The Admiral and his wife are dependent on one another throughout the entire book even though they never express their affection for one another.

He skill fully captures the Indian traditions and culture in *A New World*. In Bengal, it is customary for parents to address their sons as “baba,” which is Bengali for “father,” and their grandchildren as “dadu,” which is Bengali for “grandfather.” Even while Jayojit’s mother addresses him as “baba,” Jayojit’s father never does; instead, he addresses Bonny as “dadu.” After his parents send them off, the story closes with the two of them boarding an aircraft. As the two of them take their seats on the plane, it becomes apparent that Jayojit is not returning to India to find happiness there again but rather to start a new life. Even though

the metropolis bothered him, he thought that it would provide him with the opportunity for recoupment. The book closes with Jayojit fleeing with his son to Claremont, California, in the United States. At the end of July, his son departs from his care and goes to live with his mother, who is cohabitating with her partner without being hitched.

Chaudhuri occasionally presents himself as the protagonist of this autobiographical book, and Jayojit also does away with his twin personality in every way. He is in a situation where he must keep one leg in his native country and the other in an unfamiliar one. Like Jayojit, many diasporic Indians live in Claremont, California, and speak English. He has a strong desire to maintain both his Indian and American identities. He wants to preserve India's ideals and rich cultural heritage.

The heroes of Chaudhuri are wary of stepping foot in this turbulent and violent area. Things take place as they do in real life, without anticipation or forethought. It barely distinguishes between the present and the past and swings over them both carelessly and without certainty. The characters unconsciously move from one location to another, from memory and desire to everyday reality, and from one state of mind to another. The complexity of daily living is poetically depicted in the novel.

### Conclusion

Thus, the study of Genealogy and Cultural Versatility in Amit Chaudhuri's *A New World* provides various ideas to the society. The moral and ethical systems in the society are perfectly portrayed in the entire novel. Thus, the author has stimulated Cultural consciousness, and Generational consciousness among the readers to accentuate their role in creating their own identity in the society.

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