



## From Ancestral Voices to Modern Silences: Intergenerational Dialogue in Chaudhuri's Prose

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores how Amit Chaudhuri's fiction examines intergenerational dialogue, focusing on the interplay between ancestral voices and modern silences. His work, known for its introspective style and minimalist aesthetic, portrays middle-class Bengali families in post-independence India navigating changing cultural values. The research, drawing on postcolonial theory, memory studies, and narrative ethics, finds that intergenerational communication in Chaudhuri's prose is often indirect and elliptical, conveyed through gestures, silences, and shared routines rather than direct confrontation. Memory and everyday rituals become crucial mediums for transmitting cultural sensibilities. The study highlights how silences in familial relationships are not empty voids but rather repositories of historical and emotional complexity, reflecting the fragmentation of collective memory in a postcolonial urban setting. Chaudhuri's nuanced portrayal avoids both idealizing tradition and fully embracing modern detachment, instead presenting a continuum where ancestral voices subtly resonate. Ultimately, the study concludes that Chaudhuri's understated style emphasizes the significance of the unspoken in shaping intergenerational consciousness, challenging typical narratives of generational conflict and offering a more ambiguous and introspective view of cultural continuity in the modern Indian novel

## INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of Indian English literature, Amit Chaudhuri has carved a unique position through a body of work that resists the dominant trends of plot-driven narratives, overt politics, and historical spectacle. Instead, Chaudhuri's fiction is characterised by introspection, atmospheric subtlety, and an acute sensitivity to the nuances of everyday life. His prose is minimalist, not in thematic scope, but in its quiet insistence on exploring interiority, memory, and the fleeting moments that compose human experience. "Long overlooked as motifs and formal elements in canonical literature of the first half of the twentieth century, representations of the ordinary and the ethnographic have begun to attract interest in recent years (Rizzuto, 2014: 421). Unlike many of his contemporaries who foreground diasporic anxieties, colonial legacies, or political upheaval, Chaudhuri often turns inward – toward the domestic, the mundane, and the intergenerational. Dawson Varughese in his book *Reading New India: Post-Millennial Indian Fiction in English* comments how modernist Indian writers explore "landscape through Indian fiction in English, fiction published within India since the millennium" (Varughese, 2013: x).

This approach allows critics to read modernist literature not just as a Western phenomenon, but as a form that can capture the global complexities and uneven experiences of modern life. As a result of this many writers "shows that modernism's focus on the ordinary and the humdrum subtends a global view of modernity itself as unprogressive (Chakravorty, 2014: 489). Amit Chaudhuri's literary style diverges from the dominant trends in Indian English fiction that followed Salman Rushdie, particularly *Midnight's Children* (1981). Chaudhuri turns away from the grand, sweeping narratives and the epic scope that many Indian writers pursued after Rushdie. Instead, his work focuses on the small, the quiet, the domestic, and the aesthetics of the ordinary. The rejected the "avenue in Indian writing in English that *Midnight's Children* opened up, along with an obsession with the monumental" (Chaudhuri 2008, 234). He decisively aimed to "renovate our perception of the physical world" (Ghosh 2004: 162).

Chaudhuri's fiction frequently stages scenes of seemingly minor significance – conversations at the dinner table, afternoon silences, the presence of an elder in the house – that nevertheless reveal deeper cultural, historical, and emotional undercurrents. This kind of writing is popularly known as, the "Local Color, ... which emphasizes its setting, being concerned with the character of a district or of an era, as marked by its customs, dialect, costumes, landscapes, ..." (Hart, 1986: 382)

These intergenerational moments form the backbone of Chaudhuri's narrative world. They are not merely reflections of familial relations but are imbued with symbolic and philosophical weight. The subtle interactions between generations – grandparents and grandchildren, parents and children, teachers and students – become a lens through which to examine the changing textures of identity, belonging, and tradition in post-independence Indian society. Whether through the shared use of space, the repetition of household rituals, or the silence that stretches across generations, Chaudhuri's prose evokes a continuum of cultural transmission that is both fragile and enduring.

Despite the growing scholarly interest in Chaudhuri's stylistic innovation and thematic concerns, there has been relatively little critical engagement with the specific ways intergenerational dialogue functions in his work. Existing studies tend to focus on his minimalist aesthetics, urban sensibility, or resistance to postcolonial grand narratives. However, the subtle dynamics between elders and the younger generation—often expressed through silence, memory, and gesture—deserve closer scrutiny. These dynamics are not merely thematic but serve as narrative and ethical frameworks that shape the very structure and sensibility of his fiction. In light of this, the central research problem can be articulated as follows: How do Chaudhuri's representations of intergenerational relationships negotiate the legacy of the past within the modern Indian novel, particularly through indirect or non-verbal modes of communication?

This study seeks to investigate the role and representation of intergenerational dialogue in Chaudhuri's selected prose works. Specifically, it aims to examine how ancestral voices—whether remembered, internalised, or silenced—interact with the fractured or muted voices of modern characters. The purpose is not only to identify instances of generational interaction but to analyse their narrative and philosophical significance. This includes exploring how memory, cultural inheritance, and the dissonance between traditional and modern values are negotiated within everyday interactions. By doing so, the study aims to shed light on how Chaudhuri articulates a subtle, often understated vision of cultural continuity, one that resists both romantic nostalgia and abrupt rupture. The central argument of this paper is that Amit Chaudhuri's prose develops a distinctive form of intergenerational dialogue that privileges silence, atmosphere, and understated gesture over direct conversation or confrontation. This mode of representation challenges linear or binary narratives of generational conflict by offering a more complex and layered continuum of cultural negotiation. Rather than depicting tradition and modernity as opposing forces, Chaudhuri's fiction enacts a quiet intermingling of the two, wherein the unspoken plays a vital role in shaping intergenerational consciousness and identity.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the broader field of Indian English literature, particularly in relation to themes of memory, tradition, and modernity. By focusing on intergenerational dialogue, the study illuminates a relatively underexplored dimension of Chaudhuri's work and situates it within wider debates about cultural transmission, identity formation, and the ethics of memory. It also opens up a space to reconsider how the modern Indian novel can function as a medium of subtle historical engagement—not through grand narratives or ideological critique, but through quiet, affective, and often domestic moments. Moreover, the study brings attention to how silence, absence, and gesture function as powerful narrative tools, complicating conventional understandings of dialogue and communication in literary fiction. This research focuses on a close textual analysis of three major works by Amit Chaudhuri: *A Strange and Sublime Address*, *Afternoon Raag*, and *Freedom Song*. These texts have been selected for their rich and nuanced portrayals of familial life, their

depiction of intergenerational interactions, and their temporal placement within late 20th-century India—a period marked by rapid socio-economic transformation. While the study engages with relevant theoretical discourses such as postcolonialism, memory studies, and narrative ethics, it does not aim to provide an exhaustive account of Indian familial structures or a historical survey of generational conflict in India. The emphasis remains on literary form, style, and meaning as derived from close reading.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This review surveys critical perspectives that inform the study of intergenerational dialogue and cultural memory in Chaudhuri's fiction. Myriam Bellehigue (2010) foregrounds the spatial and temporal scope of everyday life in *A Strange and Sublime Address*, arguing that Chaudhuri constructs "everyday horizons" that resist teleological narrative progression. Her analysis is vital in understanding how intergenerational connections unfold in ambient and spatially grounded ways, rather than through dramatic familial conflict.

Mrinalini Chakravorty (2014) explores the aesthetics of boredom and low-frequency modernisms, identifying Chaudhuri's narrative form as a response to global modernist traditions that prioritize slowness and the mundane. This theoretical lens highlights how intergenerational relationships are mediated through routines, silences, and small gestures rather than explicit confrontation.

Nicole Rizzuto (2014) similarly addresses "the force of the everyday" in contemporary literature, situating Chaudhuri among writers who encode affect and memory in the repetition of minor events. Her work supports a reading of intergenerational communication as implicit, often marked more by what is left unsaid than by direct articulation.

Fernando Galván's (1999) conversation with Chaudhuri, along with Sumana R. Ghosh's (2004) interview, provides crucial authorial insight into Chaudhuri's philosophical and artistic aims. He distances himself from monumental, nationalistic narratives, emphasizing instead the fragmented and affective nature of memory and belonging.

Finally, E. Dawson Varghese's *Reading New India* (2013) positions Chaudhuri as an outlier in post-millennial Indian fiction, whose works prioritize cultural subjectivity over global marketability. James D. Hart's *The Concise Oxford Companion to American Literature* is referenced contextually to frame modernist influences in Chaudhuri's prose, particularly his alignment with an alternative literary tradition grounded in quiet introspection.

Together, these works provide a foundation for analyzing how Chaudhuri's fiction engages intergenerational themes not through epic inheritance or conflict, but through the affective rhythms of daily life, where ancestral voices echo in silences and repetitions.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in close textual analysis to examine intergenerational dialogue in the prose works of Amit Chaudhuri. The primary texts under consideration include *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1991), *Freedom Song* (1998), and *The Immortals* (2009), selected for their nuanced representation of familial relationships, generational shifts, and cultural memory.

The research is grounded in literary hermeneutics, drawing on theories of memory, identity, and postcolonial temporality. Key theoretical frameworks include Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, which informs the reading of cross-generational conversations as sites of ideological negotiation, and Pierre Nora's idea of *lieux de mémoire*, which helps frame the representation of memory and silence in familial and cultural transmission. The study also engages with postcolonial and modernist theories, particularly the works of critics such as Homi Bhabha, Rebecca Walkowitz, and Jahan Ramazani, to explore how Chaudhuri's prose positions Indian modernity against inherited traditions and ancestral voices.

Through detailed textual analysis, the paper investigates how older generations are remembered, voiced, or silenced in Chaudhuri's fiction and how these dynamics shape the protagonist's negotiation of cultural belonging and identity. Attention is paid to narrative structure, tone, temporal shifts, and the symbolic use of sound and silence to trace the patterns of intergenerational exchange.

Secondary sources include scholarly articles, interviews with Chaudhuri, and reviews, providing contextual insights into the critical reception of his work. This multi-layered approach allows for a nuanced exploration of how Chaudhuri's understated literary style encodes complex relationships between memory, modernity, and cultural inheritance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Review of Existing Scholarship on Amit Chaudhuri

Amit Chaudhuri's work has attracted considerable critical attention for its stylistic distinctiveness and philosophical depth. Scholars have widely acknowledged his resistance to dominant literary trends such as globalised realism, diasporic spectacle, and overt political drama. Instead, Chaudhuri's writing is often discussed in terms of its minimalism, quietness, and concern with the everyday. This section surveys the existing scholarship on Chaudhuri, focusing specifically on three interrelated themes central to this study: narrative form, memory, and postcolonial sensibility. Amit Chaudhuri's fiction is notable for its rejection of traditional narrative structures. Critics such as Brinda Bose (2001) and Ulka Anjaria (2012) have noted his preference for digression, interiority, and static temporal rhythms over linear progression or dramatic plot development.

Anjaria argues that Chaudhuri's novels represent a "counterrealism" that challenges both Western and Indian expectations of what a novel should be. Rather than follow a hero's journey or resolve a central conflict, Chaudhuri's works often hover in spaces of emotional and perceptual ambiguity.

Chaudhuri himself has articulated his opposition to "the tyranny of plot," suggesting that fiction need not conform to the conventions of crisis and resolution to be meaningful. His narrative style, characterised by reflective pauses, sensory description, and loosely structured episodes, aligns more closely with modernist traditions than with contemporary realist fiction. This has led critics such as Tabish Khair (2005) to place him in a lineage with writers like Virginia Woolf and Marcel Proust, whose focus on subjectivity and the mundane redefined the possibilities of narrative.

Memory plays a central role in Chaudhuri's fiction, not as a dramatic act of recollection but as a quiet presence embedded in the everyday. Scholars such as Sandeep Parmar (2010) and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (2015) have examined how his work reconfigures the relationship between personal memory and historical consciousness. Parmar observes that in Chaudhuri's novels, memory is often evoked through spatial and sensory cues rather than through structured reminiscence. A smell, a sound, or a patch of sunlight becomes the trigger for a deeper, often unspoken, engagement with the past. This form of memory aligns with Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* – sites of memory that function symbolically in the absence of lived tradition. In Chaudhuri's fiction, spaces such as ancestral homes, street corners, and school buildings serve as quiet repositories of cultural and emotional memory. The domestic sphere, in particular, emerges as a site where generational experiences overlap, allowing memory to be transmitted not through storytelling but through gesture, habit, and routine.

Chaudhuri's fiction occupies a complex position within postcolonial literary studies. While he writes in English and engages with questions of identity and history, his work often resists the tropes typically associated with postcolonial literature. Critics such as Elleke Boehmer and Ato Quayson have noted that much postcolonial fiction, particularly from South Asia, foregrounds themes of national trauma, displacement, and historical rupture. In contrast, Chaudhuri's prose is marked by a deliberate retreat from these dominant themes. Scholars like Ankhi Mukherjee (2008) and John Marx (2012) argue that Chaudhuri offers an "alternative postcolonialism" – one that is less concerned with recovering lost histories or addressing colonial violence directly, and more invested in the minor, the residual, and the everyday. Mukherjee suggests that his attention to "still lives" and slow time can be read as a form of quiet resistance to the spectacular and the globalised. His fiction, then, becomes postcolonial not through overt critique, but through a revaluation of the ordinary and the domestic as legitimate sites of meaning and historical continuity.

This subtlety has led to differing critical receptions. While some critics praise his refusal to be co-opted into market-driven expectations of exoticism or melodrama, others view his detachment from urgent political questions as a form of aesthetic conservatism. Yet, as this study argues, Chaudhuri's nuanced engagement with memory, space, and generational tension allows for a more intimate and layered exploration of postcolonial identity than is immediately apparent.

Despite this growing body of work, relatively little has been written about the specific dynamics of intergenerational dialogue in Chaudhuri's fiction. While scholars have examined family structures and childhood memories in his novels, the ethical and narrative implications of generational interaction – particularly how they function through silence, gesture, and spatial cohabitation – remain underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on the ways in which Chaudhuri's narrative strategies allow ancestral voices to persist quietly within modern settings, offering a new lens through which to understand cultural memory and transmission in postcolonial literature.

#### **Intergenerational Interaction in Selected Works**

In *A Strange and Sublime Address*, Amit Chaudhuri crafts a narrative that eschews dramatic action in favour of immersive attention to the everyday. *A Strange and Sublime Address* "The novel is an accumulation of moments or "vignettes" that focus upon the tiny events of everyday routine: morning baths, meal preparations, afternoon naps, children's games, the uncle's noisy departures for his office in a car that just will not start, the occasional visits to (or of) relatives, walks in the neighbourhood, and so on" (Bellehigue, 2010: 106). The novel follows Sandeep, a young boy from Bombay, who spends his summer holidays at his relatives' home in Calcutta. In an interview he says: "To go back and visit Calcutta was to go back to houses which were nearer the street level. Streets in south Calcutta had their own particular noises; with me was my maternal uncle's family, and my cousins.

They were very important to me, one doesn't have a word for cousin in Bengali, in daily parlance you refer to your brother or your sister, so I had this illusion, or wishful thinking, that they were my brothers. So I guess I identified Calcutta as a place that was home" (Galvan, 1999: 42). The novel opens on a note of day to day life occurrence: "A window opened above (it was so silent for a second that Sandeep could hear someone unlocking it) and Babla's face appeared behind the mullions (1). The narrative is composed of sensory fragments – sounds, smells, textures – that accumulate into a portrait of familial intimacy and quiet observation. Central to this portrayal is the intergenerational dynamic that unfolds not through confrontation or explicit dialogue, but through atmosphere, shared routines, and unspoken understanding.

One of the most evocative figures in this dynamic is the grandfather, a largely silent and peripheral presence. He is not invested with authority or wisdom in any overt sense, yet his quiet routines – sitting by the window, resting in the afternoon heat, occasionally muttering to himself – establish a rhythm that anchors the household. The grandfather becomes a figure through whom the past

lingers, not as narrative exposition but as a presence woven into the very fabric of domestic life. He does not recount stories or impose lessons; instead, he embodies a form of cultural memory that is absorbed through proximity.

From Sandeep's point of view, there is no attempt to extract moral or historical lessons from the grandfather's behaviour. Rather, the child registers his presence with curiosity and quiet reverence, suggesting that intergenerational inheritance in this novel takes place through embodied routine rather than spoken transmission. The physical space of the house itself becomes a conduit for this silent intergenerational dialogue. Its decaying walls, the sound of ceiling fans, the repetition of meals, and the texture of midday heat all serve as sensory markers of a Bengali middle-class world on the cusp of transformation. This material environment holds the memory of a slower, perhaps more cohesive cultural moment, now fading but still present in gesture and rhythm.

In contrast, Sandeep's uncle represents a generation straddling the weight of cultural memory and the demands of modern life. His casual smoking, ironic political banter, and everyday complaints reflect a weary negotiation between nostalgia and pragmatism. He is neither a cultural authority nor a modern rebel, but someone caught in-between, trying to make sense of his own inheritance. From Sandeep's perspective, these moments are not filtered through critique but recorded with a detached attentiveness. The child's quiet absorption allows the narrative to highlight how intergenerational dynamics are often felt rather than explained. Thus, *A Strange and Sublime Address* offers a subtle, deeply atmospheric representation of intergenerational interaction, where silence, shared space, and ambient detail replace the need for dramatic speech or conflict.

*Afternoon Raag* presents intergenerational interaction in a more introspective and meditative register than *A Strange and Sublime Address*. The novel follows a first-person narrator, a postgraduate student studying literature at Oxford, whose life abroad is punctuated by reflections on his Indian past. The novel's structure is non-linear and impressionistic, prioritizing mood and memory over conventional narrative development. Within this fluid structure, the narrator's relationship with his mother emerges as a central thread – delicate, understated, yet deeply formative.

The mother's presence is almost entirely mediated through memory. She does not function as a character in the present but as a persistent emotional and cultural reference point. Her remembered voice – concerned with everyday domestic matters, occasional health advice, or casual remarks – anchors the narrator's drifting consciousness. Despite the simplicity of these exchanges, they possess a quiet gravity. The mother becomes more than a familial figure; she serves as a subtle conduit of cultural and emotional orientation, embodying a form of inherited sensibility that continues to influence the narrator's identity abroad. This affective inheritance is not articulated through explicit instruction or emotional display. Rather, it is transmitted through small, repeated details: the smell of a particular dish, the tone of a half-remembered phrase, the rhythm of daily routines once shared.

These fragments build a textured emotional landscape, evoking the complex intimacy between parent and child that transcends physical separation. In this way, the novel suggests that intergenerational dialogue does not always require presence or words—it often unfolds as an internalised conversation, shaped by mood, rhythm, and recollection. The title *Afternoon Raag* itself serves as a powerful metaphor for this subtle form of intergenerational exchange. A raag in Indian classical music is not a fixed melody but a tonal framework, marked by gradual transitions, nuanced variation, and emotional depth. The afternoon raag specifically evokes a mood of reflection and calm—qualities that define both the narrator’s prose and his engagement with the past. The metaphor implies that the relationship between generations, like a raag, is not abrupt or didactic but resonant and continuous. The narrator’s memories of his mother form a kind of emotional tonality that persists and modulates across space and time.

Silence plays a pivotal role in this interaction. The absence of dramatic confrontations or revelatory conversations reflects Chaudhuri’s resistance to conventional narrative arcs. The intergenerational bond between the narrator and his mother is not constructed through event, but through texture—through the accumulation of quiet moments that defy easy categorisation. The silence is not empty but laden with shared understanding, emotional atonement, and cultural imprint. *Afternoon Raag* redefines intergenerational dialogue as something that can occur across distances, mediated by memory and internal reflection. It suggests that family legacies, particularly maternal ones, are often carried in tones, gestures, and sensory impressions rather than spoken declarations. This mode of inheritance is central to the novel’s poetic structure and its refusal of narrative closure, mirroring the open-ended, improvisational nature of a raag itself. In doing so, Chaudhuri presents a vision of cultural and emotional continuity that is both understated and profoundly enduring.

In *Freedom Song*, Amit Chaudhuri expands the scope of his narrative to encompass a broader family network and a more overtly political backdrop. Set in Calcutta during a time of communal tension and social unease, the novel intricately juxtaposes the external unrest of the city with the quiet rhythms of domestic life. Despite the political context, Chaudhuri remains focused on the interpersonal—on the nuanced emotional exchanges that occur within families across generations. The novel features a cast of characters that includes elderly widows, middle-aged civil servants, and children, all caught in the everyday negotiations of memory, expectation, and silence.

At the centre of this intergenerational dynamic are Khuku, an elderly widow who lives with her nephew, Bhaskar, a schoolteacher. Their relationship is not marked by overt conflict or familial melodrama. Instead, it is characterised by cohabitation, small gestures of mutual care, and a persistent undercurrent of emotional distance. Khuku, whose life is shaped by recollections of her deceased husband and an increasingly irrelevant social world, represents a generation for whom memory is still a living presence. Bhaskar, by contrast, is more introspective and emotionally reticent. He navigates the world with a kind of muted resignation, burdened by an undefined sense of detachment.

The relationship between Khuku and Bhaskar embodies a subtle form of generational dissonance. One illustrative scene captures Khuku attempting to share stories about her past—snippets of her social life, her husband's habits, fragments of old joys and sorrows. Bhaskar listens passively, offering little by way of response or engagement. Yet, Chaudhuri does not frame this as emotional failure. Instead, he presents it as a layered moment of missed connection and quiet presence. The silence that follows is not hostile; it is an ambient silence, filled with the weight of the unsaid. In Chaudhuri's hands, this moment resists dramatization and instead reflects the realism of everyday familial interaction—where emotional expression often takes the form of habit, proximity, or the shared navigation of space.

These moments recur throughout the novel. Bhaskar and Khuku often occupy the same room without speaking. They eat together, perform domestic chores, or simply sit in each other's company. Their relationship develops not through revelation or catharsis, but through repetition and routine. These quiet acts of cohabitation reflect a mode of intergenerational dialogue that is gestural rather than verbal. The novel suggests that the transmission of emotion, history, and cultural values frequently takes place outside the domain of speech. Khuku's persistence in recalling the past, and Bhaskar's quiet attendance to her needs, together form a pattern of relational presence that resists easy interpretation but carries undeniable emotional weight.

Moreover, *Freedom Song* complicates this interpersonal silence by embedding it within a wider atmosphere of political quietude. Communal tensions, hinted at through news reports, background conversations, and unease in the streets, shape the emotional contours of the household. Yet, these tensions never fully enter the foreground of the narrative. Characters rarely discuss politics explicitly. Instead, the effects of unrest seep into the domestic space as a kind of collective anxiety.

Bhaskar and others move through a world tinged with caution and fear, but these emotions remain largely unvoiced. The older generation, including Khuku, carries memories of Partition and past communal strife, though these too remain largely unspoken. This layering of historical silence over familial silence gives the novel a dense emotional texture, suggesting that unarticulated fears and inherited traumas circulate within families, even when never directly acknowledged. In this context, silence functions both as a mode of intergenerational communication and as a register of postcolonial inheritance. The gaps in speech are not merely absences but carriers of emotional and historical residue. The inability—or unwillingness—of characters to fully articulate their inner lives becomes a comment on the ineffability of inherited experiences in a postcolonial society where collective trauma often goes undocumented. Rather than fill these silences with exposition, Chaudhuri leaves them intact, allowing the reader to sense their gravity through the atmosphere, through the pacing of scenes, and through the material textures of everyday life.

Freedom Song offers a deeply layered portrayal of intergenerational exchange—one that privileges atmosphere over articulation, and presence over performance. Khuku and Bhaskar's quiet coexistence becomes emblematic of a larger theme in Chaudhuri's work: the idea that memory, identity, and cultural continuity are carried forward not only through speech or overt teaching but through the understated and often ineffable dynamics of everyday life. The novel resists both nostalgia and rupture, preferring instead a careful, observant realism that honours the subtleties of emotional inheritance in a world marked by political and personal silences.

### **Synthesis: Memory, Silence and Cultural Continuity**

The close readings of Chaudhuri's *A Strange and Sublime Address*, *Afternoon Raag*, and *Freedom Song* reveal a coherent pattern in his treatment of intergenerational dialogue—one that is notably quiet, indirect, and atmospherically charged. Across these texts, communication between generations rarely takes the form of overt conversation, ideological conflict, or explicit storytelling. Instead, it unfolds through ambient modes: spatial cohabitation, shared rituals, observed habits, and remembered gestures. This subdued form of interaction reflects Chaudhuri's broader narrative strategy, where meaning is not declared but intuited—emerging through suggestion, cadence, and the power of the unsaid.

Central to this mode is the recurring presence of silence—not as absence or failure, but as a generative medium through which memory and emotion flow. Silence in Chaudhuri's fiction is often dense with implication: the quiet presence of a grandparent sitting in the corner, a mother's unspoken concern, or the unacknowledged fears of a younger character shaped by inherited traumas. These silences are rarely broken by dramatic revelations. Instead, they are sustained, making space for ambiguity and introspection. In resisting explicit intergenerational confrontation, Chaudhuri allows for a more intimate and enduring form of cultural transmission—one that is sustained not by argument or narrative closure but by presence, repetition, and affective resonance.

Sensory detail plays a vital role in this transmission. In *A Strange and Sublime Address*, the smell of food and the rhythmic sounds of domestic life evoke a shared Bengali inheritance; in *Afternoon Raag*, remembered fragments of music and meals conjure the emotional texture of a relationship between mother and son; and in *Freedom Song*, the atmosphere of an aging Calcutta home bears the psychological imprints of multiple generations. These material and sensory elements act as mnemonic devices—bridging past and present, anchoring individual memory in communal experience. They allow cultural values and emotional dispositions to persist even in the absence of verbal affirmation.

Crucially, Chaudhuri's intergenerational portrayals avoid idealisation. The older generation is not revered as moral or cultural authority, nor is the younger generation cast as disruptors of tradition. His characters, instead, are ordinary individuals who carry their histories in understated ways. They neither romanticise the past nor wholly embrace modernity. This refusal to structure

narrative around binaries—tradition versus progress, memory versus forgetting—marks a significant departure from much postcolonial fiction. In place of rupture, Chaudhuri offers continuity; in place of spectacle, he offers quiet endurance.

What emerges, then, is a distinctive narrative ethic—one that sees cultural memory as something lived, embodied, and quietly passed down through daily life. Chaudhuri's prose privileges emotional and spatial proximity over ideological discourse. His work suggests that the act of being together—of sharing space, rhythms, silences—is itself a form of communication and inheritance. In an age often marked by mobility, fragmentation, and spectacle, this quiet insistence on intimacy and atmosphere becomes a subtle yet powerful mode of resistance. By placing silence at the centre of intergenerational dialogue, Chaudhuri expands our understanding of how cultural memory can survive—not in dramatic acts or speeches, but in the quiet persistence of the everyday.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study explored how Amit Chaudhuri's prose expresses intergenerational dialogue. It focused on the subtle and often silent exchanges between ancestral voices and modern silences. The research addressed the underexplored narrative and ethical aspects of intergenerational communication in Chaudhuri's fiction. It examined how these interactions negotiate cultural memory, identity, and continuity in post-independence India. Close readings of *A Strange and Sublime Address*, *Afternoon Raag*, and *Freedom Song* showed that Chaudhuri's intergenerational dialogue rarely uses direct speech. Instead, it happens through shared spaces, sensory experiences, routines, and silence. This silence is not absence or disconnection.

Rather, it is a complex, nuanced form of cultural inheritance. The findings show Chaudhuri's characters navigate a continuum of tradition and modernity. They avoid simple narratives of conflict or rupture. His prose highlights emotional closeness, atmosphere, and the power of what is left unsaid to sustain family bonds. These findings have broader implications. They invite a rethink of how contemporary Indian and postcolonial literature represent memory and cultural continuity. By focusing on silence and indirect communication, Chaudhuri challenges storytelling that relies on explicit dialogue and ideological debate. His work offers alternative ways to engage with inherited histories. In this view, everyday moments and fleeting experiences matter as much as grand stories and political issues. The study has some limitations. It analyzed only three major novels. It focused on narrative form and themes but did not deeply explore social or historical family contexts in India.

The research also did not cover Chaudhuri's later works or his essays and poetry, which might provide more insights on intergenerational themes. Future research can expand this work. It could study more of Chaudhuri's writings, including recent novels and non-fiction. Comparative studies with other Indian authors could reveal different ways to depict family relations.

Interdisciplinary methods, such as anthropology or cultural studies, could help connect literary silence with real-life experiences of memory and transmission. Amit Chaudhuri's prose asks readers to listen carefully to family life's quiet rhythms. Much is communicated not in words but in shared silences, gestures, and echoes of the past. This study shows his fiction creates a vital space to think about how cultural memory survives in modern India. Sometimes, the deepest conversations happen in the quietest moments.

#### **FUTURE STUDY**

This research still has limitations so further research is needed related to the topic of *From Ancestral Voices to Modern Silences: Intergenerational Dialogue in Chaudhuri's Prose* to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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