

## A COLONIAL DESIRE IN THE SELECTED FICTION OF AMITAV GHOSH

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*The title of the present article is A Colonial Desire in the Selected Fiction of Amitav Ghosh. The researchers have focused on concepts like gender issues, migration, repatriating, exile refugees, assimilation, multiculturalism, and social realism. But no one could handle the issue of Colonial Desire. Therefore, the present research is going to focus on the above notions.*

**Keywords:** Amitav Ghosh, Colonial Desire, assimilation, multiculturalism, and social realism.

### INTRODUCTION

Post-colonial literature is the worldwide literature of the colonies being studied even by the colonizers today. The image of man is truly depicted only in Post-colonial literature. Colonial Desire and Hybridity has become a core part of this literature. Colonial Desire means to make a colony and to rule over them. Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, *The Shadow Lines*, *Sea of Poppies* and *In An Antique Land* are remarkable examples of Colonial Desire.

### A Critical study

*The Glass Palace* is a world-famous novel by Amitav Ghosh, which was published in 2000, which describes the family of three generations travelling and moving onward and backwards in three countries namely Burma, India and Malaya during the 20th century. However, the principal aim of this chapter is to focus on the critical study of *The Glass Palace* and draw out notions of

### Colonial Desire.

*The Shadow Lines* is the second novel of Amitav Ghosh, which is a *Sahitya Akademi* Award-winning novel. It is divided into two parts, *Going Away* and *Coming Home*. It brilliantly shifts from past to present and from present to past. The story is told by a nameless narrator in recollection. It is an account of a middle-class Bengali family living in Kolkata.

*Sea of Poppies* is a novel by Amitav Ghosh, which was shortlisted for the *Man Booker Prize* in 2008. It is based on the historical setting of colonial Desire and to fulfil its need for a supply of opium to China. However, the principal aim of this chapter is to focus on the critical study of *Sea of Poppies* and draw out notions of Colonial Desire.

### Colonial Desire

The novel starts with a teenage boy called Rajkumar running through the city of Mandalay to find a woman called Ma Cho. He is the last surviving member of his family and comes to Burma from India with a bright entrepreneurial spirit and a hunger for success. Rajkumar's work as an assistant on Ma Cho's food stall takes place in the shadow of The Glass Palace, in which King Thibaw and his wife reside with their daughters, the princesses.

The novelist portrayed the life of the narrator-Rajkumar, who is an orphan boy of Indian origin, after facing lots of trouble becomes a successful teak merchant. Regarding the marginalized identity of Rajkumar, Rukmini. Rajkumar, originally a subaltern comes out as a true transnational post-colonial subject firstly by being a *Kalaa*, a foreigner in a foreign country, then by being subjected to the colonization of a more ruthless kind in contributing to the great national upheaval that the British occupation of Burma involves.

With the colonial desire, the British captured the Burmese Empire, humiliated them and tried to enslave them. They had intended to discourage, deject, demoralize, control them, by humiliating them. Like this approach, One of the King's senior ministers, the kinwun Mingyi, had suggested discreetly that it might be best to accept the terms; that the British might allow to Royal Family to remain in the palace in Mandalay, on terms similar to those of the Indian princes- like farmyard pigs, in other words, to

be fed and fattened by their masters; swine, housed in sites that had been tricked out with a few little bits of finery.' (Ghosh: 2000: 21-22)

It shows the humiliation of the Burmese Empire. The abrupt removal of the king and the pregnant queen from Mandalay to distant Ratnagiri on the west coast of India by the conquering British, successful in humiliating the royal couple completely, also is erasing them from public memory at home. The avarice and greed inherent in the colonial practice are seen in Burma. As the British invasion comes to depose the present rule everyday citizens of Mandalay can enter the enshrined building, and since began the revolt against the Empire. The people come to know it is the end of their Empire so get our thing back from the palace which belonged to them in the past.

When Ghosh anxiously unravels the implication of the British invasion on Burma, he also exposes historical insinuation of the present condition of Burma. While Burma lost all hopes other side people made their mind to possess the things from the Palace. The loot symbolically suggests the loot of power itself. The colonial powers usually win not because their cause is just but because of superior power, manipulative skill, and weaponry. Ghosh is writing about the history of Burma that lost its age-old heritage, monarchy and the pathos of the royal family. Colonisation exposed Burma of its realm bringing unrest and instability to the entire country till today.

Amitav Ghosh reflected the ideology of Colonial Desire and Hybridity. The thematic selection of his selected fiction has accorded him a worldwide readership. He believes that the human sufferings and sacrifices, their trials and tribulations are left unrecorded in history. A critical reading of Ghosh's fiction opens up a new perspective in literary criticism. As many feminist historians point out that women have been pushed to the margins or wiped out by male historians.

The postcolonial re-interpretation of the past also reproduces postmodernist disbelief in traditional history, an indispensable characteristic of the re-inventing of history. The post-modernist school of history challenges traditional history and its grand narratives, as one that is too limited and narrow. It questions the certainties of traditional modes of thinking, social organization and

the human self as well. In subverting accepted modes of thought and experience postmodernism reveals the meaninglessness of existence. It is history that depicts human experiences of a kind that has not been registered or represented in any traditional historiography.

The major theme which forms a part of the post-colonial narrative is the struggle against imperialism. Therefore, Ghosh illustrates the predicament and internal conflict faced by the Indian officers in the British army. Through an analysis of selected fiction, the research has tried to unravel the various thematic concerns that have recurred in his novels. The universal travel theme and the desire to dream of a world free of divisions and separations have been inculcated in his works, though in varying manners. The predicament of the migrating subaltern and the changing perspectives of the post-colonial subject is discussed, involving a variety of characters in diverse and exotic geographical settings that change with each of his works.

Colonial Desire and Hybridity are recurrent themes that can be found in the selected fiction of Amitav Ghosh. Hybridity is a well-known phenomenon in post-colonial literature, which intend to explore the identity of the man. Man, as a whole has no religion, caste, creed etc. But when he shares his survival with any society, he has to follow social norms and traditions.

This article tells in detail how Amitav Ghosh has described varied characters with different themes throughout his novels. Fiction, having been the most powerful form of literary expression today, has acquired a prestigious position in Indian English Literature. It is generally agreed that the novel is the most acceptable way of expressing experiences and ideas in the context of our time. Indian Fiction in English has been attracting worldwide attention.

Ghosh has undoubtedly earned his position in the canon of Indian English fiction as a postcolonial writer. The analyses in the preceding chapters seek to establish the postcolonial idiosyncrasies of the works of Ghosh. It has been ascertained that he is relevant today as a postcolonial writer for the postcolonial themes that he chooses and for his techniques and treatment. He brings about the radical change that has happened during the colonial as well as postcolonial period.

Colonial desire may be a social development that has existed for centuries influencing and remodelling the whole world in its wake. Literature has mirrored this influence through the writings of the colonial desire that features not solely Indians, however, conjointly folks from everywhere on the planet. Colonial writings from the African diaspora in America or the Indian or Sri Lankan diaspora in America or Canada, and so on.

### Conclusion

Literature of the diaspora is marked by the Colonial desire consciousness as mirrored within the searching for the house culture, a way of displacement, alienation, fragmentation and a struggle to achieve harmony between the house and host culture through assimilation.

Colonial Desire has become a core part of this literature. Colonial Desire means to make a colony and to rule over them. However, the post decades of the twentieth century witnessed both in Europe and in several countries of the Third World including India, a diminishing away of the old, established value systems because they were accused of catering to the needs of the privileged few. The new concepts like subversion, deconstruction, postmodernism, and postcolonialism

swept away the old literary theories. Consequently, Colonial Desire created a new wave in their respective writing.

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