

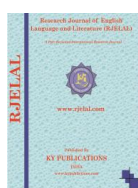


AMITAV GHOSH: VOICE OF POSTMODERNISM

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Abstract

Postmodernism is an extensive movement that developed in the mid to late 20th century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism marking a departure from modernism. It is a general and wide term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction and cultural and literary criticism, etc. It is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific or objective efforts to explain reality. As per postmodernists, national boundaries are barriers to human communication. Amitav Ghosh is regarded a postmodernist. He has been greatly influenced by India's post-independence political and cultural milieu. As a social anthropologist with the opportunity to visit foreign lands, he comments on the current state of the world in his novels. His works reflect the element of post modernism. This paper is an attempt to unravel the postmodern perspectives in the fiction of Amitav Ghosh. Keywords: Postmodernism, Cultural milieu, Architecture, National boundaries, Anthropologist.

Post modernism is a socio-cultural and artistic concept, as well as a shift in view point that has expressed itself in a wide range of disciplines, including the human sciences, art, architectural style, literary works, fashion, communications, and innovative technologies. It is widely acknowledged that the postmodern shift in perception began in the late 1950s and is probable still ongoing. Post-Colonial authors also perform to recapture the past, as their own pasts were frequently removed or dismissed under imperialism, as well as to understand their own culture and personal identities and to chart their own future prospects with their own terms rather than the terms imposed on them by colonialist ideological framework.

Postmodern authors also have been inspired by many factors of actions and concepts derived from postmodern philosophy. According to postmodern doctrine, consciousness and factual information are always related to particular

situations. Endeavor to recover any clear definition towards toward any theory, doctrine or event is both worthless and unimaginable. The major characteristics of postmodernism are undeniably seen in Amitav Ghosh's novels. Postmodernists believe that national borders are major obstacles to human interactions. As a result, postmodernists promote for globalization. Amitav Ghosh is the only modern Indian novelist who captures the essence of the Indian literary scene. He has a lot of responsibilities in the world of literature. He performs excellently as an anthropologist, philosopher, author, social commentator, travel writer and educator. His novels are focused on multi-racial and multi-cultural issues which he roves around and weaves with his narrative suitability as a peripatetic multinational.

In his novel *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh brings East and West together on a pedestal of relationship, primarily through the characters Tridib,

May, Nice Prince, and others. He focuses more on colonialism than dispossession. *The Glass Palace's* story of half-bred Rajkumar takes place in Burma, Myanmar and India. He freely migrates to different locations and makes profit. His delight is cut short when his son is killed in a Japanese bomb attack.

Ghosh is credited with perfecting the theme of 'magical realism which is another trait of postmodernism. Salman Rushdie pioneered this in India and Gabriel Garcia Marquez gained popularity through it in South America. Ghosh is recognized as a "belonging to this international school of writing which successfully deals with the post-colonial ethos of the modern world without sacrificing the ancient histories of separate lands."¹ Amitav Ghosh, like Salman Rushdie, masterfully blends fact and fiction to magical realism. He perceives history and culture in new ways. He is scientific in his choice of materials, linguistic in his resource establishment and innovative in his dramatized historical progression. In *The Glass Palace*, he depicts the devastation caused by the Invasion of Japan of Burma and also the impacts on Military commanders and innocents. Meenakshi Mukherjee says that in *The Glass Palace* "A sense of dejection deals with so; much human tragedy, wars, deaths, devastation and dislocation."²

In *The Shadow Lines*, Tridib during the communal riots in Dhaka in 1963-64 devoted his life to defend Ilaform Mob in communal riots. In the New York Times, Pankaj Mishra explains Amitav Ghosh as "one of the few postcolonial writers to express a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and disappointments of colonized people as they figure out their place in the world in his works"³.

Ghosh's imaginative realistic plot is also infused with postmodern themes. His fictional works are marked by consciousness and revelation. In his fictional writings, migration is the main fundamental with departures and arrivals having a permanent symbolic significance in his narrative techniques. Insecurities, disorientation and alienation are given expression in postmodernism. The majority of his novels deals with human insecurities which is a postmodern characteristic. Post-modernism, which opposes western concepts, beliefs, society and

norms, dismisses Western ideals and traditions as a minor part of the human experience. In the novel *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh employs the invasion of the West into the East to express the discourse on environmental and cultural issues. The novel *The Circle of Reason* refers to the urbanizing incursion of Western civilization which ruins traditional rural life and the change happens to non-European peoples by imperialism. The modern political conflicts and community schisms were depicted in *In An Antique Land*.

Postcolonialism movement is another feature of postmodernism. In *The Hunger Tide* the subject of migrants, occasionally volunteer but sometimes pressured, as well as its unpleasant interactions, runs through most incidents in the novel's core – the vicious persecution and mass killing of East Pakistani refugees who had escaped from the Dandakaranya refugee camps to Marichjhampi, believing that the latter region would provide them with familiar surroundings and thus a better life. In another novel *Sea of Poppies*, the enslaved workers and prisoners are transferred to the island of Mauritius on the ship Ibis where they suffer greatly. In the novel *The Glass Palace*, the exiled Burmese royal family gets to live an unpleasant life in India. Rajkumar, who amasses a fortune in Burma, is forced to flee his home and business due to the Japanese invasion.

In postmodern literature irony plays a critical part. The authors approach from a distant position the very topics such as World War II, communal protests, etc and prefer to realistically and artfully represent their stories. In *The Glass Palace*, with a touch of irony Amitav Ghosh builds up the personalities of Queen Supayalat and Arjun. Supayalat Queen retains her majesty in the novel even after being abducted by British forces. The Queen's portrayal is melodramatic. Arjun, an Indian, is completely affected by Western ideology. In terms of dress and dining habits, he is imitating the west. He has no idea that he is being used as device to cause pain to the people he owns.

A literary technique that employs a nonlinear timeline is known as temporal distortion. The author has the option of jumping forward or backward in

time. Ghosh employs a nonlinear timeline in his film *The Glass Palace*. Many of the characters, as well as the past, are connected by memory. It contributes in the development of a magical universe. In *The Hungry Tide*, he alternates between Nirmal's perspective on the Marichjhampi event and the present journeys of Piya Roy, Kanai and Fokir. There are numerous sub-topics and plots as a result of the time travel.

The narration technique of Amitav Ghosh is typically postmodern. The narrative voice in the novel *The Shadow Lines* is sensible and easy to understand. It moves fluidly back and forth between times, areas and plot points. His writing style in *The Shadow Lines* is eloquent and reliable, written faultlessly and also skillfully with a mixture of imagination and non-fiction. Throughout *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh seems to be using one end to signify the beginning of another, so that nothing changes on one level but everything does on another. His technique has a strong resemblance to Buddhist metaphysics existence, bereavement, achievement and disappointment all follow a cycle and early in *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh introduced the theory of a laser pointer to avoid exposing the viewer to this perspective. And as a rationalist, he employs very clear language and provides confirmation to the readers. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh used the same thing by interconnecting Bangla words such as mohona, bhata and others are associated with local myths such as Bon Bibi and her brother ShajJangalithe region 'supreme deities. According to Amitav Ghosh's discourse in the process of creating art achieves the status of Migrant portrayal. Language contains the steps to develop relatives that has shattered and distributed in the manure ambiguity. Amitav Ghosh reveals this in the novel

The Shadow lines:

"You see, in our family we don't know whether we're coming or going – it's all my grandmother's fault. But of course, the fault was n't hers at all: it lay in the language. Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a

coming or a going at all; a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement."⁴

Ghosh wants to believe in this language and he aims to create it in his work. Postmodernists refuse to accept complex formal aesthetic appeal in favour of a new of postmodern genres. Ghosh's picturesque depiction and decorative usage of the tongue, language has no meaning. Tabish khair's comments on this are as follows:

"Ghosh is very careful in his use of English and vernacular transcriptions. He develops a conscious and rich tradition in Indian English fiction, a tradition that includes R.K. Aryan and Shashi Deshpande. The attempt is not to stage Indian English's. Ghosh avoids the aestheticisation of language"⁵

Feminists' problem is defended by postmodernists. Uma, employed by Amitav Ghosh, is a prime example of this. Uma deviates from the stereotype of female characters. She is a political commentator who travels the country dispelling nationalist emotions. One of the postmodern characteristics is genre distortion which can be seen in Amitav Ghosh's literature. He maims himself by combining multiple styles. Girish Karnad was correct when he said himself that *he uses to great effect a matrix of multiple points of view in which memory, mythology and history freely interpenetrate A delight to read.*"⁶Romance, descriptive stories, adventure fantasy and historical fiction flourish in *The Glass Palace*. He combines all of the features of a novel to create fragmentation and uses the erotic theme to adopt the story lines as he investigates Burma's colonial history and the progress of Myanmar. Furthermore, it is a work of fiction that employs a vibrant circular pattern descriptive framework to flesh out the personality traits and viewpoints of several characters in our world. The novel can be read in cultural background because it is a history portrayal and a country memorandum. Amitav Ghosh discovers a third-person lead character who tells a story in a classic way, dramatizes and tries to make true historical topics and incidents. It dramatizes and creates real past figures. The novel

The Calcutta Chromosome (1995) is “not only a medical thriller but also a Victorian ghost story, a scientific quest, a unique mixture of a ‘whodunit thriller’ and a poltergeist tale”.⁷

To summarize, postmodernism is a rapidly expanding and enduring field that lacks a concrete definition. Even if each big and strong has its own distinct characteristics. It is extremely difficult to present these solid elements as a concrete whole. Post colonialism, postmodern traits are certainly apparent in Amitav Ghosh's novels *The Glass Palace*, *River of Smoke*, and *Sea of Poppies*. The novels are centered on multicultural and multilingual issues which he depicts as a strolling progressive and weaves into the descriptive beauty. As a result, this research paper will continue to be an attempt to enforce postmodern theory with Amitav Ghosh's novels.

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