

RESEARCH ARTICLE



## POST MODERNISM IN THE FICTION OF AMITAV GHOSH

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### Article Info:

Article Received:18/01/2013

Revised on:19/02/2013

Accepted for

Publication:28/2/2013

### ABSTRACT

Earlier fiction in India described India's heritage tradition, cultural past and moral values. But a remarkable change can be noticed in the Novels published after the First World War, which is called modernism. Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee are the leading lights of modernism in India. Amitav Ghosh can be seen as the flag bearer of modernism and post modernism Ghosh combines history with a very contemporary vision of a world free of boundaries Amitav Ghosh's novels explore the question of nation and identity. Keywords: Amitav Ghosh, Modernism, Migration, Identity, Diaspora

Both modern and postmodern literature represents a break from 19<sup>th</sup> century realism. But basically post modernism is a reaction against modernism. It gives voice to insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation in character development, both modern and postmodern literature explore subjectivism, turning from external reality to examine inner states of consciousness, in many cases drawing on modernist examples in the "Stream of Consciousness" styles of Virginia woolf and James Joyce or explorative poems like the waste land by T.S.Eliot.

Postmodernism is a reaction against the modernist and The 'Anti-modernist' tendencies which have Psychological and intellectual impact. In America and France postmodern literature emerged as a genre. Postmodernist writers break away from all the rules and seek alternative principles of composition conforming to their content of existentialist Thought.

Postmodern in Indian English literature explores fragmentariness in narrative – and character construction in a different way from its British or American counterpart. In postmodernism, There is a

preoccupation with insecurities in the existence of humanity. Postmodernist literature manifests chaotic condition of the World. Postmodernism of Indian English Literature however different from that of England or Europe which rejects western values and beliefs as only a small part of the human experience and rejects such ideas, beliefs, culture and norms of the western.

Amitav Ghosh as a practioner of postmodernism in novels focuses entirely on the colonialism's impoverished and usually non-white, victims. They are given the central position, not the white masters. In Amitav Ghosh's novels there is a colorful array of seam on, convicts and laborers sailing forth in the hope of transforming apparently it seems that the characters are his targets he expressed a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and disappointments of the colonized people.

The modern concept of displacement is intimately associated with diaspora. The modern themes of displacement race-relations and strong desire for re-identification can be found in most of Amitav Ghosh's novels. Amitav Ghosh, a social anthropologist came to the literary scenario with

disjointed magic realism. The theme of migration out of violence based on political, cultural differences is explored in his fiction.

Amitav Ghosh is greatly influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post independent India. Cultural fragmentation, colonial and neo-colonial power structures, cultural degeneration, the materialistic offshoots of modern civilization, dying of human relationships, blending of facts and fantasy, search for love and security, diasporas etc are the major preoccupations in the writings of Amitav Ghosh.

The elemental traits of post-modernism are obviously present in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. In post modernism view, national boundaries are a hindrance to human communications. According to this view, nationalism causes wars. Amitav Ghosh's novels centre around multi racial and multi ethnic issues; as a wandering cosmopolitan he moves around and weaves them with his narrative beauty. In the shadow lines, Amitav Ghosh makes the East and West meet as a pedestal of friendship, especially through the characters like Tridib, May, Nice Prince etc. In The Glass Palace, the story of half-bred Rajkumar revolves around Burma, Myanmar and India. His happiness ends when his son is killed by Japanese bomb blast. The reason for this calamity is fighting for national boundaries.

Amitav Ghosh is very successful in handling magical realism, in his fiction. His best known novel The Shadow Lines which won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1989 recreates history in Fictional terms. For him "History is Textuality / Textuality is History" Ghosh is seen as "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" (Anita Desai) Amitav Ghosh Weaves his magical realistic plot with post modern themes. Self examination and confessionality are the major motifs in his fiction. Displacement has been a central process in his fictional writings; departure and arrival have a symbolic significance. Post modernism gives voices to insecurities, departure gives voices to insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation. Pankaj Mishra describes Amitav Ghosh in the New York Times, as one of few postcolonial writers, "to have expressed in his work a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and

disappointments of colonized people as they figure out their place in the world".

In The Hungry Tide, Ghosh explores post modern motifs of eco-environment and cultural issue though the invasion of the West into East. The Circle of Reason is an allegory about the destruction of traditional village life by the modernizing influx of western culture and the subsequent displacement of non-European peoples by imperialism. In An Antique Land, contemporary political tensions and communal riots are portrayed.

Post colonial migration is another facet of post modernism. In The Hungry Tide, the theme of immigration, sometimes voluntary and sometimes forced, along with its experiences is described. The ruthless suppression and mass acre of East Pakistani refugees who had run away from Dandakaranya refugee camps to Mirichjhampi. In Sea of Poppies the indentured labourers and convicts are transported to the island of Mauritius on The Ship Ibis where they suffer a lot.

Irony is another characteristic of post modernism. In The Glass Palace, Amitav Ghosh sketches the characters of queen Supayalat and Arjun Withatinge of Irony.

The narrative style of Amitav Ghosh is typically postmodern. In The Shadow Lines the narrative is simple. His style in the Shadow Lines is so evocative and realistic blending fiction and non-fiction. There is a suggestion of Buddhist metaphysics in his technique. Life, death, success and failure come in cycles and Ghosh uses the conceit of a pair of binoculars early in The Glass Palace.

Post modernists reject elaborate formal aesthetics in favour of minimalist designs. Amitav Ghosh does not give any significance for pictures que description and ornamental use of language. Postmodernists defend the cause of feminists. Uma, Amitav Ghosh's Character, is a perfect example of this. Blurring of genres, one of the post modern traits, can be witnessed in the writings of Amitav Ghosh.

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