



الإمبراطورية البريطانية والمقاومة في القصر الزجاجي لأميتاف غوش

British Empire and Resistance in Amitav Ghosh's The Glass Palace

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المخلص:

قدم البحث أساسيات رواية القصر الزجاجي للكاتب أميتاف قوش ومدى ارتباطها بالإمبريالية. والكاتب قوش حصل على العديد من الجوائز ومن بينها الجائزة التي منحت له عند كتابة رواية القصر الزجاجي ولكنه رفض أن يأخذ الجائزة لأنه كان يعلم أن عايدة فلوس الجائزة ترجع إلى الإمبريالية البريطانية. كما وصف قوش معاناة الناس العامة الذين أصبحوا مُهمّشين في وطنهم خلال فترة الاستعمار البريطاني، وعرض لنا قوش الظلم والاستبداد والتفرقة العنصرية الذي لاقاه المجتمع الهندي من المستعمر البريطاني. فقد أصبح أصوات المُهمّشين له صدى وتأثير قوي عند الكُتاب الهنود المعاصرين. فيرجع تعريف كلمة " المُهمّشين " الى الكاتب أنتونيو قرامشي الذي أوضح لنا تاريخ المُهمّشين. بعد ذلك أُجريت دراسات عن المُهمّشين من قِبَل الكاتب راناجيت فُها في أوساط مجتمع جنوب آسيا، وتكلم عنهم بجوانب متعددة: الطبقة، المساواة بين الرجل والمرأة، العنصرية. فهذا البحث يكشف لنا ظلم الاستعمار بشكل عام والاستعمار البريطاني على وجه الخصوص. أيضاً يكشف البحث معاناة وصعوبة حياة الكُتاب الهنود، فقد كان يتم سرد أحداث وقصص الناس العامة من قبل النُخبة الهنود الذين يصوروا الأحداث وفق رؤيتهم من دون النظر إلى معاناة المُهمّشين. ما بين الكاتب إن توسع الاستعمار البريطاني كان له دور كبير في تهْميش المرأة الهندية وتقسيم الهند إلى هند وباكستان وزرع التفرقة العنصرية بين الهنود من خلال تقسيم الشعب الهندي الى طبقات وطوائف. ومما ميز الكاتب عن غيره من الكُتاب الهنود أنه أبرز الكاتب في الرواية موقف المرأة تجاه المستعمر البريطاني، ودورها البطولي الشجاع في طرد الاستعمار. بعكس بعض الكُتاب الذين يصفون المرأة بنظرة دونية وعاطفية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أيديولوجي، الإمبراطورية البريطانية، الحنين إلى الوطن، الهجرة، المقاومة، أصوات المُهمّشين.

Abstract:

The present paper presents analytical themes of Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace*. It tries to analyze how the novel is related to Empire. In addition, Ghosh has received many awards, among them commonwealth prize when he wrote *The Glass Palace*. But he refused the prize, because he perfectly knew that the whole business of commonwealth is repackaging of Empire. This paper intends to investigate imperialism in the narrative of Indian writer; with special focus on subaltern voices who expose their bitter experiences during British Empire. The term 'subaltern' was used by Antonio Gramsci who supports us with the history of subaltern. After that, it was adopted to Subaltern Studies by Ranajit Guha. Guha subordinates South Asian society and addresses them in different way; cast, class, gender, race,.. etc. The research seeks to expose the colonizer's oppression in general and British colonizers in particular; voice the subaltern writers who expose their hard life because of political corruption. Further, others previous Indian writers narrate the subaltern nations throughout elites who have ambiguous picture about subaltern nations. Rather, elites are not portraying the authentic voices of subaltern. On the other hand, Ghosh asserts that the expansion of British Empire has a significant role on different aspects: woman's oppression, Indian partition into India and Pakistan, and the division of the nations into different classes and parties. To bridge the gap that other writers leave in terms of neglecting woman's rule towards the British colonizer. Ghosh's fiction portrays the woman as the leading spirits, he avoids victimization and degradation of woman. However, other writers depict woman and her experience in patriarchal societies with a deep sympathetic way.

Key Words: Ideology, British Empire, Homelessness, Migration, Resistance, Subaltern Voice.

Introduction

The research paper is based on an analytical reading of British Empire. It concentrates on Indian writers, namely Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. It attempts to investigate the ideological workings of the colonizer. Setting from Michel Foucault's central argument of the interaction between power and resistance, it advocates the themes of resistance articulated in the current novel. Rather, it attempts to re-root the feminine by woman's resistance who has a significant role against British Empire¹ in Indian society. In other word, Ghosh exposes the marginalization of the nations in various fields: economy, cultural and social construction. Therefore, Ghosh attempts to enroll the nations in the construction of society, through the art of novel and literary writings.

This research follows a descriptive analytical study which consists both theoretical study and a critical study in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. Theoretical study includes postcolonial literature based on exposing the political corruption of British Empire and its effects on the nation's life who immigrate to a new country. Rather, the research exposes immigrant's identity crisis in the new country who feels homelessness and exile. The research begins by giving a brief sketch of Amitav Ghosh and his novel *The Glass Palace*. The research portrays Ghosh's character as a victim of Empire, and the exposes ideology of Empire in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. The research finally expresses the themes of resistance culture in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. The current research goes into deeper analysis of the works that have been selected to be examined in the next part.

1. A Brief Sketch of Amitav Ghosh and his novel *The Glass Palace*:

Amitav Ghosh is one of the best-known Indian storytellers writing in English language. Ghosh was born in Kolkata in 1956. He was educated at the Doon school and Stephen's College, Delhi university. He held various academic positions in different universities. He

is currently a distinguished professor teaching comparative literature at the Queens College, New York University. He is known for his works in English language in India and abroad. Ghosh is also known as a novelist with an extraordinary sense of history, myth and place. His works are profoundly concerned with Indian myths, civilization, and history. His writings bring together the social, cultural and political events of the past. He has emerged to interpret the relationship between nation and individual. As a novelist, he narrates the societies and human beings and their inter-relationship.

Amitav Ghosh and his works attracted the interest of many scholars, Sharma shows that Amitav Ghosh is the author of seven highly acclaimed novels which are *The circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008) and *River of Smoke* (2011). Ghosh has also written five non-fictional works namely- *In an Antique Land* (1992); *Countdown* (1999); *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* (1998); *Countdown* (1991); *The Indian and the Indian* (2002), and *Incendiary Circumstances* (2006) (See Sharma, Nov. 2014: 596).

In addition, Ghosh has received many awards, among them Commonwealth prize, as Mehta mentions:

The *Glass Palace* published in 2000 has also remained as the best-seller book in Germany and in India ever since it was published. It is also on best-seller list in Europe and was also awarded Frankfurt Book Award for the year 2007. The publisher of *The Glass Palace* had submitted this book for commonwealth prize, but Amitav Ghosh withdrew *The Glass Palace* from consideration for the commonwealth prize, as he had no idea about the prize and also the whole business of the commonwealth is repackaging of empire. (15-16)

Moreover, Malathi and Prema argue:

The lists of contemporary Indian-English writers remain incomplete without the name of Amitav Ghosh... Amitav Ghosh has incarnated

¹ British Empire: (formerly) the united kingdom and the territories under its control, which reached its greatest extent at the end of World WarI when it embraced over a quarter of the world's population and

more than more than a quarter of the world's land surface (British Dictionary definition).

in himself the greatness and a great writer among world literary writers as well as philosophers and anthropologists. Amitav Ghosh possesses a sharp eye and sense of perceiving the human being and their societies in right earnest. (1)

According to the title *The Glass Palace*, it refers to the royal family's palace in Burma. The name of the novel is derived from *The Glass Palace Chronicle*, that are commissioned by King Bagyidaw in 1829. Thus, *The Glass Palace* presents the characters into two parts; historical characters and fictional characters. Historical characters, such as; King Thebaw and his family. Further, fictional characters, such as; Rajkumar, Dolly, Saya John, and Uma who reflect upon the historical events. Thus, Ghosh attempts to negotiate the realistic picture of Indian nation through the representation of the Indian history, Sharma adds "Amitav Ghosh is one of those contemporary Indian novelists who combine their professional skills as social historians with a literary flair to create works of art which are profoundly concerned with civilization and history" (595).

Besides, the novel is set from 1752 to 1885 in Burma. The palace refers to the royal family that includes King Thibaw, Queen Supayalat and their daughters. They thus are defeated at the hands of the British; they are forced into house and they are sent to exile in the West coast of India called Ratnagiri. Ghosh's narration exposes the dramatic shifts of Indians from dominators to the dominated.

In addition, *The Glass Place* represents the history of three South Asian countries: Myanmar, India and Malaysia. Those places were depicted during British Empire through the late 19th and 20th centuries. Ghosh exposes British Empire, he presents his characters as victims of Empire. The researcher shall mention some characters in *The Glass Palace* in the next part.

2. Ghosh's Character as a Victim of Empire:

The researcher shall humbly contribute to Ghosh's criticism by attempting to emphasize the writer's real attitude towards imperial practices. As Ghosh states:

we rebelled against an Empire that has shaped everything in our lives; Colored every Thing in the world as we know It ...We cannot destroy it without destroying ourselves. And that, I suppose, is where I am".(TGP 518)

According to the occasion of writing *The Glass Palace*, the royal family becomes at the hands of British Empire. It was obvious when the British informed the King that "The matter of permanent residence for you and your family has finally been resolved" (TGP 52). For the King and Queen of Burma, it was even sadder as they were now no less than prisoners whose royalty has been taken. The answer to the King's query of a return to his country met with this response: "Your Highness, you must prepare yourself to be in Ratnagiri for sometime, a considerable time I fear" (TGP 52). The British did away with King Thebaw in 1885 when they colonized Burma transferring power from the king to their imperial regime, "The Royal Family was sent into exile...they were to go to India" (TGP 35).

King Thebaw died a migrant in Ratnagiri. Even if they immigrated to find a safe refuge, they did not know when it will be possible for them to go back to their homes. The Royal Family was reduced to the stature of prisoners in Outram House. Their residence was far from the city, very much unlike their Glass Palace in Burma. The Burmese refused to maintain their duties towards their queen, "Their shikoes became perfunctory; they began to complain about sore knees and refused to stay on all fours while waiting on the Queen" (TGP 48).

In addition, the royal family is a significant figure of subaltern. Rather, *The Glass Palace* reveals imperial regime rule towards subaltern Indian. Other characters represent subaltern, such as; Dolly, Mo Chao, Arjun and Kishan Singh. The eldest princess, Ashin Hteik Su Myat Phaya Gyi, married an Indian coachman Mohan Sawant and they settled in India. Thus, the royal family faced various suffering: displacement, exile, alienation and identity crisis.

Moreover, the protagonist character, Rajkumar, loses his son, Neel in the face of a war between the British and the Japanese in World War in

1942 interferes. He has endured the hardships of the teak trade, he works together on an epic scale as elephants transport with large volumes of wood, such as Rajkumar, he was born Bengali, he is peasant. Therefore, Rajkumar travelled many countries, Ghosh depicts Rajkumar's life when Rajkumar followed Baburao first to the village for recruiting a labor force. Ghosh exposes the effect of British empire, which lead to poverty; dispossession, and sorrow so that Indian nation leave their country and look for the peace in a new country. Besides, both Dolly and Rajkumar suffered most of their lives in displaced locations. They ironically had a loyalty to the nation of their exile or displacement which they have appropriated as home. Ghosh explores Indian displacement during British Empire and how they were forced to immigrate to another land. As Rajkumar confessed to Dolly:

My father was from Chittagong and he ended up in Arakan; I ended up in Rangoon; you went from Mandalay to Ratnagiri and now you're here too. There are people who have the luck to end their lives where they began them. But this is not something that is owed to us. (TGP 269)

Above all, Rajkumar is a sign of subaltern and unskilled labor "coolie", as Sankaran presents, "In *The Glass Palace*. it is significant that the narrative of the coolie lines is introduced through the capitalistic ventures of a minority to Burmese society" (40). According to Rajkumar's journey, as Kindu explains that "Rajkumar's journey in search of Dolly becomes a metaphor in his search for himself and his identity. In this novel several layers of displacement are very much discernable" (79). Further, he explores anxiety and multicultural that affected conflict in his own identity. Rajkumar said that "There were shouts of joy on the streets, and the fog of anxiety that had hung over the city for the last few days dissipated quickly" (TGP 14).

Thus, the Empire has a major role in displacing Indian nation. Further, Rajkumar loves Dolly, the servant of the royal family. She also suffers exile with the royal family. She

grew up in India from her childhood Dolly and feels more at home in India, so she says: "If I went to Burma now I would be a foreigner" (TGP 96).

Further, Uma felt exiled with the royal family. She grew up in India from her childhood. She felt more at home in India, so she says, "If I went to Burma now I would be a foreigner – they would call me *kala*² like they do Indians" (TGP 96). For Dolly, her life in Outram House was the only life she knew and surprisingly she was the most assertive, in her place of exile. She asked Uma, "Where would I go?" Dolly smiled at her. "This is the only place I know. This is home" (TGP 102). Both Dolly and Uma are victims of the same colonial force. Therefore, Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* expresses immigrant's crisis such as displacement and race-relation. In other words, he represents nation's cultural dislocations and anxieties, so that the protagonist Rajkumar looks for better perspectives, and struggles hard to adjust himself to new surroundings.

On the other hand, the British colonizer thus aims to expand their markets. As Ghosh asks in interview, "Why this furious movement – people taken from one place to another, to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile?"³

In addition, Ghosh represents another victim of imperialism. The character Arjun is Indian officer in the British army in order to form the INA⁴. Further, Arjun becomes in the hands of British military discourse and he is proud to be among the privileged few that are able to enter the class of the rulers he has been trained by a Britain colonial administrator. he felt proud of being in the British army. Arjun was fighting against his won country and was simply facilitating the British policy to expand in his own country and he called his group:

First True Indians... Punjabs, Marathas, Bengalis, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims. Where else in India would you come across a group such as ours – where region and religion don't matter – where we can all drink together and eat beef and pork and think nothing of it? ... Look at

⁷ This quote is found in *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction* (Sankaran 1).

⁸ INA: Indian National Army

us!' Arjun would say, after a whisky or two 'we're the first modern Indians; the first Indians to be truly free. We eat what we like, we drink what we like, we're the first Indians who're not weighed down by the past. (TGP 125-126)

Nevertheless, Arjun was sure that British ruled their native country, as Ghosh states, "Most of the day-to-day tasks of ruling were performed by Indians" (TGP 127).

Later, he realizes and expresses scepticism of his own country, when he says, "Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don't have a country, so where is this place whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time?" (TGP 287). In fact, he realizes his condition as a puppet of this colonial discourse and then he decides to create some distance from it, he is left with nothing. Further, he cannot speak, there is no language that would help him build a new self with other, he feels that he must die in order to destroy the empire. As Ghosh says:

Arjun finds himself at a loss... But if it were true that his life had somehow been moulded by acts of power of which he was unaware—then it would follow that he had never acted of his own volition; never had a moment of true self-consciousness. Everything he had ever assumed about himself was a lie, an illusion. And if this were so, how was he to find himself now? (TGP 372)

Arjun thus represents an ironical aspect, Huttunen elaborates:

Arjun then concludes that the difference between officers and other ranks was that the common soldiers had no way of reaching and comprehending the instincts that made them act. They had no linguistic means of shaping their self-awareness, no access to the ethical. Therefore, their fate was to remain strangers to themselves, always at the mercy of the directions of others. (63-64)

He was fighting neither to defend nor to extend the territory of India and he became at the hand of British army. He has been a mere tool in the British army. It was clear when he talked with Dinu, Rajkumar's son. Later, he understood himself that he was radically altered when he discussed with his batman, Singh.

Further, Singh talked about the fear that made the two of them hide as they did at that very moment:

Is it the fear of the Japanese or the British? Or is it the fear of themselves, the fear of the shadow of the gun instead of the gun itself. The allusion here is to the British military forces and the abeyance, to bargain for a woman's soul with a coin of kindness and patience. The thought of this terrified her. This was subjection beyond decency, beyond her imagining. (TGP 153)

Later, he fought against British rule. British Empire revolted against them, "They mutinied shooting a couple of officers" (TGP 416). Along with this, Ghosh presents the mental state of Arjun with Uma's nephew:

He was a military man and he knew that nothing – nothing important – was possible without loyalty, without faith. But who would claim his loyalty now? The old loyalties of India, the ancient ones – they'd been destroyed long ago; the British had built their Empire by effacing them. But the Empire was dead now – he knew this because he had felt it die within himself. (TGP 471)

Thus, Arjun believes that he has to die in order to eliminate the Empire. As Ghosh states:

Arjun did become a pivotal character for me. He is so much like people, I went to school and college with, in some sense, I could both sympathize with him and he appalled by him. His character because a very interesting figure for me. And, I course, Arjun reflects the experiences of so many Indians, who served in the British Army. (TGP 63)

Thus, he destroyed himself in order to destroy empire, as Biswas states:

He was a military man and he knew that nothing – nothing important – was possible without loyalty, without faith. But who would claim his loyalty now? The old loyalties of India, the ancient ones – they'd been destroyed long ago; the British had built their Empire by effacing them. But the Empire was dead now – he knew this because he had felt it die within himself. (20)

On the other hand, *The Glass Palace* represents two types of diasporas; new diaspora⁵ and old diaspora⁶. British Empire plays an important role in dividing Indian nation into two parts. Nandini adds:

There have been interesting studies of the twentieth-century Indian diaspora to the West by Cohen, Ballard, and Brah, among many others. In the fields of literature, sociology, and politics, this diaspora has become increasingly visible, especially in the wake of India's new strategic engagement with its diaspora through the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conference instituted since 2003. (33)

Ghosh explores the reality of Indian labor diaspora and shows their bitter experiences; displacement and rootlessness, as Bhautoo-Dewnarain mentions in his topic "*The Glass Palace: Reconnecting Two Diasporas*":

The old diaspora of indentured workers which started in the mid-nineteenth century and ended in the early decades of the twentieth century is less well known and the literature which has come out of the descendants of these indentured diaspora, grappling with issues of multiculturalism, hybridity, and social identity within social frames which problematize these internal reconstructions of collective Indian identity, is less well known. (33)

Meanwhile, Bhautoo-Dewnarain asserts:

The complex ontology of migration rooted in the distance between the new Indian diaspora of the twentieth century and the old plantation labour diaspora of indentured workers informs the novel's essential tenor. What drops out of her discussion is that the new diasporic formation is stratified in its nature, propelled as it is by new economic opportunities and shifts in the economic changes of late capitalism. Theorizing the paradigms of the South Asian diaspora. (qtd. in Sankaran 44)

In other words, the connection between the old and new diaspora has a major role of the colonial regime in general and diasporic anxiety in particular, such as the conversation between Arjun and Rajan, when Ghosh exposes the historical reality of labour Indian diaspora. Arjun argues the idea of India, and the bitter

experience of plantation. He says, "What was it to be a slave?" (TGP 450), Rajan says, "No-for even animals had the autonomy of their instincts. It was being made into a machine: having your mind taken away and replaced by a clockwork mechanism. Anything was better than that" (TGP 450).

Above all, the division of Indian nation into two parts has a strong affect in British expansion and explores their ideology which shall be presented in the next part.

3. The Ideology of Empire in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*:

Ghosh's narration is based on the great humanity; rather he challenges the division between Old and New diaspora in his characters. Ghosh exposes the ideology of imperial expansion in India that divides them into two diasporas; the elite Indian diaspora and the "subaltern" labor diaspora. The characters who represent Old diaspora are; Rajkumar and Dolly. And the characters who represent new diaspora are Uma's family. Yet, Ghosh depicts the mixing of two diasporas, they lived and interacted as one family, he criticized the discrimination of Empire regime rule, such as Uma's relationship wit Dolly.

On the other hand, his immigrant characters (such the King, Queen and their daughters) are displaced from their land and are forced to immigrate to another land. Indian nation feel alienation and he still seeks self-identity. Ghosh thus exposes the close association between nation's history and Indian's displacement. Rather, he reveals the ideology of British Empir when poor Indians are forced to immigrate to another land.

On the other hand, *The Glass Palace* represents another theme of imperial ideology that is mimicry. In *The Glass Palace*, Indian officers lived with Westerners, they did the same work and they ate the same food, when Arjun accepted that "When we joined up we didn't have India on our minds: we wanted to be sahibs and that's what we have become" (TGP 379).

⁹ New Diaspora: It refers to West that constituted both the United Kingdom and the United States.

¹⁰ Old Diaspora: It refers to low class of Indian nation, such as; peasants and indentured laborers that have been forced to work during British Empire.

Another character that represents the mimicry of Imperial's language was Saya John. He was orphan and he was Chinese Christian, as Ghosh states that "Catholic priests, in a town called Malacca. These men were from everywhere—Portugal, Macao,Goa"(TGP 9). He was Rajkumar's friend, he said to Rajkumar, "But, Rajkumar, you can't even read English; how do you think you're going to make this bid?" Rajkumar grinned, "It's true that I can't read English, Saya, but I've learnt to speak it. And why do I need when you can do it for me?Saya?" (TGP 67)

Moreover, Saya suggested to Rajkumar to learn European's way, as he said to Rajkumar, "This is UBa Kyaw, He was a valet to an English planter in Maymo. He can teach you many things, like how to eat a European table with a knife and fork" (TGP 112). John became assimilated and believed that the colonizer's mimicry has got a better life in future, when he said, "Just to bring you luck" (TGP 113). Thus, John was a clear picture of mimicry of colonizer's language. Ghosh said about him "Would always change into European clothes, a white shirt, duck trousers" (TGP 62), so he attempted to hide his own identity whenever he would go on business with Englishmen. Besides, John was a significant character to represent multicultural modes because he had been in touch with people from different cultures since his childhood. He became the teak trader.

On the other hand, According to John's son Mathew, he grew up in Singapore and he went to America for studies, where Mathew adopted American culture. They thus brought out transcultural forms and identity fragmentation. John narrated his conversation with the soldiers at the military hospital:

The soldiers there were mainly Indians and they asked me this question: how is that you, who look like Chinese and carry a Christian name, can speak our language? When I told them how this had come about, they would laugh and say, you are a *dhobi ka kutta* – a washerman's dog – *na ghar ka na hat ka* – you don't belong anywhere, either by the water or

on land, and I'd say, yes, that is what exactly I am. (TGP 9)

Thus, he ended up as a secret and an ambiguous photographer that shows the Myanmar dictatorship.

Ghosh exposes the ideology of colonizer who has shifted Indian nation into sublatern, Whereas, Uma's husband called Beni Prasad Dey was an Indian-Bengali and he worked with the British Government, he was a dedicated huge supporter. He told king Thibaw about the Japanese victory over Russia:

Japan's victory has resulted in widespread rejoicing among nationalists in India and no doubt in Burma too...The Empire is today stronger than it has ever been. You have only to glance at a map of the world to see the truth of this... Britain's Empire is already more than a century old, and you may be certain. (TGP 91)

In this quote, Ghosh represents one of the causes behind British expansion that is Japanese invasion in *The Glass Palace*. The havoc is caused because of Japanese invasion in Burma and its effect on Indian nation with tragedy; wars, deaths and dislocation.

Above all, Ghosh's texts show intellectual responses to the imperial's discourses, that lead to slavery. His critics take common social needs of nationalist into account, such as: race, gender, class and sexuality. Because the ideology of British Empire still remains the class formation upon the Third World country. Thus, the effects of colonial rule do not disappear after independence.

Moreover, Ghosh represents the ideology of empire, when he begins his narration in depicting Rajkumar:

Rajkumar's sharp excited voice cut through the buzz of speculation. "English cannon," he said in his fluent but heavily accented Burmese. "They're shooting somewhere up the river. Heading in this direction." Frowns appeared on some customers' faces as they noted that it was the serving boy who had spoken and that he was a *kalaa* from across the sea—an Indian, with teeth as white as his eyes and skin the colour of polished hardwood. He was standing in the centre of the stall, holding a pile of chipped ceramic bowls. He was grinning a little sheepishly, as though embarrassed to parade his precocious knowingness (TGP 1).

This depiction asserts the subaltern's voice and illustrates that Rajkumar hoped to step out the boundaries. Rajkumar played a major role in exposing bitter experiences of subaltern. Subaltern became a variable concept within the space of British Empire. Further, Ghosh illustrates their identity crisis such as; Rajkumar, Dolly and Ma Cho. Rajkumar was born in India and brought up in Burma. However, Dolly is born in Burma and brought up in India. Rajkumar exposes Imperial regime at the end of the novel, when Jaya goes to Myanmar to search for Dinu, who has opened a photo studio there. The officer tells her that she does not know how to write Burmese. He complains that he has spent a lot of time correcting the manuscript, it is full of red pencil marks. After pronouncing that it is not his job to teach people how to write, he tells Daw to take her paper and leave. The next part shall humbly illustrate the themes of resistance culture in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*.

4. Themes of Resistance Culture in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* during *British Empire*:

Ghosh's fiction portrays the woman as the leading spirits, he never depicts the woman as *Sita*⁷ or as a radical feminist. He believes that woman has a major role in resisting Imperial regime and participating in the cultural construction, he portrays the women characters in a realistic manner. Unlike imperialism ideologies, they argues about femimism which are against our Islamic religion, they ignore that people follow traditional rule of their countr rather than Islamic instruction about woman rights.

Moreover, Ghosh exposes woman's voices against British Empire. Even though, the fact that there are only a few women characters in his novels and their roles are limited, they are under control of the entire

happening in the novels. They act as independent entities, they are growing and determining their own lives. They find social acceptance. He depicts the woman as finding social acceptance, defining their own way, such as Uma Dey replies Dolly, when they heard about Queen Supayalat, "Don't you sometimes wonder how many people have been killed in Queen Victoria's name? It must be millions; wouldn't you say? I think I'd be frightened to live with one of those pictures(TGP 97). After her husband's death, Uma visits Europe and America. In London and New York, she joins the movement against Imperial regime in India and she becomes a leader of the movement to free India. Later, she becomes revolutionary against the British Empire. Ghosh thus represents the resistance and the struggle against them. In fact, his narration avoids humiliation of women. Further, he has explored strong female characters that are ambitious. His concern is to place woman within national space rather than man's sexual desires.

Further, another character is active role in resisting the colonizer, Queen Supayalat. Supayalat is nationalist against British Empire, as Ghosh states:

Visitors were expected to walk in and seat themselves on low chairs around Her Highness, with no words way of preserving the spirit of Mandalay⁸ protocol: since the representatives of the British were adamant in their refusal to perform the shiko, she in turn made a point of not acknowledging their entry in her presence. (TGP 91)

Besides, she went to secure her husband's throne, Thebaw. One of historical importance of Burma occurred by Supayalat when she took eighty-nine potential heir to the throne of Burma. Thus, Supayalat asserted the Anglo-Burmese war was considered the main reason to lead to the fall of the Burmese empire. Again, she wanted to give up the British demands, "The

⁷Sati : Sati meant a good wife, as Arasi and Phil highlighted, a woman who played her gender role in an appropriate way (pp. 68-71). However, Spivak pointed out that "The word *sati* or *suttee*, as the British translated the word, however, does not have the meaning of —good wife. Instead, the word *sati* is understood to mean self-immolation on the husband's pyre. Because of this cultural mistranslation of the word, the British colonizers contend that sati is a barbaric practice and use it to justify their civilizing mission in India. Although the British prohibition of the ritual called sati did save some

widows 'lives, it was also used symbolically as a means of showing British superiority over Indian barbarism, being seen as a case of white men saving brown women from brown men. (Queiroz 48)

⁸ Mandalaya: "It is a cosmopolitan world in itself. 'Cosmopolitanism' can in this context be defined as "the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, do (or at least can) belong to a single community, and that this community should be cultivated". (TGP 144)

Queen had prevailed and the Burmese court had, fused to yield to the British ultimatum" (TGP 19). Even in her exile she still kept her Indian tradition, she seemed to embody a story within herself:

Once or twice a year the Queen would ride out with her daughters, her face a white mask, stem and unmoving, her lips stained a deep, deathly mauve by her cheroots... but she never seemed to notice anyone or anything, sitting as straight as a rod, her face stern and unmoving. (TGP 67)

Ghosh explains the Nationalist movements, as the Queen Supayalat who fights in a Nationalist battle against the British's colonizer, Ghosh states:

During the day Ma Cho was a harried and frantic termagant ... But by night ... a certain languor entered her movements. She would cup her breasts and air them, fanning herself with her hands: she would run her fingers through the cleft of her chest, past the pout of her belly, down to her legs and thighs. Watching her from below, Rajkumar's hand would snake slowly past the knot of his longyi, down to his groin. (TGP 7)

His characters show that women act as independent entities, who are growing, determining their own lives and finding social acceptance. Again, Ghosh's novels avoid victimization and degradation of women. Rather, Ghosh believes that the female characters should be a part of a cosmopolitan society. In other word, Malathi and Prema add:

Amitav Ghosh portrays his women sensitively and infact, they are the leading spirits in his fiction. They are distinct portrayals of a cultural construction. He never presents his women as overt radical feminists nor as the stereotypical images of Sita and Savithiri. They are the characters of real life and in his novels he portrays the women characters in a realistic manner. (1)

Thus, Ghosh claims the importance of understanding the women nationalism, and he encourages woman's participation in social construction. Above all, his novels show that women attempt to look for different phases of liberation.

Another female character who represents an active part in the movement against British rule is Uma Dey. The Royal family of Burma met Uma and her husband called the Collector Beni Prasad Dey. Uma's family was from the Bengali Badhrolok and her father was an architect, he was from high class. Uma's family depicted the middle class and the elite educated Indian. *The Glass Palace* presents the British colonial conquest and India's independence movement with Uma. Her character represents another theme of post-colonial traits that is the resistance. Uma was a clear depiction of nationalism, she struggled against Indian officers and soldiers serving in the British army, along with other Indians living in America:

Among Uma's contemporaries, in New York there were many who took their direction from a newsletter published from the University of California, in Berkeley, by Indian students. This publication was called Ghadar, after the Hindustani word for the uprising of 1857...and the people who served the British Empire as soldiers now have "become dedicated enemies of the Empire. (TGP 192)

Another quotation asserts Uma's resistance, as she said to Rajkumar:

Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your people have done is far worse than the worst deeds of the Europeans...lay bare native collusion with imperial commodification of peasant subjects. Yet we have in turn Rajkumar's Marxist response to her comment, of asking her in turn if she had ever "Given a single person a job? Improved anyone's life in any way? (TGP 214)

Whereas, Uma's husband called Beni Prasad Dey was an Indian-Bengali and he worked with the British Government, he was a dedicated huge supporter. He told king Thibaw about the Japanese victory over Russia:

Japan's victory has resulted in widespread rejoicing among nationalists in India and no doubt in Burma too...The Empire is today stronger than it has ever been. You have only to glance at a map of the world to see the truth of this... Britain's Empire is already more than a century old, and you may be certain. (TGP 91)

At the beginning, Uma liked the modernity and fashionable things, when she stayed in Europe and America. Uma thus her journey to Europe and America after her husband's death led her to the Indian Nationalist movement and she struggled for freedom.

Ghosh's view is very similar to Rajkumar's view. When Ghosh portrays Rajkumar "No matter how costly Rajkumar's clothes or how well fitting, it was a certainty that he would never be mistaken for a man who'd been born to wealth of office. There was a roughness to his face that was surety against that" (TGP 113). Although, Rajkumar wore European clothes, his face was against them. Ghosh explores identity crisis of Indian nation during imperialism. In other word, immigrants attempt to overcome life's bitterness with strengths of their own.

Further, Ghosh refuses to take the commonwealth prize of *The Glass Palace*. He thus indicates his attitude towards British Empire because he was very aware of the ideology of Empire. As Ghosh illustrates that "Father says they [British] want all the teak in Burma. The King won't let them have it so they're going to do away with him" (TGP 13). The point of emphasis is not so much on colonialism rather it is on the weakness of the king to contain his kingship and country. Above all, the king finally leads to his permanent exile. Besides, Ghosh shows different types of trades that are in practice during the British rule in the Eastern part of South Asia. The novel gives a picture of the teak trade in Burma, where the British Government's conquerors of Burma were trying to capture its teak wood resource. The British Empire will do anything to expand their markets, so they had to remove the King from his position.

According to Ghosh's characters, he exposes his sympathetic attitude towards the subaltern, he reveals the voice of the subalterns, their struggles during Imperial regime. He depicts the problems of alienation and immigration. Thus, he begins to get a prominent voice of subaltern in a different way. They raise their voices against the oppressive forces of their

society. In an interview with Ghosh, he responds:

I think this interest arose because of some kind of in born distrust of anything that appears to 'given' or taken-for-granted. This is why I distrust also the lines that people draw between fiction and non-fiction. I think these lines are drawn in order to manipulate our ways of thought: that is why they must be disregarded. (Hawley 9)

His character's voices are obvious towards the colonizer's regime throughout their textual resistance.

Ghosh's resistance stands in the face of other oppressions and negotiates US power that ignores other nations. Meanwhile, marginalization has a major role within postcolonial studies. So he exposes their margins that are connected to race; class, gender and religion. He has added to such critiques by developing the nationalist thinkers and activists who put both intellectual and cultural grounds for self-determination and independence. The nationalist's need of constructing the idea of their nationhood are considered a crucial element of anti-colonialism. Rather, his critiques claim the participation of the nations in various dimensions: economic, cultural, political and social construction. So, immigrant writers express some of the greatest hopes in their future life. Unfortunately, they feel alienated and marginalized in their own country. Thus, they prefer to leave their homeland.

In addition, Ghosh represents the resistance, when he depicts the mixture of their languages; from India to Burma and the intrusion of the British into it. For example, when Saya John addresses Rajkumar in 'broken Hindustani', the boy asks him 'in Burmese, "how did you learn to speak an Indian language?" (TGP 9), Saya John replies, "They spoke many languages, these priests, and from the Goans I learnt a few Indian words (TGP 9). Even though, this dialogue discusses English words but with an Indian tone or accent.

According to the character's language, British empire plays a major role of Indian language, it is mixed because of different spaces that are affected the usage of language, as Biswas expresses:

In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh depicts a scenario from India to Burma and the intrusion of the British into it; and the mixture of their languages. Rajkumar, an Indian boy, settles in Burma and come across the Burmese language and words like 'longyi'⁹ and many others. Ghosh shows Indian society as King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat of Burma along with the whole family are exiled in Ratnagiri of India. Indian expressions like, ... 'jaladi'¹⁰ 'bhangra'¹¹ and many others are used. Here, the Indian language has become a part of English: "Kanhoji would issue scoldings from his bench, telling the villagers to clear the way for the Collector's *gaari*" Here 'gaari' is used with such ease that it seems like part of the English language. (48)¹²

Further, the ideology of Imperialism attempt to expand British language globally. Nowadays, English language becomes the second language in most countries. Unfortunately, Arabic language becomes marginalized, even among Arabian country.

On the other hand, the colonized Burmese words were kept even though they wrote in English. This indicates one of the main themes in postcolonial theory, resistance. As Ghosh shows Ma Cho's European clothes, "A shirt, trousers and a pith hat" (TGP 7), and Ma Cho asks in English, Rajkumar understands what he asks, but he intends to answer him Indian words, he said that "*Kaisa hai? Sub kuchh theek-thaak?*"¹³ (TGP 7). Not only Rajkumar keeps his own accent, he keeps Indian clothes, when Ghosh depicts his mother's death:

Rajkumar had covered his mother with all the saris in her cloth bundle, with *longyis* borrowed from the boatmen, even a folded sail. But he'd no sooner finished than her teeth began to chatter again, softly, like dice...She showed him a knot on the tail end of her sari...Rajkumar. Live, my prince ;hold on to your life. (TGP 11)

In this quote, he indicated another aspect in the new land and revealed the nation's identity crisis during imperialist.

Furthermore, Ghosh portrays some students activities and arguments about the military dictatorial rule, such as Hitler and Mussolini in Dinu's photo studio. This studio is called '*The Glass Palace*' in Rangoon. These photographs elaborate the colonized's resistance, against the dictators in Burma that are based on the experience of Indian immigrants in South East Asia. The photographs represent the blurring of lines that are visible not just through colonial displacement but also the binarism between colonized and colonizer that is under scanner. Besides, another photo studio is represented by Jaya who goes to Myanmar to search for Dinu, Jaya has opened there. Thus, this photographs depict the existence of totalitarian regimes at the end of the novel, the officer told her that she does not know how to write Burmese. He complains that he spends lot of time correcting the manuscript, which is full of red pencil marks. After that, he asserts that it is not his job to teach people how to write, he told Dinu to take her paper and leave. Dinu used the language of photography and of the image as a representative system to illustrate those spies, who have been sent by regime:

Today for example, I was talking about Edward Weston's theory of pre-visualisation ... that you must see the truth of your subject in your mind...after that the camera is incidental, unimportant...If you know the truth of what you see, the rest is mere execution. Nothing can come between you and your imagined desire ... no camera, no lens... ' He shrugged, smiling. To that list I could have added: No band of criminals like this regime ... But I did not have to tell them that in so many words ... They understood what I was saying ... they knew ... you saw how they laughed and clapped ... Here in *the Glass Palace*

⁹Longyi: In the British dictionary, it means a long piece of cotton cloth worn as a loincloth, sash, or turban by Indian men or as a skirt. word origin; Hindi from Persian.

¹⁰Jaldi: in my memory dictionary, it means early.

¹¹Bhangra: in the British dictionary, it defines as a type of Asian pop music that combines elements of traditional Punjabi music with western pop. Word origin from Hindi

¹² Those idioms are found in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, pp. 124,148,344,149,431.

¹³"*Kaisa hai?Sub kuchh theek-thaak?*": this Indian statement means "Everything is fine".

photography too is a secret language. (TGP 509-510)

Thus, as he claimed that their truth came from the West dominance, and the people at Dinu's studio were not forced to withdraw into complete silence, but they were able to remain in the realm of discourse, to clarify different discourses from that regime.

In short, *The Glass Palace* demonstrates how the economic and political are two sides of the same colonial coin and it depicts an economic exploitation of land, resources and people as a clear picture of political oppression that contains an area from India to Burma during British Empire. Ghosh confesses in *The Anglophone Empire*, "I am Indian and my history has been shaped as much by the institutions of this empire as a long tradition of struggle against them" (TGP 20). Besides, *The Glass Palace* brings the reader to the present. Therefore, the novel focuses on 20th century Burma; India, Bengal and Malaya, trading economic changes that affect nation's social construction. It is obvious that Ghosh's narration of historical events affect Indian families. Further, *The Glass Palace* gives a colourful and real pictures of families in colonial period of India that leads nation's identity crisis. Besides, Ghosh's text does not include the connecting of two diasporas but he presents a clear picture of coolie experience. Thus, he depicts a different picture between colonizer and subaltern.

However, *The Glass Palace* illustrates the British Empire and their regime rule upon the poor Indian nation. Ghosh thus invokes the idea of the nationalism in their own country. Thus, Ghosh plays a major role in exposing the subaltern status in their own country, Srivastava shows:

In his major novels Amitav Ghosh's sympathetic attitude towards the subaltern can be perceived. The problems of alienation, migration and existential crisis in life of unprivileged class of the society are explored through his fiction. The voice of the subalterns, their struggle and sacrifices which went unnoticed in the annals of the history began to get a prominent voice in the fiction of Amitav Ghosh in a different way. (189)

Further, Ghosh's fictions are focused on nation's social and political events in the past. Ghosh shows the ideology of imperialism. Thus, nations hope a better life in the future, as Sharma illustrates:

In Amitav Ghosh's fiction the historical facts in terms of time and space forms an integral part of a work of art transcending the creative expression to achieve wider dimensions of universality induced with both social and political consciousness...Amitav Ghosh evokes postcolonial situation, social milieu, cultural dislocations and anxieties to look for better perspectives. He combines his professional skills as social historian with a literary flair to create works of art which are profoundly concerned with civilization and history...Ghosh mediates upon a core set of issues from a new perspective; the legacy of colonial knowledge; colonized societies, people, ideas: the formation and re-formation of identities in colonial and postcolonial societies; skepticism and socio-economic struggle for survival; and an engagement with cultural multiplicity through economic migrants, travelers, students, prisoners, researchers, settlers, peasants and indentured laborers. Wealth, Power and Privilege establish new strife among the people, societies and nations. (596- 597)

Ghosh asserts that classes discrimination is neglected in Indian nation so they share a deep understanding and respect for each other's predicament. However, Dolly and Uma were acknowledged of their respective status. Dolly was quiet for a moment and Uma began to worry that she had offended her. Then Dolly spoke up, "You know Uma", she said in her softest voice, "Every time I come to your house, I notice that picture you have hanging by your front door..." "Of Queen Victoria, you mean" "Yes" Uma was puzzled, "What about it?" "Don't you sometimes wonder how many people have been killed in Queen Victoria's name? It must be millions wouldn't you say? I think I'd be frightened to live with one of those pictures. A few days later Uma put the picture down and sent it to the Cutchery, to be hung in the Collector's office". (TGP 97)

Moreover, Arjun represents subaltern during British Empire, when he asked Rajan, "What was it to be a slave?", Rajan replayed, "No ... for even animals had the autonomy of their instincts. It was being made into a machine: having your mind taken away and replaced by a clockwork mechanism. Anything was better than that" (TGP 450). In this quote, Ghosh shows that Arjun lived in middle class. Ghosh reveals the forgotten history during regime rule, such as; subaltern experience. When Arjun engaged Rajan in conversation about his motives, his idea of India, and the experience of plantation, this relationship is reflected through Rajan's words as Arjun spoke to him about India in the jungles of Malaya:

And India... What was India to them? This land whose freedom they were fighting for, this land they'd never seen but for which they were willing to die? Did they know of the poverty, of the hunger their parents and grandparents had left behind? India was the shining mountain beyond the horizon, a sacrament of redemption— a metaphor for freedom in the same way that slavery was a metaphor for the plantation. (TGP 450)

Again, the writer narrates what he encountered during imperialism. Besides, Ghosh depicted Rajkumar's hard life, he was peasant, he lost his parents, Ghosh texts represented the movement of peasants from India to many Western colonies in the nineteenth century. As Ghosh depicts:

They were peasants, those men, from small countryside villages: their clothes and turbans still smelt of wood smoke and dung fires. What makes you fight . . . "Money," they'd say, and yet all they earned was a few annas a day, not much more than a dockyard coolie (TGP 26).

Ghosh presents different aspects of the ideology imperialism in *The Glass palace*. On the other hand, the reader is interested in Ghosh's fiction, because he emerged to interpret the relationship between society construction and common people. In other word, he narrates the societies and human beings and their inter-relationship in his novel. Rather, he proclaims the participation of nations in different dimension; history, policy and culture so that he is one of the most

important novelists of our time, he thus asserts the ideas on nationalism.

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