

I. AMITAV GHOSH AS A WRITER

Life and Works of Amitav Ghosh

Amitav Ghosh, a prominent Indian literary voice in English, and an anthropologist, is accepted as a productive writer, not because he produced book after book, but because of his dexterity in mingling his personal experiences and the epochal events of human history. He was born in 1956, in Calcutta and grew up in the then East Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, Iran and India. As a young person, he was influenced by stories of partition, Independence and the Second World War. These stories had an indelible impression in his mind. During his shaping years, Ghosh learnt through the political and military subterfuges. This aspect of historical reality allured him and he used these memories to build a concept of freedom and its numerous connotations in the modern world a dominant theme of his novels.

Ghosh graduated from St. Stephen College, University of Delhi. He worked with The Indian Express newspaper. Later he joined Delhi School of Economics as a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology. After some years, he received a scholarship to do a Ph. D. in Social Anthropology at Oxford University. In 1980, he went Egypt to do field work in the Fella Heel village of Lataifa. Starting in fall 1999, Ghosh joined Queens College in the City College of New York as distinguished professor in the Department of Comparative Literature. He currently lives in Brooklyn, New York with his wife, Deborah Baker.

Ghosh's career as a writer consists of four novels, a travelogue and a booklet. His first Novel, *The Circle of Reason* (1986) was translated into many European languages and its French edition received the Prix Médicis Étranger,

an eminent literary award in France. His second novel, *The Shadow Lines* (1988) evokes the postcolonial situations, cultural dislocations and anxieties in the period between 1962 and 1979. In the third book, *In an Antique Land* (1992) is a creation of his experience as an anthropologist and of his interaction with four languages and cultures spread over three continents and across several countries. It is a seamless blending of fiction, fact and history. Written in a unique experimental postmodern form and a complex and imaginative story of quest and discovery, his novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) combines various themes and techniques.

His travelogue, *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* (1998), reveals his perception about the socio-political situations in both Cambodia and Burma. His latest booklet, *Countdown* (1999), exposes the unclear lobby in both India and Pakistan. At the same time, he challenges and questions the views of leaders of India.

Ghosh writing in *The Shadow Lines* cannot be found to any particular style. Its language, idea, theme, style and other feature in the presentation have made it distinct from other novels written in English by Indian writers. The style of presenting the story is quite peculiar and complex. The author uses a non-linear, multi-layered narrative technique to present a narrative that covers a time span from 1939 to 1962. But the past and present are blended so skillfully that the combination appears seamless.

Review of Amitav Ghosh's Themes and Style

Amitav Ghosh's fiction is characterized by strong themes that may be some what identified with postcolonialism, but is difficult to label it as such. His topics are unique and personal; some of his appeal lies in his ability to weave

"Indo-nostalgic" elements into more serious themes. In his writing, Ghosh demonstrates the mixture and interstitial nature of cultures, as expressed through language. Like many subaltern authors, Ghosh endeavors to recuperate the silenced voices of those not represented in the historical record. So, his novels brim with interesting themes set against fascinating historical backdrops.

The social, political and cultural scenario and the tumultuous times that Amitav Ghosh lived through in India, shaped his themes and influenced him as a writer. During 1980s, lives were irrevocably shaken by the events- separatist violence of Punjab, a military attack on the Sikh temple of Amritsar and the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Amitav Ghosh was one of the peoples who were shaken by the events. "Looking back," Ghosh writes, "I see that the experiences of that period were profoundly important to my development as a writer" ("The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi" 46)

When Ghosh was just twenty-eight, the city he considered home was Calcutta, but New Delhi was where he had spent all his adult life except for a few years away in England and Egypt. He had returned to India two years before, upon completing a doctorate in Oxford, and recently found a teaching job at Delhi University. He was writing his first novel, in the classic fashion, "perched in garret" (47).

Ghosh was already identifying writing as his "real" life, distinct finally from his teaching and research. But the subjects he would choose to address and the style he would choose to employ were still in flux. The events of 1980s seem to have solidified his thinking in both regards. The riots were directed principally against Sikh people, and as their ramifications unfolded, "It was not just grief I felt," He writes, "Rather, it was a sense of something slipping loose, of a

mooring coming untied somewhere within" (48). At the time when he started writing *The Circle of Reason*, he adopted the style very much in a Salman Rushdie vein of imaginative serio-comic story telling –a flight of fancy that had only the loosest ties to actual historical events. But 1980s changed all that. It is as though the next novel, *The Shadow Lines*, was written by someone else entirely. Here the style is more sophisticated-but less fantastic. Here, the history of partition is very real, indeed, but its broad strokes are used to paint a backdrop against which a personal struggle of the young protagonist and his family gets the spotlight. Why this change happened and continues is one of the questions that need to be explored as we move through his corpus of writing.

However, this was not to be the final shaping influence in his work, indeed, Ghosh has by now become a bit "notorious in his bold embrace of new genres and styles" according to John C. Howley, when he undertakes a new project (4). In her review of *Dancing Combodia, At large Burma for India Star*, Meenakshi Mukherjee speaks for many when she observes:

Amitav Ghosh's each new book seems to be different from what has appeared before. The wistful evocation of memory to reflect on divisions of land and people in *The Shadow Line* (1986). Neither, however, prepared any reader for the febrile frenzy of *The Calcuatta Chrosome* (1996) where the history of Malaria research is spliced with this story of subaltern subversions quite unlike what was tried by Ghosh's other non-fiction work, *In an Antique Land* (1992). In *Dancing in Combodia, At Large in Burma*, travel, history, cultural commentary, political reportage shade into one another. (14)

Muknherjee emphasizes in this review Amitav Ghosh's refusal to be categorized, his rebellion against the templates of genre. In an interview with Sheela Reedy in 2002, Ghosh suggests that his future writing may go in still newer directions, at least in their themes if not their forms. He told Reddy:

In some way the riots didn't change anything. To me, that was the most disquieting aspect of that kind of social violence. But since then something has changed very drastically in the world. Perhaps it is a symptom rather than a cause. The whole system of nation-states is coming under increasing strain. The rich countries are essentially more and more single unit: borders don't really apply. At the bottom of the scale, in countries like Pakistan and Burma, again borders have melted away and there's a general collapse of the slate. I think we are at a point where the ideal of the nation as way of organizing society is no longer holding. ("The Writer, his Contexts and his Thames" 5)

In this ominous description of our age, we see a first suggestion of Ghosh's recurring themes: the role of the individual in the broad sweep of political events; the dubious nature of borders, whether between nations and people or between one literary genre and another; the role of memory in one's recovery of identity in the march of time; the role of the artist in society; the importance of narrative in shaping history.

The first of Ghosh's novels, *The Circle of Reason* is a complex tapestry of stories of individual whose lives overlap, pull apart, and separate-and sometimes find each other again in new contexts. It is a story of obsession and obsessive rationalism that some embrace as science and others ridicule as insanity.

According to Howley, "the book is an example of this novelist's tendency to push against the limits of a particular genre" (54). It is a detective story, a story of exile, a travelogue, a woman's rights tract, a Marxist protest, a plea for humanistic camaraderie, etc. The narrative techniques that Ghosh employs here sometimes share the characteristics of magical realism. Toru-debi, for example, strangely looks upon her singer sewing machine as her child.

The crossing of the borders becomes an obsession with Ghosh as narrator and characters are itinerant travelers who frequently cross the boundaries between one cultural space and other cultural space, one geographical space to other geographical space, and one linguistic space to other linguistic space. The significance of the journey is meant to do a way with history and restriction. In the four novels, the shadow lines, *In an Antique Land*, *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide* Ghosh's abiding interest is in crossing the borders and in last novel, his ironic obliteration of them. In the latter, as Amitav has Nirmal tell the five-year-old Fokir, rather ominously: the crabs are eating away at the dikes, and sooner or later the tides will cover the land-"because the animals [quoting Rilke] 'already know by instinct we're not comfortably at home in our translated world'" (206). So, in these countries in them Ghosh is more interested and focused on personal lives than on the massive historical sweep that serves as backdrop. Nonetheless, they show his deepening interest in history, time, and memory, almost as though the French autobiographical novelist Marcel Proust had been transplanted to Calcutta. Brinda Bose nicely sums it up:

As he travels between culture lands that diasporas straddle (India/Bangladesh/England in *The Shadow Lines*; India/Egypt in *In An Antique Land*; India Burma/ Malay in *The Glass Palace*) the

burden of India's colonial past appears to weigh heavily on a migrant postcolonial generation, and Ghosh seems to be constantly in search of that elusive epiphanic moment in which individuals may come to terms with their histories, thereby releasing themselves from the metaphoric-and metaphysical-burden of their condition In Ghosh's fiction, the diasporic entity continuously negotiates between two lands, separated by both time and space-history and geography-and attempts to define the present through a nuanced understanding of the past. (19)

In this way, in a leisurely blend of travelogue, history and cross-cultural analysis, Ghosh reconstructs a historical relationship that confounds modern concepts of modernism. In medieval India and the Middle East, Ghosh points out, servitude was often a career opportunity, the principal means of recruitment into privileged strata of the army and bureaucracy. He also writes vividly of southern India, a tapestry of castes, cults and worship of spirit-deities

Review of *The Glass Palace*

Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Glass Place* has received both serious and flippant, valuable and hostile reviews and criticism from different corners of the world since its publication in 2000. Since he is non-European writer, many non-Western critics have paid their attention to it. Then the novel has been read and analyzed from different perspectives like colonial, postcolonial and cultural historical. Below are given the commentaries of some critics who have studied the novel through various angles.

John C. Hawley analyzes this novel from postcolonial perspective. So he regards this novel as postcolonial maneuvers. He writes that Gosh has the king

who "ponders his fate" and the fate of empires as he is on his way on the exile. Queen Supayalat also has the view of postcolonial critic who complains about Europe's greed (115).

Meenakshi Mukherjee has called *The Glass Palace* "the most scathing critique of British colonialism ever comes across in fiction" (123). In response to this view Ghosh has regarded that colonialism has 'Pretty Easy Ride.' Nonetheless, all sorts of empires come under criticism within the pages of this novel.

Frderick Luis Aldama views about complicated project of pre-colonial and postcolonial south Asian Identity. He says the novel as ambitious epic, which tells the stories of a cast of characters royal, working class, bourgeois Indians, Bengalis and Burmese laborers. Here these laborers also as colonial fashion bring "Law and Order" to the jungle (132).

Stephen Amidon analyzes this novel as the best historical romance. He has indicated the Ghosh's command of culture and history: whether describing court life in the nineteenth century Burmese *The Glass Palace* where servants could approach royalty only on all fours or limning a political speech by the contemporary Burmese opposition leader whose laughter confounds her jailers (127).

Sybil S. Steinberg regards this as an epic novel of Burma and Malaya over a span of 115 years as the "sweep of history". There is almost too much for one book, as over the years the lives and deaths of principal characters go flying by. He takes Ghosh as beguiling and endlessly resourceful storyteller who boasts one of the most arresting opening in recent fiction: in the marketplace of Mandalay, only the 11- year-old Indian boy Rajkumar recognizes the booming

sounds beyond and the curve of the river as English canon fire. Here the story of exiled king and his family in Ratnagiri, is also worth in a novel itself (82).

David W. Henderson views it as the tale of a family and how historical events influence real lives. As a young boy, Rajkumar, is temporarily stranded in Mandalay, finds himself in British invasion that led the Burmese king to exile. As their family grows and their lives intersect with others, the tangled web of local and international politics is brought to bear, changing lives as well as nations (512).

Troy Patterson analyzes this novel as a "Sprawling Victorian Pile" inhabited by orphans, windows, bureaucrats, servants and secret children. Boy, Rajkumar gets a lump in his throat at first glance of girl Dolly. Then promises to meet and sure enough they marry and their family Saga gets entwined with a counter worth of social upheaval (65).

Likewise, Michel Leber views this novel as a "rich tapestry of illuminating saga". As British troop take the Burmese royal family into exile in Mandalay in 1885, 11 years old Rajkumar who has lost his entire family to illness in India, spies lovely 10 years old Dolly, an orphan who serves the queen. 20 years later they marry and with the friendship and marriage, their lives becomes intertwined with members of two other families and are seen in the context of the political conflicts and movements of the time in Burma, India, and Malaysia (786).

In this way, many critics have read Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* through various perspectives such as Postcolonial, Colonial, Cultural Identity, Historical Romance, Sweep of History, Sprawling Victorian Pile, Illuminating Saga etc. However, their analysis through the perspective Subaltern Studies still

remains incomplete. So this present study of the novel is from the Subaltern point of view as Ghosh has shown the family portrait of a poor errand boy's three generation in *The Glass Palace* to depict the history of subaltern mass.

The following chapter makes the study of the brief history and theory of subalternity as a theoretical framework in order to interpret the novel from subaltern viewpoint.

II: A STUDY OF SUBALTERNITY

General Introduction of Subalternity

The term "Subaltern", which comes from the Latin root sub "under" + alter "other", literally refers to any person or group of inferior to rank and station, whether because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion. The subaltern has now become a standard way to designate the colonial people who employ this discourse. The whole concept of subaltern subject is now to resist this European discourse rather than comply with it. So, many postcolonial writers have now undertaken the task of resistance by writing in a European language.

The origin of the term "subaltern" can be traced back to the medieval age. In the medieval age, this term applied to vassals and peasants. By eighteenth century, it however, came to denote lower ranks in military suggesting peasant origin. In India and America, historians and writers began writing about military campaign from the subaltern point of view by nineteenth century. Eventually two terms got recognition and began to be used when Antonio Gramsci adopted it to describe those groups in the society who are subject to the hegemonic exploitation of the ruling classes. These subaltern classes include marginalized groups such as peasant, workers and others, who were forced to stay away from the Germanic power.

Subaltern Studies, which emerged in 1982 in India to write the ignored historiography of the marginalized people, tried its best to establish the subalterns as an autonomous body. This group, which was led by Ranjit Guha, endeavored to provide the subaltern people with their own voice. This group is known as a group of historians who "aimed to promote a systematic discussion of

subaltern themes in South Asian society" (vii). This group aimed to examine the general attribute of subordination in South Asian Society in terms of class, caste, age gender, and office.

Subaltern studies emerged as a theory of change, which sustained vigorous political commitment. The academic atmosphere was witnessing a great change at the time. Postmodernism and post-structuralism had a strong hold and the academic field. On the other hand, cultural studies were getting more and more attention from all sides. In this backdrop, Subaltern Studies also witnessed a change along with *Subaltern Studies IV*. The reason was that *Subaltern Studies IV* included the writings of two U.S. based theorists like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Bernard S. Cohn who brought cultural perspective in Subaltern Studies. Spivak gave linguistic as well as cultural mode to Subaltern Studies with her seminal essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (*Subaltern Studies IV*, 1986). She contributed Subaltern Studies to shift to representation from politics. She, therefore, gave literary mode to Subaltern Studies. Spivak, in the *Subaltern Studies V*, reinforced the literary mode as she contributed to the translation of Mahashwetadevi's "Standadayini" as well as commentary on it entitled "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's 'Standayini'".

The writers like Susie Tharu and Amitav Ghosh followed her in the succeeding volumes. Spivak is credited to have given Subaltern Studies with the feminist mode as well as can be seen in "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", where she raises the feminist issues. Slowly but surely, Subaltern Studies was moving towards representation, critical theory, and cultural studies from subaltern politics. Spivak in her essay writes: "The Subaltern Studies

Collective . . . generally perceive their task as making a theory of consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change" (330). It was the first major shift that emerged in the history of Subaltern Studies. Meanwhile, socialist communist and Marxist systems were deteriorating throughout the world. And, the academic world was moving towards post-Marxist studies. In such a context, postcolonial studies remained the only domain which could provide a platform to the third world voices. So, it remained as the center of hope for the marginalized mass in the third world countries.

These writers have tried their best to defend it from the harsh criticisms of the critics. Dipesh Chakrabarty, in his essay "Invitation to a Dialogue" (*Subaltern Studies IV*), not only tries to defend it from the critics especially the Marxist ones but also pinpoints its problematic relation with Marxism. In 1988, Spivak's seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" got published. This essay is credited to have brought the subalternity into postcolonial domain. In this essay, she presents women as a subaltern group. They argue that it indicates the torn consciousness colonialism brought about in the middle class people by exposing them to two kinds of existence: master-slave, colonizer-colonized, elite-subaltern and so forth.

The Subaltern Studies is now moving ahead with unprecedented momentum. The way it is marching ahead suggests that it is a rather creative as well as flexible project. That's why it's been assimilating ideas from diverse disciplines: history, literature, anthropology, culture, sociology and so on. It is interdisciplinary in nature. It is a new way of writing historiography of the marginalized mass. So, it has reinvented many terms including subalternity itself. However problematic it might be, it has brought about a paradigmatic shift in our

way of perceiving life and world. Like other poststructuralist and postcolonial theories, it is very useful to those intellectuals who oppose the totalitarian concepts and meta-narratives like modernity, enlightenment as such in the process of inquiring into colonialism. Just like postcolonialism, Subaltern Studies has got to adjust the language and theoretical strategies of the elite group to speak on behalf of the subalterns. Likewise, it heavily derives raw materials from various discourses like Marxism, Cultural Studies post-structuralism and others as postcolonialism does.

Theoretical Study of Subalternity

The term “subaltern,” as Guha writes in the *Subaltern Studies 1(1982)*, "will be used as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age gender, and office or in any other way" (vii). He includes rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle peasants into the category of subaltern classes. He, however, admits that they "could, under certain circumstances act for the elite" (8). He declares that Subaltern Studies will study "the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity . . . in short, the culture informing that condition" (vii). Subaltern Studies' commitment to history and culture is rather easy to discern. As the elite historiography is generally regarded as "official history" 'sidelining the people's history, Subaltern Studies has committed itself "to rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work in this particular area" (vii). This shows that Subaltern Studies serves the interest of the marginalized mass whereas elite historiography accounts for official history.

The history of subaltern classes is a very complex issue. Gramsci thinks that it was as complex as the history of the dominant classes. Moreover, the

history of the subaltern classes, in Gramsci's opinion, is inevitably fragmented and episodic as they were subject to the activity of the elite groups even when they raise their voice against the complacent elite groups. The subaltern classes have less access to the means by which they can control their representation. They have less access to social and cultural institutions which are the important center of representation. The only way to get rid of subordination is the permanent victory over elite groups who have been controlling every important social and cultural institution. It requires a lot of patience and consciousness. The victory, however, cannot be achieved overnight. Here, Gramsci "is concerned with the intellectual's role in the subaltern's cultural and political movement into hegemony" (78). As the subaltern people do not have the means as well as the strategy to get access to the places where elites have hegemony, they need the intellectuals to show them the way. The intellectuals, while serving the elite classes, should educate, make aware and mobilize the people. Only then can the subaltern classes be turned into revolutionary figures, who will strive to achieve independence and will get equal representation autonomy.

The politics of people has its own distinctive features. Guha differentiates this politics from elite politics. He thinks that it "was an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from elite politics, nor did its existence depend on the latter" (4). In spite of the strong impact of colonialism, it was proceeding on by adjusting itself to the prevailing condition in different form and content. So, it was as old as colonialism was. The development of nationalist consciousness, in accordance with elitist historiography, was an achievement either of colonialist administrators, policy, and culture or of elite Indian personalities or ideas. Obviously, such historiography, claims Guha, fails to "acknowledge or interpret

the contribution made by people on their own, i.e. independently of the elite" (3). In other words, it ignores the people's politics, an autonomous domain, which outlived elite politics. This is to say that the subaltern politics is different from the elite politics. The elite groups mobilize their politics through adaptation to parliamentary institutions whereas subaltern classes through traditional organization of kinship and territoriality or class association. Even the strategy of political mobilization demonstrates the link between British colonialism and bourgeois nationalism. The bourgeois nationalists adopted the legacies of colonialism. In a way, they are successors of colonial regime. The elite historiography equally claims that "Indian nationalism was primarily an idealist venture in which the indigenous elite led the lie from subjugation to freedom" (2). It illustrates how the elite historiography ignores the roles the subaltern classes played independent of elite command or headquarters during the anti-imperialist movements. Likewise, the national narrative fails to speak on behalf of the people as the postcolonial nationalist project imposes a form of elitism. Naturally the rational philosophy of Enlightenment is its impetus. In a way, this kind of project is undertaken with the Western bias. Consequently, the "subaltern issues and themes," as Partha Chatterjee is quoted by R. Radhakrishnan in his book *Diasporic Mediations*, "do not figure out in the nationalist equation . . ." (147). Radhakrishnan, referring to Chatterjee, argues that the nationalism is problematic as it "sustains and continues the baleful legacies of Eurocentrism and Orientalism" (194). Here Radhakrishnan, questions nationalism.

The co-existence of elite class and subaltern class was a strong evidence of "the failure of the Indian bourgeoisie to speak for the nation. There were vast areas in the life and the consciousness of the people which were never integrated

into their hegemony" (*Subaltern Studies I* 5-6). Despite colonialism's perpetration inhuman violence and injustice on people, the colonialist historiography claims that colonialism was based on people's assent. In short, it endows colonialism with hegemony which history denied.

Undoubtedly, the incubus known as Raj was "a dominance without hegemony" (*Selected Subaltern Studies* xvii). Ranajit Guha, in his essay "Dominance without Hegemony and Its Historiography", asserts that colonialism involved dominance without hegemony. In other words, it proceeded on with the help of coercion rather than assent of people. The people resisted against colonialism. The colonial historiography, however, simply overlooks their resistance. It undermines their political sensibility. Now it is busy in proving the British colonialism as a rule that was based on the assent of the people. It does not reflect the injustices colonialism inflicted upon the ruled people. On the top of all these, some native historiographers fall prey to the discourse of colonialism and its so-called project of improvement. All these factors are responsible behind the emergence of colonialism as a project of imperialism that involved the assent of the ruled.

On the contrary, Guha holds that colonialism was a rule without hegemony. This hegemony was either created out of coercion or it was simply imagined by colonialist historiographers while writing British history. At the same time, they, however, believed that they wrote Indian history. Actually, they had written a little portion of British history. The South Asian history was just one stage in the colonial career of the colonialist historiography. To ignore the thousand year long Indian history is definitely an act of colonial arrogance. After independence, the bourgeois nationalism inherited it as a colonial legacy. It

boasts of representing all people as it has won the assent of the people. Like colonialism, bourgeois nationalism takes help of coercion rather than that of persuasion. So, the bourgeois nationalism, not unlike colonialism, is also the domination without hegemony. So, Guha says: "In short, the price of blindness about the structure of the colonial regime as domination without hegemony has been, for us, a total want of insight into the character of the successor regime – elite nationalism – too as domination without hegemony" (307). They thought that the elite party led the great anti-imperialist movements like Civil Disobedience, Non-cooperation, and Quit India. Right, here, Subaltern Studies has developed a rather different idea. It claims that the subalterns defied high commands and the headquarters to make these struggles their own. For this purpose, they appropriate these movements by framing them in the codes specific to the traditions of popular resistance and phrasing them in their idioms derived from the communitarian experience of working and living together. So the bourgeois nationalist historiography, here, emerges deceitful as it "has made such anti-imperialist mobilization into the ground for bourgeoisie claims to hegemony. . ." (xviii-xix). And we know better what the ground reality was. As a matter of fact, their claims were contested even by the mobilized themselves.

From the above discussion on subalternity, it can be said that Subaltern Studies aspires to "rewrite the nation outside the state-centered national discourse that replicates colonial power knowledge in a world of globalization" (20). Subaltern Studies, therefore, has brought a paradigmatic shift in the perspective through revision of elite historiographies. And its outcome, of course, is that subaltern people are now identified as the agent of change. They possess the potential to bring about change so as to counter the elite hegemony.

As a new kind of national history, Subaltern Studies "consists of dispersed moments and fragments, which subaltern historians seek in ethnographic colonialism" (20). This kind of historiography, of course, "constitutes subversive politics because it exposes forms of power/knowledge that oppress subaltern people and also because it provides liberating alternatives" (20). In the process of inquiring colonialism, and its aftermath "the historians and postcolonial critics stand together against colonial modernity to secure a better future for subaltern people, learning to hear them, allowing them to speak, talking back to powers that marginalize them, documenting their past" (20). The historians should aspire to create "a liberated imagined community" (20) which "can come into its own in subaltern language and memory. They, not unlike magical realists, should make themselves free from "the shackles of chronological, linear time" (20). Indeed, it has developed into a cultural history as it is based on the culture of the subaltern people. In the process of its multicultural take off, it has been "more detached from the history project" (20). As a postcolonial cultural critique, Subaltern Studies aspires "to restore the integrity of indigenous histories that appear naturally in non-linear, oral, symbolic, vernacular and dramatic forms" (20). As we know, Subaltern Studies has already moved away from people's politics to the study of the culture of the subaltern people. Now it tends to take resort to cultural as well as literary modes to inquire into history. It, too, is a great shift in the people's perspective to know history. "The first emancipating act that the Subaltern Studies project performs in our understanding of tribes, castes or other such groups", as Veena Das writes in her article "Subaltern as Perspective," "is to restore to them their historical being" (314). In all, its commitment to restore history of subaltern people is rather genuine aspect about Subaltern Studies.

Indeed, David Ludden says that Subaltern Studies has become "an original sight for anew kind of history from below, a people's history free of national constraints" (12).

As subaltern people have now become more conscious of their situation, Subaltern consciousness is another hotly debated issue about Subaltern Studies. Spivak, in her seminal essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", gives a deconstructive reading to the activities of Subaltern Studies Group up to their third volume. She tries to assess their work in her writing. Like many other critics, she, too, finds problem with their compartmentalized views of consciousness. While assessing their work, she comes to realize that it somehow resembles deconstruction, which puts the binary oppositions like elite/subaltern under erasure. Their project, in her view, is a rather positivist one as it aspires to investigate, discover and establish a subaltern or peasant consciousness. It somehow assumes that this empirical project will lead to a firm ground or truth that can be disclosed. It conspicuously reflects European Enlightenment project because the latter, too, aspires to recover consciousness. For consciousness is considered to be the very ground that makes the disclosure of truth or firm ground possible.

In a way, the collective approach seems to be plagued with as much idealism as the Enlightenment project is. Spivak, however, thinks that "consciousness, here, is not consciousness-in-general, but a historicized political species, subaltern consciousness" (338). She, therefore, regards their effort to recover peasant consciousness as a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest. She suggests "that its own subalternity in claiming a positive subject-position for the subaltern might be reinscribed as a

strategy for our times" (345). This would allow them to use critical force of anti-humanism. However, this consciousness must be used in narrow sense, as self consciousness, if they really want it to be a fruitful strategy. She, again, reinforces their strategic use of "peasant consciousness" by saying that they (Subaltern Studies Group) should be "concerned not with consciousness-in-general but in this crucial narrow sense" (342). This narrow sense means that subaltern people should become conscious of themselves first.

Subaltern Group writers endeavor to establish the subaltern people as the subject of insurgency. That's why they propose to focus on subaltern consciousness as their central theme. Otherwise, the subaltern people's experience of insurgency would be turned into a history of events without a subject. Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay "Invitation to a Dialogue" writes:

The central aim of the Subaltern Studies is to understand the consciousness that informed and still informs political actions taken by the subaltern classes on their own, independently of any elite initiatives. It is only by giving this consciousness a central place in historical analysis that we see the subaltern as the maker of the history s/he lives out. (374)

Guha's holds the view that the alleged 'peasant consciousness' is a strategy they have got to adopt for establishing subaltern people as an autonomous domain having their own history. Spivak finally suggests Subaltern Studies Group to follow "reading against grain" approach because it "would get the group off the dangerous hook of claiming to establish the truth and knowledge of the subaltern and his consciousness" (356).

In his essay "Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency" Guha, too, depicts tribal revolts as the subaltern rebellion, which is completely different from nationalism. Subaltern Studies, in David Ludden words, "entered the academic scene by asserting the complete autonomy of lower class insurgency" (10). It is equally remarkable that the scholars from inside and outside Subaltern Studies have established subaltern people's everyday resistance against elite classes as the basic feature of life in the politically decolonized spaces like India.

Nevertheless subaltern consciousness has been always a critical point of subalternity. Jim Masselos, as quoted by Ludden, criticized such kind of essentialist notion about peasant consciousness. He calls "subaltern. . . a creation, a reification of historians" (23). Likewise, he thinks that it is merely a "stereotype of resistant subaltern people" (22). In other words, any theory, which endeavors to establish the autonomy of the subaltern classes, would erase them from the history.

Nevertheless the peasants or subaltern groups tend to resist the elite domination. It emerges as an invariant feature about subaltern groups. Obviously, it somehow makes the discussion on the subaltern mentality fruitful. Even when they took part in the anti imperialist movement like Non-cooperation, Disobedience and Quit India under the elite leadership of the political parties, they resisted the bourgeois nationalist as well as indigenous elite leaders by disobeying their orders. They would take orders from them. However, they would take part in the movements in their own traditional ways. They would derive the terms from the idioms of their everyday life so that they could make these struggles their own. This tendency, too, depicts their assertion of freedom and self-identity. Meanwhile, we should not forget that "defiance", as Gautam

Bhadra says, "is not the only characteristic behavior of the subaltern classes" (63) but also "submissive to authority" equally important feature of their behaviors. In short, "defiance" and "submissiveness" constitute the subaltern mentality. It is crystal clear that subaltern consciousness is rife with this serious conflict. Like their history, their consciousness, too, tends to be a fragmented as well as complex one. After all, they are subject to the elite hegemony.

Subalternity and Literature

When the theorists propound their theories, they think little of their relationship with literature. So, at the time of launching of the project of Subaltern Studies in 1982, its core members had not thought of its association with literature. Their objective was not to prove certain theoretical strategies to evaluate literary works. Instead, they wanted to make an empirical study of the culture of those people who have no access to "hegemonic power". In such a context, the Subaltern Studies, in their first three volumes, attempted to establish the peasants as an autonomous domain. For this purpose, they also talked of the peasant or subaltern consciousness. With the inclusion of Spivak in *Subaltern Studies IV*, Subaltern Studies, however, entered a new realm: literature. In other words, Spivak added new dimension to Subaltern Studies with the linguistic as well as literary mode. She, in her seminal article "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", announces that Subaltern Studies is not much concerned with change but with the representation of consciousness or culture; of the subaltern classes. She explores the language and textuality of the discursive power. In a way, she prefers representation to politics.

Despite the fact that her essay is not particularly focused on literature, it is supposed to have given the literary twist to Subaltern Studies as it somehow

manages to initiate linguistic and cultural modes in Subaltern Studies the way literature does. "Epistemologies and ways of knowing history", as David Ludden quotes Aijaz Ahmad, "came under scrutiny as social theory took a linguistic, literary turn" (13). Of course, Spivak did not limit Subaltern Studies to the literary mode for nothing. She had another great motive behind it. She wanted to present women as a subaltern group. And, she found Subaltern Studies as a rather appealing platform. She exploited literature in order to render with another mode: feminism. In her translation as well as deconstructive reading of Mahasweta Devi's "Stanadayini" (*Subaltern Studies V*), Spivak simultaneously reinforces literary as well as feminist modes of Subaltern Studies. In her texts, she has depicted how women are subalternized in colonialist and patriarchal society. Literature has become a point of departure for feminist agenda at the hand of Spivak. In this manner, her main intention is to put forth her feminist issues. She exploits literature for realizing her purpose.

When Edward Said wrote foreword to *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988), he announced that Subaltern Studies consisted of pieces of postcolonial histories. At the same time, he recommended that Subaltern Studies should also include writers and poets like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, and Mahmud Darwich. Said's announcement was another ground breaking moment for Subaltern Studies, for it reinforced the literary mode of Subaltern Studies. Spivak, in her introduction to "*Selected Subaltern Studies*" repeats the announcement she had made in her essay "Deconstructing Historiography." Her idea somehow confines Subaltern Studies within representation of the culture of the subaltern people. In a way, Subaltern Studies not only became a part of postcolonial writing but also that of cultural studies. Later on, the writers like

Amitav Ghosh, Sussie Tharu contributed their writings to Subaltern Studies. Now the inclusion of the literary writings has been regular phenomenon. Moreover, if we look into the purpose of both postcolonial literary writings and, Subaltern Studies, we can notice a number of similarities between them. They both try to represent suppressed and marginalized groups. Postcolonial literary writings deal with the issues like Diaspora, cultural encounter, hybridity etc. involved with the third world people.

In the same manner, the Subaltern Studies deals with the issues like subaltern consciousness, and effects of colonization on subaltern people. In short, postcolonial writings mainly speak for the sake of third world people whether they are in their own places or they are in the first world living as immigrants. Likewise, Subaltern Studies speaks for the subaltern people. Thus the culture of the indigenous people emerges to a point of convergence for subalternity and postcolonial literature. With the help of the technique like magical realism, the postcolonial literature tries to demonstrate various aspects of the indigenous culture disrupted by colonialism and its aftermath. As a postcolonial critique, Subaltern Studies aspires to inquire into elite historiographies including colonial historiography. In a way, it tries to deconstruct colonial historiography to establish subaltern historiography as the hegemonic one. Moreover, both heavily derive from poststructuralism. In a way, both have to appropriate the language and the theoretical strategies of the dominant groups to speak on behalf of the marginalized groups. Indeed, both postcolonial literature and Subaltern Studies have turned into two interrelated postcolonial discourses in recent times.

On the basis of the above discussion on subalternity, the following chapter analyzes the text, *The Glass Palace* from a subaltern point of view. So, by relating the saga of poor, marginalized and orphaned boy, Rajkumar's three generation, it explores their life history to depict the subaltern history.

III: A SUBALTERN STUDY OF GHOSH'S *THE GLASS PALACE*

Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* represents the voice of subaltern people. It seeks to make a room for occluded worldviews and experiences. The novel is full of hyphenated-Burmese-India, Anglo-Indian, for example, character – who represents and seek a sense of place and belonging – a home within homelands torn apart by colonialist and imperialist invasions and civil wars. It is a novel whose story stretches out from and around the experiences of South Asian hybrid characters as grand historical events of nation unfold. In this regard, in a review of the novel, Chris Higashi calls the novel "a beautiful multigenerational saga that is a wonderful, satisfying blend of history and storytelling" (132).

The Glass Palace includes a recorded history. Some people's immediate impulse, then, would be to read this novel as a postcolonial text that receives and has silently transformed Anglo-colonial biased histories that revises or have silenced and/or erased the subaltern presence. The novel's revisiting of historical events can be read as a symbolic and real restoration of subaltern history and cultural memory that, as Azade Seyhan comments generally, "accord meaning, purpose, and integrity to the past" (15). So, the novel guides its readers to interpret its narrative as a subaltern historical narrative. The novel gives a relative picture of historical details. Ghosh's cast literally includes kings: Thebaw, Queen Supalayath, the Burmese princesses and commoners: Dolly, Rajkumar, Saya John, Uma, etc. but what unites them all is the inescapable narrative of colonial displacement. Buffeted about by the gale-winds of history, these protagonists are driven from Burma to India, Malaya, Singapore, and back

again. In particular, Ghosh has shown the portrait of a poor and unnoticeable errand boy, Rajkumar's three generation to depict the history of subaltern mass.

The Story of Rajkumar: The First Generation

Ghosh gives voice to the poor, silenced – an orphaned boy of eleven by naming him after Prince "Rajkumar," who is associated with high class, though "his name meant Prince, but he was anything but princely in appearance, with his oil-splashed vest, untidily knotted *longyi* and his bare feet with their thick slippers of callused skin" (4). This shows that though Rajkumar looks shabby in his untidy and mismatched clothing, Ghosh elevates him to the status of 'Prince,' by capitalizing the very word prince. His parents are Indian and they live a miserable life, who have migrated from one place to another and once en route a Burmese port they die of fever, they are struck by poverty and discrimination of various kind, and they have always been conscious of their situation. Ghosh writes about Rajkumar's mother's dying words to him as she said: "Live my Prince; hold on to your life – stay alive, '*Beche theko*,' [SIC] Rajkumar" (14). This reflects subaltern people's consciousness and positive thinking towards their life. Though they have been displaced by colonialism, they do not lose confidence and morality to lead their life.

Rajkumar has been left stranded in Burma as an orphan who is the only person aware of the activities of British colonizers who are invading Burma when he starts working in the food-stall run by half-Chinese and half-Indian Ma Cho in Mandalay, Burma. Here, Ghosh speaks on behalf of Rajkumar, who observes the sound of bombings and cannon through he is "not an authority to be relied upon" from the elite and bourgeois point of view considering his position (3). Ghosh writes:

There was only one person in the food-stall who knew exactly what that sound was that was rolling in across the plain, along the silver curve of the Irrawaddy, to the western wall of Mandalay's fort. His name was Rajkumar and he was an Indian, a boy of eleven-not an authority to be relied upon. (3)

This awareness of Rajkumar about the happenings in Burma when the British are marching towards the heart of the country is further substantiated by Rajkumar's "sharp, excited voice," as he says in his fluent but heavily accented Burmese, "English cannon, they're shooting somewhere up the river. Heading in this direction" (3). Rajkumar is very much conscious about the effects of colonialism that was engulfing Burma towards the late nineties. Though Rajkumar is only eleven, he hides his age to seem a grown-up person so as to make others aware of the consciousness that he possesses. When people ask him how old he is he says fifteen, or sometimes eighteen or nineteen, for it gives him "a sense of strength and power to be able to exaggerate so wildly, to pass himself off as grown and strong in body and judgment" when he is, in fact, not much more than a child (4).

As an errand boy in the boat, Rajkumar is a "well-travelled" person (4). This is why he has come to observe and understand the plight of people across different parts of Burma and India. He has travelled from Burma to Bengal. But in all his travels he had never come across thoroughfares like those in Mandalay wherever he goes he "wanders far a field, exploring" (5). There he becomes "curious about the fort," beyond which lives the Burmese Royal family (6). But he knows from Ma Cho that the fort's precincts were forbidden ground, which adds to his curiosity as Ma Cho further tells him that there is "a vast hall that is

like a great shaft of light, with shining crystal walls and mirrored ceilings. People call it "The Glass Palace" (7). Later that night out of curiosity to know the reality of the fort, he makes up his mind to visit the palace at any cost:

That night, lying flat on his mat, Rajkumar looked through the gap between his feet and caught sight of the gilded *hti* [SIC] that marked the palace: it glowed like a beacon in the moonlight. No matter what Ma Cho said, he decided, he would cross the moat—before he left Mandalay, he would find a way in. (7)

This shows subaltern people's realization of the gap between marginalize and elite class, which leads Rajkumar to explore the palace.

When Rajkumar learns from Mao Cho's lover, Saya John who employs him as a helper in teak business later that the English colonizers are preparing to send a fleet of army because they "want all the teak in Burma" Rajkumar gives "a shout of laughter" saying, "A war over wood? Who's ever heard of such a thing?" (15). Here Rajkumar's implication is that the colonizers invade the less powerful countries for petty things like wood. Rajkumar is really concerned about the predicament of the common people at the time of war. The royal family sends its troops to deal with the invaders, and there follows a clash leading to the defeat of invaders, which consoles Rajkumar. But when he hears from a familiar, white-bearded face of his boat owner that "the war isn't over," Rajkumar is disappointed as he says "but we heard . . . (17). The fact that the war is continuing disappoints him.

Rajkumar goes to explore the town of Myingan in Mandalay after two days of the bombardment. He observes the effect of war on the Burmese common people and the houses, alleys and hops etc. when one morning a man

runs through the marketplace, past Ma Cho's stall, shouting at the top of his voice: "foreign ships had anchored off the shore; English soldiers were marching towards the city," panic strikes the market and people begin to run and jostle

Rajkumar:

[. . .] managed to push his way through the crowd to the adjoining road. He could not see far; a cloud of dust hung over the road, drummed up by hundreds of racing feet. People were running in every direction, slamming against each other and pushing blindly at anything that came their way. Rajkumar was swept along in the direction of the river. As he ran, he became aware of a ripple in the ground beneath him, a kind of drumbeat in the earth, a rhythmic tremor that traveled up his spine through the soles of his feet. (27)

People are leaving the space for the British army, pushing up against the sides of the road. But Rajkumar does not rush out of fear. Rather he faces the soldiers boldly meeting their eyes. Suddenly he goes in the front rank of the crowd, "looking directly at two English soldiers mounted on brown horses" (27). The soldiers are all over the town into the streets, dark alleys and houses.

Nevertheless, Rajkumar wanders about the roads of Mandalay in a manner that reflects no fear of any kind in reality; he is the only Indian to be freely roaming there. The *sepoys* were just a short distance away, hundreds of and thousands of them. But "he [Rajkumar] was alone in the alley – the only Indian out of earshot, surrounded by these men who were clearly intent on making him answer for the soldiers' presence" (28). When a soldier flashes out his hand to take a grip on Rajkumar's hair and pulls him off the ground, Rajkumar's head around, "he strikes him across the face with the back of his fist, shooting a spurt of blood out

of Rajkumar's nose" (28). When once Saya John tells Rajkumar's about the soldier's setting fire to the whole village of Burma as "an act of innocent evil," Rajkumar" shrugs off handedly," and says," they're just tools without minds of their own. They count for nothing "(30). At this, Saya John glances at him startled and notices something "unusual about the kind of watchful determination. No excess of gratitude here, no gifts or offerings, no talk of honor, with murder in the heart. There was no simplicity in his face, no innocence: his eyes were filled with worldliness, curiosity, hunger" (30). This shows how subaltern people like Rajkumar rise up against the colonizers though he is a minority Indian in Burma.

When the Burmese Royal Palace is seized by the British army, in some ways Rajkumar's desire to see the Royal Palace directly with his own eyes is fulfilled as he accompanies other Burmese people to the palace to bring things of the Royal family. But he does not act as other do there. He has subaltern consciousness, which makes his act differently. When the Royal family is led into exile with the servants following behind, one of the girl servants Dolly attracts him, which reflects one subaltern person's concerns for another subaltern person. Rajkumar buys some food and hands it over to Dolly thinking of the difficult time that would follow after the Royal family is made captive. But, when Dolly gives the food to one of the soldiers leading the, Rajkumar is astonished, even angry. So, he says: "What was Dolly doing? Why was she giving these hard-won tidbits to the very men who were leading her into captivity and exile?" (46). However, at the same time, he consoles himself with the thought of Dolly's helplessness in the wake of take over of the Royal Palace.

Because he sees Dolly safety and security in not challenging the British army.

Rajkumar's

initial sense of betrayal turned to relief, even gratitude. Yes, it had to be done. What purpose would it serve for these girls to make a futile show of resentment? How could they succeed in defiance when the very army of the realm had succumbed? No, better by far to wait, and in the meanwhile to smile. This way Dolly would live.
(46)

This reflects that Rajkumar, though conscious, accepts Dolly's passivity as a means to live. When the British soldiers form a cordon across the road to hold the crowd back, people begin to climb trees and gather on rooftops, looking for vantage points. At this very moment, he "finds Ma Cho weeping, and between sobs" (46). Rajkumar does not lose hope; instead he "consoles her by running a hand gently over her head because he had never seen an adult cry like this before" (46). Despite his age, Rajkumar has this confidence and determination to keep living. This beautifully demonstrates the unflagging spirit of the subaltern people, who manage to understand and care for one another or any other phenomena on despite their helplessness.

Rajkumar's recollection of the incident of looting at the Royal place by the people who are now mourning the loss of their king fills them with grief. But as a subaltern character, Rajkumar cannot understand this grief. He was, in way,

A feral creature, unaware that in certain places there exist invisible bonds linking people to one another through personifications of their commonality. In the Bengal of his birth those ties had been sundered by a century of conquest and no

longer existed even as memory. Beyond the ties of blood, friendship and immediate reciprocity, Rajkumar recognized no loyalties, no obligations and no limits on the compass of his right to provide for himself. He reserved his trust and affection for those who earned it by concrete example and proven goodwill. (4)

This reflects Rajkumar's reservation about people's loyalty to the Royal family, which is the reprehensive of elite and bourgeois class. This is Rajkumar's just questioning.

In Burma many Indians lived. Ghosh mentions that the British had brought them then, to work in the docks and mills, to pull rickshaws and empty the latrines, because in Burma people were more prosperous than in India. While leaving Burma, the king observes several Indians on the roads and streets. Here, Rajkumar wonders at the hegemonic power of the powerful countries like Britain. He says

What vast, what in comprehensible power, to move people in such huge numbers from one place to another- emperors, kings, farmers, dockworkers, soldiers, coolies, policemen. Why? Why this furious movement- people taken from one place to another, to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile? And where would his own people go, now that they were a part of this empire? It wouldn't suit them, all this moving about. They were not a portable people, the Burmese; he knew this, very well, for himself. He [King] had never wanted to go anywhere. Yet here he was, on his way to India. (50)

This shows how the hegemonic power displaces people from lower status to the higher status like kings, of which Rajkumar is very much conscious. This is undoubtedly subaltern consciousness.

After the British invasion, Burmese people are displaced and unsafe because many of the king's soldiers escape into the countryside "staging attacks on the occupiers, sometimes materializing inside the city at night" (56), which shows that subaltern people do not want any kind of interventions and they really do want independence and sovereignty and they are ready to sacrifice their lives in their fight against the hegemonic power. At this backdrop, when Ma Cho's stall is broken into by British soldiers, Rajkumar is always there to help and show sympathy to Ma Cho as "tenderness wells up" in him and he says, "Don't cry, Ma Cho" (56). It reinforces the integrity of the subaltern people in their fight against hegemonic power.

The face of Burma is completely transformed by this power of Britain. Rajkumar has no option but to join teak business with Saya John. As a conscious subaltern citizen, Rajkumar closely and minutely observes the transformation of Burma:

The British occupation had changed everything: Burma had been quickly integrated into the Empire, forcibly converted into a province of British India; resources were being exploited with an energy and efficiency hither to undreamt of. The Mandalay place had been refurbished to serve the conquerors' recondite pleasures; the west wing had been converted into a British club; the mirrored walls were lined with months-old copies of *Punch* and the

Illustrated London Times; the gardens had been dug up to make room for tennis courts and polo grounds.(66)

This extracts vividly demonstrates the effect of colonization. This is the clear example of how hegemonic power exploits everything for their interest and advantage.

On the other hand, the subaltern people like Rajkumar and Saya John spend their days and night on the forest and shattered houses. Rajkukmar works to yoke a forehead-strap. To his particular change would fall the small bespoke luxuries that were specially ordered by the forest Assistants who run the timber camps-cigars, bottles of whisky, tins of canned meat and sardines. He goes "barefoot, like the porters, wearing nothing but a vest, a *longgi* and a farmer's wide-brimmed hat" (67). This reflects the subaltern identity of Rajkumar. While dealing the other English teak businessmen, Rajkumar wants every dealing with equal footing on the basis of respect to each other. When they try to show their bossy and bullying nature, Rajkumar does not tolerate though he knows "very little English" (72). He finds himself with growing hot with indignation on his mentor's [Saya John] behalf. Rajkumar runs up to fight with the agent of the colonial power. As Saya john asks him where he is going, Rajkumar answers," To the *tai*. To show that bastrard . . ." (72). This is because he does not want anyone to be berated, which makes him lay awake a long time at night. This is the reflection of Rakumar's desire not to tolerate injustice and divide between high and low status.

Rajkumar leads his rebellious life forward in teak business amidst difficulties, sufferings and struggles in British-ruled Burma. In course of time, he makes friendship with Doh Say, an elephant herder, whom he confesses his love

for Dolly, a servant to the Burmese Royal family, with is living in exile in Ratnagiri, India. Though Dolly is a servant, and Rajkumar grows to be a wealthy businessman, he cherishes her in his mind and makes up his mind to make her own close person. He could have chosen rich and more beautiful woman for him, but his unflagging love for Dolly is the result of their similar subaltern root and social position that attracts him towards her. Long time back, in her wide eyes, saturated with fear, he had seen his own loneliness turned inside out, rendered visible, worn upon the skin" (91). In fact, he undertakes bigger business ventures in order to make up for the journey expense to visit Dolly in India. For this, Rajkumar works very hard. He hires an ox-cart at the market and employs people. He succeeds in indenturing fifty-five men and three women He "sits up all night in his hired country boat keeping watch over his recruits" (128). Finally, he earns enough to pay off the loans he has taken from Saya John. This shows the subaltern people's dedication to hard work. This proves only those beings can survive who work hand. When Saya John cautions him in his dealings with big European people, Rajkumar retorts," It's not just the big people who always know everything, saga" (130). Despite the fact that Rajkumar keeps his low profile, Saya John thinks that there is "nothing to fault in his appearance" (131). And thus, Saya John feels proud of Rajkumar who "had formidably imposing and of commanding presence" (132). This reflects a subaltern character's assertion of his confidence.

In this way, the success of Rajkumar as a businessman enables him to be on equal position with other European and Burmese and Indian people. In Ratnagiri, the District Collector, Beni Prasad and his wife Uma get to know about

the success and rise of Rajkumar. Moreover, they get to know a lot about him through the post sent to them through one of the post, they know that

He was planning to make a bid for a major contract and had come to ask the purohit to pray for him. Rajkumar-babu, the letter continued, had lived in Rangoon many years but for much of that time he had had no contact with Bengalis of the city. Then suddenly one morning, he had dropped down like a hailstone from the sky, right into the Durga temple on spark, street, the gathering-place of the city's Hindu Bengalis. He had come perfectly consumed for the occasion, in a starched white dhoti and a gold-buttoned Punjabi. (134)

This reflects subaltern people's rise in high status so as to counter and face elite and hegemonic power group in society. At the same time, it becomes clear that the subaltern consciousness tends to be religious not for religion per se but for boosting their morale up. The religious rituals performed with their typical clothing reflect subaltern identity.

Rajkumar's rise to fame is a subaltern's rise, to which Ghosh devotes considerable amount of space for representing his voice. Though Rajkumar begins his life as an illiterate errand boy, he has now

Netted a profit of eight lakh rupees – a fortune. Out of gratitude he'd virtually rebuilt the temple, paving its floors in marble, gliding the walls of the shrine and erecting a beautiful new dwelling for the *purohit* and his family. Since that time he had other several successes and had risen to eminence within the

business community. And all this at the age of thirty, before he had even time to marry. (135)

Ghosh even elevates Rajkumar to the position as he can now be entertained and received by a District Collector in India visit from Burma. But at home in India, Ghosh has doubt about Rajkumar's status to be gained such respect as he writes: "In India a man like Rajkumar-babu would stand little chance of gaining acceptance in the society of people like ourselves" (135). Again here the suffix "babu" added to Rajkumar's name is Ghosh's stress to give extra voice to the subaltern people like Rajkumar.

When Rajkumar really visits Burma for the sake of Dolly whom he has cherished in his heart from his childhood, he "brings a number of his people with him" (138). At the collector's Residency, Rajkumar is invited to dinner. When the fish is served, Rajkumar glances impatiently at the knives and forks that surrounded his plate. Then as though in exasperation, he holds up his "right hand and uses his fingers" (142). On the one hand, this trivial description about Rajkumar by Ghosh is the focus on Rajkumar's personal habits and behaviors, and on the other hand, this description shows how subaltern people are not affected by western way of living.

At collector's home, Rajkumar gets to have conversation with Dolly. As he is from poor family and he is now orphaned, he chooses Dolly as his right attachment. He says to Dolly:

Miss Dolly I have no family, no parents, no brothers, no sisters, no fabric of small memories from which to cut a large cloth. People think this sad and so it is. But it means also that I have no option

but to choose my attachments. This is not easy, as you can see.

But it is freedom of a kind, and thus not without value. (148).

Thus, Rajkumar wants to assert his freedom, which is the result of subaltern consciousness.

However, Dolly is not convinced as to whether Rajkumar really loves her or not. In reality, she loves him from the bottom of her heart. She expresses her reservation when Rajkumar proposes to her:

Mr. Raha, you must understand. There are things you cannot change no matter how much money you have. Things might have been different for us in another time, another place. But it's too late now. This is my house. I have lived all my life here. My place is here at Outram House. (164).

This shows how subaltern people can sacrifice anything for others' sake, though they are conscious of their situation. However, through the good office of Mrs. Uma, the Collector's wife, Rajkumar and Dolly get married and leave for Burma, which annoys the Royal family as Dolly is the best and most hardworking, intelligent and good natured servant of all the servant girls. The queen does not come to see Dolly off as she is not happy about her departure. When Dolly tries to meet the queen orders the gate man to close the gate so as not to let Dolly in to bid farewell to the Princesses. The Gateman's statement that "she [The queen] would sack me if I did; she said we couldn't ever say your name again in this house" (171). This shows how the elites in society exploit the poor and underprivileged people.

When Rajkumar and Dolly arrive in Rangoon, Dolly comes across Rajkumar's mentor, Saya John who she had dreaded to face because Rajkumar

had talked of "his mentor at such length that Saya John had become the equivalent of a father-in-law in her mind" (180). There she finds lost as to how things would turn out between the two of them. At their arrival, she is faced with him in person, "holding hands together, in the Indian way, unconsciously, through the force of long habit" (181). All this reflects their adherence to Indian way of life and culture. Most importantly, Saya John acts as the real father-in-law as he slips the bracelet of his dead wife over Dolly's Knuckles. He says: "It belonged to my wife; I put it aside for you" (181).

After Uma's husband, Collector's death, Uma becomes a widow and decides to go to Europe and America she first visits Rajkumar and Dolly who are very much grateful to her and they receive her with great enthusiasm. They seem to have little knowledge of one of the member of their own family. They seem to have little knowledge of one another's likes and dislikes, preferences and habits, yet the miracle in – and this too Uma could see clearly – that far from weakening their bond, their mutual incomprehension serves rather to strengthen it. On the contrary, between Uma and the Collector, every eventuality had been governed by clearly defined "rules and meanings" as he was the agent of colonial power (186). However, her husband influence on her cannot utterly be ruled out as she herself admits she has become "a creature of rules and method and dogged persistence, Dolly and Uma share a good rapport with each other.

After some years, Dolly bears Rajkumar a son who is named Sein, in Burmese, and Neeldhri – Neel for short in Indian name. And four year later, Dolly has another son. Like Neel he is given two names, one Burmese and one Indian: they are respectively, Tun Pe and Dinanath. The latter is quickly

shortened to Dinu, and it is by this name that he is known at home. For this, "an astrologer is called in to advise them on the children's names; they were to have two, as was the custom among Indians in Burma" (195). This shows how subaltern people take heed to the minor things like described above even in foreign land which is under the rule of colonial power.

The Story of Rajkumar's Sons, Neel and Dinu: The Second Generation

In the meantime, while Ghosh describes about Rajkumar's visit to Burma, Malaya and India as he is responsible for ensuring a steady supply of workers there, Ghosh equally spends his pages to the second generation of Rajkumar: Ghosh writes:

Even when Neel and Dinu are very young, it is evident that they each take after a single parent. Neel looks very much like Rajkumar: he was big and robust, more Indian than Burmese in build and colouring. Dinu, on the other hand, had his mother's delicate features as well as her ivory complexion and fine-boned slimness of build. (202)

This character sketch of Rajkumar's sons tells us about their prospective tendency and nature that they inherit from their parents.

Rajkumar's wife, Dolly has her own worldview. Dinu falls sick she makes special arrangement for him. In her dream she sees an ominous event which turns her to be what she was interpreted that dream:

She saw herself lifting up her mosquito net, climbing out of bed and going to sit in a chair on the balcony. The tai [SIC] was in darkness but the night was alive with cicadas and fireflies. Two doors away she could hear Rajkumar breathing heavily in his sleep.

She heard someone spoke: it was Thebaw. He was saying something to her with urgency. As so often in dreams, she could not tell the words apart, but she understood exactly what he was trying to communicate. (203)

The fact is that from this dream Dolly interprets that king has died. Subaltern people maintain their spiritual life as strong as they do their physical life. Dolly possesses this aspect of spiritual reality. Once in one of the towns of Burma when Dolly and Rajkumar with other friends go to explore the place, she stops at a Buddhist monastery, which foreshadows her joining nunnery at the final years of her life. Ghosh describes:

Dolly made her way carefully across the crowded roundabout and climbed a flight of stairs. Removing her shoes, she found herself standing on a cool, marble-paved floor. The noise of the street had fallen away and the air seemed clean, free of dust. She spotted a group of saffron-robed monks, chanting in one of the small shrines that ringed the pagoda's circular nave. She stepped in and knelt behind them, on a mat. In a raised niche, directly ahead, there was a small gilded image of the Buddha, seated in the *bhumisparshamundra* (ground-touching posture), with the middle finger of his right hand touching the earth. (210)

This incident indicates the spiritual dimension of Dolly. She does according to Dinu her "te-ya-tai i.e. meditation" in the morning. (238). Dolly even tells Uma that she wants to go to "Buddhist nunnery not because she is not happy with Rajkumar, but because she considers "this her life" (240)

Uma arrives at Rangoon and becomes happy when she finds Rajkumar's two sons grown up. One day, she takes Dinu for a walk to the kaleidoscopic lines where they observe everything ruined by the bombings – by the colonial power. Dinu gets attracted to these things as he is "absorbed in photography the ruins, moving round the structures" (229). Dinu specially is attracted to the shrines called *Chandis* by Uma's father. There they find images of Ganesh on pedestal, carved in moss-covered stone, and ruined to take interest in photography through which he wants record ignored and neglected history to the force.

Uma's purpose in visiting Europe and America was to understand and analyze the international situation, and colonialism. While there, she works in different organization and newspapers on behalf of Indian Independence. This influence on Rajkumar's sons and granddaughter who try to depict the effect of colonialism through photography which indirectly motivates people to rise against hegemonic power.

Uma had dismissed Gandhi's political thinking in the earlier parts of her life. Non-violence, she thinks, is the philosophy of wish-fulfillment. But later, she becomes his follower, which also inspires Dinu and his niece. She thinks that Gandhi has been decades ahead of her in his thinking. So she writes to Mahatma offering her services, and he, in return, invites her to his Ashram at Wardha. This is reflected in her statement as she argues with her nephew, Arjun who has joined British Indian Army: "The Mahatma thinks that the country can only benefit from having men of conscience in the army. India needs soldiers who won't blindly obey their superiors" (258).

Rajkumar's elder son, Neel goes into film business; he directs films-a profession which allows him to depict social, moral and political issues. So, this

profession attracts Neel. For this, he persists his father to invest in it, "When Neel persisted, he'd [Rajkumar] given him a sum of money" (270). It is the coincidence that Manju, Uma's niece wants to be an actress, who meets Neel at the studio and they soon get married.

Although Dinu and Arjun have known each other for a long time, they have never been close friends because they bear opposite characteristics and belief. Dinu tends to think of Arjun on the analogy of a "friendly and bumbling pet – a large dog perhaps or a well-trained mule- a creature of unfailing, tail-wagging good will" (276). This extract can be analyzed in terms of Arjun's servility towards his master-colonial and hegemonic power to which he often wags his tail like a dog. This is the subaltern consciousness of Dinu. Arjun has been totally influenced by hegemonic power as his vocabulary consist now mainly of "jargon intermixed with assorted bits of English" (276). When Arjun boasts of his association with the English, and his being modern as he gets to eat and do what they like, Dinu finds it "profoundly offensive" (279). He defends saying, "It's not what you eat and drink that make you modern: it's a way of looking at things"(279). He shows the photographs by Stieglitz, Cunningham and Western, and asks him to interpret things. But when Dinu actually asks Arjun cannot answer a convincingly. And finally he says the fact that "the British and Indian Army has always functioned on the understanding that there was to be a separation between Indians and Britishers" (283). In this way, Dinu's subaltern consciousness makes Arjun vomit the reality inside the British Indian Army.

During Neel and Manjus's Wedding, Uma, Arjun and Dinu go for shopping in India. There is peaceful demonstration going on all around in India.

There is peaceful demonstration going on all around for India's independence. When they wait in the car for the demonstration to pass, a marcher drops a pamphlet through the car window, The pamphlet quoted Gandhi as saying, "Why should India, in the name of freedom, come to the defense of this Satanic Empire which is itself the greatest menace to liberty that the world has ever known" (292). This disappoints Uma and Dinu. At this Uma says: "Watch out what you say, Arjun I hope you know that I was meant to be in that march too. I don't think you should be calling them idiots. After all what do you know about these things?" (293).

At this Dinu, not to offend Arjun, seems to support Arjun but expresses his view on the national and international scenario. He says:

I'm talking about fascism. The most important thing right now is to fight it. Because if war does break out, it won't be like any other war. . . . Hitler and Mussolini are among the most tyrannical and destructive leaders in all of human history. The Japanese are already aspiring to an Empire, like the Nazis and Fascists. If they succeed, it'll be the worst catastrophe in human history. (293)

Though still not so mature, Dinu can analyze the political scenario just before the World War II. But Uma blames the colonial power for every evil thing whereas Dinu goes into the nuances of history, culture and tradition, which is the example of subaltern consciousness. He puts questions to Uma:

You're always talking about the evils of Empire and what the British have done to India. But do you think that terrible things weren't happening here before they came? Look at the way women

are treated even today, look at the caste system, untouchability, widow-burning . . . all these terrible, terrible things.

This shows Dinu's subtle understanding of society and hegemonic power which has affected the lives of subaltern people.

Later on Dinu and his friend, Thiha Saw, make dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the Air Raid precautions schemes; because they are involved in student union politics. They place themselves on the far left of the political spectrum and are involved in the publication of an anti-fascist magazine" (307). Participating in civil defenses" becomes a natural extension of their political work (306). In course of this, Dinu develops a brief bond with his father, Rajkumar because his health worsens in the following day as he is almost ninety. He suffers form pneumonia and is hospitalized, yet he "keeps the radio most of the time" to update himself about the situation (308).

After some months, Dinu goes to Malaya with his loved Alison, say John's grand daughter. As a photographer his is interested in recording ignored and neglected thigs. So, he borrows a bicycle and goes to look for "the ruined *chandis* of Gunung Jerai. Dinu's coming here is his desire not to take part in politics directly. In Malaya, Dinu goes to monumental areas from Morningsid House. He becomes so much fascinated by the shrines that he takes his lunch thee and "haps lying in the shade in one of the *chandis*" (334). One day while looking down, he finds a puddle of rain water trapped inside.

The pool had the even shape and metallic glint of an antique mirror. He took a picture a snapshot – and then sat down to smoke a cigarette. What was the opening for? Had it once been a base for a monumental sculpture-some gigantic, smiling monolith? It didn't

matter: it was just a hole now, colonized by a family of tiny green frogs... that evening he asks Alison: Did you know that there was another ruin a kind of pyramid. (335)

As his intimacy with the ruins deepens, Dinu begins to find that his eye would to directly to the place where the temple's principal image would once have stood. His hands would reach automatically for the niches where offerings of flowers would have been laid. In this way he laments over significant form the subaltern point of view.

The Story of Rajkumar's Granddaughter: The Third Generation

In the meantime, Manju bears a daughter to Neel who is given two names – Tin May and Jaya, Burmese and Indian respectively in the same manner Neel and Dinu given two names. Jaya, the granddaughter of Rajkumer, with whom Ghosh moves now on to the third generation of Rajkumar's life story. At that time, Japan was advancing into Burma. The situation was that if Japan invaded, the Indian population would be vulnerable. India was under the British rule. Rajkumar's "family is pushed into jeopardy by this conflict between two great colonial powers. Rajkumar is non-plussed by one Burmese committee's decision to "get as many Indians out of Burma as possible"(393).

Dinu is in Malaya. There is war going on in Northeim Malaya. There Dinu visits sungei pattani where he observes mass exodus:

The evacuees seemed to consist mainly of the families of planters and mining engineers. Their cars and trucks were filled with household objects- furniture, trunks, and suitcases. He came across a truck that loaded with a refrigerator, a dog and an upright piano. He spoke to the man who was driving the truck. His family was

sitting crowded in the truck's cab: his wife, a newborn baby and two girls. He said he'd managed to get out just ahead of the Japanese. His advice to Dinu was to leave as soon as possible- not to make the mistake of waiting until the last minute. (420)

This incident makes Dinu very sad and tormented, so he talks this matter over with Alison who also tells him that they have very few choices. This shows how poor, people are displaced by the selfish interest of the colonial power.

Saya John and his granddaughter Alison, who are foreigners feel insecure and try to travel on the train which the English policeman at the station tells them is only for Europeans. This makes Dinu outraged and at first he requests politely but when he is rejected, he loses his temper and a sense of rebellion nature stimulates him. He then argues with another station master who is an Indian: "You don't understand. It's not just Europeans who are in danger . . . it's wrong" (425). At this the station master replies in a way which shows his servile attitude towards the colonizer. He says, "They are the rulers; they are the ones who stand to lose" (425). At this Dinu, like his father Rajkumar, cannot bear it and raises his hands and grabs hold of the station master's collar saying, "you bastard... it's you who're the enemy. People like you- just doing their jobs... you're the enemy" (425). As a result of this behavior, Dinu is badly beaten by the policemen. This shows his desire for justice and equality which the hegemonic power denies to the subaltern people. They only care about their own wellbeing.

This discrimination separates Dinu and Alison, so Alison decides to leave for Singapore on her own. Before leaving they stand at the car, Dinu holds her and slams the garage door. And Alison says, "I'll leave later-at night. Who knows how long it'll be before we see each other again? I want to spend a few hours

with you before I go" (434). This is the result of the politics of colonial power which displaces common people. This really touches our heart. When she leaves on the car with Saya John inside, soldiers on the road stop and fire; Alison also fires with her pistol, but Saya John is killed. Later Alison kills some soldiers and kills herself by shooting into her temple.

On the other hand, Rajkumar, Dolly, Neel, and Manju and Jaya try to flee to India through the path of jungle. On the way they come across "dismembered limbs" which shocks them to despair (462). To worsen their plight, Neel is "crushed to death by an immense weight" of an elephant in the jungle (463). Manju cuts short her beautiful hair in order to protect herself from the dacoits and unruly soldiers. This gives her a lot of physical as well as emotional pain:

She saw a lock of hair falling on to the grass and she sawed at another handful and then another. She could see the pile of hair growing in the grass around her feet. The one thing she could not understand was the pain: Why should it hurt so much to cut one's hair? (464).

The pain is more than physical here because women's hair is considered too be ornaments. When Dolly and Rajkumar try to console her, Manju is not convinced; she feels like slapping them because of her look. She shouts in her face: "This is the reality, this is the world, look at it, look at the evil that surrounds us; to pretend that it is an illusion will not make it go away" (469). This shows how common people are helpless in the conflict which is created due to the interest of colonial power. And finally Manju commits suicide by allowing herself to fall down the hill.

In India Rajkumar and Dolly manage to bring Neel and Manju's daughter, Jaya who is a small child. This child seems to have strong determination from its childhood. When Rajkumar holds her in his arm, the baby cries at the top of her voice. At that moment the world holds no more beautiful sound than this "utterance of rage: this primitive sound of life proclaiming its determination to defend itself" (478). Then it is the Rajkumar who has to take up the responsibility of bringing up his orphaned granddaughter, because his wife Dolly goes to nunnery for goods. Rajkumar tells Jaya about his life right from his childhood, which becomes a beautiful story for Jaya. And then, Rajkumar would begin to talk; stories would come pouring out of him- of places that Jaya had never been to and never seen; of images and scenes that were so vivid as to brim over from the measuring cup of reality into an ocean of dreams. She lived in his stories. (463)

In this way, Rajkumar inspires her a lot through the account of his reality based stories. He often takes her to the temple of The Dingyut in India. Once at the temple, the Princess of Burmese Royal family meets them. Rajkumar talks with her, which fills Jaya with pride because "every eye in the temple was now on Rajkumar. Jaya could feel herself swelling with pride on her grandfather's behalf" (484).

Jaya, as a result of her grandfather's inspiration, grows to be a creative personality. Though she marries young, she does PhD on "the history of photography in India" (482). In the meantime, she learns about her uncle, Dinu's interest in photography. She haunts every art gallery in India, locates everything that has been told by her grandfather in the photography. She even decides to visit Ratnagiri which she'd often thought of going, because Ratanagiri was the

place where her own, very particular, history had its origins- but the thought of going there unsettled her, stirring up forgotten sediments of anxiety and disquiet" (490). She also gets encouragement from her niece Bela who says, "You must go; you should have gone years ago . . ." (490). Then she visits Ratnagiri.

Jaya's first real discovery is the site of the collector's residence the place where Uma lived. Ratnagiri, Jaya finds out, lay spread out below, the perfect model of "a colonial district town", with an invisible line separating its huddled bazaars from the 'Cutcherry' – the red-brick Victoria compound that housed the district courts and offices (491). In Calcutta, too, Jaya looks through the "huge collection of documents and papers" that Uma left her, in her will (494). This reminds her of her grandfather's voice in which Rajkumar would say , several times each day about Burma as a golden land" (494). These memories provoke a new chain of thought. She reads about the birth of a democracy movement in Rangoon, which makes her conscious about politics. But she does not become totally satisfied with her findings about the tumultuous past history, so she decides to look for Dinu who is now living in Manmar.

Jaya follows Dinu to Maynmar, who is now old and weak, but gives lesson to people who are interested in "photography and history" at his private room.(505). In addition he keeps a library or an archive of photographs, where people come to observe daily. Dinu has opened a photo studio too. Dinu and Jaya explore more about photography and the history of Burma, Malaya and India. Dinu tells Jaya that with the help of Ma Thin Aye, a young girl student, whom he married later, they set up the photo studio Ma Thin also did a research on The Glass Palace Chronicles- a famous nineteenth century history, written in the reign of King Bodawpaya, an ancestor of King Thebaw's. She also writes books

about history and politics. Though they directly didn't participate in politics, they expressed their subaltern consciousness through different activities. Finally, Jaya tells Dinu about the death of Rajkumar, Dolly and Uma who died within few weeks of time. In this way, Amitav Ghosh depicts the subaltern consciousness through the story of Rajkumar's three generation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present trend of postcolonial and third world literature has been to raise the issue of marginalized groups and their culture. In this backdrop, almost all the postcolonial and third world writers have concerned themselves to represent and give voices to marginalized or suppressed voices in their writings. Subaltern Studies Group has been found to record the historiography of the subaltern-marginalized people in the third world countries. So, needless to say, Amitav Ghosh has risen to prominence in the field of English literature because of his brilliant depiction of third world experience and issues in his writings.

Amitav Ghosh's recent, *The Glass Palace* on which this present research is based relates the saga of poor orphaned boy, named Rajkumar's three generations: himself, his sons and granddaughter. Though Rajkumar is poor orphaned boy, Ghosh gives him voice by elevating him to the status of the prince by naming him after the prince. His story begins from his childhood when he is left stranded at the harbor where he used to work on the sampan. Later, when he is given work at the shop of Ma Cho, a Chinese woman who has a Christian lover Saya John, Rajkumar works very hard to the satisfaction of his employer. As the novel is set during the colonial time in Burma, India and Malaya, the effect of colonization is clearly seen in the novel, which Rajkumar is well aware right from his childhood. As the British army is taking control of Burma, there are bombings being exploded everyday. Only Rajkumar is aware of these explosions made by British invaders as the story revolves round him.

Rajkumar is presented as an experienced, well-travelled person for his age. He is knowledgeable about the plight of poor marginalized people. In Burma, he becomes aware of the gap between the rich and poor because he takes

interest in the internal activities of the Royal family of Burma. When the Royal family is captured by the British invaders, Rajkumar goes there particularly to observe how the high class people live, through he accompanies other people, who go there for booty. There he hands over a jewel he has found to the poor servant, Dolly, of the Royal family. This shows his subaltern consciousness. This also shows the bond between two subaltern consciousnesses. This also shows the bond between two subaltern characters.

Rajkumar hates the colonizers and its agents, who have invaded Burma and other countries. He is even surprised to learn that one of the reasons why Burma was invaded is for its rich wood. On the streets of Burma, he boldly faces the English soldiers. He defiantly looks at their eyes with hatred, He even strikes them. This makes them angry and they beat him severely. Once he tells Saya John that the English soldiers are just tools of the hegemonic colonial power which has displaced people. This reflects Rajkumar's subaltern consciousness.

Despite adverse situation, Rajkumar gets success in teak business because of his strong determination which is reflective of subaltern character. In this business, he helps Saya John a lot because the other European traders try to cheat them. He does not tolerate injustice and ill-treatment against the marginalized people, because he is aware of the hegemonic power's interest in the third world countries. Rajkumar thus rises to affluence struggling against the odds. This shows a subaltern character's risk, which Ghosh highlights.

Rajkumar is never influenced by the Western way of living, though there is direct rule of Britain at the time. He wears typical Indian dress, follows all rituals and traditions. He goes all the way from Burma to Ratnagiri for the sake

of Dolly and settles down in life by marrying her in accordance to Hindu traditions. He fathers two sons, Neel and Dinu and retires.

Neel and Dinu are given Indian name even though they are born in Burma. Neel grows up to be a filmmaker and Dinu takes interest in photography; he visits India, Malaya and many other places recording many historical places. Finally he opens up a photo studio in Malaya and gives lectures on photography till his death. Neel's daughter, Jaya fulfills the unfinished job of Dinu by doing doctorate in photography. She, too, visits historically, politically and culturally significant places all in Burma, India and Malaya. In this way, both Jaya and Dinu bring to the fore the colonial past through their photography. This gives the knowledge of colonial relationship with the third world countries.

In this way, by relating and highlighting the saga of subaltern characters' – Rajkumar, and his sons and grandchildren – family story, life history and their contribution, Amitav Ghosh depicts the history of subaltern mass.

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