

Postmodern Perspective in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh

Rajendra Mishra*

*Asst. Prof. & HOD (English) Govt. M.H.College of Home Science & Science for Women, Jabalpur (M.P.) INDIA

Abstract - This paper is an attempt to apply the post-modern theory in Amitav Ghosh's novels. Post modernism is a socio-cultural and artistic concept, as well as a shift in view point that has expressed itself in a wide range of disciplines, including the human sciences, art, architectural style, literary works, fashion, communications, and innovative technologies. It is widely acknowledged that the postmodern shift in perception began in the late 1950s and is probable still ongoing. PostColonial authors also perform to recapture the past, as their own pasts were frequently removed or dismissed under imperialism, as well as to understand their own culture and personal identities and to chart their own future prospects with their own terms rather than the terms imposed on them by colonialist ideological framework. Amitav Ghosh is regarded a postmodernist. He has been greatly influenced by India's post-independence political and cultural milieu. As a social anthropologist with the opportunity to visit foreign lands, he comments on the current state of the world in his novels. His works reflect the element of post modernism.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Cultural milieu, Architecture, National boundaries, Anthropologist.

Introduction - Postmodernism is an extensive movement that developed in the mid to late 20th century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism marking a departure from modernism. It is a general and wide term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction and cultural and literary criticism, etc. It is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific or objective efforts to explain reality. As per postmodernists, national boundaries are barriers to human communication. Amitav Ghosh is one among the postmodernists. He is immensely influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post independent India. Being a social anthropologist and having the opportunity of visiting alien lands, he comments on the present scenario the world is passing through in his novels. Cultural fragmentation, colonial and neo-colonial power structures, cultural degeneration, the materialistic offshoots of modern civilization, dying of human relationships, blending of facts and fantasy, search for love and security, diasporas, etc... are the major preoccupations in the writings of Amitav Ghosh. The elemental traits of post-modernism are obviously present in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. As per postmodernists, national boundaries are a hindrance to human communication. They believe that Nationalism causes wars. So, post-modernists speak in favour of globalization. Amitav Ghosh's novels centre around multiracial and multiethnic issues; as a wandering cosmopolitan he roves around and weaves them with his narrative beauty. In The Shadow lines, Amitav Ghosh makes the East and West meet on a pedestal of friendship,

especially through the characters like Tridib, May, Nice Prince etc., He stresses more on the globalization rather than nationalization. In The Glass Palace, the story of half-bred Rajkumar revolves around Burma, Myanmar and India. He travels round many places freely and gains profit. Unexpectedly, his happiness ends when his son is killed by Japanese bomb blast. The reason for this calamity is fighting for national boundaries.

Amitav Ghosh has been credited for successfully mastering the genre known as 'magical realism' which was largely developed in India by Salman Rushdie and in South America by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Ghosh is seen as "belonging to this international school of writing which successfully deals with the post-colonial ethos of the modern world without sacrificing the ancient histories of separate lands." Like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh perfectly blends fact and fiction with magical realism. He reconceptualizes society and history. He is so scientific in the collection of material, semiotical in the organization of material, so creative in the formation of fictionalized history. Amitav Ghosh weaves his magical realistic plot with postmodern themes. Self-reflexivity and confessionality characterize fictional works of Amitav Ghosh. Displacement has been a central process in his fictional writings; departure and arrivals have a permanent symbolic relevance in his narrative structure. Post modernism gives voice to insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation. Most of his novels deal with insecurities in the existence of humanity, which is one of the postmodern traits. The narrative style of

Amitav Ghosh is typically postmodern. In *The Shadow Lines*, the narrative is simple. It flows smoothly, back and forth between times, places and characters. His prose in *The Shadow Lines* is so evocative and realistic written effortlessly as well as enigmatically with a blend of fiction and non-fiction. Throughout *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh uses one end to signal the beginning of another so that at one level, nothing changes but yet everything does. There is a strong suggestion of Buddhist metaphysics in his technique. Life, death, success and failure come in cycles and Ghosh uses the conceit of a pair of binoculars early in *The Glass Palace* to sensitize the reading in this perspective. Being a postmodernist, he makes use of very simple language to give clarity to the readers. Many Indians writing in English experiment with the language to suit their story. *The Glass Palace* is not only a novel but also romance, narrative fiction, adventure fiction, and historical fiction. He combines all the elements of a novel to create fragmentation. Ghosh uses the romantic genre to chart the characters who reflect on the history of colonialism in Burma and the formation of the present Myanmar nation. It is also a narrative fiction that employs a complex spiral narrative structure to texture many characters' identities and experiences in the world where we live in. It can be read in historical point of view, since it is portraiture of history and document of nation. Ghosh invents the third person narrator who relates a story in a spiral fashion that fictionalizes and makes real historical subject and event. *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) is "not only a medical thriller but also a Victorian ghost story, a scientific quest, a unique mixture of a 'whodunit thriller', and a poltergeist tale".

Postmodernism is a blooming and ongoing area. Even if it has its own features, it is very difficult to concretize these solid elements. This paper is an attempt to unravel the postmodern perspectives in the fiction of Amitav Ghosh. Indian writing in English has stamped its greatness by mixing up tradition and modernity in the production of art. Earlier novels projected India's heritage, tradition, cultural past and moral values. But a remarkable change can be noticed in the novels published after the First World War, which is called, modernism. The novels written in the late 20th century, especially after the Second World War, are considered postmodern novels. Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Amitav Ghosh are the makers of new pattern in writing novels with post-modern thoughts and emotions. Postmodern authors also have been inspired by many factors of actions and concepts derived from postmodern philosophy. According to postmodern doctrine, consciousness and factual information are always related to particular situations. Endeavor to recover any clear definition towards toward any theory, doctrine or event is both worthless and unimaginable. The major characteristics of postmodernism are undeniably seen in Amitav Ghosh's novels. Postmodernists believe that national borders are

major obstacles to human interactions. As a result, postmodernists promote for globalization. Amitav Ghosh is the only modern Indian novelist who captures the essence of the Indian literary scene. He has a lot of responsibilities in the world of literature. He performs excellently as an anthropologist, philosopher, author, social commentator, travel writer and educator. His novels are focused on multi-racial and multi-cultural issues which he roves around and weaves with his narrative suitability as a peripatetic multinational. In his novel *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh brings East and West together on a pedestal of relationship, primarily through the characters Tridib, Ghosh's imaginative realistic plot is also infused with postmodern themes. His fictional works are marked by consciousness and revelation. In his fictional writings, migration is the main fundamental with departures and arrivals having a permanent symbolic significance in his narrative techniques. Insecurities, disorientation and alienation are given expression in postmodernism. The majority of his novels deals with human insecurities which is a postmodern characteristic. Post-modernism, which opposes western concepts, beliefs, society and norms, dismisses Western ideals and traditions as a minor part of the human experience. In the novel *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh employs the invasion of the West into the East to express the discourse on environmental and cultural issues.

There are numerous sub-topics and plots as a result of the time travel. The narration technique of Amitav Ghosh is typically postmodern. The narrative voice in the novel *The Shadow Lines* is sensible and easy to understand. It moves fluidly back and forth between times, areas and plot points. His writing style in *The Shadow Lines* is eloquent and reliable, written faultlessly and also skillfully with a mixture of imagination and non-fiction. Throughout *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh seems to be using one end to signify the beginning of another, so that nothing changes on one level but everything does on another. His technique has a strong resemblance to Buddhist metaphysics existence, bereavement, achievement and disappointment all follow a cycle and early in *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh introduced the theory of a laser pointer to avoid exposing the viewer to this perspective. And as rationalist, he employs very clear language and provides confirmation to the readers. According to Amitav Ghosh's discourse in the process of creating art achieves the status of Migrant portrayal. Language contains the steps to develop relatives that has shattered and distributed in the manure ambiguity. Amitav Ghosh reveals this in the novel *The Shadow lines*: "You see, in our family we don't know whether we're coming or going – it's all my grandmother's fault. But of course, the fault was n't hers at all: it lay in the language. Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a coming or a going at all; a journey that was a search for precisely

that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement.” Ghosh wants to believe in this language and he aims to create it in his work. Postmodernists refuse to accept complex formal aesthetic appeal in favour of a new of postmodern genres. Ghosh’s picturesque depiction and decorative usage of the tongue, language has no meaning. Feminists’ problem is defended by postmodernists. Uma, employed by Amitav Ghosh, is a prime example of this. Uma deviates from the stereotype of female characters. She is a political commentator who travels the country dispelling nationalist emotions. One of the postmodern characteristics is genre distortion which can be seen in Amitav Ghosh’s literature. He maims himself by combining multiple styles.

Conclusion : To summarize, postmodernism is a rapidly expanding and enduring field that lacks a concrete definition. Even if each big and strong has its own distinct characteristics. It is extremely difficult to present these solid elements as a concrete whole. Post colonialism, postmodern traits are certainly apparent in Amitav Ghosh’s novels *The Glass Palace*, *River of Smoke*, and *Sea of Poppies*. The novels are centered on multicultural and

multilingual issues which he depicts as a strolling progressive and weaves into the descriptive beauty. As a result, this research paper will continue to be an attempt to enforce postmodern theory with Amitav Ghosh’s novels.

References:-

1. Ghosh, Amitav. *The Shadow Lines*. Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publishesr,1988
2. Amitav Ghosh: *A Critical Companion*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.
3. Chenniappan, R., & Suresh, R. S. Postmodern Traits in The Novels of Amitav Ghosh in *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*. Volume II, Issue II, June 2011.
4. Berry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*. New York: Manchester University Press,2002.
5. Ghosh, Amitav. *The Circle of Reason*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1986. —,
6. *The Shadow Lines*,.Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1988. —,
7. *In an Antique Land*. Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1992. —.
