

Social Settings in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh is the crucial writer who mirrors the actuality of Indian reality. All his significant works have received enormous academic consideration over the globe and it has welcomed a lot of literary criticism. He has composed reliably great books and non-anecdotal composition works which have won extraordinary praise both in India and abroad. Ghosh gives great prominence to social and cultural incidents in his writings for bringing about a significant impact among the masses of this world. His creative writing, both fiction and non-fiction, in general, take on issues of history and geography as well as politics and culture. His thoughtful standpoint of the world makes him the citizen of the world, since he emphatically accepts that under the roof of the sky, the world is one. The novelist makes his books as a weapon to delete the shadow lines between individuals and nations and he needs to rebuild the world without war and as a blossoming garden with full of aromatic smell.

Keywords: Diaspora, Fundamentalism, Social Milieu, Novels of Amitav Ghosh

Introduction

In the contemporary fictional world, Amitav Ghosh is one of the most serious authors shaping fiction in English from the viewpoint of language, history and society as well as an anthropologist skilled in India, Alexandria and Oxford, got into the anecdotal world with a reason for looking backwards. His essential concern is the Diaspora and related topics, for example, migration, exile, cultural displacement and transnational social flow. In the present Indian Literary setting, Amitav Ghosh is the crucial writer who mirrors the actuality of Indian reality. He takes various obligations in the realm of literary writing. He performs with praiseworthy assurance as an anthropologist, humanist, novelist, essayist, travel writer, instructor and slips into worldwide obligation regarding building up harmony as a minister. He has dominated the worldwide scholarly principles set by the post colonial and post modern writers.

He has become the primary mediator to intervene the core social and cultural issues of India and other colonized countries. All his significant works have received enormous scholarly consideration over the globe and it has welcomed and fashioned a lot of literary criticism. All the post colonial and post modern dilemmas are struggled to show a significant level of self consciousness, going on to question the social, philosophical, cultural issues of the world in the entirety of its importance and newness. His works have started the materialization of critique of nationalism and universalism.

Amitav Ghosh is viewed as one of the Indian well-known writers. In his early years Ghosh stayed a long time in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka while studying in Delhi, Oxford and in Egypt. He writes both fiction and non-fiction, and his composing is acknowledged for interweaving history and life experiences. Ghosh

has won the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Padma Shri. He is also considered the first author in English to win the esteemed Jnanpith award.

His first novel, *The Circle of Reason* (1986), set in India and Africa and winner of the 1990 Prix Médicis Étranger; and furthermore, his other novels are *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), about the search for a genetic strain which ensures eternity and winner of the 1997 Arthur C Clarke Award for Best Science Fiction, *The Glass Palace* (2000), and *The Hungry Tide* (2004), a saga set in Calcutta and the Bay of Bengal. His books of non-fiction incorporate 3 collections of essays: *Dancing in Cambodia* and *At Large in Burma* (1998); *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), around his experience in Egypt in the early 1980s; and *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times* (2005).

Furthermore, his books form a trilogy: *Sea of Poppies* (2008), an epic saga set just before the Opium Wars, shortlisted for the 2008 Man Booker Prize for Fiction Prize; *River of Smoke* (2011), shortlisted for the 2011 Man Asia Literary Prize; and *Flood of Fire* (2015), which finishes up the story. He has also published *The Great Derangement* (2016), a non-fiction book on climate change.

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta in 1956, to Shailendra Chandra Ghosh and Anjali. He spent his childhood days in various locales – Calcutta, Dhaka, Colombo, and Iran. Amitav Ghosh studied in Dun school, got BA degree with honours in history from St. Stephan's College, University of Delhi, in 1976, and MA in Sociology from University of Delhi. His first employment was at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi. He procured a doctorate at Oxford before he wrote his first novel and then he got it published in 1986. He married Deborah Baker, the author of *A Blue Hand: The Beats in India, a biography of Allen Ginsberg*, and they have two children, Lila and Nayan.

Social Settings

The writers of fiction frequently blend actuality and fiction to reconsider the previous happenings, occurrences, perspectives and presumptions. Their significant concern being the idea of reality that existed for the period of colonial time; these fictional authors frequently focus on the political and social happenings so as to challenge the scholastic or the acknowledged forms about them. Ghosh is recognized by numerous individuals as one among the best experts of the class who arose out of the Indian English fiction during the 1980s. He has composed reliably great books and non-anecdotal composition works which have won extraordinary praise both in India and abroad. Critics have perceived his amazing intelligence as a reliable chronicler of the modern world; one who has upgraded our insight into the hidden histories and has borne a persuasive observer to some of the historic occasions of our era.

The works of Ghosh have a critical association in history and display a lot of impact by his innate association with individuals and places. The Bay of Bengal, The Arabian Sea and The Indian Ocean are the locales that have fascinated him the most. He is strongly believed to follow fundamentalism which is very clear in his literary works, which are stuffed with political, chronological and social awareness. Just like his contemporary writers, Ghosh has been incredibly affected by the political, cultural and social milieu of post-independent India.

He has fashioned the unconventional novels that cross examine the historical backdrop of mankind with rambling talks. His non-anecdotal compositions are similarly demanding and invigorating offering philosophical and social clarification on various subjects, for example, fundamentalism, history of the novel, Egyptian culture and writing.

Ghosh gives great prominence to social and cultural incidents in his writings for bringing about a significant impact among the masses of this world. His creative writing, both fiction and non-fiction, in general, take on issues of history and geography as well as politics and culture. He sees humanity in the perspective of being drawn to their destiny. His novels show the various locations in different times and sensitize them to the importance of being connected to places where what is going to happen.

His first novel, *The Circle of Reason* deals with a boy's life; his name is Alu who experienced in India and his experience living in India and later, because of specific conditions escapes to Middle East. During his movement he meets different individuals from various countries. Consequently this novel illuminates to the subject of outcast, lonesomeness, dejection, relocation and dislodging. The visuals and circumstances the novelist experienced in his own life is found in *The Circle of Reason*. John C. Hawley (2005) says about this novel:

“This first of Ghosh's novels is a complex tapestry of individuals whose lives overlap, pull apart, and separate – and sometimes find each other again in new contexts. It is a story of obsession – obsessive rationalism that some embrace as science and others ridicule as insanity (the science of “queues” and purification by carbolic acid), and obsessive manhunts. The book is an early example of this novelist's tendency to push against the limits of a particular genre: after all, *The Circle of Reason* is, at once, a detective story, a story of exile, a travelogue, a women's rights tract, a Marxist protest, a plea for humanistic camaraderie, etc” (Hawley 53-54).

Ghosh doesn't absolutely consent to the claims of historicism. He cited in *The Shadow Lines* (1988) about ‘arbitrary and invented divisions between people and nations’. In *The Glass Palace* (2000), for example, Ghosh uncovers the flash in an eleven-year-old, Rajkumar, when he looks at Dolly, an attendant of the princess, and falls in love with her at once. Afterwards, however they are isolated immediately when they are tossed into oust by the British, Rajkumar beats long periods of misfortune and at last when he has

made his fortune, he continues to recall Dolly. His fantasy turns into a reality when he discovers Dolly, weds her and moves her out of the family, and they finally go down to Burma.

His novels are full of a vivid assortment of seamen, convicts and labourers sailing forward in the expectation of changing their lives. Thus, Ghosh presents issues of all things considered. His work makes it obvious that characters are his objectives. He conjures the possibility of non-existent shadow lines between two countries and communities; he applies this plan: 'to a wide domain of inner and outer realities without which human beings could hardly live through a single day of their lives' (*The Shadow Lines* 299).

Ghosh considers the idea of man being free regardless of his background, and henceforth his compositions manage individuals of all countries. At the last point of *Sea of Poppies* (2008), he exposes conditions that supposedly were approaching, as British opium interests in India squeezed for the utilization of power to force the Chinese mandarins to keep open their ports, for the sake of free trade. Emblematically, the novel finishes in the midst of a seething tempest, shaking the triple-master schooner, the Ibis. In *The Glass Palace* (2000), Ghosh portrays the ruin brought about by the Japanese attack of Burma and its impact on the Army officials and individuals. He makes a feeling of disheartening that manages so much human misfortune, wars, deaths, destruction and dislodgment.

The Ibis trilogy is a work of chronological fiction by Amitav Ghosh. The story is set in the first portion of the nineteenth century, dealing with the trade of opium between India and China run by the East India Company and trafficking labourers to Mauritius. It includes *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), and *Flood of Fire* (2015). The trilogy gets its names from the ship Ibis, on board which a large portion of the fundamental characters assemble all at once. The Ibis begins from Calcutta transporting indentured workers and convicts ordained for Mauritius, but it runs into a tempest and countenances an insurrection.

The novels portray a scope of characters from various societies, including Bihari agricultural labourers, Bengali Zamindars, Parsi businessmen, Cantonese boat workers, British dealers and officials, a Cornish botanist, and a mulatto sailor. Notwithstanding their native tongues, the novels also present the readers to different pidgins, including the original Chinese Pidgin English and variations spoken by the lascars.

Ghosh's social cognizance arises in his every single novel. The unparalleled desire of the author is to get daybreak to the life of his countrymen and country and everywhere on the world. Through his writings he has demonstrated that he has a place with a solitary country as well as he has a place with the resident of the world. His thoughtful standpoint of the world makes him the citizen of the world, since he

emphatically accepts that under the top of the sky, the world is one. Therefore, it is embarrassed to divide individuals and the land at anyway; furthermore he uncovers his intense outrage towards the dividing phenomena. To show his indignation, Ghosh has composed his most prominent books to draw consideration of the partitioning areas and to offer attention to the needy individuals. He solidly urges individuals to be along with the overall people of the world without recognizing any sort of separation inside them. The novelist makes his books as a weapon to delete the shadow lines between individuals and nations and he needs to rebuild the world without war and as a blossoming garden with full of aromatic smell.

His works are a converse on human quest. They venture characters occupied with singular quest for truth, self-identity, and self-knowledge. Ghosh gains a global acknowledgment with his aptitude in depicting the post-colonial subjects, for example, estrangement, displacement, migration, travelling, social discontinuity, colonial and neo-colonial power structures, look for love and security, search for identity, cross-culturalism, vanishing of human relationships, colonial and neo-colonial history and so forth.

In almost all the novels of Ghosh the cross-cultural encounters are about religion, mannerism, nation, treatment, language, religious intolerance, negotiation, suffering, humiliation, realization of truth, identity and customs. These common features are brought when the characters either migrate or travel.

Conclusion

Ghosh weaves the stories by utilizing an assortment of strands of creative mind and musings amalgamating with history, politics and financial aspects. His writings approve the nexus between the historical moment and the imaginary world by utilizing the tool of portraying specific time, place and things. In spite of the fact that his characters and occasions are imaginatively drawn, they are made around certain realities from an earlier time or present. As far as he might be concerned, the characters and stories must be established in the strong soil of truth of human life. His compositions get through different structures and foundations of power in the social order. He shows his interest in drawing out the lives of characters, occasions and sufferings continuing at the core and getting noticed.

Therefore, Amitav Ghosh's novels have a stamped position in speaking to postcolonial writing. His fiction has consistently been about “communities” against the more extensive social and historical landscape and it is constantly centred on the people. An investigation of his novels mirrors the lives of individuals who settled British involved domains in South-East Asia. Ghosh has portrayed the basic sociological and political repercussions of the encounters of exile, vagrancy and misfortune focusing more on the people and how their lives get influenced by the contemporary cultural and social changes than on the enormous

historical move that fills in as foundation. Ghosh's writings are not bound to India alone; his accounts navigate various areas of the world and, in the way of doing so, present assortments of social practice in sort parting anecdotal frames.

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