
Discourse of Power under Power Play: An Analysis of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* between Displaced Diaspora and Nondiaspora

Jebun Ara Geeti (Corresponding author)

Department of International Comparative Literary Studies, The University of Sydney, Australia

Email: jebunara@yahoo.com

Received: 25/12/2020

Accepted: 26/02/2021

Published: 01/05/2021

Volume: 2 Issue: 3

How to cite this paper: Geeti, J. A. (2021). Discourse of Power under Power Play: An Analysis of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* between Displaced Diaspora and Nondiaspora. *Journal of Critical Studies in Language and Literature*, 2(3), 1-7

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46809/jcsll.v2i3.62>

Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and Global Talent Academy Ltd. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

This paper examines the causes and consequences of the shifting values infused in the displaced Diasporas in comparison to those who are not from diasporic background yet colonized. Amitav Ghosh's critically acclaimed novel *The Glass Palace* introduces few dislocated figures particularly Rajkumar Raha, and his mentor Saya John, who overlook the power play of the British acting as collaborators. Arriving in Burma as orphans, they amassed enormous profit with teak business in the Burmese forests, and gradually transform themselves into business tycoons. Utilizing colonial havoc, they become affluent while fully understand the British power politics. This novel also throws light on two other Nondiasporic characters; Beni Prasad, the District Collector, and Arjun, a Lieutenant in the British Indian Army, who equally shake hands with their European masters being part of their exploitative venture and ideological network. However, interestingly they could not flourish like Rajkumar and Saya John, rather collapsed completely under British policy. Ultimately, they committed suicide through an acute remorse. This paper shows how people from displaced Diaspora become the instances of failed Cosmopolitanism who are unable to rise as transnational in their new home. It also clarifies that, the construction of identity is interrelated with the discourse of power, and the multi-dimensional impact of power and politics.

Keywords: Colonialism, Diaspora, Non-Diaspora, Commonwealth Writers, Discourse of Power

1. Introduction

Amitav Ghosh can be considered as one of the most promising Indian authors after Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* (1981), which conclusively paves the way for all Indian writers writing in English on the issues of imperial legacy, the idea of nationhood and national identity. However, the purpose of this paper is to examine how "power" is shaped, nurtured, and developed within the natives and displaced Diasporas under an uncontrollable "power Play" of the British portrayed in *The Glass Palace* (2000). In 2001, Ghosh caused huge controversy by withdrawing *The Glass Palace* from the competition for the Commonwealth Writers Prize. In his letter to the Prize's organizers, he expressed his own unease with the term 'Commonwealth', a label that he thinks, can classify the contemporary writers emerged from the idea of old power structures of colonialism. Ghosh also criticizes the Prize for excluding Commonwealth writers who choose to write in language other than English. The author states in his letter to the Commonwealth foundation, "I have on many occasions publicly stated my objections to the classifications of books such as mine under the term 'Commonwealth Literature'.

Principal among these is that this phrase anchors an era of contemporary writing not within the realistic of the present day, nor within the possibilities of the future, but rather within a disputed aspect of the past” (Ghosh, 2001, p.1). Ghosh’s denial of the Commonwealth Writers Prize came exactly from his anti-colonial spirit which he states in an unambiguous terms: “The past engenders the present is of course undeniable; it is equally undeniable that the reasons why I write in English are ultimately rooted in my country’s history...The issue of how the past is to be remembered lies at the heart of *The Glass Palace* and I feel that I would be betraying the spirit of my book if I were to allow it to be incorporated within that particular memorization of Empire that passes under the rubric of “the Commonwealth”(Ghosh, 2001, p.1). It is mentionable that, Ghosh always rejects that he is part of the postcolonial writing movement, though the term Postcolonialism has gained immense popularity in the last couple of years. However, this term fully misrepresents the focus of Ghosh’s work while he states in an interview: “What is postcolonialism? When I look at the works of critics, such as Homi Bhaba, I think they have somehow invented this word which is just a set of representations of representations” (Silva & Tickell, 1997, p.171). An American critic John C. Hawley notes in his popular book-series *Contemporary Indian Writers in English* that, the very word “past” used by Ghosh in his letter does not suggest any imperial chess game rather “the biographies of unknown people” (Hawley, 2005). He notes that, according to Ghosh, nobody has the right to determine how they would be counted in future. Here, Hawley criticizes the arbitrary nature of the “history” of the Indian rebellion of the mid-Victorian period where the heroic, cowardice or villainous roles are not recorded appropriately. He notes that, Ghosh portrays the fate of exiled as a recurrent point which is a problem arising from the past. Hawley thinks that the novel was nominated for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize, but it was unsure that it would win the award of ten thousand pounds which has already been won in the past by few Indian writers writing in English. The critic refers to Indian writers Mulk Raj Anand and Salman Rushdie, who also blamed this problematic trend of literary or cultural grouping like Ghosh. In his analysis, Hawley compares Ghosh’s stance with Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o who decides to write future novels only in African Language rather than in English. Thus, Ghosh has just raised a philosophical point that need to be discussed by the South Asian writers, while he never blamed other Indian writers for accepting that award in the past. Hawley also defends Ghosh that, if the prize is not intended to celebrate the memory of the British Empire, why it is not extended beyond Commonwealth membership to all writers in English, as the Booker Prize is doing. Here, the critic strictly emphasizes on Ghosh’s feeling of Indianness as an Indian writer who feels unease at any categorization. However, Ghosh has inevitably surpassed the idea of mere postcolonialism in this works through his minute experiment of the imperial legacy in our postcolonial world. The reason is that the author holds an acute consciousness of the modern problems of nationalism and upholds that, only cosmopolitan ideas can resolve all those problems emerged from the geo-political issues.

Though *The Glass Palace* (2000) is structured as an epic family saga, it spans from several generations and continues to describe the histories of Burma and India accommodating enormous setting including India, Britain, America, Burma, and Malaysia. It also draws our attention to the horrific ‘Forgotten Long March’ (Chambers, 2006, p.30) that took place at the end of Second World War. The action of this novel exactly begins in Mandalay, 1885, at the critical juncture of the fate of colonized Burma when the British rulers just took over Burma, exiling king Thebaw, the last Burmese King to a ghostly town on the west coast of India. Through the portrayal of the dethroned King and the Royal family, Ghosh explicitly shows the process how a sovereign gradually becomes a subaltern before the common eyes. The sadness of the King’s settling into his captivity is depicted by Ghosh: “He sat in one of the armchairs and watched the ghostly shadows of coconut palms swaying on the room’s white plaster wall. In this room the hours would accumulate like grains of sand until they buried him” (Ghosh, 2000, p.78). Unfortunately, the King’s captors were mainly English, but the British army which withdrew the king was largely formed by Indians who had deliberately accelerated that imperial mission. Ghosh’s recurrent note in this novel is that the greatest danger lies not only in the power played by the European masters, or by many European countries that were in a competition to undertake missions to civilize the dark nations of the East. Rather, the unfathomable danger in a colonized land lies in the duplicity and deceitfulness of some double agents, who act as part of British mechanism. V.S Naipaul categorized them as “mimic man” (Naipaul, 1967) who consciously acts as collaborator with the colonizers being careless of the massive exploitation. What Ghosh strongly put forward is that the colonial masters have shaped everything in their subjugated lands so deeply that it is nearly impossible to destroy their all-pervasive impact. His observation fervently knocks us to be aware of that imperial legacy that still haunts those subject countries psychologically and politically. The prime objective of this paper is to examine how the dual agents from both Diasporic and Nondiasporic backdrop take part in colonial exploitation differently, becoming a part of the colonizer’s strategy. It will also focus on the impacts of political and military power in Burma drawing our attention to the mass destruction of the teak forests in Burma, transportation, and exploitation of labourers, especially the female workers who were double colonized under that disjunctive colonial violence.

2. Duplicity, Shifting Values, and the Power without Conscience

In the last couple of years literary theorists have rendered unprecedented contributions in experimenting and understanding the problems of subjectivity and nationhood in the post-structural and postmodern phenomenon. Among them, the most pioneering is Homi. K. Bhabha, who came with innovative ideas like ‘mimicry’, ‘hybridity’, and the ‘third space’ which emphasize the fact that the process of the construction of identity is always in a state of flux, a movement. Bhabha points out that, “mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (Bhabha, 1994, p.121). She thinks that mimicry represents an ironic compromise which is constructed on an idea of

ambivalence, and which is, “the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power” (122). Bhabha’s idea of constructiveness of identity is deeply interrelated with the extent of power structure which, as Michael Foucault has pointed out, is not simply a top to bottom phenomena; rather “multidimensional” (Foucault, 2002) in nature. From a different analysis, power is also explained as “the capacity to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them” (Jary & Jary, 2005). Thus, it is to be noted that, power has both the capacity to be multidimensional, as well as shifting in nature.

However, according to Bhabha both Rajkumar and Saya John are the “complex strategy of reform” in this novel. Freud also comments on those members as “individuals of mixed race who taken all round resemble white men but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other and on that account are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges” (Freud, 1915). Throughout the novel, both Rajkumar and Saya John are categorized as displaced Diaspora, destitute, and orphans, who came to Burma in their tender ages in search of their own homes. Rajkumar arrives in Burma at the age of eleven after losing his mother in a long voyage from Arakan to Bengal, and finally finds shelter in the stall of Ma Cho, who is half Burmese and half Indian. In fact, Rajkumar is an ideological invention of the author who represents the subaltern, being a member of a displaced Diaspora who ultimately becomes a transnational figure. But unfortunately, both failed to create their new home in a new country becoming despicable money-minded and double agents. They openly acted as collaborators with their masters in exploiting the ecological resources in their teak business in Burma and rubber plantation in Malaysia. Starting career as labourers in the teak business in the Burmese forests, soon they initiated their own business. Rajkumar started importing indentured labourers with the help of Saya from India and within few years becomes a business tycoon. Being a successful businessman in Burma, he moved to Ratnagiri, India, where the Burmese royal family was exiled with their attendants. Rajkumar had a yearning for his childhood love Dolly for many years, who was residing with the royal family as Queen’s maid. Thus, having established himself as a potential man, he became successful in marrying her in India and returns to Burma. Eventually he makes an affluent life in Burma becoming the heart of British manipulation.

Indisputably, both Rajkumar and Saya John resemble the white colonizers who commodified the ecology and established an undisputed monopoly over them. Interestingly, the exiled Burmese king also once declared the Indians as invaders who were called then as “Kaalas” in their new land as they came to Burma in search of good fortune. Here, quoting few words from one of the critics of Ghosh can be appropriate: “The line between the colonizers and colonized is blurred, even erased; colonization is run as a continuous ongoing process and often reversible” (Punekar, 2003, p.58). It is to be noted that the role of Rajkumar and Saya John also resemble the huge number of Indian soldiers working in British Indian army, who are fighting on behalf of the British. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said clearly explains the stance of Europe in the East: “Orientalism therefore is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment” (Said, 1978, p. 4). However, It is evident from the scenario of imperial past that, before the arrival of European Colonizers in the East, the natural world had its own independence, own spiritual impact on the natives. But when the capitalistic merchants started considering the ecological resources to be the way of “human development”, the natural world becomes marginalized and subordinate to human development losing its divine power. An idea of eco-commercialization in Burma and India was fully comprehended even by Saya John, who highlights on capitalistic tendency: “Yet until the Europeans came none of them had ever thought of using elephants for the purpose of logging. Their elephants were used only in pagodas and palaces, for wars and ceremonies. It was the Europeans who saw that tame elephants could be made work for human profit...this entire way of life are their creation” (Ghosh, 2000, p. 99).

However, with the shifts in power structure and unrestricted monopoly in the business of indentured labourers, Rajkumar gradually appears to be a great manipulator of the human labour who makes money importing and exploiting cheap labourers from Bengal. Clare Anderson clearly mentions that, many Indians were directly involved in the business of indentures in colonized India: “It was not only British officials who connected indenture with the disciplinary regimes associated with other colonial innovations. Indians also forged their own linkage, most particularly in viewing migration through a prism of incarceration and transportation” (Anderson, 93). From Ghosh’s portrayal of the inexpressible suffering of the indentures, and Rajkumar’s ruthless treatment in transporting them exactly reminds us of the harrowing experience of the Black people who were bought or kidnapped from African countries for sugar plantation in Caribbean islands or South America. Certainly, it was the highest point of colonial devastations of man and nature, when Burma became a land of sheer exploitation, forced migration, exile, and evacuation. Rajkumar was one of those Indians who directly conspired to marginalize the Burmese: “Indian moneylenders have taken over all the farmlands; Indians run most of the shops; people say that the rich Indians live like colonialists, lording it over the Burmese” (Ghosh, 2000, p 102). The most abhorrent job Rajkumar did as an oppressor was the exploitation of the female workers in the rubber plantation in Malaysia. One of the major investigations in postcolonial literature is the affliction of the female at home or outside. They were doubly colonized through the sexual assault by their Indian masters, and by the domination of the colonizers. Hiding from his wife, Rajkumar compelled one of the female workers to continue sexual relation with him, while consequently that woman gave birth to his child Illongo. Rajkumar had neither any intention to marry her nor he had the least repentance for that malevolent act. He found it his generosity in sending money regularly depriving the mother and the child of their due rights. Rajkumar had everything he wanted; his beloved, his two sons, a successful business of teak and rubber plantation, a lavish life like typical white British. Once he was harshly criticized for his imperialistic nature by Uma, the wife of District collector and Dolly’s friend: “You- an animal, with your greed, your determination to take whatever you can- at whatever cost. Do you think

nobody knows about the things you have done to people in your power- to woman and children who could not defend themselves? You're no better than a slave and a rapist, Rajkumar." (230).

As every climax has an anticlimax, so Rajkumar and Saya John also had to be collapsed when the Second World War turned out to be their doom. Rajkumar lost his most loving son Neel in a mishap, his daughter-in-law also died during their long journey to India. And finally, he ended up as a complete destitute in the house of Uma Dey in Calcutta, India. Saya John often remembers his drifting childhood days, and the memories and pains of his fragmented life. He never forgets how he was treated when working as a helping boy in a hospital where the Indian soldier's used to poke fun of him due to his uncertain background. They called him "dhobi ka kutta, na gharka na ghatka" (a washer man's dog, who belongs neither to land nor to water). This comment epitomizes the predicament of the displaced and rootless subaltern who naturally suffers from the sense of dislocation. Rukmini Bhaya Nair notes an acute sense of nostalgia among the displaced diaspora in *The Glass Palace*: "Any writer who seeks to present the soul of man under colonialism, as Amitav does in his latest novel, *The Glass Palace* is therefore condemned to record the exit-ential dilemma- wherein the subject is necessarily partitioned, a bewildered immigrant never quite in focus nor contained within the frame" (Nair, 2013, p.168). Undoubtedly, Ghosh has deliberately employed Rajkumar and many other drifting characters to retell the history of suppressed Burma under an all-pervasive control of power. In fact, through the portrayal the enormous flow of people from one country to another, their traumatic dislocations, burden of memories, the novel also direct us to the ceaseless anguish of the displaced Diaspora who is bewildered to recreate a new home in their new land due to their traumatic experience in the places of their origin. When King Thebaw was exiled and robbed off his power as an independent ruler in Burma, he makes few comments with profound agony: "What vast, what incomprehensible power, to move people in such huge numbers from one place to another- emperors, kings, farmers, dockworkers, soldiers, coolies, policeman. Why? Why this furious movement-people taken from one place to another, to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile?" (Ghosh, 2000, p.88)

3. False Ideology, Simulation, and the False Notion of Power

Impacts of power and the manipulations of power practice in societies, organizations, countries, or an individual's everyday existence is a modern phenomenon. Specially in this trouble-torn Globalized world, the all-consuming nature of power has evicted from the modern problems of neocolonial dilemma. But, inevitably, power play is not a modern phenomenon which was evolved hundreds of years ago when people from one country thought to invade others uncomplicatedly for plundering and ransacking. Bertrand Russell gave a precise but noteworthy definition of power, he says, "Power is the ability to produce intended effects" (Russel, 2000, p. 21) while according to Karl Marx, there is a limited amount of power in a society, which can only be held by one person or group at a time. Marx believed the structure of society is determined by the nature of its economy, or its economic base. So, if the economy is capitalist, the rest of society will act under capitalist value. In case of *The Glass Palace*, obviously the ultimate power is captured and manipulated by the capitalist colonizers while the rest of the natives hold a sheer sense of delusion, a false and deceptive kind of power. Arjun, a lieutenant in the British India Army and Beni Prasad, the District Collector under British administration are not drifting figures like Rajkumar and Saya John, yet they have failed completely to uphold their values as natives. Becoming obsessed in simulation like a 'mimic man', they think themselves connected to the British ideology being unable to perceive their positions as merely tools at the hands of their master. British power play turned themselves cataleptics who have lost the least idea of nationhood, selfhood, or the notion of belongingness by becoming an integral part of the British ideology, which proves to be a false ideology at the end of the day.

However, in *The Glass Palace*, Beni Prasad and Arjun are associated with the false notion of power, while they have formulated an idea that, British ways are the best. Having graduated from Calcutta University, Beni Prasad joined at Cambridge University and subsequently resumed the position of District Collector under the British. British education and knowledge made him acquire the ruler's ideology blindly considering them as superior and the Indian as the inferior. From Lord Macaulay's "Minute on Education" we can form an idea of the psychology of the colonizers. Macaulay articulated how the education system in India should be: "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect". According to Macaulay's theory of education, the natives would be the blind imitator of their system exactly like the Collector. However, Beni Prasad's false consciousness ultimately destroys him, leading to his death in a most disgraceful way. His major responsibility was to take care of the exiled family of the King of Burma in India, but he was terminated from the post due to the ruler's strict observation. His failure to prove himself as the best in their eyes made him suffer horribly, instigating him to commit suicide ultimately. One point is notable here is that the ideology that Beni Prasad acquired served the British well, but created a great tragedy in his personal life, who fails completely to find any objective in his purposeless life.

Arjun, a Lieutenant at British Indian army begins with the ideals in achieving greater things in the army and does not associate it with any personal or social ethics. His job is related to power and intricately linked with the rulers having no other values attached to it. He takes pride in acting on behalf of the British and falsely thinks himself privileged for having first-hand knowledge of them. Despite racial discrimination and humiliation, Arjun fails to understand that he is merely a tool in the hands of the British. Like the collector, without any confusion he holds them superior in all aspects. However, when the Japanese defeat the British, Arjun starts pondering whether it is his failure or the failure of the British. He comes out of

his false consciousness and understands his life is shaped by the false ideological networks of the colonial masters. When he was wounded in World War II, a sense of emptiness suddenly came into his mind where he finds himself merely a player who has not the least idea why was he fighting: “He had never experienced the slightest doubt about his personal sovereignty; never imagined himself to be dealing with anything other than the full range of human choice. But if it were true that his life had somehow been moulded by acts of power of which he was unaware –then it would follow that he had never acted of his own volition; never had a moment of true self-consciousness” (Ghosh, 2000, p.421). Arjun interrogates, why the Empire always exist within him in each thought while he and his fellow officials always found themselves as the first Indians to be truly liberated in a modern nation. Throughout the novel, Ghosh emphasizes that, the priceless virtues like honour, loyalty, self-sacrifice of the natives are fully employed in the service of an exploitative Empire. The author also notes that, the British brought certain liberations and modernizations, but it did accidentally good to the Indians. It was the most crucial moment in the novel when the army officers rebelled against the British Empire being hopeless in their attempts, who are thoroughly the Empire’s creature. One officer question to his colleague, ‘What are we? We’ve learned to dance the tango and we know how to eat roast beef with a knife and fork. The truth is that except for the colour of our skin, most people in India wouldn’t even recognize us as Indians’ (430). Eventually, the meaninglessness of Arjun’s sacrifice for the British makes him suffer horribly. When he discovers himself as ‘victim’ of the ruler’s ideology, he decides to live for his country and decides to join INA (Indian National Army), but soon he realizes an awkward fact that, his old loyalties to India had already been uprooted long before. Finally, he commits suicide being a victim of the politics of identity created by the colonizers in their subjugated lands.

4. Political Power, Military Power, and the Powerless Subjects

Apart from explaining the manipulations, exploitations, and blind imitations practiced among the displaced Diaspora and Nondiaspora, the novel largely deals with the impact of political and military power on commoners who are quite dissociated with the central power, or, with the exercise of the power politics. Political power is a necessity for a large number of people which stems from the usefulness of the territorial regulation. In *The Glass Palace*, political power mainly arises from the economic network, and, from the beneficiaries of the economic power network. The novel highlights two types of economic networks; the timber export in Burma and the rubber plantation in Malaya which were not commercial crops before the arrival of the colonizers. In colonized Burma and Malaysia, nature became commodified, transformed, and transported to bring teak and rubber within the folds of an economic network. That caused enormous ecological exploitation and destruction while the economic power finally turns into political power. One of the critics of *The Glass Palace* explains: “The exploitative part of capital-intensive economy appears in the form of exploitation of nature, human beings and animals. But surprisingly the beneficiaries of the system fail to notice the exploitation” (Rajalakshmi, 2016, p.115). However, the beneficiaries of that exploitation, whether they are colonized or colonizers, from displaced Diaspora or Nondiaspora, never noticed or recognized that exploitation. For instance, Rajkumar utilizes nature as an essence of prosperity justifying his involvement in the business of indentured labourers. Being a part of the economic power network of the ruling class, he thinks that he is helping people to progress, and is therefore falsely proud of his deeds. Making huge profit in the timber business he develops more greed, but finally becomes a victim of economic power when he loses his beloved son in a disaster and is forced to flee from Burma to India. Thus, being a tool of economic power, Rajkumar finally transformed pathetically when the economic power is withdrawn from Burma.

The military and political powers in this novel are shown as aggression created from some political upheaval. The Burmese military joined hands with the British and overthrew the last king of Burma, king Thebaw and Queen Supayalat from the political power. When the King loses his power, the common people came to the palace and started looting, while that loot suggests the loot of power itself. Ghosh describes the king’s loss of power brilliantly, “The palace was unguarded. The guards and sentries were all gone. The intruders slipped through the gates and vanished into the fort” (Ghosh, 2000, p. 33). After the exile, no one in the palace was interested accompany the royal family while only the Queen’s orphan maids were agreed to volunteer their service to that mortified exile. Suddenly as well as unprecedentedly, the King lost all his powerful controls over his subjects which were exercised for hundreds of years. Here Ghosh clearly shows how occultation of power happens through the process of an abrupt replacement of governance: “this is how power is eclipsed; in a moment of vivid realism, between the waning of one fantasy of governance and replacement by the next” (88). As the British Army was fighting the war only to extend their territory and to accumulate wealth, so they did not care much about the political power and finally withdrew it. But in Burma, another military power was existed due to the British that were Japanese army who fought its war with the British in Burma. Japanese army also made Burma suffer horribly by making a complete devastation of the whole land. It also caused destruction of natural resources along with the displacement, evacuation and desertion of many Indians who had settled in Burma. Thus, the political power slips into the military power in Burma. In this narrative, some political and military rules are emphasized by the author; rule of Queen Supayalat, rule of the British colony, and the military rule in Burma. Unfortunately, none of the rules has any attachment to its subjects who remains completely detached from the governing body. In this ground, one of Ghosh’s critics of this novel Rajalakshmi points out that the common people of subjugated Burma are completely detached from the governing body who define the rulers only as “power” not as part of themselves. The critic states, “the relationship between the political power and its subjects always remains as a relationship between the ‘powered’ and ‘powerless’” (Rajalakshmi, 2016, p.119)

5. Conclusion

Analyzing the power-practice and the consequential details of both Diaspora and Nondiaspora, this paper largely focuses on the powerless people who remain disconnected from the central power across the novel. Thus, the relationship between powerful and powerless is another striking issue that the paper highlights. Besides, economic network or economic power remains a dominating trait linked with the political and military power. In fact, It was the economic network in Burma that prompted the British to advance their political power through their forceful intervention into military power. The drifting figures like Rajkumar and Saya John, or natives like Arjun and Beni Prasad, all are the victims under an overriding influence of power emerged mainly from the issues of economic, political, and military.

From the last couple of years scholars have been focusing on the justification of researching and investing the relationship between Diaspora and Colonialism specially in the arena of postcolonial history and literature. They have already distinguished different kinds of Diaspora based on its causes such as colonialism, trade or labour migration bringing out its ties to the ancestral land. It is evident that, some Diaspora communities maintain strong political ties with their homeland, often think of returning, keep ties back into their origin, and retain strong relationship with other communities in the Diaspora. One typical thing among them is that they have a lack of full integration into the host countries holding a natural tendency to maintain strong link with the historical affiliation of their origin influencing the powers evolve from the economy, politics, and the social policies of their new country of settlement. Obviously, a question comes into the mind, why did they act as collaborators with the British, or any other outsiders unremorsefully? The answer probably lies in the terms called “racialization” or “marginalization”, through which the Diaspora communities are often treated as alien and fail to create profound attachment with their host countries. In *The Glass Palace*, both Non-diaspora and Diaspora have equally taken part in colonial devastation, and triggered the exploitation, but affected differently. Both have ultimately faced their inevitable doom, or their catastrophic destiny, while Nondiasporic remains completely impenitent, and astonishingly unapologetic. Power, an overused word in this paper should be examined more closely in defining the causes and consequences of the wavering values inculcated in Diaspora and Nondiaspora. Besides the shrewd power play of the British, obviously power has been exercised and manipulated in its various manifestations in this novel. In *The Glass Palace*, power emerges not only from the colonizer’s premeditated venture, rather appears to be a guiding strength in almost all the characters acting as a universal impulse, an indomitable human instinct. The very word “power” suffused by Ghosh in this text is not directly the power of the West as explained by Edward Said in his *Orientalism*, who defines the relationship between the West and the East as relationship of power and domination. In perceiving the shifting nature of power in this novel, few incidences in Burmese Royal family can be considered. In Burma, few months before the exile of king Thebaw and Queen Supalayay, a dispute occurred with the British Timber company in relation to some logs of teak. Overlooking the kingdom’s customs regulations, the British company started cutting up logs to avoid paying while the royal custom officers had imposed heavy fine on the company demanding arrears of payment for some fifty thousand logs. The Englishmen immediately refused to pay complaining to the British Governor in Rangoon, who ultimately gets furious and prepared to punish the King through an arrangement of expulsion. In that awkward situation, one of the King’s senior ministers, Kinwun Mingyi also misused his power and suggested some humiliating steps for the Royal family to please the Governor. The minister sends message to the Queen that the British would allow the Royal family in the palace only if they remain loyal like the farmyard pigs who are fed and fattened by their masters. Interestingly, the Queen responded to that message more powerfully mentioning that the Kings of Burma have already defeated the Emperor of China, conquered Thailand, Assam, and Manipur. And to protect the national sovereignty, the King would act like a monarch, not like a prince. It is worth mentioning that the Queen herself was so authoritative that she had risked everything to secure the throne for her husband, the last King of Burma. Mercilessly, She has executed the murders of all those potential rivals of the King. Throughout the Queen’s reign, the common people had only hated her for her cruelty, ruthlessness, and for her dogmatic authority and power. But, after the disintegration of tyranny, the Queen was transformed in their eyes, as though, just a bond is created with her subjects that had never existed before. It also seems that, for the first time in her reign the Queen is behaving appropriately as a sovereign, and as a voice of her subjects. Soon after she loses her power, everyone who comes through the door shows a spontaneous act of homage. Interestingly, when she is powerless to punish them, they are deliberately offering her these tokens of respect. Thus, in perceiving Ghosh’s treatment of power in this novel, it should be noted that, any power used or abused by anybody, or any society has a convertible capacity which is rooted in each organization, and everyone’s existence. In the other words, each person is vulnerable to the discourse of power in this world, whether he or she is from a drifting background or not.

References

- Anderson, C. (2009). Convicts and Coolies: Rethinking Indentured labour in the Nineteenth Century, *Slavery and Abolition*, 30(1) 2, 93-109.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*, New York: Routledge.
- Chambers, C. (2006) The Absolute Essentialness of Conversation. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Taylor & Francis, 41(1), 30
- Foucault, M. (2002). *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, ed, James D. F, 3, Penguin.

- Freud, S. (1915). *The Unconscious*, Penguin Classic.
- Ghosh, A. (2000). *The Glass Palace*, US: Harper Collins.
- Ghosh, A. (2001). Letter to the Commonwealth Foundation. 1, www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com
- Hawley, J. C. (2005). *Amitav Ghosh: Contemporary Writers Writing in English*, Foundation Books.
- Jary, J and Jary, D. (2005). *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, Glasgow: Harper Collins, 478-79.
- Nair, R. B. (2013). The Road from Mandalay: Reflections on Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*, ed, Tabish Khair, UK: Roman Books,168
- Naipaul, V.S. (1967). *The Mimic Men*, UK: Andre Deutsch.
- Punekar, R. M. (2003). Repositioning Borders: A Reading of *The Glass Palace*, *Critical Practice*. X (1), 58.
- Russel, B. (2000). *Power: A New Social Analysis*, London: Routledge, 21.
- Rushdie, S. (1981). *The Midnight's Children*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Rajalaksmi, N.K. (2016). Mapping the Power Discourse in *The Glass Palace*. *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Essays*, ed, Bibhash Choudhury Delhi: PHI Learning Pvt Ltd. 115-119.
- Silva, N and Tickell, A. (1997). Amitav Ghosh in interview with Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, *Kunapipi*,19,171.
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, Routledge, and Kegan Paul, 4-9.