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Novels of Amitav Ghosh: Imaginative Recreation

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Abstract

To study the novels of Ghosh is to study history. *The Hungry Tide* is all a recreation of the history of the dark times cause by postcolonial agents. In this novel he has portrayed the event on the island of Sundarban, an isolated and disregarded place. The issue of tigers made the Sundarban important and the same island which was unknown became center of instant attention. In the same way recreation of social past on the discovery of the malaria forms the basis of *The Calcutta Chromosome*. In another story the turmoil in Burma and India, the society that was exposed to exploitation of natural resources is unfolded under the title *The Glass Palace*. In this all his novel are the outcome his treatment of history and mythology on one hand and on the other Ghosh is master in cultural analysis of the nation. *The Shadow Lines* deals with the two significant things, one the world war and second the communal riots of 1984.

Keywords: *history, imagination, recreation, Amitav Ghosh*

Novels of Amitav Ghosh: Imaginative Recreation

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Novels of Amitav Ghosh created histories of individuals to see it in imagination and recreate those parts when there is human part involved. He explored the abyss of human psyche in the form of collective called society and how it formed through the ages that is the culture in which he lives. He created a trustworthy character of the society and history and culture that is usually not found in official writings. He establishes a kind of relationship between past and present in order to present his stories. We have read many writers who mix history in literature with an intention to recreate the past. Ghosh is at his best when he occupies his readers with the issues debated from history, mythology and traditional narratives.

Ghosh structured his novels to create ethos of the past with imaginary characters. He looks at the present disorder as result of the past mistakes. He studies the past in order to assess its impact on the current scene and opens a discussion on the difficulty of individuals who were subjected to the events of history. In his novels Ghosh portrays events with unforgettable characters that present a scene from history with present relevance. Thus creating an ethos that becomes practically real. The reader does not escape its charm and is convinced of what Ghosh tries bring home. Social and cultural ethos in his novels is so captivating that the reader keeps on reading and re-reading his novels. The ethos is all pervasive something like universal in character though presented in a very local situation. In his novels there are various types of characters at work the most striking and memorable to me is Raj Kumar, an orphan who develops into a wealthy businessman in Burma and lives a free life. A man of army Arjun, who found himself in struggle, Kusum a woman living in the refugees of Sundarban these characters contribute the significant creation of social and cultural ethos. Ghosh delineates characters and situations from his keen observation of the society. His novels are the outcome of extensive research and sublime imagination. There are certain stories that are extremely creative. He uses the available resources in the library to develop his stories and genuine imagination makes his novels one of the best in the Indian English tradition.

In almost all of his fiction he recreated socio-cultural ethos of India and even the of the places to which his characters visited for business, study and touring purposes. He concentrates on the subconscious, which colors and distorts them in accordance with personal biases and priorities. Ghosh captures the main stream of memories and events to create ethos of sublime nature and weave his stories in all its complexities. There are various historic tools he used in his works to create a work fact and fiction. This social ethos is the result of his meeting people and mostly individuals irrespective of its class position in the society, recording his story in fiction. Juxtaposition of past and present is another special character of his works. He recreates past on the basis of recorded history and adds certain fiction into it and the result is a great work of significance.

Ghosh has certain objectives before him which are resonated in one of his characters, "How skillful the tide country is in silting over its past... perhaps I can make sure at least that what happened here leaves some trace, some hold upon the memory of the world." Ghosh has accepted the task to rescuing and representing the stories of the lower class of society that combines the substance, theme and topics. He has given a kind of stage to his character to express their views and sorrows, especially lower caste characters. They are represented as the stories of the lower class itself. Ghosh plays vital role in relating these stories to reader. It is the fiction as well as the real characterize the work of Ghosh. Mostly his works is concerned with the subaltern. He presented their problems from their point of view and let the characters in his works speak for themselves.

The Circle of Reason has the characters from the lower class of society. These characters are Alu, Debnath, Toru Debi, Rajan, Kulfi and many such are from the lower class of society and they do a kind of work that traditionally inherited from their forefathers, which are not supposed to be good at all in the upper class of society. The subaltern hero is shown to be in struggle and not at all capable to cope up with. This novel shows the writers interest in the marginal class of people. In *The Calcutta Chromosome* writer focuses on those whose efforts were not recorded in the history. Tridib a marginal is the hero of *The Shadow Lines*, Fokir in *The Hungry Tide*, Raj Kumar, Dolly, Ma Cho and Arjun are memorable figures in his novels because they are the embodiment of the individual and not the puppets in the hands of the writer. All these characters present life in its totality and help us understand their problem as one among them. In *The Hungry Tide* Kusum give insight into the Morichjhapi incident and advises Nirmal hear the voices of the voiceless. Nirmal understands the struggle of these refugees as the representative of all such communities which are homeless. In *The Calcutta Chromosome* the novelist has given the characters a place to carry out their experiment and to treat the patients of malaria. This kind of practice is exactly opposite to the western norms. Mangal and Laakhan prove to be the real agents behind discovery of the malaria bacteria but their resources were inadequate to further explore it and they had to take help of Ross by revealing certain information to him that led Ross to the discovery of the malaria. But their work is not considered as the significant contribution to the society because they belonged to the lower class of society. In *The Glass Palace* the lives of servants are narrated. These servants are governess, urchins and soldiers. Their life becomes miserable after the royal downfall. This novel deals with the story of three generations and three countries.

Thus one can conclude that the novels of Amitav Ghosh reflect society and culture from various points of view. The socio-cultural ethos is portrayed by the author is trustworthy as long as the reader believes in history and its traditions.

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