Chapter II: A Critical study of *The Glass Palace*
2.1. Introduction:

_The Glass Palace_ is a world famous novel by Amitav Ghosh, which was published in 2000, which is describes the family of three generations traveling and moving onward and backward in three countries namely Burma, India and Malaya during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. However, the principle aim of this chapter is to focus on critical study of _The Glass Palace_ and draw out notions as Colonial Desire and Hybridity.

2.2. A Critical study of _The Glass Palace_:

The novel starts with a teenage boy called Rajkumar running through the city of Mandalay to find a woman called Ma Cho. He is the last surviving member of his family and comes to Burma from India with a bright entrepreneurial spirit and a hunger for success. Rajkumar’s work as an assistant on Ma Cho’s food stall takes place in the shadow of The Glass Palace, in which King Thibaw and his wife reside with their daughters, the princesses.
The novelist portrayed the life of the narrator-Rajkumar, who is an orphan boy of Indian origin, after facing lots of trouble becomes a successful teak merchant. Regarding to the marginalized identity of Rajkumar, Rukmini V. Nair said in her essay entitled *The Road from Mandalay: Reflection on Amitav Ghosh’s The Glass Palace*:

Rajkumar’s symbolic as well as real orphan-hood implies that he has to invent a family where none exists;… Rajkumar in effect to solve the same dilemma that confronts the post-colonial authors… he has to make the sense of the ‘existential’ corundum that plagues all individual who cross… the well define lines of ‘national identity’ and ‘family genealogy’ [Quoted by Nagarjun: 2011: 40]

Though he was an orphan, he lived all relations such as Saya John as fatherly figure, Mathew as a brother and Dolly as soul-mate. He made his fortune in Burma but always lived in touch with India. He built his little world in Burma but finally he took shelter in India which is known as homeland.

Rajkumar, originally a subaltern comes out as a true transnational post-colonial subject firstly by being a *Kalaa*, a foreigner in an foreign country, then by being subjected to colonization of a more ruthless kind in contributing in the great national upheaval that the British occupation of Burma involves, followed by another chaotic experience in imperial India and his foray into the Malayan forest resources. He inhabits a truly borderless post-colonial liberation beyond the interstices of race, class and nation in which his life is entangled. The hybrid nature of the colonized-subaltern who grows himself into an prosperous
businessman and comes to look like the colonizer is exposed through the character of Rajkumar, who graduates from a petty settler young man, with the company Saya John, and become a merchant who is respected in the timber trading business in Burma.

Rajkumar who was the person saw first scenes of the Anglo-Burmese war of 1885. ‘There was only one person (narrator-Rajkumar) in the food-stall who knew exactly what that sound was rolling in across the plain, along the silver curve… a boy of eleven s- not an authority to be relied upon.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 3] it was the sound of up-coming revival of destruction of Burmese empire. In concerned to this S. P. Auradkar writes,

This sound comes surging across the plain in to Mandalay, Burma travelling up the banks of the Irrawaddy River Skidding across the western wall of the Mandalay Fort, and ultimately spreading confusion in the market place. [Auradkar: 2007: 89]

She further said,

With gentle irony, the narrator tells us that the only person who can identify the sound correctly, it is British canon as the army advantages on defiant Burma in the 1880 is Rajkumar, who is merely an Indian and only a boy thus not to be believed. [Ibid]

The sound of canon raised the question of uncertainty of human lives, their existence, and survival under the colonial rule. This colonial greed changed the geographical, economic, cultural, religious, artistic landscape of territory. Sound
of canons that could be heard coming from the side of the river. It was the sign of fore coming trouble of the British rule over Burma.

Every sound of canon increases the uncertainty of lives in Burmese people. To evoke the citizens of Burma Royal Empire issued a Proclamation as follows, ‘To all Royal subjects and inhabitants of the Royal Empire: those heretics, the barbarian English kalaas having..., to uphold the national honour, to uphold the country’s interests will bring about threefold good –good of our religion, good of our master and good of ourselves and will gain for us the important result of placing us on the path to the celestial regions and to Nirvana.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 15-16] The present proclamation indicates Superiority of Burmese Empire the words like, barbarian English kalaas, national tradition and customs, and degradation of our race, the interest of our religion, uphold the religion, to uphold the national honor, to uphold the country’s interests, good of our religion, good of our master and good of ourselves. It is also an attempt to alert people from the upcoming aggression and to defend their culture, religion.

With the colonial desire British captured Burmese Empire, humiliated them and tried to enslave them. They had intended to discourage, deject, demoralize, control on them, by humiliating. Like this approach, ‘One of the King’s senior ministers, the kinwun Mingyi, had suggested discreetly that it might be best to accept the terms; that the British might allow to Royal Family to remain in the palace in Mandalay, on terms similar to those of the Indian princes- like farmyard pigs in other words, to be fed and fattened by their masters; swine, housed in sties that had been tricked out with a few little bits of finery.’ [Ibid: 21-22] It shows the humiliation of Burmese Empire. The abrupt removal of the king and the pregnant queen from Mandalay to distant Ratnagiri in the west coast of India by the conquering British, successful in humiliating the royal couple completely, also is
erasing them from public memory at home. The avarice and greed inherent in the colonial practice is seen in Burma.

Two senior ministers of Burma, Kinwun Mingyi and Taingda, are willing to keep the Royal family under guard because they expect rich rewards from the English for handing over the royal couple, King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat, along with their family. Sarika Auradkar has written about this kind of divide and rule British policy she says:

Amitav Ghosh refers to the phrase ‘banality of evil’ in the context of soldiers fighting for their British masters from neither enmity nor anger, but the submission to orders from superiors, without protest and without conscious. The process of colonization and the state of colonized are very relevant thought components of this novel. The very word used Rajkumar Kaala is objectionable, which is decolonized at least in the actual process of aggression, capture and colonization. How the Burmese people are robbed of all grace with guns and artillery. The British are only giving commands. The soldiers are fighting among themselves. [Ibid: 99]

It means the soldiers are not only physically but also mentally involved in the process of colonization. Ghosh vividly worked as a highlighter of the pathetic journey of soldiers. ‘These men who would think nothing of setting fire, an orange. I would look into their eyes and see also a kind innocence. An innocent evil. I could think nothing more dangerous.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 30] Saya John describes the piteous condition of the solders that are the only tools in the hands of their English masters.
When glory of Empire gone away, Queen became powerless, everyone dared to disobey to their sovereign. Everyone wanted to break the rules and regulations which are only for them. Exactly this happen in Burma ‘A day before, she could have had a commoner imprisoned for so much as looking her directly in the face. Today all the city’s scum had come to surging in the palace and she was not afraid, not in the least.’ [Ibid: 33] After occupying the Royal palace by the British soldiers a mob of people entered in it with the intension of looting the things. Before one day they could not enter in palace at any cost but today they have no fear for looting, disobeying to Queen, what made them like this? It is an impact of colonialism.

As the British invasion comes to depose the present rule everyday citizens of Mandalay are able to enter the enshrined building, and since began the revolt against the Empire. The people come to know it is the end of their own Empire so get our thing back from palace which belonged to them in the past. ‘Just one day earlier the crime of entering the palace would have resulted in summary execution. This they all knew – the Queen and everyone who had joined the mob. But yesterday had passed: the Queen had fought and been defeated. What purpose was to be served by giving her back what she had lost? None of those things was hers any more: what was to be gained by leaving them to the foreigners to take away?’[Ibid: 34] It is the loss of monarchy is permanent till date, and the British invasion has destabilized Burma, not only as a monarchy but as a military ruled country as well. When the common public loot the palace, very nobly they shiko before the queen, but do not stop looting the wealth in the palace.

When Ghosh anxiously unravels the implication of British invasion on Burma he also exposes historical insinuation of present condition of Burma. At the same
time Ghosh only discusses a piece of history to lay more emphasis on the rebel of citizens against their own realm. While Burma lost it all hopes other side people made their mind to possess the things from the Palace. The loot symbolically suggests the loot of power itself. N.K. Rajalakshmi in his essay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace’ states:

Ghosh beautifully sums up the situation: ‘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; in an instant when the world springs free of its mooring of its dramas and reveals itself to be girdled in the pathway of survival and self preservation. [Rajalaxmi: 2009: 123]

Through the eyes of Rajkumar we witness the humiliation of King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat. As the royal family prepares to surrender, the looters – the Burmese public who had earlier stood far aloof in fear and awe – now quickly move into scavenge what they can find in the palace.

Similarly, the British soldiers in charge of shifting the king’s precious jewels and ornaments from the palace to the ship that is waiting to take the royal family into exile also pilfer the precious articles. Ghosh here strips veils off human nature to reveal the crude and brutal greed that drives people at various levels. This desire to grab and to possess is shown to be equally common to ordinary Asiatic individuals and the British soldiers, even as it forms the leitmotif of the big empire builders. In a single remarkable scene, thus, unscrupulous greed is shown to be the animating force cutting across financial status, racial differences, caste, creed, individuals, groups, and nations.
A Colonial Desire And Hybridity In The Selected Fiction Of Amitav Ghosh: A Post-Colonial Study

Also, the plunder described in the opening scene in the large frame of the novel transcends its literal significance to become a metaphor for the raw and naked greed of the colonizer and sets the tone of the novel. ‘If Thebaw ever becomes king,’ he once remarked, ‘the country will pass in to the hands of foreigners.’ [Ibid: 38] King Mindon most prudent ruler ever to sit on the throne of Burma had said about Thebaw and it was true because King Thebaw has not ability to run the country like Burma which was to irritate the British. It shows cruelty of and Queen Supayalat who was very ambitious, she had chosen a violent path through she found the way to crown Thebaw. No school book taught us anything about the country's past before it became part of the empire relationship with Mandalay and emperor Thebaw. Here is a Rudyard Kipling’s jingle about a British soldier and Burmese girl:

Her petticoat was yellow and little
coat was green.
Her name was Supi-yaw-let, just
the same as Thebaw’s queen. [www.amitavghosh.com]

Amitav Ghosh presents Thebaw's proud queen Supayalat, who feared and admired blindly by the people of Burma. To emphasis woman’s power Shubha Tiwari differences In between Dolly and Queen Supalayat temperament. She writes,

The scene where Dolly is not able to carry a young princess in her lap when the palace is ravaged is particularly touching because one individual’s suffering looks so small and yet so poignant. [Tivari: 2003: 95]

She further says,
These beginning pages of the novel contrast two aspects of female power so well. On one hand goes the story of Queen Supayalat who is an expert in cruel court intrigues and palace politics and on other hand a twelve years old boy offers sweets to a ten years vulnerable girl. The contrast is too intense to be missed. Queen Supayalat is no ordinary women. Thebaw is ineffectual and scholarly type of person, But most unexpectedly Supalayat. [Ibid]

In defiance of the protocols of place intrigue, fell headlong in love with her husband, the king. His ineffectual good nature seemed to inspire a maternal ferocity in her.

In order to protect him from her family she stripped her mother of her powers and banished her to a corner of the palace, along with her sisters and co-wives. Then she set about ridding Thebaw of his rivals. ‘She ordered the killing of every member of Royal Family who might ever be considered a threat to her husband. Seventy-nine princes were slaughtered on her orders, some of them new-born infants, and some too old to walk. To prevent the spillage of royal blood she had had them wrapped in carpets and bludgeoned to death. The corpses were thrown into the nearest river.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 38]. The mystery of human life is such that this terrible lady goes on to live in exile, suffers confinement and degradation for love and affection for her husband. ‘What could love mean to this woman, this murderer, responsible for the slaughter of scores of her own relatives? And yet it was fact that she had chosen captivity over freedom for the sake of her husband, condemned err own daughters to twenty years of exile.’ [Ibid: 152] Ghosh even
mentions Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Indian Emperor who was taken to Rangoon in exile.

A parallel is drawn here. One thing apart from the cruel colonization, must their on subjects land and to a shocking extent. When King Thebaw is taken out of his palace, it is for the first time he is seeing his land. ‘The King noticed that his canopy had seven tires, the number allotted to a nobleman, not the nine due to king.’ [Ibid: 43] What the king loses is not just the governance of a territory but displacement from his territorial land. The loss of rule is symbolically represent in having only seven tiers in the king’s canopy when he was sent on exile, the number allotted to a nobleman and not the nine due to a king. “In the final days of Indian uprising of 1857, Major Hadson had captured Bahadur Shah Jafar, the last of the Mughals, on the outskirts of Delhi. The blind and infirm old emperor had taken refuge in the tomb of his ancestor, Humayun, with two of his sons. When it came time for the major to escort the emperor and his sons back in to the city, people had gathered in large numbers along the roadside. These crowds had grown more and more unruly, increasingly threatening.

Finely, to keep the mob under control, the major had ordered the princes’ execution. They had been pushed before the crowd and their brains had been blown out in full public view.’ [Ibid: 44] Ghosh very nicely interweaved the historic events with the present situation. Colonizers had long reach history their cruelty, greed, ambitious nature they were always ready to violate the morals. Not only in Burma but in the whole world they were in search to fulfill their colonial desire at any cost. The country like India and the Emperors like Bahadur Shah Jafar the Mughal who was very powerful at that time could not save their Empire from the wave of colonization and to force to exile. The Emperors of both
countries who had gone away from the reality of ground and they forgot their duty towards the empire. Shubha Tiwari writes about that, as follows:

**Ghosh even mentions, Bahadur Shah Jafar, the last Emperor who was taken to Rangoon in exile. A parallel is drawn here. One thing, apart from the cruel colonization, must be said that these emperors were distanced from reality, from their own subjects and land to a shocking extent. When King Thebaw is taken out of his palace, it is for the first time he is seeing his land. [Ibid: 104-105]**

Ghosh uses ironical tone of language but there is kind of hidden meaning this is a conversation in between two attendants who were already in the custody of queen and discussing about the confinement of royal couple. How emperors and colonizers made them mentally colonized.

When an Englishwoman comes as Queen’s maid and refuses to crawl this is the beginning of an encounter in between an Emperor and colonizers. ‘The Queen appealed to Mr. Cox but an Englishman came out to support of Mrs. Wright. She could bow, he said, from the waist, but she needn’t *shiko* and she certainly wouldn’t crawl. She was an Englishwomen.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 55] The abrupt removal of the king and the expecting queen from Mandalay to distant Ratnagiri in the west coast of India was an astute move by the conquering British, successful in humiliating the royal couple completely, also erasing them from public memory at home. Forgotten and abandoned, the king and queen led a life of increasing shabbiness and obscurity in an unfamiliar territory while their country was depleted of its valuable natural resources - teak, ivory, and petroleum. The rapacity and greed inherent in the colonial process is seen concentrated in what
happened in Burma, and the author does not gloss over the fact that Indians were willing collaborator in this British endeavor of devastation.

In the 19th century, Britain was expending its commercial interests, especially in its colonies. India is particular had come not just a continent to exploit and rule but a source of raw labor and a military muscle that bolstered British dominance worldwide and kept the imperial machine humming. With the end slavery in the empire in the 1833, thousands of poor’s, willing Indian workers were recruited for work in Burma, Fiji, the Caribbean and African, on plantation, in docks, mills and railroads, while others were conscripted in to the British army, turning India into what one character in The Glass Palace calls a Vast garrison.

The primary desire for a colonial venture, as is well known, is often commercial, leading to the establishment of a trading post or some such outfit. Thus, it is the Burmese teak and the Malayan rubber that force the British colonial drive. With a forethought beyond his years, the seven years old Mathew reports his unbelieving friend Rajkumar what his father, Saya John, has told him, namely, that the English: ‘Want all the teak in Burma. The King won’t them have it so they’re going to do away with him’. [Ibid: 15] Once the colonial power is firmly established and has a clear military superiority over the hapless and unprepared native rulers, it looks for, and often fabricates. A dispute with an inconvenient native ruler so as to justify dethroning him, annexing his state, company, in which the company was clearly in the wrong, it was used as an excuse for waging a war against king Thebaw in Mandalay.

The colonial powers usually win not because their cause is just but because of superior power, manipulative skill, and weaponry. The second dimension is the conquest of Burma at the hands of colonized Indians. This conquest took place at various levels. After the exclusion of King Thebaw, monarchy came to an abrupt
end, and Burma became a part of the British Empire in India. Bound together in colonial subjugation the two countries and their peoples could never come together. In the second section which called Ratnagiri, is a portrayed in which effects of imperialism are shown.

As Amitav Ghosh describe the stories of the Burmese’ reactions to these significant historical events and changes, he presents the discontent and disapproval of the masses and how they began to see the image of themselves reflected in the other, the Indians. The servility and surrender of the Indians to the British – the Burmese felt – was a warning to them to prevent them from going to such extents of surrender to the power of the British colonial masters. Ghosh has woven the whole historical circumstances together with the colonial past. It encompass the colonial rule of nearly a whole century in Burma, Malay, and India, starting from the Anglo-Burmese War of 1885 – in fact the “war” was no war at all as the Mandalay surrendered to the British almost without a fight – through the chaos of the two world wars right up to the age of e-mail and internet. It is a cusp narrative opening out on the pre-independence era and ending in post-independence days. Ira Pande appropriately describes the novel as follows:

Spanning centuries and generations and straddling the space of countries, India, Burma and Malay, this is a saga that could have exhausted the skills of a lesser writer. But in the hands of Ghosh, historian by training, an adventures traveler and a sensitive writer of fiction it becomes a confluence of all three. With remarkable sleight of hand, Ghosh juggles history, fiction and travel writing to produce a story that can be read variously as history of Burma over the last two centuries, an enduring
romance between two families and a travelogue about a forgotten Buddhist territory. [www.amitavghosh.com]

The pathetic journey of Royal couple started to India after the defeat which causes the exile. The second part of the novel deals with the awkward beginning of a new life for King Thebaw and his family as they try to settle in to the port town of Ratnagiri, north of Goa. Events conspire to weave Outram House more firmly in to the life of Ratnagiri than had been expected. Ghosh is writing the history of Burma that lost its age old heritage, monarchy and the pathos of royal family. Colonisation exposed Burma of its realm bringing unrest and instability to the entire country till today.

The last king of Burma, King Thebaw, was stripped of all powers as a king. He and his queen, Queen Supayalat and the three princesses were forcefully evicted out of their country and exiled to India to live as prisoners there with no scope of a return home. Burma eventually saw the death of King Thebaw as a prisoner in Ratnagiri, India. Apart from all these King Thebaw is respected by the local community, and in time the family comes to feel secure and even happy in their new surroundings with Indian culture, traditions and customs. B. K. Nagarajan in his assay states:

The King Thebaw, however, accepts his fete more or less like a philosopher. As a result of his early trainings of a monk he reigns over the fishermen of Ratnagiri, foretelling when there would be a storm, how many boats returns from sea. But it is in Queen Supalayat that one sees the dehumanization of colonial process. She lives in the dilapidated Outrm House allowing slums to grow in the surrounding area, and welcomes the few
guests she occasionally has in defiance. Her attitude is clear in the proud, thin lipped smile she has for all of them. [Opp, Cite. 2011: 41]

Ghosh visibly demonstrate British desire to keep alive the royal families of India and Burma, but the way these princes and princesses are kept, it questions the basic ideology of the Western civilization which the ruling power possesses. The arrival of new Collector awakes feelings of hatred to the colonial government, especially for Queen Supalayat who gritted with new Collector coldly she says to him, ‘Yes, look around you, look at how we live. Yes, we who ruled the richest land in Asia are now reduced to this. This is what they have done to us, this is what they will do to all of Burma. They took our kingdom, promising roads and railways and ports, but mark my words, this is how it will end. In a few decades the wealth will be gone—all the gems, the timber and the oil—and then they too will leave.

In our golden Burma where no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to write and read, all that will remain is destitution and ignorance, famine and despair. We were the first to be imprisoned in the name of their progress; millions more will follow. This is what awaits us all: this is how we will all end—as prisoners, in shantytowns born of the plague. A hundred years hence you will read the indictment of Europe’s greed in the difference between the kingdom of Siam and the state of our own enslaved realm.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 88] Dolly is only one maid servant who has been living with exiled royal family in their crucial day in Ratnagiri. When other maids the seven girls left them Evelyn, Augusta, Mary, Wahthau, Nan Pau, Minlwin, and even Hemau, who was, of all of them, the closest to Dolly in age. Dolly was now one of the last remaining members of the original Mandalay contingent she has a duty to teach the new local staff the ways
of the household. She dedicated her loyalty to the royal family. She remains with them in the most critical situation. There is no home for she to go back and has nothing to look forward to.

The new ayahs and maids came to Dolly when they wanted to know how things were done in the Mandalay palace. It was she who had to teach them how to *shiko* and how to move about the Queen’s bedroom on their hands and knees. It was very hard at first, for she couldn’t make herself understood. She would explain everything in the politest way but they wouldn’t understand so she would shout louder and louder and they would become more and more frightened. She also learnt the English and Marathi language to converse with local servants. Dolly managed an outbreak of plague with the help of Savant a local coachman. Apart from this she has her own feelings, emotions she wanted to share and she chooses Savant a chief servant. Shubha Tiwari writes,

> She has nothing to look forward to. She cannot dream for herself. Her life is an appendage, a depending extension of royal family. Sex comes as a handy rescue for this young girl to maintain her sanity. [Opp, Cite. 2003: 96]

Once, Dolly and Savant caught during sex by first Princess who herself is growing in to a women and is needful of physical engagement now became furies and shouted, ‘She ordered Dolly to dress, to leave the room. ‘If I ever see you alone again together, I will go to Her Majesty. You are servants. You will be thrown out.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 86] After that incident she snatches Savant got pregnant from him. It shows the desire, an imperial desire of second Princess that having Savant as a lover. Means, the blood never change if you live in freedom or exile. Ghosh keeps the novel moving to imminent where lots of upcoming turns one of those is
the arrival of Collector Dey and his wife, ‘at a time when politics was much on people’s minds. Every day there were reports of meetings, marches and petitions: people were being told to boycott British-made goods; women were making bonfires of Lancashire cloth.

In the Far East there was the war between Russia and Japan and for the first time it looked as though an Asian country might prevail against a European power. The Indian papers were full of news of this war and what it would mean for colonized countries.’ [Ibid; 105] In 1905, the nineteenth year of the King’s exile, a new District Collector arrived in Ratnagiri. The Collector was the district’s administrative head, the official who was ultimately responsible for dealing with the Burmese Royal Family. The first decade of 20th century was a period of sensational incidents in world politics. In India the movement of independence took momentum and other side the practice of 2nd world war was going on. There was a little bit hope to King Thebaw observing such a condition he asked to Collector, ‘did you ever think that we would live to witness the day when an Eastern country would defeat a European power?’[Ibid: 107] Then Collector replied, ‘The Empire is today stronger than it has ever been. You have only to glance at a map of the world to see the truth of this.’ [Ibid: 107] It shows an encounter between a setting Emperor and a colonial representative. In such a condition Asian countries were trying to rebel against the colonial rule of British. In this circumstances District Collector Beny Prasad Dey trying to follow colonial protocols. Sarika Auradkar writes,

By the beginning the 20th century, the British Empire had evolved from being a powerful trading presents in to a huge government apparatus, imposing it hierarchies and protocol on its colonies. Figures such as the Collector were instrumental in
enforcing its myriad colonial rules, even the most absurd once, such a treating the kind of Burma like caged animal and controlling who his daughters, the princess, could marry. [Opp, Cite. 2007: 89]

Uma is another protagonist of novel in the first meeting with the Royal family she handled the awkward situation smoothly. Queen Supayalat also impressed by her, Uma, the Collector’s wife, is able to help bridge the gap by befriending Dolly. ‘she was impressed by the way the young woman had intervened to save the situation. Self-possession was a quality she’d always admired.

There was something attractive about this woman, Uma Dey; the liveliness of her manner was a welcome contrast to her husband’s arrogance.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 108] Dolly’s friendship with Uma Dey matures her and gives her a personality. Both Dolly and Uma are victims of the same colonial supremacy and share a deep understanding and respect for each other’s predicament. Dolly however; tolerate the burden of slavery also at the hands of the Burmese royalty. However, both are very quick to recognize their respective status and any colonial injustice. A significant conversation between Dolly and Uma also gives occasion to question established thinking and historical fact it shows imperialism and colonialism are reflection of each other. ‘One night, plucking up her courage, Uma remarked: ‘One hears some awful things about Queen Supayalat.’ ‘What?’ ‘That she had a lot of people killed… in Mandalay…’ Dolly was quiet for a moment and Uma began to worry that she had offended her. Then Dolly spoke up. ‘You know Uma’ she said in her softest voice. ‘Every time I come to your house, I notice that picture you have hanging by your front door…’ ‘Of Queen Victoria, you mean?’
'Yes.'
Uma was puzzled. 'What about it?'
'Don’t you sometimes wonder how many people have been killed in Queen Victoria’s name? It must be millions wouldn’t you say? I think I’d be frightened to live with one of those pictures.' A few days later, Uma put the picture down and sent it to the Cutchery, to be hung in the Collector’s office.’ [Ibid: 114]. Ghosh nicely shows the demonstration of pride and prejudice of such protagonists under the influence of colonialism. N.K. Rajalakshmi in his essay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace says:

Conversation between Uma and Dolly tells us exactly the difference that the floating power makes on Burma. Like the British, Uma is also under the impression that the Burmese have been helped by the British invasion. [Opp, Cite. 2009: 123]

After the removal of King from Burma, colonizers started to fulfill their colonial desire by extending their empire to strengthen their economy. At first their crooked eyes found the natural resources of Burma. ‘Courtly Mandalay was now a bustling commercial hub; resources were being exploited with an energy and efficiency hitherto undreamt of. The Mandalay palace had been refurbished to serve the conquerors’ recondite pleasures: the west wing had been converted into a British Club; the Queen’s Hall of Audience had now become a billiard room;’ [Ghosh: 2000: 66].

In other hand Rajkumar has been continuing the hardships of the teak trade, having witnessed man and monster working together on an epic scale as elephants transport large volumes of wood down from the forests for sell in to the British
Empire’s vastly growing markets. N.K. Rajalakshmi in his assay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace’ says:

The political power concentrated on Burma as a source to improve the economy of its kingdom. The economic status of the colony was secondary to it. The colonial political network extended its territory in those lands which were rich in natural and human resources. Its rule in Burma and India was restricted to exploitation and extraction of natural wealth rather than territorial governance. [Ibid]

Here Saya John tells Rajkumar about how the Europeans make teak business so easy by involving elephants. ‘Yet until the Europeans came none of them had ever thought of using elephants for the purposes of logging. Their elephants were used in pagodas and palaces, for wars and ceremonies. It was the Europeans who saw that tame elephants could be made to work for human profit.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 74]

N.K. Rajalakshmi in his assay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace’ states:

The elephants that were the symbol of power, dignity and authority are transformed into commodity. Elephants turn out to be slaves and object of profit. Power, when moved from one form to another, completely dismantled the earlier system; it ruptured and percolated through the earlier mode. The political power capacitated itself to change the ideological, economic and military network of the system. [Ibid]
Colonizers not only ruled over human being but also controlled nature. Their dominative desire bent the nature as they wished as it, ‘You see that man, Rajkumar?’ he said. ‘That is someone you can learn from. To bend the work of nature to your will; to make the trees of the earth useful to human beings- what could be more admirable, more exciting than this? That is what I would say to a boy who has his life before him.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 75]

Rajkumar was new in the business so he was unknown of colonial supremacy over the poor workers who brought from various nations. They were forced to migrate for survival many of them were Indians who treated as an animal. The supervisors harasses, annoy, demoralize, discourage them, ‘But there was a time once when an Assistant began to berate Saya John, accusing him of having forgotten something he had ordered. ‘Take that grinning face out of here . . .’,’ the Englishman shouted, ‘I’ll see you in hell, Johnny Chinaman.’ At the time Rajkumar knew very little English but there was no mistaking the anger and contempt in the Assistant’s voice.’ [Ibid: 72] Rajkumar become more practical as a companion of Saya John and starts his own timber yard and being a successful businessman. Rajkumar concentrate his freedom from family tie into developing his own business and he by taking loan from Soya John starts his own timber yard. Rajkumar says: ‘If I am even going to make this business grow I will have to take few risks’ [Ibid: 130]. Rajkumar develops his business by his willpower, hard work and forgetting the barriers of nationhood. On his success in business, Rajkumar search for Dolly who is gone with royal family in charge of collector.

Rajkumar uses his good offices in tracing and meeting collector for Dolly only. Collector’s wife Uma Dey is arranging meeting of Rajkumar with Dolly. He undertakes journey to India and see Uma Collector’s wife, the Collector being in charge of royal family of king Thebaw and her princess in exile in Ratnagiri part
of Indian Territory under British rule. Rajkumar who has gone to collector with a hope to find Dolly, did find her and marries her with help of Uma Dey – collector’s wife and recoups his early life and he with Dolly is happy and have two sons Neel and Dinu. Other side Uma and Collector Dey are not happy with each other the bond between them is weak. N.K. Rajalakshmi in his assay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace’ quoted: ‘She was more comfortable with and faithful to the prisoner than the jailer.’ [Ibid: 117] The Collector was highly educated in foreign so his desire to live likes colonizers and Uma’ attachment with Indian virtues makes differences between them. Dey was approximately fascinated by the British and their way of life. The education had not only given him knowledge but also had made him obtain an ideology of the ruler. It made him treat the British as the superior and the Indian inferior. So he tries to prove himself an extraordinary who is more close to the British then Indian ways of life.

Ghosh comments on this strange relation between then, ‘The wifely virtues she could offer him he had no use for: Cambridge had taught him to want more; to make sure that nothing was held in abeyance, to bargain for a woman’s soul with the coin of kindness and patience. The thought of this terrified her. This was subjection beyond decency, beyond her imagining. She could not bring herself to think of it. Anything would be better than to submit.’[Ghosh: 2000: 153] As a result of which their family is disturbed. Shubha Tiwari picks out the features of Uma and Collector Dey’s nature. She writes,

The collector wants mental connection with Uma. Her resources prove to be inadequate on this account. She does not love her husband. She does not trust him. She may be having ‘wife virtues’ namely timely supply of needs, patience, passivity etc.
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but a bond with husband is something she dreads. The Collector on other hand is a different type of man. We can say he is intellectually emancipated. He selected Uma after seeing her at a puja when she was sixteen. He wanted a flexible girl who is not settled in her ideas and behavior. [Opp, Cite. 2003: 98]

Uma Dey’s husband commits suicide as he fails to control Royal family because one of the princesses is pregnant. ‘His failure leads to his death. Queen Supalayat spits in to the garden in commemoration of her jailer’s death.’ [Opp, Cite. 2009: 123]

The colonial desire he acquired from British leads to great personal tragedy. He could not understand the feelings, importance of others lives like Uma, Savant and Royal family. The main characters – Saya John, Rajkumar (Raha)—Dolly, Uma Dey are the beads which Ghosh strung in the form of novel its main plot structure. Rakhi Moral exactly comments as:

Amitav Ghosh weaves into the life of his central protagonist, Rajkumar, the bewildering and often poignant accounts of a family scattered through post imperialist dislocation in various parts of the Asian continent as he charts the complex, sociological and political repercussions of such disbanding through experiment of loss, exile and search for homeland. [Moral: 2005: 143]

These are connected episodic stories linked with characters. The trans-formulation of Burmese Royal family into the culture of Hindustani, princess’s pregnancy with
the relation with Sawant taken by queen very lightly forms sub plot stories which are linked and connected with leading characters.

Thus, Ghosh tries to project intermingle of stories to give way to formation of new stories – again forming sub plots – with inter-activation of religion, culture and class of the societies of various families of middle class suffering migrations from place to place. Dolly represents the twice colonized victim of the breaking of a nation. She embodies the quiet and subliminal aggression of dislocated subjects. Dolly’s most haunting concern is that Burma the place of her birth is lost to her forever.

The third section *The Money Tree* shows how Rajkumar, an orphan, prospers through timber business. Amitav Ghosh has woven the theme of isolation and colonial displacement of the characters, which cross boundaries and make several transitions during their lifetime, in the novel *The Glass Palace*. This chapter is an interaction between three families, Dolly and Rajkumar in Burma, Saya John Rajkumar’s mentor and his son in Malaysia and Uma and her brother in India. The emphasis, like all Ghosh’s fiction is again on highlighting the obliteration of borders that is a result of crossovers and transitions presented in the novel. *The Glass Palace* is a perfect manifestation of almost all the major concerns of Ghosh, blended into a wonderful epic narrative. But over riding all the thematic concerns is the theme of post-coloniality. Nation formation is a major tool in the process of colonization and *The Glass Palace* records and incites the experiences of first such races inhabiting British occupied territories in South East Asia, who are dying to make their own nation.

The novel is the author’s attempt to remap the history of three south Asian countries, Myanmar, India and Malaysia all sites of the British Empire through the
late 19th and 20th centuries. At the same time Ghosh only discusses a piece of history to lay more emphasis on the character of his protagonist. While Burma lost it all to colonialism, Rajkumar builds his home on the debris. His stay in Burma has given him all that he was snatched off in his native land: family, home, love and even wealth. The turbulent cultural crossovers, conflicts, histories and nations as a metaphor of loss make up the central concern of Ghosh. Especially in 19th century, Britain was growing its economic and commercial interests mainly in Asian territory. They extended their empire to strengthen their economy which was dependent on the territory. India is not just a continent to exploit and rule, but a main source of raw labour and military power that bolstered British dominance worldwide and kept the imperial machine humming. With the end of slavery in the empire in 1833, thousands of poor, willing Indian workers were recruited for work in Burma, Fiji, the Caribbean and Africa, on plantation, in docks, mills and railroads, while others were conscripted in to British army. With the colonial desire British entered in the business of teak and rubber in conquered territory like Burma and Malaya.

Ghosh through many characters has drawn disturbing situation of colonization particularly aggression, capture of land of beauty and abundant resources of richness in Burma by British. Shobha Tiwari comments:

**Apart from human scenes of colonization, Ghosh also deals with larger question of Europe’s greed. Everything becomes a resource to be exploited – woods, water, mines, people just everyone and everything. [Opp, Cite. 2003: 105]**

The major economic sources of colonizers are two things, the first is the timber export in Burma and the second is the rubber plantation in Malaya. Both timber
and rubber were not a part of merchandise culture in Burma and Malaya before they were colonized. The heavy teak epitomized nature and was part of inherent Burmese culture. But British knew the importance of territory and the land of Malaya was chosen for rubber plantation. ‘The British colonial government was looking to India to supply coolies and workers for the plantation.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 183]

Interestingly enough, Ghosh’s main protagonist, Rajkumar Raha, a protagonist who provides evidence for the manifest Indian contribution to the extension of the British Empire. Born in poverty on a boat and stranded in Mandalay, Rajkumar witnesses the British conquest of Burma at first hand. He works as a coolie in supplying teak camps in the Burmese rainforests and, as soon as he has acquired some capital, engages in the traffic of bringing migrant workers from India to Burma. With the help of Indian labours nature became transformed and transported, both in Burma and Malaya. As a result, teak and rubber brought within the creases of economic set-up of the imperial rulers, subsequently expanding their power in the economic form. There are few consequences of it in Burma and Malaya. Firstly, the significant effect operates at the level of capital intensive economy that involves a range of exploitation. Secondly, economic power turns in to political power through an understanding of the operation of economic supremacy.

The exploitative part of capital-intensive economy appears in the form of exploitation of nature, human beings and animals. But astonishingly, the beneficiaries of the system fail to notice the exploitation. They perceive it differently. To the Rajkumar, nature is always an epitome of wealth. He justifies his involvement in human trade in indentured labour. According to him, he is helping them to progress. Their financial status is more stabilized as indentured
labourers. As part of the economic system, positioned at a superior level, his world fails to notice that he is not inevitable to the system.

It gives him an illusion that he is an essential part of the system. Rajkumar next succeeds in securing a major contract to supply teak to a railway company and, in the eyes of Saya John, his mentor; the Indian businessman evolves into a new person. He makes lots of money in timber business as a tool in the hand of colonizers, he develops desire for money. He was always very excited to make money. There is a commercial desire of colonizers, leading to the establishment of a trading post or some such business. It is Burmese teak and Malayan rubbers that encourage the British colonial force. With a forethought beyond his years, the seven years old Mathew informs to his friend Rajkumar what his father, Saya John, has told him namely, that the English: ‘they want all the teak in Burma. The King won’t let them have it so they’re going to do away with him.’ [Ibid: 15] This is the complex back drop from Ghosh’s novel, which centers on the fascinating story of Indians in Burma, by the late 19th century, there was a considerable Indian community in Burma; many were recruited to fill the lowly positions; others, such as Rajkumar, came to prosper as a merchants in the growing economy.

Rajkumar is the quintessential opportunist, in the best sense of the word. He makes his first money recruiting in indentured workers in India, then builds up a teak export business in the hills of Burma. Sarika Auradkar in his critical book explains the economic theory of British:

Through Rajkumar we can observe the wheels of British commerce transforming the subcontinent and its other colonies into a vast network of trading and exploitation. And though this book aims at a deep critique of empire, Ghosh does not have so
narrow an agenda as to simply bash the imperial masters. After all, in the new colonial system, someone like Rajkumar is not stuck in his born station in life, but given a greater chance to succeed on his own initiative. Instead, through the novel’s characters, Ghosh shows the subtle questions of allegiance that come to torment them all. [Opp, Cite. 2007: 96-97]

The married life of Dolly and Rajkumar was not going fine, their temperament seems different Rajkumar is running behind the physical pleasures of life and other side Dolly who trying to find spiritual pleasure in Lord Buddha’s philosophy. ‘You’re changing…leaving us behind.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 210]

The inner realization of Dolly is quite significant in the novel. There was a critical situation when her son Dinu was recovering in the hospital, Dolly became meditative and grieved with other mothers keening over their dead children. “…She’d found herself listening to voices that were inaudible during the day: the murmurs of anxious relatives; distant screams of pain, women keening in bereavement. It was as though the walls turned porous in the stillness of the night, flooding her room with an unseen tide of defeat and suffering… She’d begun to cry – it was as though her voice had merged with that of the unknown woman: as though an invisible link had arisen between all of them – her, Dinu, the dead child, his mother.’ [Ibid: 210] Her sympathy melts all mental barriers and joins her with the other women in hunger. John Hawley comments:

The compassion breaks borders, real and imagined, and she is one with the living and the dead. The Glass Palace has been shattered. [Howely: 2005: 213]
The genre of fiction being the most supple and expressive is perfectly suited for the expression of disarticulation, displacement and rootlessness. Due to greed for money Rajkumar loses his son Nil and he becomes a victim of economic circle which was created by British Empire. Rajkumar throughout his life knew only to extract, transport and consume the objects of nature.

Ghosh here portrays the ties between two human beings one man and another woman without any fences of religion or political or any cultural restraints for marriages. Shobha Tiwari comments on character of Dolly: ‘Dolly is the personification of the spirit of endurance and acceptance.’ [Opp, Cite. 2003: 105] The present novel *The Glass Palace* deals with Hybridity due to colonialism and its effects on human lives. In the novel characters like Saya John and his family, Rajkumar Raha and his family, King Thibaw Min and his family, Uma Dey and her family are the victims of such a Hybridity. Rajkumar The main protagonist of the novel is a true multicultural, hybrid personality. Being as orphan he created her own relationship with people who belong to different casts, religion, race, culture, nationality and language.

Rajkumar marry Dolly and they became hybrid. Dolly has fear of such a hybridization her displacement from her roots and her discomfort with her changed identity is clear when she confides her predicament to Uma, the collector’s wife: ‘If I went to Burma now I would be a foreigner – they would call me a Kalaa like they do Indians – a trespasser, an outsider from across the sea. I’d find that very hard I think. I’d never be able to rid myself of the idea that I would have to leave again one day, just as I knew what it was like when we left’ [Ghosh: 2000: 113]. Padmini Mongia quotes Gayatri Spivak’s explanation of such dilemma:
For the post-colonial the idea of a nationhood is a metaphor constantly being ‘reclaimed’, as the post-colonial space cannot advance referents that are ‘historically adequate’ in the case of the colonial subject nationhood is perhaps the only real and historically immediate concern. [Mongia: 277]

The colonial subjects suffer from a sense of imaginary homeland having to suffer most of their lives in displaced locations. Dolly and Rajkumar both paradoxically have a commitment to the nation of their exile or displacement which they have appropriated as home. For Dolly, her life in Outram House is the only life she knows and surprisingly she is the most assertive, in her place of exile. She asks Uma, ‘where would I go, this is home’ [Ghosh: 2000: 119] Her worship for the royal family is obvious when before leaving with Rajkumar, she takes a “last glimpse of the lane, the leaning coconut palms, the Union Jack, flapping above the gaol on its crooked pole…” [Ibid: 171] Dolly in her spouse relationship with Rajkumar, gets two sons Neel and Dinu. Dolly due to her association with Uma Day, Collector’s wife, developed her personality and whereas Rajkumar through successful in business remain uneducated.

When Dolly devotes all her time to taking care of her son Dinu, who develops slight polio in one leg, Rajkumar forces one of the women workers for sexual relationship. An illegitimate son, Ilongo, is the result of this extramarital relationship. Perhaps, the civilized rules of morality do not seem to work here as this novel is the true depiction of life. It is only quite natural for Rajkumar to succumb to his physical needs, with Dolly withdrawing into a world of her own. Dolly is created as most beautiful woman and the reader is driven by the Dolly’s character and novel becomes more interesting. And these lies better art of characterization on the part of author, other side Uma struggled with the Indian
Hindu tradition as a widow in Calcutta with her family. ‘Uma’s was life still one of rigid constraints and deprivation: her hair was shaved off; she could eat no meat nor fish and she was allowed to wear nothing but white. She was twenty-eight and had a lifetime ahead of her.’ [Ibid: 184] But soon she decided to leave India and go abroad because she was independent nature women.

She becomes a freedom fighter, a celebrity in her own way. Uma is only twenty-eight when she becomes a widow. She remembers her husband mostly as a mimic man, a runner of the colonizer: ‘There seemed never to be a moment when he was not haunted by the fear of being thought lacking by his British colleagues.’ [Ibid: 186] Uma, the housewife turns into an idealist activist in Indian independence movement and traveled the world and worked t. Uma best friend of Dolly but the relation between Rajkumar and Uma was not good there is an ideological difference, on one occasion Rajkumar says her ‘Have you ever built anything? Given a single person a job? Improved anyone’s life in any way? No. All you ever do is stand back, as though you were above all of us, and you criticize and criticize. Your husband was as fine a man as any I’ve ever met, and you hounded him to his death with your self-righteousness’. [Ibid: 248] Apart from this in Burma politics reached on violent way there is anger against Indians in Burmese people. They had come on the road for their rights.

Since Rajkumar succeeds in his pursuit for Dolly, she returns to Burma, raises two half-caste sons, and gradually becomes aware of the results of the Indian immigration: ‘Indian moneylenders have taken over all the farmland; Indians run most of the shops; people say that the rich Indians live like colonialists, lording it over the Burmese’ [Ibid: 240]. Burmese people had also counted Indians as colonizers because of after King’s demolition Indian army settled there on the half of British Colonial Empire. ‘Not just in India, but also in Burma, Malaya, East
Africa, no matter where. and of course, the Empire does everything possible to keep these soldiers in hand: only certain castes of men are recruited; they're completely shut off from politics and the wider society; they’re given land and their children are assured jobs.’ [Ibid: 223] It shows the colonial desire of British to rule over Asian continent had caused for displacement, demolition, destruction of the territory.

However, it is interesting to note that while showing the subjugated Burma, Ghosh’s attitude towards India and the Indians is starkly different from his treatment of the Burmese people. Even though the center of the novel Rajkumar, an Indian born, he is far from being a flawless character.

He represents the Indian who benefited through the British colonization. It is true that British colonized both India and Burma, but in Burma the Burmese are the ones oppressed whereas the Indians as well as people from other countries were given many opportunities to flourish. The rise of Rajkumar is only one of many stories of such success. Through him and the world revolving around him Ghosh shows how colonialism is a process where people and values are compromised.  [Opp, Cite. 2011: 42]

Ghosh presents the next generation and web relationship between Rajkumar, Saya John and Uma’s family by introducing Mathew, Arjun, Nil, Dinu Manju and others in this part. In second generation characters like Arjun and Dinu show fascination for colonizers. Three stories run parallel in the novel. There are two stories of the first generation, that of Rajkumar and Dolly and of B.P. Dey and Uma. The story of the second generation turns around Neel and Manju. The twist
and revolves in the lives of these characters are the main sources of attention in the novel.

The address of the novel is obviously to convinced exact chronological situations – the colonial past – and it seeks to “interrogate our role” in looking at our colonial past. Thus it encompasses the colonial rule of nearly a whole century in Burma, Malay, and India, starting from the Anglo-Burmese War of 1885 – in fact the “war” was no war at all as the Mandalay surrendered to the British almost without a fight – through the chaos of the two world wars right up to the age of e-mail and internet. It is a cusp narrative opening out on the colonial age and ending in post-independence days. Amitav Ghosh has nicely drowned the pen picture of the anguish, pain, agony of the people who suffered during the colonial period even after post-colonial era.

In The Glass Palace three generations suffered due to displacement, dislocation, Hybridity, apartheid and suppression. It is also representation of the marginalized and the oppressed in the works of Amitav Ghosh in the backdrop of the Indian society under the shadow of colonialism. The colonial desire and its recollections are loaded with a sense of pain and suffering of the large numbers of people who lived through those periods of history. Meenakshi Mukherji writes:

No one is directly indicted in this novel, not a single person idealized. Yet casually mentioned details get linked across space and time to form haunting patterns, their cumulative effect staying with the reader long after the novel is over. For all its vividness of description and range of human experience, The Glass Palace will remain for me memorable mainly as the most
The King in *The Glass Palace* talks about the inexplicable shift of power and margins in the society. Again, an example of how people in centre can shift to the margins. Thus, ironically, the royal family is reduced to the status of subalterns. He considers on the force and nature of power of British Empire that was changing fates of thousands across the subcontinent. ‘What vast, what incompressible power, to move people in such 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?’ [Ghosh, 2000: 43-44]. British colonial masters fulfill their desire to rule over territory with the help of British Indian Army. The action in the novel is centered in Burma, but it features Diasporas to India, the eastern half of the Indian Ocean (South East Asia), Europe and North America. Among the many debates about colonialism and women, Gandhi and the Ghadar party, Congress vs. the anti-Fascist position on the Second World War etc the one that is most significant communicate to the moral dilemma of the Indian officers in the British Army, some of whom later deserted to form the Indian National Army.

They could not expand their empire without assist of local Indians like Arjun who feel proud to serve for their colonial masters. Saya John shares his experience with Rajkumar on the incident of British army arrival as follows. In Singapore he used to work in a hospital for a time there the patients were mainly Indian sepoys back from fighting wars for their English masters. He discussed with them, ‘What...
makes you fight, I would ask them, “When you should be planting your fields at home?” “Money,” they’d say, and yet all they earned was a few annas a day, not much more than a dockyard coolie…How do you fight an enemy who fights from neither enmity nor anger, but in submission to orders from superiors, without protest and without conscience?’ [Ibid-29, 30] Ghosh interweaved the English colonial desire and Indian compassion for survival. The pathetic journey of Indians always ends with tragically. For the few annas they used to meet to their misfortune, unwillingly, they mortgage their proud and become slave of English colonizers.

Another unexplored aspect of Indian history also finds a voice in this novel. The history of Indian Army under British Rule is completely over sighted in the discussion of the colonial past in terms of what it meant for those who had joined British Army. It is as an answer to Gayatri Spivak’s question it is Arjun whose class and agency changes in accordance with time and space. The time span of the novel makes space for the monstrous manifestations of exploitation from the time of colonialism to the period of neocolonialism. Ghosh points out the fact that Indians were also responsible for such exploitation of people and place. British Indian Army is a military network of colonizers for conducts their rule. N.K. Rajalakshmi in his essay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace’ quoted:

The military network is defined in terms of organized physical violence. It is the power of direct and immediate coercion. Historically many armies fought for the benefit of their own leaders, who created “empires of dominations” by taking over newly arisen civilizations based on the economic, ideological and
political networks. Military organization is essentially *concentrated coercive.* [Opp, Cite. 2009: 120]

Amitav Ghosh, through Arjun, and creates a discourse in this novel that performs the progress of colonial desire. He discovers the anti-colonial realization and ultimate revolt in Arjun. Arjun receives a letter from the Indian Military Academy announcing his selection as an officer cadet.

Arjun is Uma’s nephew and holds great fascination for the British customs and ways of life. He is educated in the British modelled institutions and so naturally holds the British in awe and respect. However, Uma tells Arjun that ‘the Mahatma thinks that the country can only benefit from having men of conscience in the army. She encourages Arjun to join the army because India needs soldiers who won’t blindly obey their superiors.’ Ghosh: 2000: 258] From here onwards the novel traces the evolution of national conscience antithetical to the colonial power. Arjun joins the colonial army as a gentleman cadet and goes on to become a Second Lieutenant in the 1st Jat Light Infantry. Arjun has moulded into a war-machine in the hands of British military discourse like the character of the Collector Beni Prasad Dey, a Britain-trained colonial administrator. Both these characters are destroyed: they end up in a dead end in their existential moorings and kill themselves. Arjun, the more prominent of these figures, can initially express himself only within the discourse of the military culture. He is proud to belong to 1/1 Jats because it is honoured with a special title, The Royal Battalion, which is called as *Jarnail-sahib ki dyni haat ki paltan* – the general’s right-hand battalion’ [Ibid: 262] for the battle honours it won for the British Government, such as quelling the mutinies and capturing kings in India, in Burma, in Mesopotamia, in Somme, and in China. Arjun’s thoughts at this phase are appealing: ‘Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, I still find it hard to believe
that I really belong with these men…… 1/1 Jats; it seems like such a huge responsibility –as though we’re representing the whole of the country!’ [Ibid: 262]

The impact of western academic disciplines is easily discernible on Arjun in whom the hierarchical constructions of inferiority and superiority, native and angrez are so deeply ingrained that all his effort is to be like an Englishman. He, as a young army officer in the colonial army, is puffed with pride that he belongs to a battalion which is honoured. His obtrusive acknowledgement of the superiority of the colonial masters, and his awe and respect for them, orient him to internalize the European morals, manners, dress code, and eating habits by aping them. His induction into the army initiates him into the British way of life and he becomes intoxicated with it.

To Arjun modern and western are synonymous. To be a modern Indian he is prepared to erase all traces of being Indian: discard his past and embrace western habits of thought in its totality. At this stage, he does not realize the cost he would be paying to be accepted as a member of the elitist class, the rulers’ class. When Bela, his sister, wants to know people’s perceptions of him, Kishan Singh, an NCO says, ‘He’s a good officer…. Of all the Indians in our battalion, he’s the one who’s the most English. We call him the Angrez.’ [Ibid: 297] Arjun receives the first surprise of his life on the occasion of his sister’s wedding. Some Burmese student activists, Congressmen, Buddhist monks berate him for serving in an army of occupation. On this auspicious occasion he manages to keep his anger and replies, ‘We aren’t occupying the country ….We are here to defend you.’ [Ibid: 287] The response of the activists is quick: ‘From whom are you defending us? From ourselves? From other Indians? It’s your masters from whom the country needs to be defended.’ [Ibid: 288] This is exact reply by an officer who is influenced by colonizers ideology.
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Arjun, however, is not surprised by these arguments. One of the demonstrators of anti-war march drops a pamphlet through his car window. Arjun reads some quotations from Mahatma Gandhi and a passage that says, ‘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 had ever known? Arjun is extremely irritated by this time, and cannot control his anger: Idiots …. I wish I could stuff this down their throats. You’d think they’d have better things to do than March about in the hot sun.’ [Ibid: 292] Obviously, Arjun has become totally servile at this point. He does not question even once why the British Empire should hold India. As Gouri Viswanathan notices that:

Without submission of the individual to moral law or the authority or God, the control they were able to secure over the lower classes in their own country would elude them in India.

[Viswanathan: 2003: 105]

The education machinery was geared up to make the people of India believe that the British were their rightful masters; by following them, they would elevate and uplift their manner, morals, and behavior. This would ensure eternal maintenance of the colonial hegemony. The behavior of Arjun shows success achieved in this direction. The decolonization of the mind of Arjun becomes discernible with the onset of the Second World War, which witnessed several hundred Indian troops of the British army changing their loyalty and enrolling themselves as fighters in the Indian National army because they come to know that in the words of N.K. Rajalakshmi in his essay ‘Mapping the Power Discourse in The Glass Palace:
The British Indian Army was fighting the war neither to defend nor to extend the territory of India. It was helping the British to protect and expand their territory. [Opp, Cite. 2009: 121]

Ghosh forcefully eloquent the psychological crisis and traces the change in the mind of Arjun, a man whom his colleagues call Angrez. Hardy (Hardayal), his friend and colleague who is always trying to change the mind of Arjun. He reminds him of the inscription at the Military Academy in Dehra Dun which says, ‘The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next .... And your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time,’ further he says: ‘Well, didn’t you ever think: this country whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time – what is it? Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don’t have a country – so where is this place whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time? And why was it that when we took our oath it wasn’t to a country but to the King Emperor – to defend the Empire?’ [Ghosh: 2000: 330] through this Ghosh evokes the feelings of ethical puzzlement of the Indian officers in British army fighting for British of British King Emperor in their own country.

Ghosh thus condemn British rule in the Indian country through inter weaving the themes of Indian independence struggle. Ghosh writes: ‘Arjun saw that it was a pamphlet written in Hindustani and printed in both Devnagri and Arabic script. It was an appeal to Indian soldiers signed by one Amreek Singh of Indian independence league. The text began: ‘Brothers, ask yourselves what you are fight for and why you are here: do you really wish to sacrifice your lives for an empire that has kept your country in slavery for two hundred years.’ [Ibid: 391] During the World War II Arjun on the horns of a dilemma trying to judge his position on
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the war field. The diasporic state is portrayed by Ghosh through the central dilemma of the novel which is the conflict in loyalty that the Indian soldier in the British Indian Army suffers. It’s a very painful dilemma that pits unequal forces together and makes one choose. Sarika Auradkar in her critical essay describes Arjun’s condition as:

In the Indian epic Mahabharata, Arjun is the warrior who pauses in battle to question the purpose of war and the kingdom he is fighting for. So too does this modern Arjun begin to doubt his soldier’s training – during World War II, when he encounters those drawn to the aims of the Indian National Army. [Opp, Cite. 2007: 103]

Ghosh projects the faithfulness of people in foreign rulers on their own land – country by presenting character like Arjun. Ghosh brings further the dilemma of self-realization in Arjun’s life view. Arjun feels that he was ‘used’ instead of ‘employed’ in the British army. Arjun has served British Army for major parts of his life feels deceived by British Army.

Dinu is another main character in the novel shows fascination for British like Arjun. Dinu’s character is further defined when his relationship with Alison is described. His attitude to the British rule is no different from that of many of the educated Indians of the time. When British prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain declared war against Germany on behalf of Burma and her Empire so many Burmese people were in favor of colonial power. ‘Certainly, in Burma, as in India, public opinion was deeply divided: in both places many important personages had expressed their support of the colonial Government….. The mood among Burma’s student activists was summed up in a slogan coined by a charismatic young
student leader, Aung San: Colonialism’s difficulty, he said, was Freedom’s opportunity. One day, Aung San disappeared: a rumor circulated that he was on his way to China to seek the support of the Communists. Later it came to be known that he had gone instead to Japan.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 305] On the circumstances of World War II there was a debate among Dinu, Arjun and Uma when they were on their way home from shopping in Calcutta.

The debate revolves round the question of wisdom in choosing in the context of world war second one evil over the other the imperialist British on the one hand and the Facist and racist Germany and Militant Japan on the other. Dinu maintains that Hitler and Mussolini are among the most tyrannical and destructive leaders in all human history. He condemns for their cruelty and spreading violence across Europe. He says, ‘Hitler and Mussolini are among the most tyrannical and destructive leaders in all of human history …. They’re grotesque they’re monsters [Ibid: 293].Obviously Dinu is true in pointing out that they are destructive, brutal, cruel. But it means the British are not right they both are two extremely aggressive forces out to destroy the world. But what Dinu unfortunately fail to see that the British too are guilty of ‘racialism, rule through aggression and conquest’ [Ibid: 294].

Uma counters this argument stating that the expansionist aspirations of Germany and Japan can be traced to the successful imperialist British model. She says the British Empire is equally guilty of killing tens of millions people in its conquest of the world. Further she points out that the Indian nationalists also do not sympathize with the Nazis and the Fascists. But she says that we are ‘caught between two scourges: two sources of absolute evil. The question for us is, why should we pick one over the other?’ [Ibid: 293].But Dinu is not understand the
situation his judgment is away from reality. This question does not arise in Dinu’s mind. On such a situation Fanon says:

The Western bourgeoisie has prepared enough fences and railings to have no fear of competition of those whom it exploits and holds in contempt. [Fanon: 1967: 127-28]

Saya John, Rajkumar, Beniprasad Dey, and Arjun have a merciless faith in the superiority of the colonizers. Rajkumar, whose is a rags-to-riches story, is also a staunch supporter of the British. From an orphan boy, he reaches great heights with the help of Saya John. He believes that the Burmese economy would collapse without the patronage of the British.

Actually, during the process of exploitation of the natural resources of the colony by the colonizers, he and some others have benefited, whereas, to use Fanon’s words, ‘... the rest of the colony follows its path of underdevelopment and poverty.’ [Ibid] It is a part of mental colonization through British government introduced western ideology. Mental colonization is even worse especially Saya John, Rajkumar and in second generation Arjun, Dinu have affected by this meticulously internalized the teaching of the British. They achieved this through education. When Macaulay introduced western education in India, he clearly stated,

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, Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. [Macaulay: 1935: 430]
Arjun is in love with Alison and is a competitor of Dinu. From Dinu’s statements the success of the British in creating this class of people is evident. He spew out loyally what he has been trained in schools and colleges, and now as an intellectual denounce the Nazis and the Fascists as British would want him to do. Even when Burma and India achieve independence, his gratefulness towards the British remains. This is evident from his discussion with Jaya after the rise of despotism in Burma. He feels very upset at the loss of democracy due to the rise of military regime, which is understandable because the purpose of driving out the British was to create a society based on equality and fraternity. At the same time, he praises the British by saying that they gave more freedom to masses. At least the common man had greater freedom and was not so much put to trouble to be watched by the ‘man in the pharmacy next door.’ [Ghosh: 2000: 511]

Dinu also thinks that the British regime has successfully reformed the Indian society and purged it of all the evils. This is a great mistake. Dinu has been completely influenced by British which are of a social reformist, and so he is obliged to them. He disagree with Uma: ‘Look at the way women (are) treated even today, look at the caste system, untouchability, widow-burning ….all these terrible, terrible things.’ [Ibid: 294] Amitav Ghosh clearly brings out the true nature of the colonial rule through Uma, who answers to Dinu’s allegation: ‘Let me be the first to admit the horrors of our own society – as a woman …. Mahatma Gandhi has always said that our struggle for independence cannot be separated from our struggle for reform.’ [Ibid: 294] Dinu has put blinkers over his eyes and is not able to see through the real colonialist intentions of the British. This is where we find that the British have succeeded in creating a class of people having black skin in white masks. By the end of eighteenth century, the British were able to bring the entire subcontinent under their control. Many administrative and social reforms were imposed to civilize the ignorant and apathetic Hindus. These
annexations, social reforms, educational reforms, and scientific innovations introduced from the west had their repercussions.

Ghosh describes the colonial desire, defeats and frustration of displaced, migrated, dislocated, people in India, Burma, China, Malaysia and America by presenting such characters as King Thebaw, Queen Supayalat, Saya John, Rajkumar, Dolly, Uma, Elison, Dinu, Neel, Arjun, Hardyal, Kishan Singh, Jaya and Ilongo. The tragic end of Royal family and their pathetic journey started from Burma and ended in India as well as Burma. They suffered lot of during those days without reason to fulfill the colonial desire of British.

2.3. Summing Up:

Thus, Amitav Ghosh expresses the life span of three generations of men and women spread over on locale of Burma, Calcutta and India during the time when British took over Burma from ex-princely state (country). The novel develops from one generation to another at the places Burma, Mandalay, India, West Coast Ratnagiri whose language differs from place to place involving the deliberations of the characters using Burmese, Hindustani and English language. The novelist uses third person point of view in the novel. The narrative technique points out minor details that introduce the character and narrative is made realistic effect. He uses the flashback technique to reveal the inner aspect of personality of the characters. It throws light on three generation and many stories have been woven together. The scope of the novel abounds in many geographical places with space and distance and time of about one hundred years. Thus, Amitav Ghosh presents history and fiction through his creative skill and researched materials embodied in the novel. The narrative does not expose bare outlines of history but
simultaneously makes the history blended with the epic story in such a fashion and narrative technique that reader is absorbed in the novel.

*The Glass Palace* is a fine example of the colonial encounter on the religious, political, social, and cultural lives of India, Burma and Bangladesh which was the part of pre-independent India. This colonial encounter was the cause of Hybridity in the race, culture, religion, language, art. The narrator in this novel is main witness of the colonial desire of colonialist and imperialist. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. Colonial Desire means to keep the colony underestimated so as to rule and master them or exploit them. The notion colonial desire can be found in every stage of the novel. Due to this desire there is a great devastation of three generations. This novel is also a book about geographical entities – space, distance and time. Many stories have been woven together. There are many characters, with sagas of families, their lives and connections with each other. Ghosh, a great humanist, raises his powerful voice against oppression and tyranny through this novel. He is against the domination of man by man at all levels – political, military, and economic. *The Glass Palace* exposes how imperialism has done immense harm to the conquered nations. The Glass Palace is divided into seven parts and each section highlights the various important aspects of the novel.
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