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A Postcolonial Ecocritical Study of Amitav Ghosh's

The Glass Palace

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Dedication

To the soul of my beloved brother, Hani, from whom I learnt that nothing can stop a person from perusing his dreams.

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to investigate the environmental and ecological issues in South Asia caused by the British colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries particularly from a postcolonial ecocritical perspective using Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* (2000). It attempts to shed light on the catastrophic extensive exploitation of the Burmese, Malay, and Indian natural resources including teak, rubber, oil as well as the human workforce by the British in the Indian subcontinent during the last two centuries. This dissertation also examines the situation of the subaltern embodied in local workers, immigrants, women, orphans, and servants who have been equally victimized just like nature itself. It explicates their ironical position of being the hands that destroy and harm their mother land during the British occupation. Moreover, it explores the relationship and attitudes of the colonized characters towards nature and the environment as well as those of the colonizers spotlighting environmental racism exercised against the subalterns. Furthermore, the study traces human cruelty, abuse, and exploitation of animals that eventually lead to the extinction of many species creating the imbalance in the ecosystem.

Keywords:

Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism, diaspora, subaltern, environmental racism, zoocriticsm.

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Introduction

The current environmental degradation and the global eco-crisis that the world is experiencing have pushed many scholars and writers to green postcolonial studies. These authors tend to highlight the reasons behind such disasters, which are mainly linked to the colonial presence in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Postcolonial ecocriticism is the result of the realization that imperialism is intertwined with environmental and green issues. In other words, the eco-crisis cannot be fully understood without being studied within historical, cultural, and political contexts. Moreover, it explores the impacts of colonization on indigenous subjects, plants, and animals, and traces the detrimental effects of colonialism on both the environment and people.

Great Britain was one of the major European colonial powers that underwent the industrial revolution during the eighteenth century. This tremendous economic change caused Britain's desperate need for new markets, raw materials, and work forces. As a result, Great Britain invaded many territories and annexed them under the banner of the British Empire. South Asian countries including India, Malaya, and Burma were among those colonies that suffered for centuries from the imperial fetishism embodied in the extensive use of natural and human resources in order to satisfy their industrial and colonial needs.

Amitav Ghosh is one of the Indian writers who attempt to depict the real image of the British imperialism revealing its dangerous colonial ambitions. He also concerns himself with the considerable environmental changes that happened in South Asia because of colonialism and the second world war. Ghosh is also one of the pioneers of natural writings in Indian literature written in English. This is actually because most of his fiction and nonfiction works have dealt with the environmental issues caused mainly by colonialism. This novelist, anthropologist, essayist, travel writer and eco-activist has received several awards and

recognitions among them the 54th Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary prize to make him the first English language writer who becomes a Jnanpith laureate. He also won The Prix Medicis Etranger, France's top literary award for his book *The Circle of Reason* (1986); The Sahitya Akademi Award and the Amanda Puraskar for *The Shadow Lines* (1988); Arthur C. Clarke Award for *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995); and Frankfort International E-book Award for *The Glass Palace* (2000).

Ghosh also caused a huge controversy when he surprisingly withdrew his novel *The Glass Palace* from The Commonwealth Writers' Prize. He stated that the Commonwealth was just a memorialization of the British Empire. Before writing it, he spent long hours with Indians who participated in the struggle against imperialism and by accepting the nomination for the prize he is betraying their memory. Moreover, he argued that the foundation excludes many cultures, sub cultures and languages that he strongly speaks for and defends in his works of fiction and non-fiction.

The Glass Palace is a historical story that begins in 1885 and ends in 1996. It tackles many events that took place in India, Malaya, and Burma starting with the decline of Konabaung dynasty after the British invasion of Mandalay and the exile of the royal family, the Second World War, and the Japanese invasion in the subcontinent, and ends with the establishment of independent states and the emergence of social and political movements like Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar (former Burma). This long novel is divided into seven parts: Mandalay, Ratnagiri, The Money Tree, The Wedding, Morningside, The Front, and The Glass Palace. It is a family saga that photographs the lives of four families, King Thabaw's family, Rajkomar Raha's family, Uma Dey's Family, and John Martin's family. The main protagonist is Rajkomar a self-made orphan whose destiny changed from a poor refugee to a businessman, who created an empire in the Burmese teak and rubber plantations. Rajkomar has never forgotten his first love Dolly, one of the queen's maids and he goes in search of her.

Throughout the chapters and pages of the novel the reader is presented with topics and themes of love, betrayal, war, tragedy diaspora and loss ...etc. Ghosh craftily plays with elements of place and time; He takes the reader from inside the walls of the Glass Palace in Mandalay to the heart of timber and rubber plantations in India and Malaya. He also accommodates enormous settings in Britain, America, and Malaysia.

The novel traces the close relationship between the characters of the novel and their environment and nature that they occupy. Moreover, it discusses the harmony that exists between the environment and natives in South Asia and how much they are attached to their land. The woods which they consider a home, a source of safety, food and spiritual shelter before the coming of the British colonizer that turned their lives upside down and did not only plunder the natural resources but also distorted Mother Nature. Furthermore, the writer keeps mentioning the rivers which are literally the veins of the subcontinent in the sense that they are used for travelling, transporting goods, connecting cities and people, and others.

When *The Glass Palace* was first published, it immediately gained recognition and fame. Many scholars and critics have analyzed and studied the novel from different perspectives since it is a long novel that tackles different topics and themes. In her article entitled "There'll Always Be an England in India", Pankaj Mishra reveals the true intentions of British colonialism behind setting Western schools and universities in India is to create interpreters between the colonizer and the millions they govern. To clone the so called "Sahibs" who are Indians only in blood and color, but English in education, morals and attitudes. These brainwashed elite that lost its identity includes soldiers, politicians, businessmen and writers become totally dependent on English culture (1-2). The writer of the article excludes Amitav Ghosh from this categorization because he becomes able to express the disappointment and defeats of the colonized people. Moreover, he pays attention about the individual who is suffering from the colonial neuroses. His novel The Glass Palace traces the

impact of colonialism on middle class society. On the other hand, the author criticizes Ghosh for the lack of complex inner life in the characters of his novel except for one of his main characters "Uma" considering her the first truly modern individual in Ghosh's narrative after her bitter political awakening about the atrocious situation of Indians under the British rule (7).

In his article "Understanding the Cultural Milieu Both Feminism and Masculine's in Amitav Ghosh's Novel *The Glass Palace* A Post- Modern Perspective," Venkateswarlu Yesapogu states that Amitav Ghosh's novels undoubtedly subscribe to post-modern stance or mode in the sense that he employs certain postmodern elements and techniques such as the Mini narration that he uses in his novels *Dancing in Cambodia*, *The Imam and the Indian* and *The Glass Palace* in which he dismantles the male centered perspective that is seen as universal representation and substitutes it by a more female perspective that focuses on women protagonists in his novels and their everyday lives' details (36). Yesapogu states that: "This novel The Glass Palace undoubtedly subscribe to the propositions of post-modernism. "Mininarrations' of women protagonists in these novels displace the centrality of male representation and subjectivity. Micro level narrations of life in The Glass Palace dismantle the so called male centered perspective of life construed as 'universal representation'" (37). Furthermore, Amitav Ghosh plays with another postmodern element which is architecture, since buildings are the symbols of the creation of a new society and have a great influence on people's lives. Yesapogu stated that: "The modernist architecture omitted glass structures but the post-modern architecture regenerated them" (38). Glass hypothetically creates separate identities where people inside the glass buildings becomes invisible to the ones outside it while they could see and know everything outside those mirror walls. Whereas outsiders are curious about what lies behind those walls yet they do not dare crossing them because they feel inferiors. By choosing the title itself Amitav Ghosh connotes a postmodern element. As

the Glass Palace becomes an object in the novel where Burmese commoners see their reflections on the Glace Palace mirrors. These reflections do not only project their position but rather the position of a whole society. The invisibility of the people inside the walls implies the element of absence and vagueness (38).

Ratan Bhattacharjee states in his article "Tracing the Post Modern Elements in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh" that Post-modernism in Indian English literature is totally different from the one written in the USA and Europe since Indian writers reject Western cultures, norms, and values. He argues that: "Amitav Ghosh as a practioner of post modernism in novels focuses entirely on the colonialism's impoverished, and usually non-white, victims. They are given the central position, not the white masters" (2). In his novels, Ghosh writes about the havoc caused by colonialism and its effects on the non-white victims who suffer from diaspora, poverty, devastation and dislocation. In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh describes the horrors of the Japanese invasion of Burma that harms both army and civilians. Postcolonial migration is an important trait of postmodernism and it exists in most of Ghosh's works. Moreover, the collage of different works of fact, fiction, history and personal drama shape the novels of Ghosh. Furthermore, he follows what Fredric Jameson referred to as "the spatialization of culture under the pressure of organized Capitalism" in the sense that he used different physical spaces in the setting of the novel. The postmodern dimension is expanded by placing his novels in a globalized cultural space of the modern times" (4).

In his article entitled "Discourse of Power under Power Play: An Analysis of Amitav Ghosh's The Glass Palace between Displaced Diaspora and Nondiaspora," Jebun Ara Geeti comments on how power is represented in the novel through the existence of the British colonialism, "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" (4). The article also analyses how does

colonialism change the economic and political standards of Burma and India. Furthermore, it investigates the state of both diasporic and nondiasporic characters in the novel and how they take part in the colonial exploitation of their land. The author talks about some dislocated figures such as the protagonist Rajkomar Raha and his mentor Saya John.

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… 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 Malaysi (3). It also follows the process of how the sovereign gradually becomes diasporic before its people, "Ghosh clearly shows how occultation of power happens through the process of an abrupt replacement of governance" (5). Moreover, the article studies the miserable situation of women who suffered from double oppression of both their patriarchal society and colonialism.

In his article "Literary Cosmopolitanism of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Arundhati Roy," Sunil Samuel Macwan compares between Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh's perceptions of migrancy and diaspora arguing that Rushdie regards a migrant as an educated, urban individual who becomes a cosmopolitan citizen of the world by easy mobility, "migrancy of diasporic Indians constitutes an individual's journey away from home country, often undertaken in a quest of personal freedom. Rushdie's migrancy is an act of self-assertion and privilege" (150). In the other hand, Ghosh considers the Indian migrant as a colonial subject who is obliged to leave homeland due to compelling political and socioeconomic circumstances (150- 1). Moreover, the cosmopolitan background of Ghosh

transcends national, cultural and linguistic boundaries allow him to identify with different affiliations. He also places family at the center of his cosmopolitanism as the only surviving unit of society that sustains people's sense of identity in postcolonial world, "Ghosh prefers to highlight the role of the family in fostering a distinctly South Asian cosmopolitanism that thrived on the Indian subcontinent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (156). In addition to this, Ghosh favors poor migrants' cosmopolitanism over the individualist and urban citizens (157).

In her article "Evolution of Women in The Selected Novels of Amitav Ghosh," Shahanez Parveen highlights the position of women in Amitav Ghosh's novels *The Shadaw Lines* and *The Glass Palace* in which "he portrays women and their experience with sympathetic understanding" (1), and how women from different ages, classes, affiliations and cultures are sexually exploited and unsecured in the patriarchal society. Moreover, women in his novel are deprived from their right of being independent individuals with a self-identity and were obliged to succumb to men in order to secure themselves from their male supremacist society (3). In his novels, Ghosh regards women as life givers and leading spirits who will eventually have their empowerment that leads to positive changes in their society:

> Ghosh's women are seeded with the feminist attitude, which is nurtured by the social issues they face and the patriarchal dominance that suffocate them. They act as independent entities, growing and developing according to their own inclinations and finding social acceptance, defining their own space, determining their own lives, fighting their own battles, enjoying the fruits of victory and never fearing to taste the bitterness of defeat. (5)

In his article entitled "Postcolonial Ecocriticism as Illustrated in *The Glass Palace*," Viennt Mehta asserts that the extensive exploitation of natural resources and the

environmental degradation urges many scholars and authors to include ecocriticism in their postcolonial studies. Furthermore, they realized that the main cause of these environmental crises is colonialism: “The European attempts to monopolize the other lands and its people, beginning in the fifteenth and climaxing in the nineteenth centuries, played havoc with the native environment and its populace” (1). In *The Glass Palace,* Ghosh shows the ecological devastation done by British colonialism in South Asia. He strongly criticizes colonialism and blames it for the socio-cultural-economic and environmental disasters, “Amitav Ghosh has skillfully brought out the green concerns in his critique of European colonial-capitalist venture” (3). He also denies the European allegations of civilizing African and Asian population by revealing its economic greed and depletion of natural and human resources. The writer of the article mentions some important natural treasures in India and Burma such as the teak trees that attract British companies. He also talks about the deforestation of large forests and replacing them by plantations of timber and rubber trees that damaged nature.

Sunil Fulsawange states in his article “Exploitation of Human, Animal, and Bird: An Ecocritical Study of *the Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies*” that: “Ghosh is by turn a sociologist, a historian, a teacher, an essayist alive to a range of crucial contemporary issues from terrorism to the conservation of nature” (143). Ghosh reflects the environmental problems and the extensive imperial exploitation of natural resources under the banner of British modernization and development. His novel *The Glass Palace* explores the history of Burma before the British invasion when it was a golden land that was rich of teak forests and self-sufficient citizens. The British colonialism did not just cause deforestation and exploitation of the Earth but it killed animals, birds and deformed landscapes; moreover, it took advantage of poor laborers who were brought from different regions to work under inhumane circumstances without any guarantees.

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the environmental problems in South Asia mainly, India, Burma, and Malaya caused by colonialism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. It also attempts to highlight the horrific exploitation of the subcontinent's natural and human resources including timber, teak, oil and rubber. Moreover, it studies the effects of this unreasonable depletion on nature and indigenous people in the long and short term. This dissertation also aims to study the relationship between colonizer, colonized, nature, in the sense that it examines the situation of the subaltern who were manipulated by the colonizer and become the tools that destroy their own land. The dissertation is an attempt to shed light on the radical changes that imperialism caused in South Asia mainly in the social and environmental sides. It also clarifies the relationship between colonizer, colonized and nature. Furthermore, the study analyses the colonial tyranny which did not just harm the socioeconomic and cultural life of natives but also destroyed their mother nature. This research also studies one of the most recent concerns in eco-studies which is related ito animal issues especially after the extinction of some species such as elephants due to the barbaric hunting of this innocent animal and its inhumane use as a mean a transportation during the years of colonialism.

The main literary theories on which this study relies on are postcolonialism, ecocriticism and one of its concerns which is zoocriticism in addition to postcolonial ecocriticism theory. The postcolonial theory helps to trace the existence of the British colonialism in South Asia using Ghosh historical narrative of some true events that took place in India, Malaya, and Burma. It also opens the way for further analytical studies concerning the position of the subaltern as well as the dislocated natives who are living in diaspora. The ecocritical study will clarify the importance of nature for natives and to what extent they were living in harmony with their motherland before the coming of the colonizer. As a result, a third theory which is the postcolonial ecocritical perspective is required to analyze the drastic

changes that the imperialism caused in South Asia green sphere and distorted its beauty and virginal purity. Furthermore, the zoocriticism is also used to picture the effect of colonialism on animals and traces one of the most important reasons behind the extinction of some rare species.

The present dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter offers a theoretical discussion of the fundamental concepts that this research investigates. Thus, it deals with socio-historical background and setting of the novel; in which it discusses briefly the industrial revolution in Britain which was one of the main reasons of invading South Asia and led to the exploitation of the natural and human resources which is the main concern of this study. Moreover, this chapter includes the study of the four theories that are applied in the research. First, it deals with the postcolonial theory and tackles some important concepts which are the relationship between colonizer colonized, diaspora and dislocation, as well as the subultern studies. Second, the dissertation will be viewed through an ecocritical scope since the environmental study is one of Amitav Ghosh's specialties. Moreover, the study deals with the environmental degradation that exists in South Asia after the British invasion thus another theory which is the postcolonial ecocritical study is required in order to understand the relationship between colonizer, colonized and nature. Finally, a more recent theory which is zoocriticism is also used to clarify the damage done by humans mainly the colonizer to animals in South Asia.

The second chapter is an analytical one; it studies *The Glass Palace* through a postcolonial perspective. It studies the novel from the invasion of Burma and the exile of the royal family by the British colonialism to the second world war when the Japanese invaded the continent. The study deals with the relationship between colonizer, colonized, and analyses the position of some Indian soldiers in the British Indian Army and their perception

of identity. It also deals with the diaspora of millions of refugees either sovereigns or commoners. Finally, it deals with the situation of subaltern embodied in local laborers.

The third chapter deals with the ecocritical postcolonial analysis of the novel. It studies the extravagant exploitation of natural resources in South Asia by the British colonialism. It also studies the relationship between colonizer, colonized and nature in the sense that locals are manipulated by colonialism to become the tools that harm their own nature. This chapter also deals with the environmental racism as it is manifested in the novel. Furthermore, the study deals with zoocriticism that tackles the issue of exploiting some species of endangered animals such as elephants. Many illustrations from the novel are cited throughout the chapter in order to support its argument.

Chapter I: Socio-Historical and Theoritical Backgrounds

I.1. The Socio-Historical Background: British Invasion of India, Malaya, Burma

I. 1. 1. Industrial Revolution and the British Invasion of South Asia:

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Great Britain witnessed a period of colonial expansion. It had colonies scattered all over the world and settled a formal political, economic, and social control over them. One of the main reasons behind this aggressive and extensive form of imperialism was the industrial revolution that accentuated Britain as a super power. Moreover, it increased its need for raw materials, work forces, and new markets found in overseas colonies to satisfy demands. Of course, their eyes were mainly on Africa and South Asia which were rich of oil, rubber, ivory, wood, gold, iron, cobalt, diamonds, and others. Furthermore, the loss of the American colonies after the civil war and the ending of slavery in 1865 created a shortage in labor and working forces.

The industrial revolution made Great Britain more powerful with the invention of heavy weapons and powerful iron warships that enabled it to conquer more than 25 percent of the land surface in 1900. The quality of the weapons and their military training allowed them to overthrow empires in Asia and Africa. In addition, the advancements in medicine and the discovery of treatments and vaccines against dangerous diseases in Asia and Africa such as malaria and they ellow fever allowed Europeans to penetrate deeply in the colonial countries which had been once “White Man’s Grave”.

The attention of the colonial countries, especially Britain, turned towards South Asia mainly, India, Malaya, and Burma. The British presence in India began with the establishment of a few trading centers at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta in the sixteen century. As time went by, India became the most important British colony. Then in the late

18th century, Great Britain was able to conquer Burma and Malaya, as well. In his book *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire 1500-1902*, William Woodward argues that there were many political, economic, religious, and social reasons behind the invasion:

> The guiding motives have been various. First, trade to gain something of the wealth which was pouring in upon Spain and Portugal from west and east. The search for the 'Northwest Passage' was a groping for new markets and rich produce. Then, Religion; to found a Church in a new land away from the temptations and persecutions of the evil world. Thirdly, Settlement; the creation of a new piece of England across the seas, a true colony, a migration to a fresh and permanent home, though without the severance of the old tie of citizen. Another motive was Defence; to protect trade, religion and settlement, the old home and the new, from the enemies of both. (10)

The invasion of India began with the settlement of the East India Company which focused at its beginnings on economic dealings and commercial exchanges with natives. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund state that: "The acquisition of a vast empire by a trading company was certainly a rather strange phenomenon. Contemporary opinion reflected this and those who participated in the endeavor were also puzzled" (244). The company guaranteed the security of Englishmen and their factories in the east by establishing permanent posts in India. Furthermore, it did not interfere with natives' lives and respected their sentiments. However, the early 18th century marked the change in the company's orientation towards more political, social, and cultural domination in the subcontinent after the overthrown of the Mughal kings and princes. William Dialymple states that:

> We still talk about the British conquering India, but that phrase disguises a more sinister reality. It was not the British government that began seizing great chunks of India in the mid-eighteenth century, but a dangerously unregulated private company headquartered in one small office, five windows wide, in London, and managed in India by a violent, utterly ruthless and intermittently mentally unstable corporate predator Robert Clive. India's transition to colonialism took place under a for-profit corporation, which existed entirely for the purpose of enriching its investors. (20-1)

The invasion of India was a typical one because it began with an economic company that aimed at seizing the natives' lands. The firm was managed by ruthless men whose main concerns were to make the maximum profit and absorb the fortunes of India.

Few decades later, Britain was able to conquer the kingdom of Burma using a strong army composed of British troops and Indian sepoys. The Burmese kings and soldiers met The British Indian army with stiff resistance. Thant Myint-U states that: "The war would be the longest and most expensive in British Indian history, costing the equivalent of nearly 30$ billion todays. Fifteen thousand British and Indian troops died, along with an unknown but almost certainly higher number of Burmese" (23). After a third Burmese war, the British troops entered Mandalay and overthrew king Thibaw who was exiled with his family to India. According to Thant Myint-U, Mandalay was razed to the ground. The British also destroyed the history of the city by burning the royal library that contained the official records and the genealogies of the ruling family (24).

Burma became a part of India and one of the crown colonies. Britain followed the policy of keeping the new colony under check by providing the minimum services while

extracting as much money as possible through taxes and firm profits. The invasion of South Asia was as Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund state:

> a classic example of a colonial economy with all its social and cultural concomitants: a poor, exploited peasantry, a small landed and educated elite and uneven smaller but very powerful European business community organizing the export trade. The export surplus which India always had to have in order to be able to pay its tribute, or home charges, was mostly provided by eastern India. (270)

The colonial authorities aimed at exploiting the natural and human resources, it also created distinctive social classes composed by small group of colonial dominating class, followed by the elite who are mainly educated and bourgeois natives, and finally the poor laborers who are totally exploited and ignored by the previous two classes.

The British empire invaded the first Malayan territory "Penang" in 1786 after sending three vessels by the East India Company (Yamada 225). There were many reasons behind this invasion. First is a strategic reason embodied in the British need for a repair-depot on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal especially during British-French struggle over the territory. Moreover, the seasonal monsoon and the violent hurricanes in the northeast cost forced the British to look for new roads to gain control over the Bengal Coast (226). Secondly and most importantly, the city was invaded for economic reasons mainly to create "a country trade." In other words, the East India Company needed a base for the export and the collection of tin, pepper, tea, and silver … (227). Moreover, the British wanted to secure the territory from French and Dutch threats. The peninsula caught everyone's attention because of its rich land that was used to grow plantation crops like tapioca and coffee. These crops were later substituted by rubber plantations the reason why

the demand for land rose sharply. The natives were totally discriminated in matters of land owning; James Hagan and Andrew Wells report that:

> The land offices of the Federated Malay States discouraged the Malays from acquiring land for rubber production, and discriminated against them. They reserved virgin land close to railways and main roads for purchase by non-Malays, and in 1915, 1916 and 1917 refused to sell any land at all to Malays for the purpose of rubber planting. Malayan land policy in the years of the great expansion of the rubber plantation industry, offered land to foreign investors, and especially British foreign investors, on extremely attractive terms. Besides that, for a time, the Government offered loans on very easy terms to intending British purchasers, and discriminated in their favour against native Malays in choice of sites. (144)

The colonial authorities forbade the Malays from owning land and agricultural fields. Instead of that they offered the lands to European companies which invested in rubber industry. British capitalists were seizing the opportunity to make fortunes by investing in Malayan rubber plantations whereas millions of Malays were starving and dying because of famines after losing their fertile lands and forests.

I.1.2. British Exploitation of the Natural and Human Resources:

For centuries, India, Burma, Malaya, and other British colonies had suffered from the extravagant exploitation of human and non-human resources. These colonies were once the richest in the world with their raw materials such as cotton, silk, teak, timber, and others, in addition to their vast markets which attracted the greedy European investors who pretended to care about the destiny of the natives. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund explain that:

> The British empire in India was a system of foreign domination: India was certainly governed with British and not with Indian interests in view. Nonetheless, the individual British civil servant in India was subjectively convinced that he was trying his best to work for the Indian people in his charge. The British tradition of trusting the 'man on the spot' encouraged motivated the district officer whose service was, indeed, the mainstay of the empire. (268)

India became part of the British empire, thus it was ruled by English representatives whose main concerns were to guarantee the constant power and wealth of the empire at the expense of India and its natives. The allegations and real ambitions of the empire were clearly visible to everyone. Pushed by the urgent needs for raw material, work forces, and new markets, the British colonialism swallowed South Asian fortunes without mercy or pity.

Cotton was one of the main products that attracted the British companies with its high quality and cheap price; thousands of merchants went to India and started their investments there. Later, they changed the industries from Cotton to other products. Sven Becket states that: "These Europeans then used their dynamic cotton industry as a platform to create other industries; indeed, cotton became the launching pad for the broader Industrial Revolution" (13). Furthermore, the British used to change the type of industrial crops according to the market demands and the industrial developments. For example, they replaced hectares of tropical fruits and rice by plantations of teak trees and timber which were used to build houses and railways. Moreover, they planted rubber trees that were in great demand after the invention of cars and machines during the industrial revolution. Yet, the substitution of the agricultural food products by cash products for export made the natives suffer from famines and diseases. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund argue that: "the British showed less consideration: even after the cruel famine of 1770 which killed

about one-third of the population, they tried their best to squeeze as much money out of hapless Bengal as they could" (246).

The exploitation of the natural resources and the cultivation of industrial products such as rubber and cotton caused soil impoverishment, deforestation, and desertification. This issue was tackled by Junko Kobayashi in his scientific article "Making the Connections: Water, Forests, and Minerals Exploitation in South and Southeast Asia", in which he argues that the different components of the ecosystem such as forests, water and minerals are interconnected and they depend on each other. Moreover, the loss of one element will negatively affect the whole environmental system. He elaborates that:

> Forests contribute to the constancy of water supply, reducing the risks of drought as well as floods. Forests help maintain a constant flow of water toward other ecosystems and urban centers. Water, forests, and minerals are interdependent. They are physically linked, for instance, in that minerals are found in forests and watersheds. Without water, forests cannot grow. Forests regulate water flows and act as barriers to coastal and river floods. Forests also contribute to climatic stability through carbon sequestration, I which then stabilizes water supply. Because of such close linkages, the exploitation of one can lead to the degradation of another. (49)

After the industrial revolution, Britain became in desperate need for labor to work in plantations and factories. Moreover, they needed low-paid soldiers and sepoys to recruit them in the British army in order to assert the empire's dominance over new territories. They even used young children to work in the forests and factories with no or low wages. Those poor workers were all illiterate that was why they did not write letters or diaries documenting the bitter reality they were living in. They were buried in unmarked graves,

one on top of the other. In fact, this was the case for the simple workers in all the colonies including India, Burma and Malaya.

Beckert Sven argues that colonialism forced natives to work in fields and factories using power; bureaucrats, and military forces guaranteed the security of mill and plantations' owners. They also used social and ideological manipulations to dominate the working class:

> Coercion had almost always been a central element in getting people to perform labor for others, a staple for feudal lords and colonial masters alike. Yet one industrial capitalism's signal features was that coercion would now be increasingly accomplished by the state, its bureaucrats and judges, and not by lords and masters. Many capitalists throughout the world in need of workers feared the decline of personal dependencies such as serfdom, slavery, and apprenticeships, expecting idleness and even anarchy as a result. But in some areas the state had gained sufficient strength to create conditions that secured reliable flows of women, children, and men into factories. (210)

Colonialism forced millions of poor labourers to work in plantations, mines, and fields. The colonial authorities used power to get low wages workers through indenture and recruiting labourers.

Animals were not excluded in this dirty greedy game; hundreds of species have been in danger of extinction because of decades of their colonial extravagant exploitation such as that of elephants, tigers, crocodiles… etc. Animals that were sacred and respected in Buddhist culture became means of transporting tons of products like teak and timber trees. Other species were just hunted for pleasure or to be used as decorations in British dining

rooms. The colonizer brazenly attacked the religious values of Muslims and Buddhists when he used the fat of cows and pigs to grease the cartridges of guns.

In his non-fiction essay "*Shooting an Elephant*," George Orwell pictures the scene of killing an elephant when its mahout was absent. The raging elephant killed a coolie, a cow and destroyed some properties on his way but eventually the beast became calm in a paddy field. However, Orwell was forced to kill the animal because he was followed by thousands of Burmese who were expecting him to shoot the elephant. He recounts: "They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant … it was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant" (34). Orwell goes further when he explains that killing a working elephant was a serious matter because it was very expensive and important for both natives and plantation owners yet he shot the animal:

> The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward. And at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East … to come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing- no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at. (36)

Orwell states that the owner was so angry but since he was Indian, the authorities did not care about him. Besides, "a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner failed to control it" (39). He recalls that Europeans' opinion was divided. The older men said he did the right thing, whereas the younger ones said that it was a big loss to shoot an elephant for killing an Indian man since the expensive animal worth more than a coolie (39). The

incident of Orwell is just an example of the Europeans' intolerable cruelty to animals and their disgusting way of justifying their actions.

I.2. Potcolonial Ecocritical Theories:

I.2.1. Postcolonialism:

The beginning of the 20th century marked the spread of anticolonial sentiments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America because of the political and the socio-economic conditions that had led millions of subjugated people to protest and erupt into bloody wars from Algeria to Vietnam. The anti-imperialism and the independence of these colonies led to the emergence of a new field of study which is postcolonialism that first appeared in the departments of English and literature at the beginning of the 1980s. Gandhi notices that postcolonial thought had "taken its place with theories such as poststructuralism, psychoanalysis and feminism as a major critical discourse in the humanities." Its presence can be found in fields all over the humanities, from cultural studies to linguistics and rhetoric, and even science studies, legal studies, history, and education" (viii). Ghandi also argues that: "postcolonialism has found itself in the company of disciplines such as women's studies, cultural studies and gay/lesbian studies. These new fields of knowledge—often classified under the rubric of the 'new humanities'—have endeavored first, to foreground the exclusions and elisions which confirm the privileges and authority of canonical knowledge systems, and second to recover those marginalized knowledges which have been occluded and silenced by the entrenched humanist curriculum" (42).

Postcolonial theory has become an urgent need after the failure of the European theory, which was supposed to be universal, to analyze the literary texts published by postcolonial authors in ex-European colonies. A new theory was needed to accommodate the

differences in the indigenous cultures, traditions as well as the history of these countries before, during and after colonialism.

Julian Gom states that the pioneers of the post-colonial theory are Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Amilcar Cabral, W. E. B. Du Bois, and C. L. R. James. These thinkers, activists, and writers inspired a second wave of postcolonial scholars including Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and other historians who were concerned with subaltern studies such as Ranajit Guhaand Dipesh Chakrabarty (7). Gom also argues that these postcolonial scholars took part in the anticolonial struggle in a way or another. Fanon, for instance, had been an active participant in anticolonial struggles. Other post-colonial scholars like Du-bois did not hold arms but rather participated in meetings, wrote for anti-imperial journals and established the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the United States.

W. E. B. Du Bois, Aime Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and other activists and authors dedicated themselves and their postcolonial works to criticize the violence of the Western empires and rejected their authoritarian policies including racism, discrimination, forced displacement and the exploitation of the colonies' resources that increased the richness of the Anglo-European countries at the expense of the natives. Moreover, they analyzed the psychological impact of colonialism on both colonizer and colonized. They also went deeply into the study of the empires' culture, structures, and ideologies, respecting the fact that the empire is everywhere manipulating the subjugated people's perception of the world around them. Julian Go states that: "Postcolonial thought is primarily an anti-imperial discourse that critiques empire and its persistent legacies. If social theory was born from and for empire, postcolonial thought was born against it" (1).

The main aim of these thinkers is to see a world liberated from the domination of the empire and encourage the independence of colonized people, and the political and socio-

economic equality. Moreover, they work hard to get rid of racism, enslavement and exploitation. They preferred and encouraged collectivism over individualism, and they hoped for post imperial countries that praise and celebrate their racial and cultural differences, and refuse to erase and replace them by the so called Anglo-European civilization (Go 8).

The Empire Writes Back uses the term 'post-colonial' to refer to "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft, Bill, et al. 2). However, a debate over this broad definition has been arisen because some critics believe it is necessary to limit the term, either by selecting only certain periods as truly post-colonial (most notably the period after independence), or by suggesting that some groups of people affected by the colonizing process are not post-colonial (most notably settlers), or finally, by suggesting that some societies are not yet post-colonial (meaning free of colonial attitudes). This latter point can be seen in the situation of indigenous peoples in settler societies. Some claim that the goal of post-colonial studies is to help societies achieve comprehensive and complete decolonization, both psychologically and politically, through enormous and dramatic recoveries of pre-colonial traditions (194). Most critics have argued that post-colonial has a clearly chronological meaning simply designating the post-independence period.

The Empire Writes Back argues that the term "post-colonial" can provide a new way of thinking about colonial relations: no longer a simple binary opposition of black colonized vs. white colonizers; Third World vs. the West, but rather an engagement with all the various manifestations of colonial power, including those in settler colonies. The Attempt to define the post-colonial by erecting barriers between individuals who are considered post-colonial (Ashcroft, Bill, et al. 200).

Julian Gom argued that the term "postcolonial" does not necessarily mean that the patrimonies of colonialism are over or it is just specified to the after colonial era, unlike many scholars who used this term to refer to the period after decolonization, "[i]t refers to a loose body of writing and thought that seeks to transcend the legacies of modern colonialism and overcome its epistemic confines. It refers to a relational position *against* and *beyond* colonialism, including colonialism's very culture" (9).

Postcolonial studies also seek to remember, revise, and question the colonial past in order to overcome its legacies that have become obvious in present day. It also criticizes the culture of the colonizer and work hard to construct new knowledge, representation and image that will be projected to the world (9). Gom goes further in explaining the signifier "post" by stating that:

> It is only post in this sense of seeking transcendence; something beyond or *after* colonial epistemes. The signifier "post" in the term "postcolonial thought" refers to an intellectual stance that recognizes colonialism's legacies, critiques them, and tries to reach beyond them. It is also *post,* therefore, in the sense that it seeks to overcome the imperial suppression of the thought, experiences, and agency of the colonized and excolonized peoples. (9)

Postcolonial theory refers to the historical, theoretical and critical observation of previous colonies of the Western powers. It investigates the effects of colonization from the moment of invasion to the present day in all aspects of life. Postcolonial theory analyses literary works written mostly by authors from those colonies.

According to Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, the analysis of the texts of imperialism requires the understanding of the social and historical context of the texts concerning culture, knowledge, power, institutions and ideologies of the author and the circumstances in which the text is set. Furthermore, the study of the text cannot be fully

accomplished without a full concentration and understanding of the interrelationship between the past and present of the nation even before the beginning of the foreign domination and the colonial exploitation. The comprehension of the historical and socio-economic circumstances allows the postcolonial theory and the imperial discourse analysis to operate well (4).

Colonialism and Postcolonialism are umbrella terms which cover a gamut of issues and features under their fold. Both of them embody hybridity, colonizer/ colonized relationship, creolization, mestizaje, inbetweenness, diaspora, subalternity, identity and others. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin states that, "Postcolonialism's major theoretical concerns: otherness, racism and miscegenation, language, translation, the trope of cannibalism, voice and the problems of speaking of and for others to name just a few" (135). The current study utilizes three concepts, colonizer/ colonized relationship, diaspora and displacement and finally subaltern studies to decipher the different meanings related to the relationship between colonizers and colonized.

I.2.1.1. Colonizer/Colonized Relationship:

The experience of colonization had shaped the life and destiny of the subjugated natives and the settlers as well on the economic, political, cultural, and social spheres. It also draws the features of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized which was charged with greed and exploitation on the part of the colonizer, and feelings of hatred and persecution on the part of subjugated natives.

George orwell states that when he was the sub-divisional police officer of the town in Moulmein in lower Burma:

I was hated by large number of people …in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter … as a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited

whenever it seemed safe to do so. The young Buddhist were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans. (33)

Orwell declares that he considered imperialism as evil, and he wanted to finish his duties and leave the empire's army as soon as possible because he was against the colonial policies and its oppressive methods,

> Theoretically- and secretly, of course- I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos_ all these oppressed me with intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. (33)

After the invasion of India, the British authorities recruited thousands of Indians in the empire's army. This later was used in the invasion of the other Asian territories like Burma and Malaya. This malicious policy caused hatred and enmity between Indians who became colonizers and the other colonies in Asia that considered those sepoys and soldiers as traitors. Moreover, the Europeans aimed at creating the so called elite or bourgeois that was composed of native land owner, agents, and intellectuals who studied in British schools. Ranajit Guha argues:

> The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism- colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism ... sharing the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness - nationalism - which confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo-colonialist historiographies these

> achievements are credited to British colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institutions and culture; in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings - to Indian elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas. (39)

The Indian Elite which was in the first place created by the British colonialism dominated and controlled the lives of the natives in South Asia especially in India where the citizens suffered from oppression for centuries. They also lacked the ability to speak or at least being represented by trustful representatives.

I. 2. 1 .2. Diaspora and Dislocation:

One of the bitter social results of colonialism is the forced displacement of the natives who become obliged to leave their home lands during wars either to look for more secured refuge during armed invasion and escape the cruelty of colonialism, or as immigrants who look for a better life in distant lands. Others are exiled from their countries because of the unjust colonial laws. Ashcroft argues that, "A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (8).

No matter how or why do these people left their mother lands, what really matters are the effects of diaspora and dislocation on them and on the host country as well. The history of India, Burma, and Malaya had known several displacements of their inhabitants especially during the British colonialism and the Second World War with the cruel Japanese invasion; millions of people from different social classes escaped wars, famines, and epidemics. Royal families were exiled from their homes to distant lands like the last Konbaung king of Burma who was deported with his family to India during the British invasion of Burma.

The need for workforce obliged the Europeans to look for more labor in the plantations and to serve in their castles and houses. Hagan James and Wells Andrew states that, Indian coolies represented the largest number of employees in Burmese and Malays rubber plantations, about 80 per cent of these men and women came from Southern India, where Madras Presidency was a fertile recruiting ground. Working in Malaya was often an alternative to starvation, for them and the families they left behind. The agents used different methods to attract villagers and employ them; one of the old ways was the recruitment under indenture which guaranteed employers with the lowest possible wage (144).

> Agents offered a cash advance to men and sometimes women willing to put their thumbprint to an indenture agreement. This provided that the recruit would work for a specified employer (and no-one else) for a fixed period (usually three years) to his employer's satisfaction, and for a fixed wage. The cash advance was a charge against the money the coolie would earn; if he succeeded in repaying it within the period set by the indenture he was free to leave the plantation; if not he had to remain and work off his debt. If he left before he had acquitted his debt and served his time, he was subjected to criminal penalties. (145)

Recruiting agents used to go to poor villages and cities from India, and use manipulating techniques to convince the poor natives who were in desperate need for work. They forced them to sign unfair contracts which deprive their rights.

The indenture system was later criticized and replaced by a system of mass immigration or 'free' laborers in which the Indian Immigration Fund would pay for the passages of 'free' coolies to Malayan ports. They used the Kanganis; a senior plantation employee who travelled to India and chose workers. The recruit was free to leave the plantation after giving a notice. The socio-economic state of those laborers was unbearable, they were living miserable situation. Most of them did not even have a proof document to

confirm their existence as human beings, the displacement caused their alienation of vision, the crisis in self-image and loss of identity. Ashcroft states that:

> A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of post-colonial societies whether these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two". (9)

1.2.1.3. Subaltern Studies:

The Subaltern Study is one of the latest subdivisions of postcolonial theory that was launched in the 1980's by Indian scholars**.** This study focuses on the deep structure of the Indian society that is composed of different social classes and ranks and concentrates on the lowest or the poorest class which is called the Subaltern. Moreover, this study deals with the history of the Indian society and the position of the subaltern subject within his community.

This controversial concept was first coined by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci who had dealt with it in his book *Prison Note books* written between 1929 and 1935.According to him the subaltern classes refers to any "low rank" person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation. The group he was refereeing to that time was composed of workers and peasants who were oppressed and discriminated by the leader of the National Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini and his agents. His main aim was to make their voice heard, and to unite the subaltern under one state. His model of study was based on study of the subaltern's history. (Louai 5)

A group of Indian scholars have dealt with the issue of subalternity under the leadership of Ranajit Guha The founder of *The Subaltern Studies Group* or *Subaltern Studies Collective*. Ranajit Guha defined the Subaltern Studies as "a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way The subaltern is that clearly definite entity, which constitutes "the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the „elite". According to The Subaltern Studies group the British colonialism has created the so called "elite" and "nationalist-bourgeois elitism". Colonialism was also the main reason behind the existence of the oppressed subaltern. Moreover, It had widened the rift between the elite and the oppressed class. Furthermore, the Indian bourgeoisie failed to speak for the nation, and could not be a reliable representation of the subaltern. (Louai 6)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak the Indian-American post-colonial feminist critic and the author of the famous essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak*?" (1988) went further in explaining the concept of subaltern by relating it to problems of gender especially the ones of Indian women during colonialism. Furthermore, she used the sample of Sati women practices in India during the British colonialism. She has dealt with the conflict that Indian Sati women were suffering; in the sense that the Hindu community following the Buddhist traditions obliged widowed women to burn themselves after the death of their husbands, whereas, the Western civilization denounced this cruel inhuman ritual. Spivak declared that this dilemma had no solution, "The conflict between these two positions produced two different discourses with no possible solution; one postulates that, "white man [are] saving brown women from brown men," the other maintains that, "the woman actually wanted to die". Spivak had confirmed that Sati women had lost their voice and their self-autonomy because of the existing controversy. "the Hindu woman" disappeared, not into a pristine

nothingness, but into a violent shuttling, which is the displaced figuration of the „third-world woman“ caught between tradition and modernization”. Spivak shed light on the struggles and experiences of women from different classes either upper, middle, or lower class that are suffering from double oppression due to the gender discrimination of their traditions in one hand and colonialism in the other hand. She also stresses the fact that women’s participation in the anti-colonial history was totally ignored. Moreover, the efforts and hard labor that women did in plantations and factories were also denied because they could not speak for themselves in a colonized patriarchal society. (90)

I.2.2. Ecocriticism

During the 2019 UN climate action summit in New York, the sixteen years old climate activist Greta Thunberg from Sweden addressed the leaders of the world in an emotionally charged speech entitled “How Dare you!” In which she accused them of ignoring the science behind the climate crisis, saying, “You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you! For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight”. (Thunberg)

This speech is one of the many attempts that eco activists are doing to protect mother earth after the massive degradation of the environmental system being the most terrific challenge of the recent times mainly because of the extravagant exploitation of the natural resources and the negative effects of the technological advancements that caused disastrous results such as pollution -with its different kinds-, Global warming coupled with carbon emission and the extinction of many species of animals… etc.

Ecocriticism emerged as a more earth-centered approach that was urgently needed in order to analyze and read the different texts which tackle the environmental issues, as well as to emphasize the significance of the relationship between the human and the non-human in literature. In other words, Eco-critical theory emphasizes the importance of not just the human beings but also the physical environment as represented in literary works. The term "Ecocriticism" was first coined by the Eco-critic William Ruckert in his essay "*Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*" in 1978. By ecocriticism Ruckert meant "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature." His main aim was not to transfer the ecological concepts to the study of literature, but rather to see literature inside the different ecological contexts. (115) He also tried to clarify the relationship between ecology and literature by asking some questions:

> The desire to join literature to ecology originates out of and is sustained by a Merwin-like condition and question: how can we apply the energy, the creativity, the knowledge, the vision we know to be in literature to the human-made problems ecology tells us are destroying the biosphere which is our home? How can we translate literature into purgative-redemptive biospheric action; how can we resolve the fundamental paradox of this profession and get out of our heads? How can we move from the community of literature to the larger biospheric community which ecology tells us (correctly, I think) we belong to even as we are destroying it? (121)

Ruckert also argues that the main purpose of the ecologists is to protect the environment from the irrationality of the human beings that will eventually lead to the destruction of the globe and thus the collapse of the human kind. He states:

> The problem now, as most ecologists agree, is to find ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community, and with it the human community. This is what ecologists like to call (the self-destructive or suicidal motive that is

> inherent in our prevailing and paradoxical attitude toward nature. The conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities-the human, the natural-can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere. (107)

Many scholars tried to identify Ecocriticism, and here are some of these definitions. The first is from the '*Introduction' to The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), an important anthology of American ecocriticism, in which Cheryll Glofelty states that ecocriticism focuses more on topics and issues related to the mother earth and the environment. The author argues:

> What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. (xvii)

Glotfelty as many other Ecocritics and theorists asks some important questions about the nature and the development of ecocriticism when analyzing a literary text, ranging from,

how is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? In addition to race, class, and gender, should place become a new critical category? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time? In what ways and to what effect is the environmental crisis seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture? What bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies? What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics? (xix)

Ecocriticism is unique amongst contemporary literary and cultural theories because of its close relationship with the science of ecology. It may seem obvious that ecological

problems are scientific problems rather than objects of cultural analysis. Eco critical theory is concerned with the analysis of the nature and the causes of the threats which are mainly man made and the possible solutions to them. Furthermore, ecocriticism is tightly bound with culture, philosophy and politics, in this context Garrard states that: "Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a 'green' moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory" (3).

I.2.3. Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Postcolonial ecocriticism is one of the fastest developing subfields within postcolonial studies, it analyzes and studies the environmental dimensions of literary works. Postcolonial ecocriticism or green postcolonialism is the result of the realization that the environmental issues such as pollution, deforestation, animals' extinction are intertwined with colonialism. In other words, the environmental disasters are the results of imperialism thus a combination of the two theories became an urgent need to analyze different literary works that tackle different eco issues in a postcolonial context.

Many ecologists and scientists traced back the reasons behind the natural degradation to the decades of the Europeans' colonization and the capitalist market greed especially after the industrial revolution that increased the need for raw materials which were mostly industrial. This extravagant selfish exploitation caused soil impoverishment, deforestation, and desertification.

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* provides a rich discussion of the ecocritical turn within postcolonial literary studies. It examines the relationships between humans, animals and the environment in postcolonial literary texts. Huggan and Tiffin argue that it is challenging to combine together postcolonial and eco/environmental studies because the two fields are notoriously

distant and difficult to define. Moreover, they have distinctive ideologies and concerns. The theories also apply diverse methods and approaches to analyze literary works. Yet, these problems can be solved by eliciting the common similarities, e.g. the two theories are committed to achieve the social and environmental justice. (5)

Graham Huggan notes in an article written in 2004 that it is impossible to analyze modern imperialism and colonialism without including the environmental disasters that they entail, considering that colonial and imperial problems are by their nature environmental problems. Huggan explaines why eco-critical and postcolonial studies are interdependent: while green studies can help make environmental issues as the primary focus and the center of the postcolonial studies, the latter can help combat 'the tendencies of some Green movements towards Western liberal universalism and "[white] middle-class nature-protection elitism" (Mukherjee 39).

In the same vein, Pablo Mukherjee states that both postcolonial and ecocritical studies are intertwined together despite the fact that they are conceptually different, yet the two theories are best understood if they are merged together,

> Surely, any field purporting to theorise the global conditions of colonialism and imperialism (let us call it postcolonial studies) cannot but consider the complex interplay of environmental categories such as water, land, energy, habitat, migration with political or cultural categories such as state, society, conflict, literature, theatre, visual arts. Equally, any field purporting to attach interpretative importance to environment (let us call it eco/environmental studies) must be able to trace the social, historical and material co-ordinates of categories such as forests, rivers, bio-regions and species. (144)

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argue that although postcolonialism and ecocriticism are opposing terms yet they must be brought together as a tool of challenging

the persistent imperial dominance over social and environmental modes. Tiffin and Huggan asked some questions about the relationship between colonizer, colonized and nature, "Is there any way of reconciling the Northern environmentalisms of the rich (always potentially vainglorious and hypocritical) and the Southern environmentalisms of the poor (often genuinely heroic and authentic)? Is there any way of narrowing the ecological gap between coloniser and colonised, each of them locked into their seemingly incommensurable worlds?" (2). Postcolonial studies have come to understand environmental issues not only as central to the projects of European conquest and global domination, but also as inherent in the ideologies of imperialism and racism on which those projects historically – and persistently – depend. Not only were other people often regarded as part of nature – and thus treated instrumentally as animals – but also they were forced or coopted over time into western views of the environment, thereby rendering cultural and environmental restitution difficult if not impossible to achieve. Once invasion and settlement had been accomplished, or at least once administrative structures had been set up, the environmental impacts of western attitudes to human being-in-the-world were facilitated or reinforced by the deliberate (or accidental) transport of animals, plants and peoples throughout the European empires, instigating widespread ecosystem change under conspicuously unequal powers. (6)

Postcolonial ecocriticism becomes very important since it plays a major role as an advocator of the both real and imaginary worlds it stands for. It also tries to give voice to the oppressed creatures either humans or nonhumans. Moreover, it draws attention to social, political, economic and environmental issues within a distinguished literary framework that seeks to change the world to a better place. In this context, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin assert that:

> Postcolonial ecocriticism – like several other modes of ecocriticism – performs an advocacy function both in relation to the real world(s) it inhabits and to the imaginary

> spaces it opens up for contemplation of how the real world might be transformed … After all, postcolonial and eco/environmental writing, even if it is directed towards specific goals (e.g. the desire to protect wilderness, or to promote the rights of abused animals and/or peoples), is always likely to transcend its categorization as 'protest literature', while not even in its most direct forms is it a transparent document of exploitation or a propagandistic blueprint for the liberation of the oppressed. Accordingly, postcolonial ecocriticism preserves the aesthetic function of the literary text while drawing attention to its social and political usefulness, its capacity to set out symbolic guidelines for the material transformation of the world. (13, 4)

I.2.3.1. Environmental Racism:

In his article "*Environmental Racism vs. Covenantal Ethics"* Patrick Wallace states that the term Environmental Racism was first coined by Benjamin Chavis, former executive director of the NAACP, during a civil rights rally in Warren County, North Carolina, where the state government approved the disposal of toxic trash in a landfill near a small African-American neighborhood. This event sparked the environmental justice movement and changed the way people think about environmental issues laws. Five years later, Chavi and a colleague, Charles Lee, published a paper titled *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States*, which included statistical data demonstrating that race played a substantial role in where hazardous waste was disposed (2).

Patrick Wallace quote the Cuban professor of social ethics Miguel A. Del La Torre, who defines environmental racism as "the link between the degradation of the environment and the racial composition of the areas where degradation takes place" (2). In other words, Environmental Racism involves the inappropriate exposure of low-income or minority

individuals to heavy chemicals, pollution, toxic wastes, pesticides, and, most importantly, polluted air. According to Bullard, “environmental racism refers to racial discrimination in environmental policy making, decision making, and/or any practice which results in equitable distribution of environmental burdens borne by society and based on race or color” (199). Bullard’s definition implies that poor communities as well as minorities who are racially discriminated according to their color and race are the main victims of this kind of racism.

Environmental racism exploits people and their lands, it plunders the natives and nature as well. It is also considered as a threat to human lives because of the constant exposure to chemicals and rubbish that causes dangerous diseases like asthma and long-term illnesses such as cancer; an epidemic can continue from one generation to the next, depending on exposure. Death rates are very high in these communities because the exposure to higher nitrogen-dioxide and other contaminations reduce natives’ life spans.

Although Chavis’s report focused on environmental racism in America, this problem isnot isolated to the United States. Social and ecological degradation existed all around the world. Imperialism is one of the main historical reasons behind the environmental racism because it gavepower to capitalist corporations to freely scan the globe for places with the most profitable natural and human resources. These corporations extracted natural resources while disposing hazardous waste in these same places. The natives and residents of these regions themselves participated in their own ecological destruction as the market system obliged them to seek work from the very companies that exploited them. This is highlighted in the example of South Asia where the British colonialism was responsible for the exploitation of the human and natural resources in India, Burma and Malaya. Moreover, the colonial authorities forced the natives especially the immigrants, indentures, coolies …etc. to live in terrible circumstances surrounded by their human wastes in the highly toxic rubber and cotton plantations.

I.2.3.2 Zoocriticsm

For centuries animals were the subject of human cruelty and suffered from all kinds of abuse and exploitation that led to the extinction of many species as well as the imbalance in the ecosystem since animals represent an important component in it. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argue that:

> It is not until our own century, in the urgent contexts of eco-catastrophe and the extinction of many non-human species, that a radical re-drawing of this foundational relationship has occurred. Contemporary humanity, having materially destroyed vast areas of wilderness – and many other animals – is now routinely configured as spiritually hollow, as lacking the essence of the human through the repression, withdrawal, destruction or absence, rather than latent threat, of the 'inner wild'. (134)

Animal liberationists work hard to protect animals and to guarantee their rights in societies were nonhuman are deprived from their simplest rights. According to Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin:

> animal studies (except where it is regarded as a sub-branch of ecocriticism) has developed independently through disciplines such as philosophy, zoology and religion. Not surprisingly, then, zoocriticism – as we might term its practice in literary studies – is concerned not just with animal representation but also with animal rights, and this different genesis and trajectory from that of ecocriticism necessarily informs its intersection with the postcolonial. And just as ecocriticism and animal studies have developed rather differently, the two fields' conjunctions with postcolonialism to this point have also proceeded unevenly. (18)

The concept "animal rights" had caused many conflicts and concerns mainly philosophical and raised many questions such as, "Should animals have equal rights with humans; and if

so, under which circumstances? With whose rights should we begin, and with whose rights – with what possible philosophical understanding and/or legal notion of rights – can we end?

Zoo criticism aims to analyze the relationship between humans and animals in humanities and to study the representation of animals in different literary works as well as in media such as newspapers, televisions, and cinema … etc. in which animals are used in a 'rhetoric of moral and social regulation for example, people tend to label violent, aggressive and sexually immoral behaviour as 'bestial' or 'animal'. Furthermore, they use cartoons of animals to represent different political and economic ideologies, in this context Garrard states that:

> Second World War cartoons deployed metonymic images in which 'the lion stands for Britain . . . the bald eagle stands for the United States' The Labour politicians were represented 'therianthropically', combining human and animal characteristics for purposes of mockery, whereas the lion and the eagle were 'theriomorphic' images of Britain and America. Theriomorphism is the reverse of anthropomorphism, and is often used in contexts of national or racial stereotyping, such as when Nazis depicted Jews as rats. (141)

In her book *Perceiving Animals,* Erica Fudge traces back the cruelty of humans towards animals. She recalls the massacres that were done to animals in the Bear Garden in early modern London where spectators enjoyed watching mastiffs attacking an ape or horseback and assault bears whose teeth and claws had been removed (1). What really shocked Fudge is that people enjoyed and paid money to watch these kind of spectacles where animals being torn to pieces. Moreover, she tried to understand the human nature and the struggle that people have undertook through ages to guarantee their supremacy over nature and over other non-human species that were until recent times silent and forgotten creatures. "To watch a cruel entertainment such as baiting is to reveal the truth about

humans. They sink below the level of the beasts … To watch a baiting, to enact anthropocentrism, is to reveal, not the stability of species status, but the animal that lurks beneath the surface. In proving their humanity humans achieve the opposite. The Bear Garden makes humans into animals" (15).

Garrard argues that Ecocriticism is interested in the subjectivity of the non-human, and in the problem of the troubled boundaries between the human and other creatures. Ecocriticism invites an encounter with the pleasures and anxieties of a possible post-human condition. In fact, animals and animal products have recently become the site of a new range of concerns. (148)

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin assert that the dominant European discourses tend to place animals as opposite to humans either philosophically or representationally, and their discourses are overloaded with racism and speciesism. Moreover, the authors state that despite the fact that many representations in books and media sympathies with animals yet other representations cause the cruel death or extinction of animals mainly because those works focus on anthropocentrism which regards humankind as the central or most important element of existence and ignores the other nonhumans. So, animals are still suffering from bad representations and stereotyping as well as metaphoric associations.

> Conservation legislation, and/or the treatment of particular species, often depend on public response to representation rather than to the animals themselves or their environments since, for most urban-based voters, there has been little or no experience of the 'real thing'. Moreover, our training in 'reading' animals, from childhood on, tends to ensure that we interpret texts of all kinds about animals anthropocentrically, trapping them in distinct representational categories, e.g. animal-specific literary genres. (139)

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin list down four examples that explain the position and status of animals as well as their image according to human perspectives. First, the "Animal categorisations and the use of derogatory animal metaphors" (136). As well as the use of similitudes and analogists to humiliate other humans and offend them by using expressions such "you stupid cow". Moreover, dominant groups- mainly colonizers and invaders- tend to treat natives like animals and oblige them to be their slaves or destroy a whole community by merciless genocides. Ironically, people tend to condemn treating people as animals but accept the cruel treatment of animals. Second, humans cause the extinction of many species because of hunting, slaughtering and the greed that devours the lands where animals live. The third category is concerned with how the treatment of animals with special status in one human civilization is used to demonize, incriminate, or exclude other human groups – such as immigrants in western societies – who have a different perspective on those animals. Like the case of the Vietnamese man who beat a puppy to death to because according to their customs this ritual will restore the health of his wife. Yet this action was harshly condemned and evoked anti-immigrant sentiment in California. Yet, "such racialisations are both inappropriate and hypocritical in a society with abattoirs, scientific experiment, and commercial exploitation" (136). Fourth, a more shocking argument justifies the abuse and the human cruelty towards animal

> why worry about animals when children are starving, or when other people are still being killed, raped and abused? The answer to this goes back to the point with which our argument began: that while there is still the 'ethical acceptability' of the killing of nonhuman others – that is, anyone represented or designated as nonhuman – such abuses will continue, irrespective of what is conceived as the species boundary at any given time. (137)

After the Industrial Revolution Britain became in desperate need for Natural and human resources as well as new markets. This led to the emergence of new form of colonialism that invaded many territories in the world like South Asia. This new imperialism caused the diaspora of millions of Indians, Malays and Burmese who were the victims of these exploitation. Moreover, subaltern inhabitants were suffering below the poverty line. Whereas the colonial authorities and the few Asia elites where living lavish lives.

The environment was also the victim of the greedy imperialism that exploited all the natural resources that excited in the sub-continent including wood, cotton, petroleum, gemstones as well as animals that were harshly oppressed. Moreover, millions of poor workers were forced to live in contaminated zones near plantations, factories … etc. Where they lacked the minimum life condition.

This thesis takes as its basis the concepts of both postcolonial and ecocritical theories in its attempt to analyze the text concerned. Chapter two examines the postcolonial perspective in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* in which the study deals with important concepts like the relation between colonizer and colonized, dislocation and diaspora, and the subaltern studies. Whereas the third chapter highlights how ecocritical and postcolonial ecocritical concepts like the environmental racism and zoocriticism are tackled in Ghosh's novel.

Chapter II: Postcolonial Study of *The Glass Palace*

The reader of Ghosh's multi-layered novel *The Glass Palace* (2000) can easily detect the postcolonial perspective. The novel deals with the history of South Asia mainly India, Malaya, and Burma during and after the British colonialism. This family saga covers a wide range of colonial and post-colonial issues such as the relationship between colonizer and colonized, diaspora, dislocation, subaltern issues, identity, and others.

Despite the fact that Amitav Ghosh does not consider himself a postcolonial writer, his works deal with issues and topics that fall into the mold of colonialism such as the national identity, communalism, national history …etc. Ghosh also highlights the colonial oppression and fetishism in South Asia in his works. Pankaj Mishra describes him as one of the postcolonial Indian writers who "have expressed in his work a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and disappointments of the colonized people as they try to figure out their place in the world" (New York Times Review). His encounter with colonized countries helped him gain a global vision in his assessment of the phenomena of colonialism. He also shares many commonalities with other postcolonial theorists. John Thieme states that: "Like Edward Said, Ghosh draws attention to the artificiality of the East-West binaries of Orientalism. Like Homi Bhabha, he demonstrates the hybrid, interstitial nature of cultures, as articulated through language. Like Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies scholars, he endeavours to recuperate the silenced voices of those occluded from the historical record" (251). In other words, Ghosh deals with themes that are in the heart of postcolonialism such as hybridity, language, subaltern, and others that have been highlighted by the pioneers of the postcolonial theory.

In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh mentions several real historical events that occurred in South Asia during two centuries; from the invasion of Burma until its independence and the

emergence of the new nationalities. Ghosh also depicts the reality of his society before, and during the post-colonial periods. In this context, Frantz Fanon states that:

> The artist who has decided to illustrate the truths of the nation turns paradoxically towards the past and away from actual events. What he ultimately in tends to embrace are in fact the cast-offs of thought, its shells and corpses, acknowledge which has been stabilized once and for all. But the native intellectual who wishes to create an authentic work of art must realize that the truths of a nation are in the first place its realities. He must go on until he has found the seething pot out of which the learning of the future will emerge. (42)

Ghosh has the ability to depict the truth of his society and give voice to his people. Moreover, he can craftily merge the different historical, social, economic, and political components to get an authentic text that is consistent with reality.

The first part of the novel entitled *Mandalay* opens up with sounds of booming far in the plain. While none of the villagers knew the source of the sound, only a thirteen years old orphan boy called Rajkomar knew what was happening because of the rumors he heard; the British were invading the city:

> The noise was unfamiliar and unsettling, a distant booming followed by low, stuttering growls. At times it was like the snapping of dry twigs, sudden and unexpected. And then, abruptly, it would change to a deep rumble, shaking the food-stall and rattling its steaming pot of soup. … People looked around in bewilderment: What is it? What can it be? And then Rajkumar's sharp, excited voice cut through the buzz of speculation. "English cannon," he said in his fluent but heavily accented Burmese. "They're shooting somewhere up the river... (3)

Most of the natives were unfamiliar with the reasons behind this invasion, they were living a peaceful life in a country where poverty and hunger did not exist, yet the coming of the British army changed their lives. Kanwar Dinesh Singh states that the novel:

> examines analytically the reasons for deposing the monarch, dislocating the native forcibly, disorganizing the indigenous public life etc. The author quite deftly lays bare the commercial and imperialist aims of the Britons, for the accomplishments of which they have waged unlawful, barbaric, evil and inhumane wars, and exploited, pillaged, damaged, and destroyed the colonies. They not only take away the booty, but also disturb the calm, culture, ecology and polity of the colonized nation. (157)

Rajkomar did not really understand what was going on, yet he knew that the city was being invaded by the British. Another child who was Mathew, the son of Saya John, told Rajkomar that the main reason behind this invasion was teak; a precious tree that was used for boat building, exterior construction, veneer, furniture…etc. The king refused to compromise with the British authorities as a result they waged war against him. And started their systematic exploitation and destruction of the land.

Through the voice of young children, Ghosh recalls an important event in the history of Burma and the subcontinent. He uses the voice of innocent children who represent the future and the hope of the country. Moreover, he uses their point of views to show the impact of colonialism and its effect on young people and allows the readers to follow the development of these characters through colonialism and even after independence by tracing the impact of imperialism on them. In the words of Mathew: “The English are preparing to send a fleet up the Irrawaddy. There’s going to be a war. Father says they want all the teak in Burma. The King won’t let them have it, so they’re going to do away with him.” Rajkumar gave a shout of laughter. “A war over wood? Who’s ever heard of such a thing?” (13).

Indeed, the war was over wood because of the dispute with a British timber company that refused to pay duties for cutting up logs. It was clear that the company was wrong; they did not respect the kingdom's customs regulations. The royal customs officers demanded arrears of payment for some fifty thousand logs. The Englishmen had protested and refused to pay and carried their complaints to the British Governor in Rangoon, who decided to invade Burma. Even queen Supayalat could not understand that a great kingdom like Burma was colonized because of timber (18):

> The Kings of Burma were not princes… they were kings, sovereigns, they'd defeated the Emperor of China, conquered Thailand, Assam, Manipur. And she herself, Supayalat, she had risked everything to secure the throne for Thebaw, her husband and stepbrother. Was it even imaginable that she would consent to give it all away now? And what if the child in her belly were a boy (and this time she was sure it was): how would she explain to him that she had surrendered his patrimony because of a quarrel over some logs of wood? (19)

Burma was one of richest kingdoms in the world; thus it attracted the greedy European countries that did not hesitate to colonize this country.

King Thibaw tried to comfort his citizens by showing them his resistance and revolution against the empire and its strong army by sending a Royal Proclamation to the citizens. In it, he declared that he would not surrender, and he would be on the front with his army to protect his nation's religion, honor, and sovereignty. Nevertheless, the king failed to defeat the strong army, and the city was invaded within few days. "The British forces were armed with the latest breech-loading rifles. Their artillery support consisted of twenty-seven rapid-firing machine guns, more than had ever before been assembled on the continent of Asia. The Burmese could not match this firepower" (23). The military advancement of the British army allowed it to invade the country within few months overthrowing the last

Burmese kingdom. The colonial authorities started a series of radical and systematic changes that transformed the country from one of the richest to be a mere weak state that suffered from poverty and subordination.

II.1. The Relationship Between Colonizer/Colonized:

Spivak states that: “The relationship between the imperialist subject and the subject of imperialism is at least ambiguous” (93). The colonial authorities’ intensions in South Asia were obvious from the beginning of the invasion; their main concern was the exploitation of the natural and human resources. Aime Cesaire also argues that: “Between the colonizer and colonized there room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded mases” (177). Cesaire goes further in explaining that the relation between the colonizer and colonized is that of control and submission; in which the colonizer takes the position of dominator whereas the colonized turns into a mere instrument of production (177). Throughout the colonization period, the empire tried to manipulate the natives and to justify their infiltration into the sub-continent using different decisive labels like Kipling’s “white man’s burden”, and civilizing the savages, as well as Spivak’s famous phrase “white men are saving brown women from brown men” (93).Moreover, the British authorities created the so called elite or bourgeois who were Asian land owners and business men that participated in the distraction and exploitation of their land and their people. Amilcar Cabral argues that:

> The experience of colonial domination shows that, in the effort to perpetuate exploitation, the colonizer not only creates a system to repress the cultural life of the colonized people; he also provokes and develops the cultural alienation of a part of the population, either by so-called assimilation of indigenous people, or by creating a social gap between the indigenous elites and the popular masses. As a result of this

> process of dividing or of deepening the divisions in the society, it happens that a considerable part of the population, notably the urban or peasant petite bourgeoisie, assimilates the colonizers' mentality, considers itself culturally superior to its own people and ignores or looks down upon their cultural values. (57)

In *The Glass Palace,* Ghosh has tackled the issue of the British-made elite through the presentation of different characters such as Saya John and Rajkomar, the Indian orphan who came to Burma and became a colonizer himself. The Burmese regarded Rajkomar Raha and other Indians as either exploitative moneylenders and landlords, or poverty-stricken workers living in slums. They nicknamed them Kala, a word with a negative connotation. In fact, Rajkumar and Saya John came to Burma and became involved in money making under the umbrella of the British. They became collaborators in the process of exploiting their land. Rajkomar Raha is a central character in the novel whose personal history is entwined with colonial history. He represents the kind of person that can adapt and integrate in any society as long as his interests are guaranteed. This self-made man came first to Burma by a sampan boat when he was thirteen years old after losing his whole family because of fiver in Akyab, a place where Burma and Bengal meet. He tried to return back to his ancestors' hometown Chitagong, yet he found himself in Mandalay where he started his journey as a self-reliant man with the guidance of his permanent mentor Saya John, who helped him lay the foundation stone for his projects and trade in timber investments. Both Saya John and Rajkumar adapt to the new colonial situation in order to make money. They adjust themselves to opportunities.

Rajkomar turned into a selfish opportunist man. In fact, he became a colonizer himself by bringing hundreds of poor workers, controlling their fates and lives in a foreign country far from their home lands, he was the reason behind the diaspora of these labourers. He sold their indenture contracts in Burma without bothering himself to think about their

destiny. In one of the sharpest discussions in the novel, Uma accused Rajkomar of being a selfish colonizer:

> Rajkumar, you're in no position to offer opinions. It's people like you who're responsible for this tragedy. Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your kind have done is far worse than the worst deeds of the Europeans. (214)

Rajkomar is never ashamed of his selfish deeds towards his land or his people, but rather he regards himself as a contributor in the developments and prosperity of his country. He bragly insulted Uma: "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" (214).

The British colonialism was the reason behind these illusions in creating the bourgeois, who considered themselves better than others and thought that they have the right to dominate the rest of the people. Moreover, colonialism had widened the rift between the elite and the rest of the society; it also caused hatred and animosity between brotherly peoples:

> "How dare you?" Uma cried… 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've done to people in your power—to women and children who couldn't defend themselves? You're no better than a slaver and a rapist. (214)

In fact, this part of the conversation between Uma and Rajkomar is just another example of this widening gap between different social categories in South Asia.

What made matters worse is that Burma was invaded by Indians who were sepoys in the British army and were called "Kalaas", a Sanskrit term used by Burmese which means

black or dark. For centuries, Indians represented the biggest number of immigrants in Burma. They worked in the bazaars as coolies, cobblers, and shopkeepers; they also served in farms, castles, and houses. Being in the British forces shocked the Burmese and eventually caused a lot of hatred and malice. The empire used this policy of 'divide and conquer' to weaken the nations that were once strong and united. The army was so strong and well-equipped with developed weapons that show the greatness and power of the British empire:

> There were some ten thousand soldiers in the British invasion force, and of these the great majority—about two-thirds—were Indian sepoys. … The Hazaras, recruited from the Afghan border, had proved their worth to the British over decades of warfare, in India and abroad. The 1stMadras Pioneers were among the most loyal of Britain's foot soldiers. The Burmese defenders of Minhla stood little chance against these sepoys, with their newly manufactured British equipment and their vastly superior numbers. The dogged little defense force dissolved when the redoubt was charged. (23)

The country entered a dark tunnel of empirical fetishism and greed. The exploitation of the city's fortunes began from the first day with the looting of the palace's valuable collectibles. What made things worse is that even the natives began to steal and loot what the invaders left behind; this shows that exploitation and greed are contagion and dangerous. Moreover, people lose their common sense during wars and invasions and became self-destructive. This was what happened in the Glass Palace when Ma Cho asked one of the women who was running out of the castle holding valuables: "The soldiers—they've been looting the palace. We're trying to save a few things for ourselves" (27). We also learn that:

> The hall was filled with a busy noise, a workman-like hum of cutting and; chopping, of breaking wood and shattering glass. Everywhere people were intently at work, men and women, armed with axes and das; they were hacking at gem-studded Ook offering

> boxes; digging patterned gemstones from the marble floor; using fish-hooks to pry the ivory inlays from lacquered sadaik chests. Armed with a rock, a girl was knocking the ornamental frets out of a crocodile-shaped zither; a man was using a meat cleaver to scrape the gilt from the neck of a saung-gak harp; and a woman was chiselling furiously at the ruby eyes of a bronze chinthe lion. (29)

Before the coming of the colonizer, people did not dare approaching the castle because it was a sacred place. However, the colonial authorities with their arrogance and greed were able to destroy its power of the sovereignty and made the citizens more daring towards the state. This proves that the main aim of the colonizer is to demolish and break down the nation's social values and the historical ties. Few days later, Rajkomar was really astonished when he saw these people crying in grief because of the exile of their king. He could not explain this irony, this blatant contradiction: "Rajkumar recognized several people from the looting of the night before. He recalled how they had hacked at the furniture and dug up the floors. Now those very men and women were lying prostrate with grief, mourning the loss of their King and sobbing in what looked like inconsolable sorrow" (40).

In his novel, Ghosh proves that colonialism has a strong harmful effect on the social side because it destroys the bounds that have existed for centuries between the members of the same country. Furthermore, colonialism increases the rift between the strata of society that becomes dominated by the British representatives followed by the native elites that people see them as traitors.

II. 2. Study of the Subaltern

One of the worst consequences of the British invasion of South Asia on the socio-economic level is that millions of people become living below the poverty line. Thus, they are forced to accept humiliating and despicable jobs. The world history ignored the stories of such

subalterns and their voices went unknown because no one could honestly speak on their behalf. Vaishnav Bhakti states that: “Subaltern Studies Group tried to fill the gaps of history, which is written by elites, by recognizing, recovering, restructuring and identifying the stories of non-elite, subjugated and marginalized people” (56). Authors like Amitav Ghosh tried to give voice to those poor people by rewriting the missing historical realities. In *The Hungry Tide* (2004), Ghosh notes, “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” (69).

Ghosh was a member of the Subaltern Studies Group that focuses on the examination and recovery of the underclass within the network of colonialism. Vaishnav Bhakti argues that: “As a writer, Ghosh negotiates with this challenge in an integrated manner that synthesizes the matter, subject and the issues.” He adds that to embrace the discourse of subaltern works, he uses two ways. “Firstly, his writings, both fiction and nonfiction become the central stage for the characters who belong to the group of marginalized. Secondly, the stories and issues are construed as a representation of the issues of subaltern class” (52).

Ghosh takes the stories of the marginalized characters (either fictitious or real life) and makes them the center of the work. It is via their stories that the reader enters into the realm of the marginalized. Ghosh also answers the dilemma of the postcolonial elite that has manipulated the fates of millions of oppressed people, Ghosh was among the Indian writers who tried to raise the voice of the subaltern in India. His western education and trips around the world made him observe numerous challenges of life in postcolonial society and allowed him to highlight the subaltern issues.

Throughout *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh depicts the stories of different marginalized people from different countries, classes, and genders. He also devotes long passages writing about the Indian soldiers who were used as scapegoats in the fronts of the British army that

recruits thousands of boys and exploited them to the point they become just tools, without thinking. Saya John recounts to Rajkomar his bad memories when he worked for a time as a hospital orderly where he met patients who were mainly sepoys back from fighting wars for their English masters:

> I still remember the smell of gangrenous bandages on amputated limbs; the night-time screams of twenty-year-old boys ... '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, ... For a few coins they would allow their masters to use them as they wished, to destroy every trace of resistance to the power of the English. … 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? "In English they use a word—it comes from the Bible—evil. I used to think of it when I talked to those soldiers. What other word could you use to describe their willingness to kill for their masters, to follow any command. (26)

Most of these soldiers were young boys from the rural India; they were living in bad conditions after losing their farms and lands. As a result, they were obliged to recruit in the colonial army and participate in other people's wars; the British authorities convinced them that they were helping to liberate oppressed people which was not true. Giani Amreek Singh is one of the Indian experienced politicians who served as a sepoy in the British army. He was insisting on the necessity of opening the eyes of Indian soldiers who were brainwashed by the British authorities or fascinated by strength, power and glory of the empire:

> He said: We never thought that we were being used to conquer people. Not at all: we thought the opposite. We were told that we were freeing those people. That is what they said—that we were going to set those people free from their bad kings or their evil customs or some such thing. (193)

Auradkar asserts that: “Thousands of poor, willing workers were recruited for work in Burma, Fiji, Caribbean and African plantations, in docks, mills and railroads while others were conscripted to the British army” (96). Besides the thousands of soldiers who were recruited by the British army, the colonial authorities exploited millions of workers and labourers to work in plantations, mills, and railways. Ghosh asserts that:

> Many foreign companies were busy digging for oil, and they were desperate for labor. They needed workers and were willing to pay handsomely. It was hard to find workers in Burma: few Burmese were so poor as to put up with conditions like those of Yenangyaung. But back at home in India, Baburao said, there were uncountable thousands of people who were so desparate to leave that they would sign over many years’ earnings. (106)

The indenture and recruitment of these poor workers was done by labor contractors who went to India and easily convince these labourers to work in houses, castles, mines, plantations…etc. Their wages did not even cover the basic needs but they had no option since they were living below the poverty line unlike the contractors who became richer like Baburao and Rajkomar:

> He spoke of a land of gold, Burma … He held up his hand so that everyone could see his gold and ruby rings. All of this, said Baburao, had come from Burma, the golden land. Before going there, he had had nothing, not even a goat or cow. “And all these things can be yours too,” Baburao said to his listeners. “Not in your next life. Not next year. Now. They can be yours now. All you need is an able bodied man from your family to put his thumbprint on this sheet of paper. (108)

Most of these poor farmers had lost their lands and farms because of the British colonialism. The country also was hit by severe droughts that caused famines and deadly

epidemics. As a result, many poor Indians were obliged to borrow money and make heavy debts in order to survive. The selfish contractors convinced them to sign the contracts in order to pay their debts and feed their families. Rajkomar started his trips to India in order to bring workers; he accompanied Baboroa, the labor contractor, in his trips to learn the secrets of this difficult yet profitable business. Baboroa had typical methods to convince the poor farmers in India to abandon their lands and recruit them in the jobs they offered. He seduced men, women, and even children to follow him to Burma, the land of dreams:

> Are there any here who have debts? Are there any who owe money to their landlords? You can settle your obligations right now, right here. As soon as your sons and brothers make their marks on these contracts, this money will be yours. In a matter of a few years they will earn back enough to free themselves of debt. Then they will be at liberty to return or stay in Burma … [S]ome were pushed on by their relatives and some had their hands held forcibly to the paper by their fathers and brothers. (108)

These poor workers had lost their right to live a dignified life; they did not have decent houses, most of them did not even had a document that proved their existence as human beings. Furthermore, they suffered from the illiteracy and the lack of health care. They even lost their right to be properly buried after their death due to colonial administrative measures, like the incident of the Indian oo-si who lost his life after being crushed by his sick elephant. His comrades could not burry him because the assistant who could sign his death note was absent:

> The funeral would have been performed immediately after the body's retrieval. But because of the forest Assistant's absence, there arose an unforeseen hitch. It was the custom for the dead to be formally released from their earthly ties by the signing of a

> note... The dead man's note of release had still to be signed, and only the Assistant, as his employer, could sign it. (83)

This was not the only incident that showed how cheap the subalterns' life was in the eyes of colonialism. Saya John told Rajkomar about the young oo-si who was crashed by a teak log when he was obliged by the assistant of the camp who was called McKay-thakin to release a log that was lodged at such an awkward angle in a very dangerous location in the river. The poor man lost his life and the camp assistant did not even bother himself signing the young man's death note simply because he was so drunk and ill. we further learn that:

> That evening, after the body had been prepared for burial, the hsin-ouq took the customary letter of release to McKay-thakin and asked for his signature. "By this time McKay-thakin was not in his right mind. …the hsin-ouq explain that the body would not keep, that the man must have his release before his last rites. He pleaded, he begged, in his desperation he even attempted to climb up the ladder and force his way into the tai. But McKaythakin saw him coming and came striding out with a glass in one hand and a heavy-bored hunting rifle in the other. Emptying one barrel into the sky, he shouted: 'For pity's sake, can you not leave me alone just this one night? (85)

These incidents and others prove that the life of these subaltern characters was so cheap in the eyes of the colonizers who regarded them as money machines and tools of reproduction that could be easily replaced.

In her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak deals with a controversial problem in the Indian society and she raises an important question about the position of the subaltern women in India: "the *object* of investigation. Thus, when confronted with the questions, Can the subaltern speak? and Can the subaltern (as woman) speak? The question of 'woman' seems most problematic in this context. Clearly, if you are poor, black

and female you get it in three ways" (90). In his novel, Ghosh presents different female characters from different ranks and classes who suffered in a way or another from triple oppression, being female in a colonized patriarchal society.

First, Uma who was the wife of the collector; one of the highest rank jobs in the Empire. Being a member of the elite society obliged her to follow certain rules and regulation in her dealings as the wife of a diplomat. Yet Uma could not stand this life and decided to leave her husband who died after her departure. Uma also refused to submit to all the Hindu widowhood traditions after the death of her husband but rather she had challenged her society and decided to leave her family and country: "as a widow living at home, Uma's life was still one of rigid constraints and deprivation: her hair was shaved off; she could eat no meat or fish; and she was allowed to wear nothing but white. She was twenty-eight and had a lifetime ahead of her. As the months dragged by, it became clear that some other solution would have to be thought of" (160).

Within few months, Uma decided to leave India and move abroad. She had visited many countries in Europe and USA, where she had met other Indians who were interested in the Indian case. The fruitful dislocation and immigration of Uma was in fact beneficial for her and for her country; her affiliation within different social and political groups and associations awakened her political awareness and made her one of the many Asian women who participated in the liberation of their countries. "she'd met many interesting people…so interesting and idealistic, men and women whose views and sentiments were so akin to her own. Through these people Uma had begun to understand that a woman like herself could contribute a great deal to India's struggle from overseas" (165). Through the character of Uma, Ghosh proved that a well-educated rich woman from India can speak and raise her voice against the cruelty of her society and colonialism. Indeed, Uma learnt a lot from the job

and acquaintances of her husband. Moreover, the fortune he left allowed her to visit different countries and absorb the ideas of nationalism and liberation then project them in her country.

Other women in the novel were not as lucky as Uma; they were oppressed and sexually abused by both brown and white man. One of this ladies was the mother of Ilongo who was Rajkomar's mistress. When she met Uma she shocked her with a heartbreaking story: "They sent me to him. On the ship, when I was coming over. They called me out of the hold and took me up to his cabin. There was nothing I could do… For years afterwards, whenever he was here he'd send for me. He wasn't so bad, better than some others" (204). Spivak states that:

> Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced. The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labor, for both of which there is 'evidence'. It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in*?* the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. (82-3)

In other words, Spivak explained that the subaltern women in India and other colonized patriarchal countries worked in terrible circumstances and suffered from poverty and sexual abuse, and were forced to remain silent and never protest. Iliongo's mother is just a sample of these women, even when Uma offered to help her expose Rajkomar's disgraceful deeds. She refused because she feared the power of Rajkomar as well as the loss of his financial support: "Ilongo's mother glanced at her visitor and saw that her face was flushed with indignation on her behalf ... "Madame, you won't speak of this to anyone? … "Because it will not help me to see him punished ... The money will stop; there'll be trouble. I am not a child; it is not for you to take this decision on my behalf" (205).

In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh exposes the tragic lives of millions of poor women who suffer from triple oppression, and are unable to make their voice heard simply because they do not dare speaking. Spivak states in this context: “The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish” (104). After long years of colonialism, the infrastructures of south Asian societies have been completely destroyed millions of people were living under poverty lines. They were obliged to accept humiliating works; they also fell in the trap of the British colonialism and betrayed their homelands and their people like in the case of soldiers, intellectuals, and business men. Finally, the natives were obliged to leave their countries in search for a better life abroad.

II.3. Diaspora and Dislocation

Imperialism caused the scattering and displacement of the colonized natives to other territories and colonies. Achkroft states that: “The most extreme consequences of imperial dominance can be seen in the radical displacement of peoples through slavery, indenture and settlement” (217). In other words, colonialism dislocates millions of people who are looking for work and safe shelters whereas others are victims of slavery. In the same context Alastair points out that: “Colonialism has produced and reduced nations, massacred populations, dispossessed people of their land, culture, language and history and shifted vast number of people from one place to another” (19).

Ghosh tends to incorporate the themes of immigration and diaspora in all of his writings, particularly in this study’s novel. He handles the subject vividly due to his own diasporic experiences and migration that made him a cosmopolitan writer. Vaishnav Bhakti states that:

> The term ‘cosmopolitan writers’ was exclusively meant for migrant writers. The plethora of novels that capitalized on the name of diaspora writing, cosmopolitan worldview against imperialism, going beyond myopic nationalism by the self-assumed role of representatives of the Third World amongst First world intellectual is undeniable. (13)

Ghosh is among the authors who devote most of their writings to tackle colonial-caused issues of poor immigrants, indenture labourers …etc.

In *The Glass Palace*, most of the characters were living far from their homeland due to many reasons like forced displacement, immigration, exile … etc. They were fetching for their real identity in the host country or countries. In fact, Ghosh does not believe in the idea of having one identity and he thinks that it does not refer to anything real. Furthermore, he argued in one of his interviews with Civilnet channel that a person can have multiple identities like his case of being a Bengali, an Indian, an Asian and a New Yorker. The characters in *The Glass Palace* are divided into three types; the ones who accept the fact that they can live in any place and they fully assimilate with the host culture or cultures like the case of Saya John, Rajkomar, and Dolly. Also, the ones who did not and could not accept the fact that they are far from their home land like the royal family; king Thebaw and queen Supayalat who fought and refused to surrender. Other characters including Uma had challenged their circumstances and got benefit from their diaspora to work for the liberation of their country.

After the falling of Mandalay, the royal family was forced into exile. The British authorities wanted to erase them completely from public memory at home; king Thibaw and his wife Queen Supayalet were obliged to leave the castle in Mandalay with their little princesses and few servants and maids. The British High Command robbed them of their dignity and degraded their existence:

> Just as he was about to step in, the King noticed that his canopy had seven tiers, the number allotted to a nobleman, not the nine due to a king. …So the well-spoken English colonels had had their revenge after all, given the knife of victory a final little twist. In his last encounter with his erstwhile subjects, he was to be publicly demoted like an errant schoolchild. (37)

The British authorities did not waste any chance to humiliate the deposed king and his family, they took revenge on him because he challenged them and defended his country.

In his novel *The Singapore Grip* (1978), J.G. Farrell discusses the phenomenon of migration during the colonial expansion in which he states that: "One of the most astounding things about our Empire … is the way we've transported vast populations across the globe as cheap labour" (175). Similarly, in his novel *The Glass Palace,* Ghosh also confirms this through the voice of king Thibaw who was transported to India after his exile:

> The King raised his glasses to his eyes and spotted several Indian faces … What vast, what incomprehensible power, to move people in such huge 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? And where would his own people go, now that they were a part of this empire? It wouldn't suit them, all this moving about. They were not a portable people, the Burmese; he knew this, ... He had never wanted to go anywhere. Yet here he was, on his way to India. (43-4)

The king was astonished by the tremendous demographical change that colonialism caused in the subcontinent by removing millions of people from one area to another, which is an example of dislocation.

The king himself was not that kind of man who liked to travel or move from one place to another; it was even said that he did not leave his castle in Mandalay for seven years. Unfortunately, the coming of the colonizer obliged him to leave his whole country and move to Ratnagiri; a small village which was very far from Bombay and the other big Indian districts in order to keep the royal family hidden and eventually be forgotten through time. Moreover, he thought about the destiny of the Burmese who were living a lavish stable life and could not survive the life of displacement and misery unlike the Indians. Thant Myint-U comments that:

> Burma was richer than the rest of British India. The Burmese were healthier and better fed, enjoyed far higher rates of literacy, and commanded bigger incomes than the average person in India. And so British companies encouraged immigration. Millions came, hoping for a new and better life- not just laborers but businessmen and professionals as well. (25)

The members of the royal family spent the rest of their lives far from their land. Even after the death of the King, the British authorities refused to take his body to his hometown to avoid riots and quarrels. Though, the queen was buried away in Rangoon. As for the four Princesses, the two who had been born in Burma both chose to live on in India. Their younger sisters, on the other hand, both born in India, chose to settle in Burma: both married and had children:

> No one could believe that this was the funeral of Burma's last King! We wanted the coffin stored in such a way that we could transport the remains to Burma someday. But when the authorities learnt of this they had the coffin forcibly removed from us. They are afraid that the King's body might become a rallying point in Burma! They built a monument on his grave, almost overnight, to make it impossible for us ever to take him back! (177)

The British authorities wanted to erase the past of the country by excluding the royal family which was the backbone of the state and the keeper of the nation's history, customs, and traditions.

Ashcroft et al. point out that: "Diaspora does not simply refer to geographical dispersal but also to the vexed questions of identity, memory and home which such displacement produces" (218). In other words, Dislocation does not just imply that a person is being physically far from his homeland, but rather he encounters issues related to his identity, culture, and affiliation. In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh tackles the problem of immigrants and refugees during and after colonialism. He discusses the plight of millions of young orphans who lost their families because of the British colonialism and were obliged to rely on themselves. Moreover, these orphans found themselves lost far from their homelands, living in diaspora and trying to clarify the features of their identities.

Saya John is one of those orphans who spends his whole life in diaspora. When Rajkomar first met Saya John at the stall of Ma cho, he was puzzled by this Chinese man who spoke Indian and Burmese languages fluently and wore European clothes. Saya John answered Rajkomars' curiosity by recalling his childhood and adolescence's long journey:

> I learnt as a child," he said, "for I am, like you, an orphan, a foundling. I was brought up by Catholic priests in a town called Malacca. These men were from everywhere—Portugal, Macao, Goa. They gave me my name—John Martins, which was not what it has become. They used to call me João, but I changed this later to John. They spoke many languages, those priests, and from the Goans I learnt a few Indian words. When I was old enough to work I went to Singapore, where I was for a while an orderly in a military hospital. The soldiers there were mainly Indians, and they asked me this very question: how is it that you, who look Chinese and carry a Christian name, can speak

> our language? When I told them how this had come about, they would laugh and say, you are a dhobi ka kutta—a washerman's dog—na ghar ka na ghat ka—you don't belong anywhere, either by the water or on land, and I'd say yes, that is exactly what I am." (9)

Saya John recalls his childhood memories that contribute in shaping his character as a self-reliant man who does not have a specific affiliation or identity.

Rajkomar Raha is another orphan who lost his whole family because of fever during the British invasion of India. He accidently came to Burma and became a successful business man. According to Rajkomar, being an orphan without family or friends is not that sad of a thing that might destroy ones' life but rather it means that the person is free to do whatever he wants:

> Miss Dolly, I have no family, no parents, no brothers, no sisters, no fabric of small memories from which to cut a large cloth. People think this sad and so it is. But it means also that I have no option but to choose my own attachments. This is not easy, as you can see. But it is freedom of a kind, and thus not without value. (127)

Rajkomar was unfamiliar with all the patriotic feelings; those bonds that connected a person to his country, to his people. Since Rajkomar spent his youth as a diasporic traveler who never stayed a long time in one place, he had never bothered himself with the issue of the belonging or identity, but rather he concentrated on business and money. When Rajkomar knew that the British had taken control of Burma for the sake of wood, he decided to begin his investments in the business with the help of Saya John who encouraged him to seize opportunities so he started his investments with his old friend Doh Say:

> Rajkumar was at a loss to understand this grief. He was, in a way, a feral creature, unaware that in certain places there exist invisible bonds linking people to one another

> through personifications of their commonality. In the Bengal of his birth those ties had been sundered by a century of conquest and no longer existed even as memory. Beyond the ties of blood, friendship and immediate reciprocity, Rajkumar recognized no loyalties, no obligations and no limits on the compass of his right to provide for himself. (40)

Ghosh proves that colonialism destroyed the social ties between the members of the society; it shattered the society into shards. Its most devastating effect was on young children who became unaware of the hidden bounds that unite the society and strengthen the community. Ghosh also reveals a dangerous effect of colonialism on diasporic members, which is being slaves to personal interests and money; as a result, they became traitors of their land and people:

> He reserved his trust and affection for those who earned it by concrete example and proven goodwill. Once earned, his loyalty was given wholeheartedly, with none of those unspoken provisions with which people usually guard against betrayal. In this too he was not unlike a creature that had returned to the wild. But that there should exist a universe of loyalties that was unrelated to himself and his own immediate needs. (40)

For years, Dolly was trying to convince Rajkomar to leave Burma and return back to India especially after the Burmese riots against the Indians. Yet Rajkomar was more adamant than ever about remaining in Burma despite his losses, he was not sure if Indians would accept him anymore since he spent his whole life abroad. Rajkomar and his family were living the toughest kind of diaspora. He said: “I’ve lived here all my life; everything I have is here... And anyway, what makes you think that we’ll be any more welcome in India than we are here? There are riots in India all the time— how do you know that the same thing wouldn’t happen to us there? (212).

Dolly and her family fell in the trap of the inbetweeness; they were not welcomed in Burma and they expected to be treated the same in India. Millions of refugees and immigrants from both sides suffered from the same dilemma because of the malicious plans of the British colonialism.

Within few years, life in Burma became impossible with the threats of the Second World War and the Japanese invasion, Rajkomar decided to leave it especially after the falling down of the timber and rubber prizes that almost bankrupted him. He sadly decided to return back to India after selling his assets and properties:

> It's hard to think of leaving: Burma has given me everything I have. The boys have grown up here; they've never known any other home. When I first came to Mandalay, the nakhoda of my boat said: This is a golden land—no one ever starves here. That proved true for me, and despite everything that's happened recently, I don't think I could ever love another place in the same way. (269)

Ghosh proves that people who live their whole lives in diaspora will eventually assimilate within the host country and forget their countries. What makes things worse is that colonialism with its malicious plans and policies can strip people of their belonging to both the home land and the host country. This is what happened to Rajkomar Raha and his family:

> There are people who have the luck to end their lives where they began them. But this is not something that is owed to us. On the contrary, we have to expect that a time will come when we'll have to move on again. … Just that it doesn't matter whether I think of Burma as home or not. What matters is what people think of us. And it's plain enough that men like me are now seen as the enemy—on all sides. (269)

Rajkomar is just one sample of the millions of Indians who are not lucky to live a stable life in their homeland, but rather they have lived in constant diaspora that has been caused by colonialism and its negative effects on society.

Salman Rushdie argues that: “Exiles or emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt” (10). In other words, Rushdie views that people who live their lives in diaspora are going one day to look back at their homelands even though they lost all bounds that they had with their origin countries. In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh tackles the problem of some characters who are haunted by the ghosts of their lost past, and lost homeland. And eventually they become unfamiliar with their true identity.

One of the female characters who lived her whole life in diaspora is Dolly. She was one of the thousands of young girls and orphans who were brought from villages and mountains to serve in the castle. Usually, the queen adopted some of these girls and made them her trusted handmaids to wait on her and her kids. Even after the collapse of the kingdom and the exile of the king, Dolly had chosen to accompany the royal family; she did not abandon them in their hardest times, unlike the other maids and servants. She spent long years in Ratnagini and she was fully integrated in the Indian culture. When Uma asked her about Burma, she answered her in an emphatic voice:

> 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 had to before. You would understand if you knew what it was like when we left. (96)

When Rajkomar came to Rarnagiri to look for his childhood love Dolly and asked her to marry him, she was so afraid and refused his proposal because she considered India her home and she was so loyal to the royal family and could never leave them. Uma tried to convince her to get married and leave the cage in which she was locked in for years: "You are free to go: you alone are here of your own will." "And where would I go?" Dolly smiled at her. "This is the only place I know. This is home" (102). Eventually, she married Rajkomar and returned to Burma where she totally isolated herself from others especially after her child Dinu got sick. Few years later, the idea of returning back to India had become an urgent need especially after the political and social problems that happened in Burma and led to the exclusion of Indians who were regarded as traitors and agents of the British colonialism. She was unsecured with her family because of being married to an Indian and her kids were half Indians in Burma. We learn that:

> Things have changed in Burma, Uma. I feel frightened now. There's a lot of anger, a lot of resentment, and much of it is aimed at Indians." … 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. I don't know what the wrongs and rights of it are, but I know that I feel frightened for the boys—even for Rajkumar. Some time ago, Dinu was shouted at on the streets: they called him Zerbadi—which is a swear word for people who're half Indian, half Burmese. (208)

The situation of Rajkomar's boys was even worse because of being the sons of parents from two opposed countries made their lives in constant threat. Eventually, the empire succeeded in turning the people of the same community into enemies, and this leads to civil wars and ethnic genocides in the aftermath.

For the first time in her life, Dolly had chosen the place that she wanted to live in. She decided to leave her husband and granddaughter and join a Buddhist nunnery at Sagaing, near Mandalay where she spent the rest of her life in.

Said asserts that: “Our age with its modern warfare, imperialism and the quasi theological ambition of totalitarian rulers is indeed the age of the refugees, the displaced person, mass migration” (175). In other words, Said states that because of colonialism, wars and tyrannical rulers many people become refugees and migrants. In the last parts of the novel, Ghosh spots the light on an important historical event which is the outbreak of the Second World War, which caused the largest displacement, refugees and diaspora known in the human history. All the characters’ in *The Glass Palace* were victims in this war especially after the Japanese invasion of South Asia that led to the escape of millions of people including Rajkomar’s family:

> The air raids had ended a good few hours before, but people were pouring down the road, heading away from town. Many were on foot; several families had their belongings slung over their shoulders, tied up in sheets; a boy was pushing a bicycle with a huge radio strapped to the carrier; two men were pulling an elderly woman behind them in a makeshift trolley. Nearer town the roads were clogged with honking cars. Sitting stalled in the truck. (333)

After the death of his son Nill, Rajkomar took his wife and daughter in law Manju with her baby girl Jaya, and they headed to Lankasuka in India. The journey was so difficult; they walked on foot for weeks; they suffered from hunger, rain, cold and the threats of thieves. Millions of refugees took that path. Most of them could not survive because of diseases and despair like Manju who committed suicide before reaching India:

> Everyone was heading in the same direction: towards the northern, landward passage to India—a distance of more than a thousand miles. They had their possessions bundled on their heads; they were carrying children on their backs; wheeling elderly people in carts and barrows. Their feet had stirred up a long, snaking cloud of dust that hung above the road like a ribbon, pointing the way to the northern horizon. They were almost all Indians. There were cars and buses too, along with taxis, rickshaws, bicycles and ox-carts. There were open trucks, with dozens of people squatting in their beds. (403)

Millions of refugees; mainly Indians were heading to India, holding their belongings, and surrounded by despair and death. Most of them could not survive the long journey because of hunger and the bad weather.

The Glass Palace proves to be a postcolonial novel with excellence since it tackles issues related colonialism and its effects on the society like diaspora, dislocation, poverty and the emergence of social classes which are divided into the elite and the subaltern. Through his novel, Ghosh reveals many historical events that happened in South Asia during the British invasion and the Second World War, as well. He reveals facts about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized that is characterized by exploitation and opportunism on the part of the colonizer, and of fear and hatred on the part of the colonized. He also tackles the contradictory position of some Asians who become colonizers themselves after being brainwashed and exploited by the colonizer. Moreover, Ghosh deals with one of the worst consequences of colonialism which is the dislocation and diaspora of millions of labors, refugees. He also proves that all the social classes were victims of this dislocation from the royal family to low rank people. In addition, Ghosh asserts that colonialism has created the elite or the new bourgeois class that contributes in the distraction of their homelands and their

people. Furthermore, he tackles the issues of the subalterns who lost their right to speak or revolt against their oppressing dominators.

Chapter III: A Postcolonial Ecocritical Study of *The Glass Palace*

III. 1. The Representation of Nature and the Environment in *The Glass Palace*:

Regarding the content of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* (2000), one can clearly find the postcolonial ecological perspective of the novel. In *Introduction to Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, Richard Kerridge states that:

> The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis. (5)

Most of Amitav Ghosh's literary and non-literary works are concerned with the environmental issues and the Eco crisis that South Asia lives nowadays. Moreover, he traces back the reasons behind this environmental degradation to the years of the British Colonialism of the continent. In other words, he allows the readers to make a comparison between the life in the pre, during and post colonialism and the effect of the imperialism on humans and non-humans.

Scott Slovic argues about the role of literature which is: "to help readers use their sensory faculties and thus achieve a greater awareness of their animal selves and their presence in particular places on earth. Some texts clearly function as sensory stimuli- or actually study how the senses operate- while other works serves different purposes, sometimes largely cerebral ones, sometimes abstracting the physical world, distancing the readers from their own surroundings" (120). In other words, Scott thinks that environmental literature can improve readers' senses and their engagement with the world and thus make people more responsible towards the environment. Through his novel *The Glass Palace*,

Amitav Ghosh provides his readers with accurate descriptions of the different places and settings before and after the coming of the British colonialism. This writer is generally known for his meticulous attention to details. His travels and field visits have allowed him to give photographic descriptions of the different plantations, forests, as well as the architecture details that characterize the Asian buildings especially the castles and temples.

The novel opens up with vivid description of the fort in Mandalay from which Ghosh quotes the title of his novel *The Glass Palace*. This citadel which is regarded as the heart of the capital city, Mandalay, and the center of the whole kingdom represents the power of the state and the sovereignty of the royal family. The writer connects all what happens to the characters with what happens in the castle. This means that the citadel has its significant role in the life of both the colonizer and the colonized. The narrator describes the citadel as follows:

> It's very large, much larger than it looks. It's a city in itself, with long roads and canals and gardens. First you come to the houses of officials and noblemen. And then you find yourself in front of a stockade made of huge teakwood posts. Beyond lie the apartments of the Royal Family and their servants—hundreds and hundreds of rooms, with gilded pillars and polished floors. And right at the center there is a vast hall that is like a great shaft of light, with shining crystal walls and mirrored ceilings. People call it the Glass Palace. (6)

Moreover, the location of the castle in the heart of the city, its immensity as well as the myths and secrets woven around it, make it so valuable and important in the lives of the citizens and its inhabitants. The narrator carries on:

> The palace lay at the exact center of Mandalay, deep within the walled city, a sprawling complex of pavilions, gardens and corridors, all grouped around the nine-

> roofed hti of Burma's kings. The complex was walled off from the surrounding streets by a stockade of tall teak posts. At each of the four corners of the stockade was a guard-post, manned by sentries from the King's personal bodyguard. (17)

This fortress has never left the memory of the people who have been in it. The castle that was constructed by king Mindon between 1857 and 1859 and inherited by king Thibaw, the last king of Burma, has amazed the inhabitants of the castle as well as its visitors. When Uma asks Dolly one of the Queens' maids about the citadel: "Do you remember anything of Burma?", she tells her about the details of the castle that she still remembers after long years of exile: "I remember the Mandalay palace. Especially the walls." "Why the walls?" "Many of them were lined with mirrors. There was a great hall called the Glass Palace. Everything there was of crystal and gold. You could see yourself everywhere if you lay on the floor" (96).

Amitav Ghosh also describes another breath-taking site which is the golden Shwe Dagon Pagoda. The most sacred Buddhist pagoda in Rangon-Burma. Asian and Buddhist architecture are known for their much care about small details by using the mosaic as well as the use of gemstones and gold in their constructions. Moreover, they take care of plants, and trees that decorate their immense houses, castles and temples. king Thibaw was eager to see the pagoda during his journey of banishment to India. Readers get to learn about it:

> The King waited patiently for the sun to scorch away the mist. When it had thinned a little, he raised his glasses. Suddenly, there it was, the sight he had longed to see all his life: the towering mass of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, larger even than he had imagined, its hti thrusting skywards, floating on a bed of mist and fog, shining in the light of the dawn. He had worked on the hti himself, helped with his own hands in the gilding of the spire, layering sheets of gold leaf upon each other. It was King Mindon who had had the hti cast, in Mandalay; it had been sent down to the Shwe Dagon in a royal barge. (42)

Ghosh emphasizes the fact that these royal and religious buildings play a major role in the life of the commoners who consider them as a strengthening factor in their lives since they represent the power of the state. That is why the city was not virtually colonized until the invaders entered the castle and took control over it after exiling the royal family. Soon the country entered a dark tunnel of empirical fetishism and greed. The exploitation of the city's fortunes began from the first day with the looting of the palace's valuable collectibles. When Ma Cho asks one of the women who is running out of the castle holding valuables: "The soldiers—they've been looting the palace. We're trying to save a few things for ourselves" (27).

Burma became a colony in the empire and the British authorities began to obliterate the features of the Burmese civilization and substitute it with the European one. As a result, the whole country had changed to serve the needs and pleasures of the Europeans; buildings including shops, bazars, houses, even the fortress had changed to be more English. Thousands of books and historical documents were burnt and destroyed in order to erase the history of an empire that was one of the strongest in the world. the citadel that was once a sacred landmark in the city became a tennis and polo field. Readers learn that:

> Burma had been quickly integrated into the Empire, forcibly converted into a province of British India. 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; the mirrored walls were lined with months-old copies of Punch and the Illustrated London News; the gardens had been dug up to make room for tennis courts and polo grounds; the exquisite little monastery in which

> Thebaw had spent his novitiate had become a chapel where Anglican priests administered the sacrament to British troops. (58)

The colonizers change the environment and the surroundings of the city and transform it from a virgin tropical land known by its Buddhist temples and clear white beaches and rivers to an industrial city crowded with commercial ships, foreign labor as well as hundreds of soldiers and British representatives.

According to Huggan and Tiffin, "Postcolonial ecocriticism preserves the aesthetic function of the literary text while drawing attention to its social and political usefulness, its capacity to set out symbolic guidelines for the material transformation of the world" (14). Amitav Ghosh is known for his devotion for nature and the environment that is why he devotes long parts of his novel to describe natural landscapes in Burma, Malaya, and India which are known for their breath-taking jungles, forests, and fields most of which were virgin lands which kept their simplicity and natural beauty. He also appreciates the harmony that had existed between nature and natives before the coming of the colonizers who turned their lives upside down. Moreover, he stresses the fact that the colonizer is the main reason behind the catastrophic eco transformation that happened in South Asia and the world in general. Readers get to learn about Uma's reaction towards one of the natural landscapes as follows:

> One morning Uma discovered a narrow entrance hidden behind a thicket of bamboo at the bottom of her garden. The gate was overgrown with weeds, but she was able to open it just wide enough to squeeze through. Twenty feet beyond, a wooded outcrop jutted out over the valley of the Kajali River. There was a peepul at the lip of the gorge, a majestic old tree with a thick beard of aerial roots hanging from its gnarled gray branches. She could tell that goats came to graze there: the earth beneath the tree's canopy had been cropped clean of undergrowth. She could see trails of black droppings leading down the slope. The goatherds had built themselves a platform to sit

> on by heaping earth and stones around the peepul's trunk. Uma was amazed by the view: the meandering river, the estuary, the curve of the bay, the windswept cliffs—she could see more of the valley from here than from the Residency on top of the hill. (94)

Amitav Ghosh keeps mentioning the rivers and their major role as being the veins that connect the different parts of South Asia and their use for transportation of voyagers and goods. Furthermore, Asians have always considered rivers as a source of life; hence whole cities and civilizations were built on the river banks. There are even some sacred rivers in which they practice their religious Hinduism and Buddhist rituals like Ganga in India, and Irrawaddy in Burma. These rivers have been sources of income for natives; thousands of hawkers, food vendors, boat-borne shopkeepers, sellers of fried snacks and distillers of country liquor gathered at the banks of the river to serve the anchored steamers. In fact, these rivers were the real treasures of Asia: Mandalay, it was confidently predicted, would soon become the Chicago of Asia; prosperity was the natural destiny of a city that guarded the confluence of two of the world's mightiest waterways, the Irrawaddy and the Chindwin (58). However, the coming of the British colonialism changed the role of these rivers to be a bleaker and a tragic one. These important veins became a source of fear and threat. Colonizers used them to transport millions of refugees, immigrants as well as more soldiers along with their heavy weaponry. Rivers also became an easy way to transport heavy teak and timber trees from the different plantations, colonial companies followed an intelligent costless method to transport tons of heavy trees from the forests and plantations by using the rushing water currents in the rivers:

> Every few minutes a log would come hurtling through the water on its way down to the plain. To be caught in midstream by one of these hurtling two-ton projectiles was to be crippled or killed. When the path switched from one bank of the chaung to the

> other, a lookout would be posted to call out the intervals between logs so that the porters would know when it was safe to cross. Often the logs came not singly but in groups, dozens of tons of hardwood caroming down the stream together: when they hit each other, the impact would be felt all the way up the banks. (60)

The colonizer did not waste any chance to get profit from each natural source in South Asia. They used materials and intelligent means that were abandoned by Asians. Their new techniques helped them absorb more fortunes from the subcontinent.

South Asians are among the nations that sacred the environment; all their customs, traditions and rituals revered the mother land. Even their religions especially Buddhism are based on a strong bound between human and earth. Furthermore, they had lived in harmony with nature until the coming of the colonizer with its greed and fetishism. The imperial authorities started their systematic invasion by taking over important sites that have sanctity in the lives of citizens like castles and temples. Then they began their exploitation of all the human and non-human resources in the land.

III. 2. The Exploitation of the Natural Resources:

Ghosh uses the power of the literary text in order to highlight some environmental and social issues that occurred in Asia after the British colonialism; this idea is tackled by Huggan and Tiffin who state that:

> After all, postcolonial and eco/environmental writing, even if it is directed towards specific goals (e.g. the desire to protect wilderness, or to promote the rights of abused animals and/or peoples), is always likely to transcend its categorisation as ‘protest literature’, while not even in its most direct forms is it a transparent document of exploitation or a propagandistic blueprint for the liberation of the oppressed. (14)

Accordingly, Ghosh uses the power of the word to protest against the colonial exploitation of the natural resources using different contexts and settings that have spread in more than half of the continent and over centuries to show the destructive effect of the British empire on the whole world.

Throughout his novel, Ghosh applies the First Law of Ecology stated by Barry Commoner: “Everything is connected to everything else” (35). Respecting this law, life is simply a chain of interconnected components that will easily collapse if one element is missed or even corrupted. Whether this component is a human being, an animal, a plant, or even a building, its loss will harm the whole chain. Ghosh stresses the fact that the British colonialism was the reason behind the environmental and eco-degradation especially in India. It was the main reason behind the extinction of many species. Whether it was fauna or flora, the missing element led to the collapse of the whole interconnected network. Colonialism caused the deforestation of jungles and forests for the sake of exploiting commercial trees like teak, timber, and most dangerously rubber. The deforestation caused the death of many rare species. It was also the main reason behind droughts that led to famines and hunger which caused epidemics. Eventually, these bad circumstances led to the displacement of the subaltern to escape hunger.

The mentioned disasters could be easily traced in Ghosh’s novel. When Rajkomar was surprised by the fact that whole teak camps were managed by young European men; those men controlled thousands of workers, soldiers and natives; they even humiliated, exploited and took advantage of these naives as much as they could. Saya John who was an outrageous admirer of these Europeans told Rajkomar that they brought new techniques and methods to get the maximum profit from each natural resource in the country. Indeed, the Europeans exploited all human and non-human resources either trees, animals, water forces,

or others. They benefited from nature by using its different components in order to guarantee the maximum profit:

> It was the Europeans who saw that tame elephants could be made to work for human profit. It was they who invented everything we see around us in this logging camp. This entire way of life is their creation. It was they who thought of these methods of girdling trees, these ways of moving logs with elephants, this system of floating them downriver. Even such details as the structure and placement of these huts, the plan of the tai, the use of bamboo thatch and rattan—it was not the oo-sis with their hoary wisdom who thought of these things. All of this came from the minds of men like this one sitting in this tai—this boy who is not much older than you. (65)

Saya John admired the European intelligence as well as their developed methods which were unfamiliar in South Asia. He was among the thousands of the so called new bourgeois that contributed in the exploitation of their lands and people as well.

Amitav Ghosh explains the painful method that the colonial companies followed to "kill" teak and timber trees and transport them to their factories. Whole forests were cut and destroyed for the sake of building good quality houses, boats, and furniture in Europe. The ego of the British empire had erased hectares of woods. Vast gardens and jungles became barren spaces. In the novel, Saya John explains to Rajkomar the heartbreaking process of preparing those trees for harvesting. In describing the process, Ghosh uses metaphorical expressions like: "kill", "assassinated trees left to die", to show the atrocity of the process:

> In the dry season, … This was the season for the timbermen to comb the forest for teak. The trees, once picked, had to be killed and left to dry, for the density of teak is such that it will not remain afloat while its heartwood is moist. The killing was achieved with a girdle of incisions, thin slits carved deep into the wood at a height of

> four feet and six inches off the ground (teak being ruled, despite the wildness of its terrain, by imperial stricture in every tiny detail). The assassinated trees were left to die where they stood, sometimes for three years or even more. It was only after they had been judged dry enough to float that they were marked for felling. That was when the axe men came, shouldering their weapons, squinting along the blades to judge their victims' angles of descent. (60)

Nevertheless, these trees refuse to surrender silently and they protest when no one could defend them, they angrily destroy everything on their way:

> Dead though they were, the trees would sound great tocsins of protest as they fell, unloosing thunderclap explosions that could be heard miles away, bringing down everything in their path, rafts of saplings, looped nets of rattan. Thick stands of bamboo were flattened in moments, thousands of jointed limbs exploding simultaneously in deadly splinter blasts, throwing up mushroom clouds of debris. (60)

The British companies did not hesitate to cut down thousands of trees and transport them to Europe. They did not even think about reforesting these woods that had become barren; this led to a serious environmental disaster for the continent of Asia in particular and the world in general. In his Fourth Law of Ecology Commoner argues that: "There is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch" (40). He explains that: "because the global ecosystem is a connected whole, in which nothing can be gained or lost and which is not subject to overall improvement, anything extracted from it by human effort must be replaced. Payment of this price cannot be avoided; it can only be delayed. The present environmental crisis is a warning that we have delayed nearly too long" (40-1). The British Colonialism did not bother itself by protecting Mother Nature; their main concern was to exploit as much natural resources as they could without caring about the disastrous results.

Human beings' superiority over nature gets worse and worse through the years of colonialism. The colonial companies did not waste any chance to get profit from any natural source in South Asia. They kept looking for more industrial products that were desperately needed in the European markets like the rubber or latex which was a substance extracted from rubber tree. The European companies convinced farmers and plantations' owners to substitute the products they had, which were mainly food crops and fruit trees, by this dangerous tree that harmed the soil and the air. William Rueckert states that:

> We are in an environmental crisis because the means which we use the ecosphere to produce wealth are destructive of the ecosystem itself. The present system of production is self-destructive. The present course of human civilization is suicidal. In our unwitting march toward ecological suicide we have run out of options. Human beings have broken out of the circle of life, driven not by biological need, but by social organization which they have devised to conquer nature. (116)

Amitav Ghosh traces back the process of shifting the different plantations and fields from their usual food crops to this harmful product for the natives, yet profitable for the Europeans. Saya John heard about this tree and induced Rajkomar to start investing in this product: "Timber is a thing of the past, Rajkumar: you have to look to the future—and if there's any tree on which money could be said to grow, then this is it—rubber" (159). The following explains the story of planting this tree in Asia:

> Some nine years before, Mr. Tan Chay Yan, scion of a well-known Peranakan Chinese family of Malacca, had converted his pepper garden into a rubber plantation. In 1897 this had seemed like a mad thing to do. Everyone had advised against it: rubber was known to be a risk. Mr. Ridley, the curator of the Singapore Botanical Gardens, had been trying for years to interest British planters in giving rubber a try. The imperial authorities in London had spent a fortune in arranging to have seed stocks stolen from

> Brazil. But Mr. Ridley was himself the first to admit that it might take as many as ten years for a rubber plantation to become productive. Malaya's European planters had backed away on learning this. But Mr. Tan Chay Yan, persevering undeterred, had succeeded in milking rubber from his trees in three short years. Now everyone, even the most timid British corporation, was following his lead, planting rubber. (158)

Neither the selfish British companies nor the naïve greedy local plantations' owners thought about the negative effects of this product. Their main concerns were to gain money without thinking about the consequences on the environment and the future of millions of people who lost hectares of lands that used to produce different food products:

> Money had been pouring into the city. The B. F. Goodrich company had sent representatives all the way from Akron, Ohio, urging the planters of Malaya to plant this new crop. This was the material of the coming age; the next generation of machines could not be made to work without this indispensable absorber of friction. The newest motorcars had dozens of rubber parts; the markets were potentially bottomless, the profits beyond imagining. (158)

Ghosh, however, describes the awful process of clearing the lands and preparing them for planting rubber trees. Elsa told Dolly during her visit to Morningside plantation about Mathew's (the son of Saya John) process of establishing the rubber estate that was before a wonderful jungle. "When she first came out to Gunung Jerai. The place was beautiful beyond imagining, but it was jungle—dense, towering, tangled, impassable jungle. Matthew had led her a little way in on foot, and it was like walking up a carpeted nave, with the tops of the trees meeting far above, forming an endless fan-vaulted ceiling" (172). Mathew began the clearing of the jungle, the site was totally destroyed and burned to aches: "It was too, he said, like a battlefield, with the jungle fighting back every inch of the way. The hillside looked as though it had been racked by a series of disasters: huge stretches of land were covered with

ashes and blackened stumps" (172). Few months later Elsa returned to the site and it was different:

> The transformation was again so great as to appear miraculous. The last time around she had felt as though she were entering a plague site; now the sensation was of walking into a freshly laid garden. The ashes had been washed away by the rain, the blackened tree-stumps had been removed and the first saplings of rubber had begun to grow. (172)

The method of extracting the latex from the tree was even uglier; each tree had a diagonal slash across its trunk, with a halved coconut shell cupped underneath in which they collect the substance (172). Ghosh makes a comparison between the state of the virgin jungles and the new man made plantation; he asserts that human beings had the power to destroy whole eco systems to fulfill their selfish destructive needs. The image of a tree with a hole on its log shows how much nature is cheap in the eyes of the selfish colonizers.

The stubborn and insuperable mentality of man towards nature is so harmful and dangerous driven by greed and lusts that are difficult to satisfy without having to destroy the biosphere and the environment. William Rueckert appropriately asserts that: "In ecology, man's tragic flaw is his anthropocentric (as opposed to bio centric) vision, and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing" (112). When investigating Ghosh's novel, one can easily find that man's greed and ego surpasses all limits in order to prove his supremacy over nature.Mathew and his wife Elsa, for example, have destroyed a whole jungle to establish their rubber plantation that amazed their visitors with its over structured organization:

> The slope ahead was scored with the shadows of thousands of trunks, all exactly parallel, like scratches scored by a machine. It was like being in a wilderness, but yet

> not. Dolly had visited Huay Zedi several times and had come to love the electric stillness of the jungle. But this was like neither city nor farm nor forest: there was something eerie about its uniformity; about the fact that such sameness could be imposed upon a landscape of such natural exuberance. She remembered how startled she'd been when the car crossed from the heady profusion of the jungle into the ordered geometry of the plantation. "It's like stepping into a labyrinth," she said to Elsa. (171-2)

Moreover, Elsa the American wife of Mathew who represented the colonizer in the novel helped in designing the Morningside house which was composed of hundreds of trees' logs. She wanted her house to be as she said to Uma, "Morningside will be a monument to wood!". Indeed, each piece in the house was made of wood, "I made Rajkumar send me the best teak from Burma; I sent people to the Celebes and Sumatra. You'll notice that each room has wood of a different kind . . ." Elsa led them downstairs and ushered them into the dining room, which was very large, with a long, polished hardwood table running down the middle. The walls were lined with knitted bamboo and the lights that from the ceiling were set inside glowing nests of rattan" (189).

In addition to the exploitation of trees, the British colonialism exploited other precious natural resources like the gemstones and the petroleum. Burma is one of the richest countries in the world with its gemstones like ruby, diamond, emerald and other rare stones that are found in its mines. The royal family possessed many fine stones kept in a hidden pavilion in the Mandalay Palace. When king Thibaw was taken into exile, his main concern was to secure these jewels and take them with him especially the Ngamauk ring, set with the greatest, most valuable ruby ever mined in Burma (44). Despite Sladen promises the king discovered that the British officers had stolen many of his gemstones and jewels during his exile trip, he was astonished by the fact that such people that considered themselves civilized and pious

Christians who claimed that they came to Asia to mentor and guide the uncivilized savage natives can commit such despicable deeds. Those officers were not even familiar with those jewelries and did not know their precious value:

> Several of his valuables had disappeared, some of them on that very first day, when the English officers had been transporting them from the palace to the Thooriya. He had asked about the lost things, and the officers had stiffened and looked offended and talked of setting up a committee of inquiry. He had realized that for all their haughty ways and grand uniforms, they were not above some common thievery. The strange thing was that if only they'd asked he'd gladly have gifted them some of his baubles; they would probably have received better things than those they'd taken—after all, what did they know about gemstones? Even his ruby ring was gone. The other things he didn't mind so much—they were just trinkets—but he grieved for the Ngamauk. They should have left him the Ngamauk. (44)

Even the king was not safe from the greed of the European soldiers. Along his journey to India, he had lost most of his valuable jewels. He was astonished by the fact that such high rank officers were able to commit such shameful act.

Within few years, the colonial corporations found a new source of wealth in South Asia. They discovered the petroleum as a new energy source that the European continent urgently needed after the industrial revolution, and the emergence of machines that were in dire need of fuel. There were some oil wells in one of the Irrawady's banks, the land was owned by twin-za families who used the oil for centuries to cure some skin disease. Every family owned individual pools and they gathered the oil in buckets in order to sell them in the nearby towns until the coming of the European companies that convinced the twin-za families to sell their lands and pools and started to drain this natural wealth. Rajkumar reports that:

> Rajkumar came upon an unfamiliar sight at Yenangyaung. He noticed a couple of foreigners, white men, walking from well to well. From that time on, whenever he returned, there were more and more of these men around the slopes, armed with instruments and surveyors' tripods. They were from France, England and America, and they were said to be offering the twin-zas good money, buying up their pools and wells. Wooden obelisks began to rise on the hillocks, cage-like pyramids inside which huge mechanical beaks hammered ceaselessly on the earth. (106)

The Europeans did not exclude anything in the journey of their exploitation of natural resources in South Asia. The oil became one of the most demanded materials in the Western markets, as a result many companies started investing in it to the extent that many wells got drained.

The ecocritical investigation of *The Glass Palace* reveals that humans had abused nature to the extent that it turned against them; the generous motherland that served people for millions of years and absorbed all their mistakes, their arrogance, and their waste has been revolting against them. In the novel, Dolly reads a passage to her Daughter in law in which Buddha is addressing his son and metaphorically emphasizing on the generosity of the mother land towards human beings.

> She read: Develop a state of mind like the earth, Rahula, for on the earth all manner of things are thrown, clean and unclean, dung and urine, spittle, pus and blood, and the earth is not troubled or repelled or disgusted…develop a state of mind like water, for in the water many things are thrown, clean and unclean, and the water is not troubled or repelled or disgusted. And so too with fire, which burns all things, clean and unclean, and with air, which blows upon them all, and with space, which is nowhere established . . . (298)

The words of Buddha reveal that the mother earth had always hugged human beings and absorbed all their disposables and droppings. Yet the constant exploitation of the natural resources and the degradation of the eco system led to the earth revolution.

During the Second World War and the British invasion of Burma, refugees who escaped the war suffered from the rain and the clay that disturbed them during their long desperate journey, “The mud had a strange consistency, more like quicksand than clay. It would suck you in, very suddenly, so that before you knew it, you were inthigh-deep. All you could do was keep still and wait until somebody cameto your help. It was worst when you stumbled or fell on your face; itwould cling to you like a hungry animal” (404). Moreover, they could not find tree branches to cook food: “there were always people whoneeded wood; rice and dal were no use without fires to cook them on. Wood bought food more easily than money or valuables” (405). Rajkomar who was the king of woods became in desperate need for few branches:

> Rajkumar would get very angry if they lost any part of their trove of firewood. It was he who collected most of it. He’d keep watch as they walked and every now and again he’d spot a branch or some twigs that had escaped the notice of the tens of thousands of people who had gone ahead of them, passed the same way, tramping the sodden earth into a river of mud. In the evenings, when they stopped, he would walk into the jungle and come back carrying armloads of firewood. …The firewood was their capital, their only asset. (405)

Rajkomar who once dominated the woods’ market became in desperate need for few twigs used for heating and cooking. He lived a tragic irony along with other business man and land owners who participated in the exploitation and the degradation of their lands and eventually lost everything, and could not even find few sticks to build a shelter that protects them from heat or rain.

III. 3. Environmental Racism:

Environmental Racism is a form of the ecological imperialism. In the introduction of *Postcolonial Ecocriticism,* Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin stated that:

> Environmental racism is perhaps best understood as a sociological phenomenon, exemplified in the environmentally discriminatory treatment of socially marginalised or economically disadvantaged peoples, and in the transference of ecological problems from their 'home' source to a 'foreign' outlet (whether discursively, e.g. through the more or less wholly imagined perception of other people's 'dirty habits', or materially, e.g. through the actual re-routing of First World commercial waste). (4)

In other words, Environmental Racism is a social economic problem known by the discrimination of some oppressed races who are obliged to live and work in areas that lack the minimum conditions of a decent life. According to Patrick Wallace: "The natives and residents of these regions sometimes themselves participate in their own ecological and social destruction as the market system has coerced them to seek work from the very corporations that have exploited them" (3). The writer asserts that those marginalized citizens contribute in the destruction of their homeland by accepting to work in the same companies, mines, and plantations that harm their environment.

In *The Glass Palace,* Amitav Ghosh deals with the topic of environmental racism in relation to colonialism. In other words, Ghosh highlights the bad circumstances and atmospheres that many Asians were forced to live in during the British invasion of South Asia. Furthermore, he links the diaspora and subaltern studies with the environmental racism; since people were obliged to leave their countries and move abroad where they suffered from poverty, extravagant exploitation and social discrimination.

The novel reveals that people in South Asia suffered from social racism and discrimination especially Indians who were forced to leave their home lands in search for jobs or escaping from wars, famines and epidemics. The journey itself was characterized by total discrimination in which the land owners and the recruiting agents travel on the first class whereas the poor labors are abandoned in the bottom of the ship, the author describes the ship as follow:

> Baburao had an arrangement with the steward of the ship: he was a valued customer because of the business he brought. He was given free passage, second-class. Pocketing Rajkumar's fare, he allowed him to sleep on the floor of his cabin. The thirty-eight men they had brought with them were sent below, to a holding space at the rear of the ship…Most were men, but there were also some hundred and fifty women. At the back, jutting out over the ship's wake, there was a narrow wooden platform with four holes to serve as toilets. The passage was rough and the floor of the holding area was soon covered with vomit and urine. This foul-smelling layer of slime welled back and forth with the rolling of the ship, rising inches high against the walls. The recruits sat huddled on their tin boxes and cloth bundles. (109)

The disastrous way of shipping the labors was catastrophic; while the agents were enjoying the lavish life in first and second class, the poor workers were suffering from death and diseases in the lower area of the ship. This stresses the fact that some races suffered from the environmental discrimination even in means of transportation.

Ghosh reveals a contradiction in the novel which is the environmental discrimination of the king and his family to a distant place that lacks the minimum conditions which the royal life demands. The king was expecting that the colonial authorities would exile him to a known city like Bombay, yet he found himself in Ratnagiri one of the farthest rural cities in India. Where he was taken to the Uttaram house that did not fit for kings.

> Outram House found itself besieged by neglect. The bungalow had no sewerage and no water supply. The toilets had to be emptied daily of night soil by sweepers; water had to be carried up in buckets from a nearby stream … Even at the best of times Dolly had trouble finding servants and persuading them to stay. The trouble was that there was never enough money to pay their salaries. The King and Queen had sold almost everything they'd brought over from Mandalay: their treasure was gone, all except for a few keepsakes and mementos (70)

The residence of the royal family in Ratnagiri was totally inappropriate; they suffered from constant humiliation and neglect by the British officers. They lost their servants because they could not afford to pay wages especially during the plague that hit the country. The princesses did not even have the opportunity to study under the supervision of a good governess because of the bad situation in the compound.

Queen Supayalat who was known for her cruelty and pride was in constant conflict with the Collectors of the city and the British officers. Despite her position under captivity she kept her arrogance and vanity. She had constantly expressed her opinions towards colonialism and protested against the exclusion of her family. She also predicted the future of the subcontinent under the British colonialism.

> The rare visitors who were allowed to call were shocked by the sight of the basti, the smell of waste and excrement, by the pall of wood smoke that hung thick in the air. Often they descended from their carriages with looks of stunned surprise on their faces, unable to believe that the residence of Burma's last King had become the nucleus of a shantytown. The Queen greeted them with her proud, thin-lipped smile. 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. (76)

The colonial authorities did this on purpose; to humiliate the royal family that once represented the power of the state and kept the unity of the kingdom. In this context Spivak argues that,

> thanks to the uneven character of regional economic and social developments, differed from area to area. The same class or element which was dominant in one area…could be among the dominated in another. This could and did create many ambiguities in attitudes and alliances, especially among the lowest strata of the rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle peasants all of whom belonged, ideally speaking, to the category of "people" or "subaltern classes". (80)

Spivak stated that colonialism was able to degrade the social level of a certain high rank class to tragically became part of the lower or subaltern class. This is what happened to the Burmese royal class that had ruled Burma for centuries, and ended up in a compound surrounded by hundreds of poor families.

> More people moved up the hill. Just as Sawant had predicted, the basti around the compound became a little village in its own right, with winding lanes and corner shops. No longer did the dwellings consist solely of shacks and shanties: tiled houses began to appear, one by one. But the little settlement had no provisions for sewage and no other facilities. When the breeze turned, a smell of excrement and refuse engulfed Outram House, wafting up from the ravines on the far side of the bluff. (72-3)

The colonial authorities had the power to change the whole demographic order of South Asia through mass immigration, labor recruitment, and diaspora. Millions of land owners as well as whole tribes became homeless and were forced to live in compounds that lack the minimum human conditions while the Europeans and the few elites lived in luxuries castles and houses. In the novel Ghosh describes the dwellings of these poor workers:

> The huts where the timbermen lived were well to the rear of the tai, so placed as not to interrupt the Assistant's view. These structures were small, stilt-supported dwellings of one or two rooms, each with a balcony-like platform in front. The oo-sis built the huts with their own hands, and while they were living in a camp, they would tend the site with the greatest diligence, daily repairing rents in the bamboo screens, patching the thatch and building shrines to their nats. (64)

These primitive houses were built far from the European assistant in order not to disturb his sight and annoy him. They used simple natural materials and they lacked sewers and clean water. As a result, the inhabitants of those compounds suffered from constant epidemics like malaria and Typhoid and so forth.

The British authorities was able to isolate millions of peoples and force them to live in slums, and poor tenements far from the classy neighborhoods dwelled by Europeans and the Asian Bourgeois. The working classes lived in an awful situation because their houses and compounds missed the minimum conditions of decent life.

III. 4. Zoocriticism: Animals, Exploitation of non-humans

In their *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment,* Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin dedicate almost one third of the book to tackle the issues of animals. The title of the second part which is Zoocriticism and the postcolonial is even controversial in the sense that it connects the severe degradation and extinction of many species as well as the suffering of animals to the existence of colonialism in Africa, Asia and other colonies. Within the same context, Australian novelist J.M. Coetzee denies the attitudes of most Western people towards animals that was characterized by separation and discrimination. Through the character of the Australian Elizabeth, he draws attention to the ways in which animals have

been regarded and treated. Referring to Descartes' claim that animals are just automata, machines that could be used for the benefit of human beings:

> It is a formula I have always been uncomfortable with. It implies that a living being that does not do what we call thinking is somehow second-class. To thinking, cognition, I oppose fullness, embodiedness, the sensation of being – not of consciousness of yourself as a kind of ghostly reasoning machine, thinking thoughts, but on the contrary a sensation – a heavily affective sensation – of being a body with limbs that have extension in space, of being alive to the world. This fullness contrasts starkly with Descartes's key state, which has an empty feel to it: the feel of a pea rattling round in a shell. (33)

In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh writes about animals' issues and exploitation in South Asia. He describes the inhuman use of elephants as means of transporting heavy logs of teak and timber alongside with their owners the oo-sis and pe-sis, who work hard to monitor these giant animals and guide them to transport the logs using inhumane methods like steal chains and painful whips. The elephant which is regarded as a sacred animal in South Asia for centuries has become used as a machine. This inhumane exploitation almost caused the extinction of this beautiful creature:

> Then teams of elephants would go to work, guided by their handlers, their oo-sis and pe-sis, butting, prodding, levering with their trunks. Belts Hof wooden rollers would be laid on the ground, and quick-fingered pakyeiks, specialized in the tying of chains, would dart between the elephants' legs, fastening steel harnesses. When finally, the logs began to move, such was the friction of their passage that water-carriers would have to run beside them, dousing the smoking rollers with tilted buckets. (61)

Since animals represent one of the most important elements in the interconnected eco system, many eco-activists, scientists, theorists as well as authors stand to speak for these innocent creatures especially with the danger of extinction that threats many rare species in the world. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argues that while humanist essentialism's enlightenment trajectory demanded the repression of the animal and animalistic in all latent and resurgent forms, it was not until our century, in the face of ecological catastrophe and the extinction of many nonhuman species, that a radical redrawing of foundational relationships occurred. (134)

In the same context, William Rueckert argues that human beings do not have the right to harm animals or nature in general. Moreover, he insists on the necessity of setting laws and regulation to protect the environment from the ongoing violations:

> This is no more absurd, of course, than the idea that man does not have the right to do anything he wants with nature. The idea that nature should also be protected by human laws, that trees (dolphins and whales, hawks and whooping cranes) should have lawyers to articulate and defend their rights is one of the most marvelous and characteristic parts of the ecological vision. (108)

Ghosh, who is an environmental activist who calls for animals' rights, blames the British companies which made fortunes from this extravagant exploitation of the animals, but they were so selfish regarding the protection of some species, they did not even provide veterinary care to the elephants that play a major role in the empire's businesses. On the contrary, the selfish use of the elephants and the cutting of the trees had developed a dangerous disease called Anthrax; which could lie dormant in grasslands under dead trees for years then it could reveal itself suddenly to be a causeway to death. This dangerous disease caused unbearable pains that made the animal crazy and could attack anything in sight. It could also uproot trees and destroy walls:

> In its most virulent forms anthrax could kill an elephant in a matter of hours. A gigantic tusker, a full fifteen arms' length off the ground, could be feeding peacefully at dusk and yet be dead at dawn. An entire working herd of a hundred elephants could be lost within a few days. Mature tuskers were valued in many thousands of rupees, and the cost of an epidemic was such as to make itself felt on the London Stock Exchange. Few were the insurers who would gamble against a disease such as this. (80)

Such disease represented a disaster for the Asian since it could kill hundreds of elephants within few days. It could also affect the stock market in London since these animals played a major role in the industries of South Asia.

This horrible disease is so contagious; no one could approach the sick animal or anything that it touched because they can lose everything; their animals, jobs, and livelihood. Once Rajkomar and Saya john witnessed this awful sickness in one of the timber camps where an elephant got sick and attacked his owner who gave up his life in an effort to keep this elephant from infecting the rest, the men in the plantation owe it to him to get the herd out of danger:

> Early next morning they returned to the site of the accident. The infected elephant was quieter now than before, dazed by pain and weakened by its struggle with the disease. The swellings had grown to pineapple size, and the elephant's hide had begun to crack and break apart. As the hours passed, the lesions grew yet larger and the cracks deepened. Soon the pustules began to leak a whitish ooze. Within a short while the animal's hide was wet with discharge. Rivulets of blood-streaked pus began to drip to the ground. The soil around the animal's feet turned into sludge, churned with blood and ooze. Rajkumar could no longer bear to look. He vomited, bending over at the waist, hitching up his longyi. "If that is what this sight has done to you, Rajkumar,"

> Saya John said, “think of what it must mean to the oo-sis to watch their elephants perish in this way. These men care for these animals as though they were their own kin. But when anthrax reaches this stage the oo-sis can do nothing but look on as these great mountains of flesh dissolve before their eyes.” The stricken elephant died in the early afternoon. Shortly afterwards the hsin-ouq and his men retrieved their comrade’s body. Saya John and Rajkumar watched from a distance as the mangled corpse was carried into the camp. (82)

Before the coming of the colonizer the relationship between the elephant and his oo-si was so typical, for they both created a strong bond built upon daily habits and routines in which they used special language and signs that they shared together. None of them could stand the loss of the other; they both represented the two sides of the same coin. However, the White man had another point of view which was excluding animals from human places and separated the two claiming that humans and animals cannot live alongside. Chris Wilbert states that:

> Such spatial ordering were also reproduced in many early conservation programs initiated in Africa (or indeed India) in the twentieth century where native peoples and (less often) white hunters were forcibly excluded from what became purely animal places, implied here was a pernicious view that people could not live alongside animals, despite thousands of years of contrary evidence. (34-5)

This argument implies that Europeans wanted to prove that animals are dangerous creatures that must be separated from humans. Moreover, they wanted to justify their inhuman treatment of animals by hunting, slaughtering and shooting them.

In one of the most severe scenes of the novel, Saya John recalls the incident of the elephant that lost its oo-si because of an unfortunate accident when he was trying to free a stuck log in a dangerous spot in the river. The elephant was so nervous and restless,

frequently flapping her ears and clawing the air with the tip of her trunk. This was expected since the elephant is a creature of habit and routine and the absence of its handler could make it out of temper and so dangerous. The hsin-ouq of the camp who was the uncle of the dead boy led Shwe Doke, the angry elephant, to a distant spot in the forest:

> This being the case, the hsin-ouq had decided not to allow Shwe Doke to forage through the night, as was the rule. Instead he had led her to a clearing, some half-mile's distance from the camp, and supplied her with a great pile of succulent treetop branches. Then he had tethered her securely between two immense and immovable trees. To be doubly sure of keeping her bound he had used not the usual lightweight fetters with which elephants are shackled at night, but the heavy iron towing chains that are employed in the harnessing of logs. This, he said, was a precaution. (86)

The Europeans had spoiled the relationship between the Elephants and their handlers; they obliged them to work in plantations and mills, take heavy logs and transport them. They harshly tied them with heavy chains that surely hurt the innocent animal.

Later that night, Saya John and Hsin-ouq heard the voice of Shwe Doke's bell; they were not sure if she had liberated herself, or she had been freed by a human hand. Surprisingly, the elephant was rushing towards the tai of the British master of the camp McKay-thakin who caused the death of the poor oo-si. Without hesitation, the white man decided to shot the animal and killed it to further confirm the supremacy of man over animals. According to the Animal Studies Group: "The killing of animal is a structural feature of all human-animal relations. It reflects human power over animals at its most extreme and yet also at its most common place" (4).

> Ten feet from the tai Shwe Doke came to a standstill. She lowered her head as though she were examining the structure... "McKay-thakin fired just as ShweDoke began her

> charge. She was so close now that he could not miss: he hit her exactly where he had aimed, in her most vulnerable spot, between ear and eye. But the momentum of Shwe Doke's charge carried her forward even as she was dying on her feet. She too hit the tai exactly where she had aimed… the structure appeared to explode, with logs and beams and thatch flying into the air. McKay-thakin was catapulted to the ground over ShweDoke's head…It was with those small, practiced steps that ShweDoke turned now, until she was facing the Assistant's prone body. Then, very slowly, she allowed her dying weight to go crashing down on him head (87-8)

The environmental situation has reached a critical stage that requires urgent need for uniting all efforts to save nature and save human beings as well. People must change their attitude towards motherland which they regard as an inexhaustible source. William Rueckert argues that:

> The problem now, as most ecologists agree, is to find ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community, and with it the human communiry. This is what ecologists like to call the self-destructive or suicidal motive that is inherent in our prevailing and paradoxical attitude towards nature. The conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities-the human, the natural-can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere. (107)

Through the novel Ghosh was able to identify the main reasons behind the environmental issues and the eco degradation which were mainly the colonial greedy exploitation and the native's blind contribution in the destruction of their lands and natural sources. In other words, the irrational cutting of trees and the replacement of food crops with harmful industrial ones that impoverished the soil and harmed the environment. Furthermore, the inhumane exploitation of animals and their use in hard works. These all led to the environmental

degradation and the eco crisis not only in Asia but all over the world. Thus, scientists, writers, and activists have sounded the alarm to take strict measures to stop the irrational depletion of nature and ensure the harmonious coexistence of humans and non-human.

Conclusion

The postcolonial ecocritical analysis of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* (2000) highlights the main reasons behind the European invasion of South Asia, which include the exploitation of the human and non-human resources, and the coverage of the demands of the European markets after the industrial revolution. Ghosh has the ability to portray the reality of this society offering his people a voice. Furthermore, he deftly combines historical, social, economic, and political elements to picture reality.

The Glass Palace proves to be a postcolonial novel with excellence since it tackles issues related colonialism and its effects on the society like diaspora, dislocation, poverty and the emergence of social classes which are divided into the elite and the subaltern. Through his novel, Ghosh reveals many historical events that happened in South Asia during the British invasion and the Second World War, as well. Ghosh recounts a pivotal moment in Burma's and the subcontinent's history. He uses the voices of innocent young orphans to reflect the country's future and hopes. Moreover, he employs their perspectives to demonstrate the influence of colonialism and its effects on young people allowing readers to track the development of these characters during colonialism and even after independence by tracking the impact of imperialism on them. Furthermore, he focuses on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized which was characterized by hatred on Asians side, and of exploitation and extravagant fetishism on the European side.

The British authorities created the so-called bourgeoisie who took part in the exploitation of their land and people. These people fell into the trap of British colonialism and betrayed their homelands and people. The British colonialism was the source of these delusions in the formation of the elite, who thought that they were better than others and so had the right to rule over the rest of the population. Colonialism also exacerbated the chasm between the elite and the rest of the society, in addition to causing hostility and animosity

among brotherly peoples. What made matters worse was the participation of Indian sepoys in the British army, and so their invasion of Burma astounded the Burmese resulting in a great deal of animosity and hate. Thus, the position of some Asians who become colonizers themselves after being brainwashed and exploited by the colonizer becomes contradictory. The empire employed the 'divide and conquer' strategy to weaken once-powerful and cohesive nations. It also destroyed the sovereignty of the state, and made the citizens more audacious towards it. This demonstrates that the colonizer's primary goal is to dismantle and destroy the nation's social values and historical links.

Ghosh tackles the issues of the subalterns who lost their right to speak or revolt against their oppressing dominators. He reveals the miserable lives of millions of poor women who are subjected to triple tyranny and are unable to speak up because they are afraid to do so. After many years of colonialism, South Asian countries' infrastructures were utterly decimated, and millions of people were living in poverty. Moreover, the indigenous people were forced to abandon their homelands in quest of a better life elsewhere. Thus, one of the worst consequences of colonialism is the dislocation and diaspora of millions of labors and refugees. Ghosh actually proves that all the social classes were victims of this dislocation from the royal family to low rank people.

The study also sheds light on one of Ghosh's concerns which is the environmental degradation. In fact, the majority of his literary and non-literary works are concerned with green issues and the current nature crises in South Asia. Furthermore, he relates the causes of environmental degradation to the period of British colonialism in the continent. In other words, he allows readers to compare life before and after colonialism and realise the impact of imperialism on humans and non-humans.

The dissertation highlights Ghosh's authentic depictions of many locales, landscapes, and monuments since he is known for paying close attention to the smallest of details. Being a

cosmopolitan author enables him to provide photographic descriptions of various plantations, woodlands, and architectural elements that distinguish Asian structures, particularly castles and temples that are so valuable and important in natives' lives, who regard them as a source of strength because they embody the state's power. Furthermore, Ghosh Highlights the major role of rivers that have traditionally been regarded a source of life for Asians and a sacred place where they practice Hinduism and Buddhist ceremonies. However, British colonialism negatively changed the significance of these rivers. Instead, these vital veins become a source of anxiety and danger. Also, they were utilized by colonizers to transport millions of refugees, immigrants, and additional soldiers, as well as their heavy weaponry.

Ghosh emphasizes that British colonialism was the cause of environmental and eco-degradation, particularly in India, Malaya, and Burma as it was the primary cause of the extinction of numerous species. Throughout the novel's story, he is able to pinpoint the primary causes of environmental concerns and degradation, which were not colonial selfish exploitation but also the natives' mindless participation in the destruction of their lands and natural resources. Whether it was fauna or flora, the missing item caused the entire interconnected ecosystem to collapse. Hence, colonialism resulted in the destruction of jungles and forests in order to extract economic trees such as teak, timber, and, most dangerously, rubber. Thousands of trees were felled and transported to Europe by British firms without hesitation. They did not even consider reforesting these barren woodlands; the result was a catastrophic environmental calamity for these environments. Besides, many rare species have died as a result of deforestation. The latter was also the primary cause of droughts, which resulted in famines, hunger, and epidemics. These unfavorable circumstances eventually forced the subalterns to flee their homes in order to avoid starvation. In addition, the colonial companies did not squander any opportunity to benefit from South Asia's natural resources. They continued to hunt for other industrial products that were in high demand on

European marketplaces like gemstones and the petroleum as a result, numerous businesses began to invest in it, to the point where many wells were drained.

This research traces the presence of environmental racism in relation to colonialism in Ghosh's novel *The Glass Palace*. In it, Ghosh emphasizes the deplorable conditions and atmospheres in which many Asians were compelled to live during the British invasion of South Asia. This study also connects diaspora and subaltern studies to environmental racism as represented in the novel because people were forced to leave their countries and go overseas, where they faced poverty, exploitation, and social discrimination. Even the Burmese royal family was not safe from this kind of discrimination; they were totally ignored and maltreated by the colonial authorities, which did this on purpose to humiliate the royal family that once represented the power of the state and kept the unity of the kingdom. Moreover, the British authorities were successful in isolating millions of people forcing them to live in slums and substandard tenements distant from the affluent European and Asian communities. The working classes were in a terrible situation since their homes and communities lacked the bare necessities of a good life.

Ghosh writes on animal issues and abuse in South Asia discussing the inhumane exploitation of elephants to transport huge teak and lumber logs as well as their owners, the oo-sis and pe-sis. The latter work tirelessly to monitor and guide these massive animals to transport the logs using barbaric techniques like as iron chains and painful whips. This research examines this phenomenon present in the novel from a zoocritical perspective. Indeed, for generations, the elephant has been revered as a holy animal in South Asia, yet it is now being employed as a machine. Europeans also intended to demonstrate that animals are harmful creatures that should be kept separate from humans. However, this dissertation shows how colonialism and colonial minds of other non-European characters of the novel contributed in environmental degradation and a global ecological disaster in Asia. As a result,

scientists, writers, and activists have sounded the alarm about the need to take drastic measures to stop the illogical depletion of nature and secure human harmony.

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ملخص

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة للتحقيق في المشاكل البيئية والايكولوجية في جنوب اسيا، والتي تسبب بها الاستعمار البريطاني خلال القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين، من منظور كل من مدرستي ما بعد الاستعمار والنقد البيئي لرواية أميتاف قوش "القصر الزجاجي" (2000). تسلط هذه الاطروحة الضوء على الاستنزاف الكارثي للثروات الطبيعية في الهند، بورما، ومالايا. والتي تتمثل في اشجار الساج، المطاط، البترول، وكذا اليد العاملة من طرف البريطانيين في شبه الجزيرة الهندية خلال القرنين الماضيين. هذه الاطروحة تفحص وضعية الطبقة المعدمة من المجتمع والمتجسدة في العمال، المهاجرين، النساء، الأيتام، والخدم الذين كانوا ضحايا مثلهم مثل بيئتهم، تشرح الدراسة وضعيتهم الحرجة والتي تتمثل في مساهمتهم في تدمير بيئتهم الأم. بالإضافة الى ذلك تتناول الدراسة علاقة المُستَعمَرين والمُستعمرين بالبيئة وسلوكياتهم نحوها. كما تبين العنصرية البيئية التي انتهجها الاستعمار ضد الطبقة المعدمة. وتقوم الدراسة أيضا بتعقب السلوكيات الوحشية للإنسان نحو الحيوانات، مما أدى الى انقراض الكثير من أصنافها، وتسبب ذلك في خلل في النظام البيئي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ما بعد الاستعمار، النقد البيئي، الشتات، الطبقة المعدمة، العنصرية البيئية، النقد الحيواني.