**Colonized Subjects as 'Tools' of British Empire : An Exploration of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace***

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**Abstract:** *The Glass Palace* can be viewed as an endeavour to narrate a specific history from a particular perspective. It is indeed a narrative taking in its wake the stories of individuals and facts of history. Its treatment of the colonial rule and its legacy is indeed unique. It offers a refreshing departure from the norm in South Asian fiction as it explores the history of the two key institutions of colonial regime, that is, the plantation and the colonial army. It is also signifiacnt that both these institutions have received a little or little attention from the traditional historians and Ghosh, by way of the exploration of these hitherto historically ignored colonial organizations, has not only brought out the hidden truth of the past but also brought to surface the traumatic experiences of the people employed in these twin pillars of colonial empre.

The objective of this paper is to present the colonized subjects as 'tools' working for the British empire. The colonized people working in both the plantation system and the colonial army were nothing more than tools or instruments in the hands of the British colonizers. The natives were relegated to the thing-like-status and this had a devastating and corrupting influence on their psyche. The plantation had gruesome effects as the master literally had absolute power over the life and death of the slave who had to suffer not only at the hands of his masters but also had to suffer the pain of being uprooted from his motherland. Moreover, the colonial army too served as a ‘tool’ of colonial sovereignty. The soldiers working for the colonial army too underwent traumatic migratory experience for they had to go abroad for their military expeditions. Owing to an unprecedented treatment of the colonial army and plantation system, *The* *Glass Palace* represents a new path being trodden in the corpus of South Asian Anglophone fiction

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 There is no gainsaying the fact that colonialism was a lucrative commercial operation bringing wealth and riches to the Western nations through the economic exploitation of the colonized countries. John McLeod in his book *Beginning Postcolonialism* very aptly quotes the views of Elleke Boehmer, “the main intention of the colonizers was to exploit the natural resources and govern the indigenous inhabitants of colonized land” (qtd. from Mcleod 8).In his groundbreaking work *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon quite emphatically and forcibly voiced his opinion about the history of the world. He asserted :

For centuries Europe has brought the progress of other men to a halt and enslaved them for its own purposes and glory; for centuries it has stifled virtually the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called 'spiritual adventure'. (Fanon 235)

 Amitav Ghosh is one of such authors who have taken upon themselves the task of bringing to the fore the real picture that had remained hidden due to the pre-dominance of colonial ideology. His novels foreground the colonial period of India because during colonization Indian people became a hybrid product. Rightly does Meenakshi Mukherjee remark in her review of *The Glass Palace* :

 For all its vividness and description and range of human experiences, *The Glass Palace* will remain for me memorable mainly as the most scathing critique of the British Colonialism I have ever come across in fiction. (Mukherjee Web)

 *The Glass Palace* opens with the annexation of Burma (today officially Myanmar) by the British in 1885 when Mandalay was captured and Thibaw, the last king, was exiled. The country was directly incorporated into Brirish India until 1937 when it was put under different administration. In 1942, Japan occupied it and controlled it till 1945. The turmoil in the country ended in 1948 when it attained independence. As much of the action of the novel takes place in this historical context, it is evident that history of Burma occupies an important place in the construction of the novel. Ghosh proves himself equal to the task by juxtaposing the actual history of both Burma and British occupied India against the fictive history of individuals whose lives go upside down due to the influence of the momentous historical events. In its wide-ranging narrative, *The Glass Palace* traces the criss-crossing fortunes of two families across Burma, India and Malaya. Appropriately does Ira Pande describe the novel as follows:

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

 Specifically speaking, 'The Glass Palace' refers to the Burmese royal palace at Mandalay. It is the splendid hall where the Burmese monarchs listened to people and their entreaties. But it is also the name of a small photo studio in the late twentieth century where the novel *The Glass Palace* ends, the studio which derived its name from its original, as a reminder of the old days when Burma was independent, both of the colonial powers and the junta which controls it now. Beginning with the annexation of Burma (today officially known as Myanmar) in 1885, the narrative goes on through the trauma of the World War II culminating in the independence of Burma in 1948 from the clutches of Japan that had occupied it in 1942. Towards the end, the narrative moves suddenly to 1992 thereby covering a long period of about hundred years. It is in this historical background that the action of the novel takes place.

 Raj Kumar who is an eleven year old orphan at time of the commencement of the narrative occupies the center stage. A victim of dislocation caused by colonial forces, he finds himself stranded in Mandalay that too soonafter is occupied by the British forces. Subsequently he becomes the apprentice of Saya John, a Chinese businessman and a successful teak baron. Raj Kumar learns the tricks of the trade from him and establishes himself also as a successful teak businessman as an adult. Dolly, the main female character, makes her first appearance as a personal attendant to Queen Supayalat, King Thebew's wife. Dolly has to accompany the royal family to Ratnagiri in Western India after King Thebew's deposition and consequent exile. Raj Kumar sees Dolly for the first time as a child and falls for her without her even knowing anything about him. Later on, when he tries his hands in the business of transferring Indian labourers into the Burmese plantations, he again comes across Dolly during one of his trips to India. His passion for her having grown with the passage of time, he proposes to marry her and after initial hesitation, she too agrees and accepts his proposal. She comes back to Burma now with Raj Kumar leaving the royal family behind. Subsequently, she gives birth to two sons: Neel and Dinu. Neel is killed during the Japenese attack on Rangoon in 1942 and Dinu survives the World War II, the invasion of Burma by the Japenese and the destruction of the Raha family fortune.

 Raj Kumar's life is directly connected to the plantation economy that flourished after the establishment of the British regime in Burma after 1885. Raj Kumar is depicted as a colonized subject or rather as a tool in the hands of his white masters. His entire world is strutured around the plantation economy. While Burma lost all its glory and riches to colonialism, Raj Kumar succeeds in building his fortune on the debris of devastated Burma. Through his mentor Saya John, he learns the tactics of survival in the colonized space. He has come to know that a displaced human being has no other option but to adapt himself to the changed circumstances. Thus dressed like a Saheb, he succeeds in securing a major contract to supply teak to a railway company and, in the eyes of Saya John, the Indian businessman evolves into a new person, "a reinvented being, formidably imposing and of a commanding presence"(*The Glass Palace* 132. Further references to this novel will appear as page number preceded by TGP). He attains in Burma all that he was deprived of in his native land such as family, home, love, and financial security. Raj Kumar’s success as a businessman allows him to invest in a rubber plantation in Malaya. Hence he becomes a true transnational, moving freely between India, Burma and Malaya in the pursuit of establishing his business. Considering the kind of ups and downs Raj Kumar witnesses in his lifetime, Ghosh has created a character who is subjected to the various turns in history.

 Understanding reality from the perspective of Raj Kumar brings to the fore lives and experiences of such people as confined their entire lives within the boundaries provided by the colonial system. His career also illustrates, as Melita Glasgow and Don Fletcher point out, that he has been inexorably seduced by the lure of the Empire since he "does not oppose but actively attempts to conform and participate" (Glasgow and Fletcher 76).What made the predicament of such people even more piteous and glaring is that despite belonging to the section of the subjugated colonized people, they deliberately and knowingly submitted to the European power and could not even contemplate the possibility of their existence without being a part, though insignificant, of the seemingly invincible colonial rule. The viewpoints of such people also afford a different dimension to the history of the colonized countries like India and Burma, and also lay bare the inability of such people to see reality in its true perspective, that ultimately led to the consolidation of the European colonial powers all across the globe. Being one of such people, Raj Kumar's character is significant in so far as the hypocrisy and double-standards exercised by the British colonial rule get exposed when the history is viewed from his stance.

 Raj Kumar's sole preoccupation is to reinvent himself as a collaborator with the inexorable and relentless colonial system and to make the most of this collaboration in terms of making money. The change he undergoes is not sudden but gradual for he as an eleven year old boy was helpless. But as he grows up, confidence and clarity characterize his speech and the way he handles English language shows the degree of progress he has made in communicating his thoughts and ideas in the language of the colonizer. Beni Prasad Dey, the collector at Ratnagiri is so impressed by his personality and speech that he calls him Mr. Raha. Homi Bhabha has interpreted mimicry as the desire for a reformed recognizable other, “as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha 89). Here Raha takes after the ‘mimic’ man visualized by Bhabha. His complicity with the colonizer is noticeable here. He responds to the questions of the Collector in refined English:

‘Burma’, Mr. Raha, he said in his ironical way. ‘You have told us very little about it. What took you there in the first place?’

‘Accident’, Rajkumar said shortly.

‘What kind of accident carries a man to another country?’

‘I was working on a boat and found myself stranded in Mandalay.

This was at the start of British invasion. The river was closed to

traffic.’

‘An eventful time’

‘A strange time, sir.’(TGP 142)

In the dialogue cited above no word seems to be superfluous, only required utterances befitting the situation. The metamorphosis of Rajkumar, from the rag-clad *kalaa* into a colonized mimic man has been vividly portrayed through the dialogue. This change in Raj Kumar too is indicative of his gradual dehumanization as he begins to torture and oppress the Burmese people and Indian labourers for his own betterment.

 What comes as a saving grace for Raj Kumar is a measure of sympathy maintained for his historical predicament despite his portrayal as a crony capitalist who is involved in the murky history of the trafficking and exploitation of indentured labourers from India. No doubt, the text is not without moments when Raj Kumar could have realised the fact of his slavish condition. One such incident occurs when his mentor Saya John is berated by one of the British assistants at the teak plantation in a racist manner by being called "Johny Chinaman". But Saya at once quells Raj Kumar's incipient rage by saying:

... left to ourselves none of us would have been here, harvesting the bounty of this forest. 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. That is someone you can learn from. (TGP 65)

 Thus, the realisation of being nothing but a tool in the hands of the colonizer is always rendered impossible for Raj Kumar who with people like Saya John and Matthew represent a particular type of colonized subject-formation. Their predicament lies not only in the fact that they count totally upon the colonial system for their well-being and can in no way have the slightest inkling of the disastrous fate in store for them but also in their uprootedness from their motherlands. The dilemma they seem to be stuck into is definitely the consequence of their dislocation from their native lands. Neither can they identify themselves with their adopted home, nor can they move back in time to reclaim their lost world. The only option they seem to be having is to adapt themselves to the circumstances of their precarious lives. And in the process of attaining stability and security in life, they dehumanise themselves by stooping to the point where they do not realise even for a moment that their own actions would become the reason of their undoing. The destructive influence of the colonial set-up is well-illustrated in the character of Raj Kumar who seemed to have made a lot of progress in life but towards the end of his life becomes a complete non-entity sans money, sans family, and living as a dependent in the house-hold of Uma where "He had a small room of his own, next to the kitchen, furnished sparsely, with a narrow bed and a couple of bookshelves" (TGP 483). Thus Raj Kumar's entire life is curcumscribed within the boundaries formed by the colonial set-up and as this relentless system collapses, Raj Kumar's world too crashes down to the dust. The only option left with him is to flee to India along with Dolly as a destitute. For years, he almost thoughtlessly and instinctually accepted the structures imposed by colonial rule. Like Saya John, he attempts to mimic the white colonial master's ability to 'bend the work of nature' to his will. However, this illusion of power is predicated upon a temporality of the 'not-yet': the specular image of the powerful figure of the colonizer is mimicked with the expectation that one day , in the future, the colonized 'maintaining individual' would achieve the same status and position of the master.

 Whatever Raj Kumar sees and does is under the constant and overpowering influence of the British colonial system. Rarely does he come out of this intoxicated state of mind which make the moments of self-awareness all but impossible for him. Raj Kumar had invested all he had on hoarding a timber consignment for the war effort. On the fateful day of December 22, 1942 when Rangoon was attacked by the Japenese air force, he "smiled as he looked down on the yard with its huge, neat stacks of timber. It was unnerving to think that this was the sum total of everything he possessed" (TGP 395). He was certain of the success of his final business venture after which he had decided to sell everything and move to India. But this proved to be the biggest miscalculation of his life for his calculations were formed by his colonial outlook that itself received a huge shock in the war. Raj Kumar's entire stock was gutted down during the attack. Even his favourite son, Neel, too died in the attack. His entire lifeworld collapsed due to his single miscalculation of putting his trust in the British colonial set-up that failed to live up to his expectations. He is compelled to spend the rest of his life as a hanger-on in Uma's house-hold by smoking cheroots and looking after his grand daughter Jaya. His failure towards the end of the novel is not merely the failure of an individual enamoured of colonial system but the downfall of the very value system which had always sustained his life. The collapse of the colonial system has thus been represented through its followers like Raj Kumar who made their fortune on the seemingly indestructible stronghold of the colonial system. Manju's remarks during Raj Kumar's arduous journey to India indicts the tragic predicaments of colonized subjects whose lifeworlds had collapsed absolutely with the downfall of the colonial system: "Look at you: you have gone on and on and on and on. And what has that brought you?"(TGP 407)

The important question as to why Indians collaborated with the colonial power so blindly is also addressed by Goonetilleke who maintains that by contrast "to the common view of colonialism as domination, I think that there was, and can be, no colonialism without collusion, at least in this part of the world"(Goonetilleke 416). He adds that a few writers had the originality to understand this; the statement may just as well be extended to Ghosh who too depicted the similar attitude of the colonized Indians towards the white administrators. Ghosh himself admitted in an interview that one of the overarching themes of *The Glass Palace* is the "complicity between Indians and the colonising power" (Kaiser Interview). Being an astute representative of a former colony, Ghosh is "acutely aware of both Indian resistance against and collusion with the British empire".(Prusse Web). Raj Kumar is thus represented as one who acknowledges the British rule over his country. In fact, he is supportive of colonialism not because he understands its ideological nuances but because his career is by and large made by colonial rule. He has availed himelf of the presence of the British in Burma. It really did not matter to Raj Kumar if Burma lost its king or monarchy. What mattered to him was that his fortune was built upon the British invasion of Burma. Hence he looked up to the British as allies and assisted them import indentured labourers even from his native country to work as slaves for the British. Raj Kumar thus emerges as a British agent of colonisation and becomes a model for all those Indians who begin to identify themselves with the traits and characteristics of their colonisers. Like them, Raj Kumar too becomes exploitative in nature and loses all ethical values for his personal benefit and advantage. He is dehumanised to the extent that he begins to exploit his own people for his monetray benefits. Such is the influence on him of the British colonialism that his very lifestyle speaks volumes about how he regarded colonialism over his own cultural values. Ghosh mocks at the distorted mental set-up of such people who fail to see through reality and nurture the wrong notions about the exploitative foreign rule. Such people seem to have lost their moorings and have no sense of belonging and identity. Thus loss of identity and belongingness can be attributed to one's emigration from one's native land. Raj Kumar does not even once think of the well-being of his native country and the country where he lives amidst luxury and riches. In fact, he becomes so dehumanized due to the corrupting influence of colonialism that he loses fellow feeling for his own countrymen.

The hierarchical set-up of the army parallels that of the plantation in the novel. At the highest level of the military lie solitary and aloof white officials such as Lt. Col. Buckland, whereas the lowest rung of the edifice is occupied by common sepoys like Kishan Singh. The major part of army sections of the text deals with 'middling figures' like Arjun and Hardy whose mental trauma and predicament catch one's attention. The historical reality about the Indian armymen serving the British army is explored through the characters of Arjun, Hardy, and Kishan Singh who offer three distinct viewpoints of Indian soldiers. Arjun is the most important of all as it is on his consciousness that the most powerful impact is laid by the thoughts, views and perceptions of armymen like Hardy, an anti-colonial nationalist and Kishan Singh, his batman. Infact, it is his relationship with Kishan Singh that makes Arjun's experiences haunting, complex and subtle. Not only does Kishan Singh make Arjun see the reality in its true perspective but also makes one see the historical truth abut the British military system from the point of view of an ordinary Indian batman.

 The character of Arjun is created by Ghosh to show the awakening of national consciousness amongst armymen, thereby providing an altogether distinct view of the colonialism. Arjun's character undergoes a matamorphosis and passes through three phases. The first stage is that of his assimilation and blind adoration of the western culture introduced by the British colonizers. The second stage evinces Arjun's introspection and self-questioning in the wake of the ill-effects of colonialism resulting in the belief in his own cultural and national roots. In the third and the final stage, Arjun becomes a revolutionary army personnel whose sole objective in life is to liberate himself from the shackles of the colonial rule.

Arjun's predicament is first foreshadowed in the character of Beni Prasad Dey, the Western educated Indian elite serving as the Collector in the British government. In his servile devotion to the British colonial system, Arjun too loses his own identity. By the time the truth of his being a mere 'tool' in the hands of the colonisers dawns upon him, it is too late. Unable to face the truth of being a 'mimic man' striving fruitlessly to ape the British, he too ends up his life to redeem himself. It is his war experiences, conversations with Hardy, his relationship with his batman Kishan Singh and his encounters with racism in war-front that make him come face to face with his predicament.

At the outset, Arjun is one of those educated youngmen who got carried away by the flamboyant and ostantatious life led by the British army officers. He was highly elated when he got selected as an officer in the army. He considers himself truly modern and free. It is his westernised upbringing that makes him adapt himself to the British ways of life. He takes to drinking whisky, eating beef and bacon at the officer's mess and gets a batman to iron his dinner jacket. Infact, he is one of those whom Macaulay in his infamous Minute of 1835 foresaw as belonging to the class "who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect" (TGP 430). The first phase of his career as the officer in the British Indian Army shows his infatuation with the cultural model introduced by the British colonialism. The illusion cast upon him by the colonial life-style gets manifested in his words to Dinu:

 Look at us ! We are the first modern Indians to be truly free. We eat what we like, we drink what we like, we're the first Indians who are not weighed down by the past (TGP 279)

These words reflect the overpowering influence exerted upon the educated Indian youth by the British life and manners.

 Arjun's career as an officer in the British Indian army witnesses a massive upheavel as he gradually comes face to face with the glaring realities behind the policies of the colonial rulers. The change in him starts gradually when he experiences the insuperable barrier of race during the war in the frontier regions. Though on the surface, the British colonisers claimed to be the custodians of the freedom and equality of Indians, the reality was different behind the curatin. Only slavery and inequality prevailed in the army camps. Not only were Indian soldiers paid less than the British soldiers but were also deprived of basic amenities like carrying umbrellas, travelling in the compartments allocated for the white soldiers and bathing in the ponds meant for the whites where by a sense of discontent and dissatidfaction had arisen amongst Indians. Even the English soldiers treated the Indian soldiers with a lot of disrespect and looked down upon them. They were called 'klang' and 'mercenaries' by the whites. It is such racial experiences that make Indian soldiers like Arjun and Hardy rebellious.

 As a commissioned Indian officer, Arjun is the colonized elite who mistakes himself at least in the beginning to be a superior to his fellow countrymen like Kishan Singh who on the surface appears to be too submissive and innocent but who gradually emerges as more in control of himself than people like Arjun. He begins to feel terribly displaced, dislocated and rootless. This sense of rootlessness generates despair and anger in him. As he crosses borders he is still aware of the fact that he is an Indian soldier paid to fight for the British. A number of disconcerting incidents brought him face to face with the inferiority and marginal status of Indian soldiers serving the British Raj. The process of his disillusionment was gradual but impactful. During the Japanese invasion of Burma, while Arjun and his fellow soldiers were hiding in the trenches, a trail of paper fluttered slowly down the sky. It was a pamphlet written in Hindustani and printed both in Devanagri and Arabic scripts. This pamphlet signed by one Amreek Singh of Indian Independence League was an eye-opener to Arjun. The text began :

Brothers, ask yourselves what you are fighting for, and why you are here: do you really wish to sacrifice your lives for an empire that has kept your country in slavery for two hundred years ? (TGP 391)

 Moreover, the Congressmen berated Arjun for serving in an army that spread exploitation everywhere. These experiences jilted Arjun out of his slumber and he began to realise the futility of serving the colonisers. It too dawned upon him that he and his fellow soldiers in the British Indian army were mere tools and instruments working on behalf of the Raj. Arjun began to feel that he was 'used' rather than 'employed' in the British Army. This moment of self-realization in Arjun has been highlighted by Helen Hayward as follows :

He [Arjun] undergoes a journey of self-realization, which ends with his recognizing the falsity of values by which he has lived his life. He feels that he has been merely a mercenary and tool in the hands of British, self-divided and lacking in even an elementary self-awareness. (Hayward 21)

His conscience told him that the war he fought was not his and the real war to be fought was with the masters whom he had served so obediently. He realised that it was the high time to shed his artificial self and defend the motherland as a true son of India. His disillusionment with the colonial rule made him aware of the exploitation and injustices inflicted upon the Indian people by the British government. This psychological awareness made him a different man altogether. Alison, Saya John's granddaughter felt pity towards him rather than love. To her, Arjun was "a toy, a manufactured thing, a weapon in someone else's hands."(TGP 376)

 Arjun's friends also brought him round to the impropriety of fighting battles for the British empire. The desire to fight for the cause of his own motherland grew stronger in him and artificial glory surrounding the colonial rule lost all charm to him. Finally, he decided to become a 'deserter' during the Japanese invasion of Burma. Though the Japanese were defeated and the British army decided to punish the deserters, Arjun was mortified not on account of being a runaway but because of a sense of shame aroused by the betrayal of his country.

 Being a tool of empire is a recurrent refrain in *The Glass Palace*. The colonial institution of plantation is run by more or less dispensable tools like Raj Kumar and coolies who are willing and unwilling collaborators respectively in the functioning of the plantation economy. The army too is a colonial institution wherein the army personnel serve as crucial tools for maintaining law and order in the colonies. What is important here is the perspective of the tools, especially Indian armymen like Arjun, Hardy and Kishan Singh as they stand at the lower rung of the military system. Their respective perspectives are pertinent to the present research as they supplant three different standpoints about the predicament of Indian soldiers. The history of colonial army has hardly been read and viewed from the point of view of native soldiers serving as tools of the colonial rule. Quite early in novel, the status of Indian armymen as tools is established when the local populace of Mandalay are amazed at the sight of the British army of 1885 that comprised chiefly Indians and not Englishmen. Saya John's remarks about the formation of the British army are quite pertinent :

I used to know soldiers like these ... They were peasants, those men, from small countryside villages: their clothes and turbans still smelt of wood-smoke and dung fires. 'What makes you fight?', I would ask them, 'when you should be planting your fields at home?' 'Money', they'd say and yet all they earned was a few annas a day, not much more than a dockyard coolie. 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. (TGP 26)

These lines foreground the 'thing' like status of the Indian soldiers fighting for the empire. Merely tools for the colonial states, these soldiers had to carry out unthinkingly the orders of their masters. Quite ironically, Raj Kumar who is merely eleven-year-old at that time makes a striking comment in response to the above statement uttered by Saya John : "They are just tools. Without minds of their own. They count for nothing" (TGP 27). Later on, Raj Kumar himself becomes a tool.

 The idea of the colonial army as a 'tool' surfaces time and again in the novel and one such moment arises during the conversation between Uma Dey and Dolly after the return of the fromer to Rangoon from New York :

 ... the Empire does everything possible to keep these soldiers in hand: only certain castes of men are recruited; they're completely shut off from politics and the wider society; they're given land, and their children are given jobs. (TGP 193)

What comes to the fore in the above lines is the predicament of the soldiers serving the colonial army unthinkingly and mechanically without showing protest and anger. They seem to have accepted their lot for fighting for an unknown cause. They could not even contemplate the possibility of their existence without the shelter and sense of security provided by the foreign rule and willingly relegated themselves to the status of being mere 'tools', 'toys' and 'instruments'.

 In *The Glass Palace*, "Ghosh analyses the ambiguous role of Indians, who posed as a colonised people and yet aided and abetted the British colonial expansion, for instance by means of furnishing the colonisers with the necessary military personnel" (Prusse Web). Raj Kumar and Arjun belong to the marginalized group of people for they are amongst those few whose subjectivities are formed and shaped totally within the colonial system. They are the ones whose lifeworlds are built upon the colonial system and when their own lives are devastated by the very system they had worshipped for long, they find no other alternative to sustain themselves. Indeed, when the colonial system breaks down after the the World War II with the consequent independence of the colonized states like India and Myanmar, Raj Kumar too witnesses the reversal of fortune due to being uprooted from his adopted land. He is reduced to the status of a refugee after having lost his wherewithal due to the downfall of creed of values and ideals he had firmly believed in for a very long time. Similarly, Arjun too dies in the jungles of Meiktila without any hope and in utter despair. A few days before his death, he meets Dinu and says, "... what must it be like to visualize defeat so accurately, so completely?"(TGP 447).

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