

**A STYLISTIC STUDY ON AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE CIRCLE OF  
REASON, THE GLASS PALACE AND THE HUNGRY TIDE***

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## SYNOPSIS

From the starting of Twentieth century, the human phenomenon is confronting the issues of miscommunication and non-communication. The crisis of World Wars have upsurged the modern age people to ponder over their life and its needs. The futility of life is strongly stressed in the works of art.

Man becomes self-centered and slowly starts to confine himself in his own world. He feels happy to be alone and enjoys silence. His ostracized nature gradually leads him to madness. His misconceptions and negative perceptions on life and people veil his eyes from seeing the other side of life, which is aesthetically designed by the inheritors of the earth. Ultimately he ends his life in utmost failure.

Many psychologists attempt to find out the remedies for the madness (restlessness) of modern age people. As so the present researcher has found out that the spring of human life is attached / clutched with language (communication system). Language paved the way for civilization in the ancient period.

The primitive man recognized his identity as being different from the rest of the things in the world. His power of communication gives him strength to fabricate an illusion that he is the superior phenomenon in the world. The present research on Stylistics is aimed to show its readers how beautiful it is to be a human with the special talent to converse among themselves with their own codified language. The thesis is divided into six chapters.

The **Introductory** chapter is intended to be an introduction on Stylistics through language, literature, linguistics and literary criticism. Language is a collection of symbolic system. It is arbitrary. Humans are able to share their sorrows, happiness,

fears, ideals and goals only with the help of language. So, it is absolute to affirm that language keeps human race sane and alive.

Language is the primary material of literature. There is no possibility to enjoy and praise literature without admiring the language in which it is composed.

Language adds essence to the life of human beings. English language is considered to be one of the ambiguous and complex languages in the world. The readers, speakers and lovers of English language have given a long and wholesome history to it.

The English readers' appetites for the scientific study of language and figurative devices never seem to be disappeared. The substantial study has been made with the specific references and quotations from the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Hardy and G. M. Hopkins. It is mentioned in the introductory chapter to portray the English readers' hunger for language (words).

Ferdinand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield and Noam Chomsky are the epoch makers in Linguistics. Their concepts and theories are explained. The development of Linguistics paves way to the growth of Stylistics, which also plays its active role in Literary Criticism. Stylistics is the systematic study of the patterns of a text. It helps its readers to have a better understanding of the works of art. It improves the readers' verbal and non-verbal skills. The select works of Amitav Ghosh has been studied to transmit the novelist's mind style through the stylistic evidences present in the novels.

One of the objectives of this research is to make the people as well as the students to be aware of the nuances in the relationship and life of human beings. Amitav Ghosh's imagination is blended with reality in his novels. When the writer's language goes beyond the familiar usage, the readers are still able to grasp the

meaning of the strange words by their inquisitive knowledge. There the writer's imaginative creation succeeds. The literary readers are expected to cherish and rejuvenate the aesthetics present in the literary works rather than the accuracy of information.

It is believed that, at first the archaic man feels two kinds of hunger i.e., for food and thought. It is well-said in the works of T. S. Eliot. He says that at times people are in search of words to express themselves in full, which never happens at all. There is a farfetched difference between what one tries to utter and what one has uttered. Those minute details are discussed elaborately in the introductory chapter.

The biographical details of the author Amitav Ghosh are also included with a brief note on the novels for research. The hypothesis and the objective of this research are dealt in brief. One of the essential focuses of this research will be to highlight the existing evils in the society by using Amitav Ghosh's decent and aesthetic exploitation of language in his select works. The final section of this chapter deals with the outline of other chapters.

The Second chapter is titled as **Stylistics – Literature Review**. The capital 'S' in 'Stylistics' represents its importance and its role as a separate field in Linguistics and Literary criticism. The various kinds of definitions, condemnations, words of appreciation on Style and Stylistics are mentioned in this chapter.

One such is, Style enhances the subject matter of a work of art. The writer secures the prestigious place in society in the way he selects the characteristic choice of words, sentence structure, syntax, figurative language, the patterns of rhyme used in his novels. Style represents a component exploited by a series of disciplines such as

aesthetics, linguistics, stylistics, poetics, literary semiotics, or non-language related disciplines such as music, architecture and arts.

Stylistics breaks the formal patterns and studies the text in its fullest extent. The development of Stylistics from the ancient Rhetoric is traced. In *Republic*, Plato distinguishes between the two kinds of narration. They are *Mimesis* and *Diegesis*. The first concept '*Mimesis*' is used widely in this research.

The two great philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, have given their own different point of views on '*Mimesis*'. Plato presents *Mimesis* as the superficial, negative and worthless practice, which distracts people from viewing the reality whereas Aristotle perceives it as a useful and helpful narration to people to understand the author's intelligence and imagination (applied reason) in his works.

The further development of Stylistics is rooted from the three ancient Greek sources: *Poetics*, *Rhetoric* and *Dialectics*. In the present era, *Poetics* is referred as Literary Criticism, while *Rhetoric* and *Dialectics* are referred as Stylistics. Stylistics has two distinctions. They are Literary Stylistics and Linguistic Stylistics.

The aim of the Literary Stylistics is relational to the critic's concern of aesthetic appreciation with the linguist's concern of linguistic description. The term 'appreciation' is used to comprehend both critical evaluation and interpretation. Linguistic Stylistics is the patterned study of verbal art on linguistic principles. It represents a synthesis of two disciplines, linguistics and aesthetics.

The various concepts and definitions of Style and Stylistics are discussed. The theories of great theorists like Richard Ohmann, Bernard Bloch, M. A. K. Halliday, Paul Simpson, Roman Jakobson, Victor Schklovsky and A. J. Greimas are noted

down. Finally, 'Mind Style', a part of Stylistics is explained which has been applied in the select novels of Amitav Ghosh.

The third chapter is titled as **Obsession on Purity and Phrenology in *The Circle of Reason through Mind Style***. It analyzes the inseparable condition of purity in the life of ancient Indians. It further studies the western influence in the minds of illiterate people. The obsession of Balaram, Toru-debi and Bhudeb Roy are analyzed through the Mind Style concept in Stylistics. Their representations, dialogues, descriptions and characterization are scrutinized to delve out their obsessed minds. The other stylistic techniques and context-oriented theories like Mimesis and Metafiction are used.

The ancient India has its own significance based on its people's diligence, patriotism, unity, honesty, intelligence and perfection. Purity is strictly maintained in all the religions especially Jainism and Sikhism. The ancient Indians have lived along with Nature. They have utilized Nature to its maximum. Their houses are structured in a way to represent their ordered and ideal way of life.

In *The Circle of Reason*, Balaram is a typical portrayal of a middle class Indian. He creates his own illusory world around him and dwells on it completely without bothering about the real world. He never cares for other people. He has neither loved nor cared for his wife, Toru debi.

Balaram has an admiration for science and scientists since his childhood. He looks at them with wonder. He thinks that the scientists are living legends. One instance, he is insulted in the meeting of Madam Curie. That is one of the crucial times in his life. He wanders around the city to forget the insult. That is the time,

when he buys an old book on Phrenology. He reads the book with passion to achieve the position of a scientist.

Gopal, friend of Balaram has gifted *Life of Pasteur* to Balaram in their college days. Balaram reads the book with renewed passion and vigor to change the world with his intelligence. The dialogues of Balaram are scrutinized in the stylistic angle to express his obsessed mind. Balaram is an ideal post-modern man.

The stylistic portrayal and characterization of Balaram, Toru debi, Bhudeb Roy, Gopal and Alu are well exposed in this chapter. Each and every character possesses their own obsessed world; all the worlds are well narrated by Amitav Ghosh. The mental strength of Amitav Ghosh is explained with relevant quotations. The narrative techniques, certain stylistic critical terms are introduced and explained in the current chapter.

The fourth chapter is titled as **Looking through the glass and Heteroglossia: Mapping the growth of Rajkumar in *The Glass Palace***. It exposes the implicit and explicit nature of Rajkumar and the royal family with the help of the stylistic devices. Since the title of the novel is coded with the adjective 'glass', the researcher has attempted to use the magnification lens for the comprehension of the mind style of the characters. The stylistic narrative technique Heteroglossia is used. *The Glass Palace* is narrated by Rajkumar's great grandson, from whom the readers understand the multiple voices in it.

Rajkumar is an eleven year old Indian orphaned boy. For his age, he is well-travelled, brave and intelligent. Rajkumar lives like a prince both by physic and the way of life. His worldly-wise nature teaches him to go with the world. He is an

illiterate but filled with precocious knowledge. He studies people and their temperament as his lessons.

After his mother's death, he works as an apprentice in the boat – Sampan. The boat owner asks his crew members to find some jobs in Mandalay because the boat needs to be repaired. Rajkumar works as an assistant in the food stall of Ma Cho. It is from Ma Cho, Rajkumar understands the female anatomy.

Rajkumar's sexual thoughts are provoked by Ma Cho, who clutches a fistful of cloth from his dress to wipe off her tears. He feels the fire within him and allows Ma Cho to proceed her work with him. Suddenly Ma Cho becomes alert and blames herself for her acts. She resists herself from the mishap. Rajkumar accepts the touch of Ma Cho as the lesson of life.

Rajkumar's prime teacher is life. He learns everything from it. 'Obstacle always leads to progress', That is the lesson learnt by Rajkumar from the life. He does things with intentions.

Rajkumar falls in love at first sight with Dolly. He asks her name and repeats it again and again. So, with a sign of that he would meet her again, he leaves her. Rajkumar's calculation for his future begins, he ponders over again and again about the Britishers interest in Burma's teak forest. He finds the wood business as a profitable business. Saya John advises Rajkumar to go back to India in his boat, Sampan. Rajkumar refuses it and grips his favour on the teak business. Saya John is the second tutor of Rajkumar. From Saya, Rajkumar learns to look at the world from the other's eyes.



Saya John teaches Rajkumar how to live, how to deal with people and situations. He gives his worldly wisdom to Rajkumar. Rajkumar lives with detachment. This is a gift; Rajkumar receives it from his orphanage. But once he is attached with the things, he showers his loyalty on it.

Rajkumar gets stronger from the advices and teachings of Saya John. He plans to establish the separate timber yard for him. He is ready to take up the few risks because risks in right path always lead to the success and growth. Saya John sees a different vision of Rajkumar. He wonders at Rajkumar's growth. All these happenings that happen in the life of Rajkumar is mentioned in detail in the light of Stylistics.

The exact lines from *The Glass Palace* are noted down to exemplify the growth of Rajkumar. The importance of communication is strongly stressed. Humans are alive and sane because they have words to share their emotions. Words connect and disconnect people. This is used as a tagline in the present chapter.

The fifth chapter is titled as **War of Water and Tiger over the Sundarban settlers in *The Hungry Tide* through Foregrounding**. It clearly portrays the survival struggle of Sundarban settlers, who live united. It stresses the importance of water. Amitav Ghosh's powerful portrayal brings the real storm in front of the readers. Through Foregrounding technique, the readers distance themselves from the work of art.

Water is the prime and active participant in *The Hungry Tide*. It constantly threatens the life of Sundarban settlers. Sundarban, an immense archipelago is interposed between the sea and the plains of Bengal, nearly three hundred kilometers.

Almost every day tide recreates the country at its wish; at times the forest lies/ submerged beneath the water. After the tide subsidizes, the forest reappears. The forest is still wet and fetid. The collided soil awaits to catch hold of its prey (humans). These are some dangerous factors of the tide country, which uses as its terrifying factors to scare the human beings.

The kings of the forest are tigers, crocodiles and snakes: “When the tides create new land, overnight mangroves begin to gestate, and if the conditions are right they can spread so fast as to cover a new island within a few short years...Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles” (THT 8).

To the outer world, it is known as ‘Sundarban’, which means ‘the beautiful forest.’ Beauty is always dangerous. Very euphemistically, it is called as ‘Sundarban’ (dangerous forest). So, it is necessary to name it as ‘the tide country.’ “There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometers inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later.”(7)

Amitav Ghosh plays on with words to describe the tide country. The artistic portrayal of the scene shakes the heart of the readers but the eyes steadily tries to grasp the word’s sense in full. It is evident to reveal the possessive nature of the tide. “.....of its determination to destroy or expel them” (8). At any moment, the presence of human beings enrages the tide, which exhibits its hostility and cunning nature to them. The mighty tide is determined to expel the occupiers of its land.

Fokir, Piya, Kanai, Kusum and Moyna are the important characters in the novel. The settlers' survival struggle is vividly exposed through the linguistic and stylistic evidences.

Amitav Ghosh has powerfully employed the prepositional phrases and the Foregrounding techniques. The stylistic evidences of this chapter rejuvenate the understanding level of its readers about the power of Nature and its determination and destructive nature to uproot the human beings.

The sixth chapter is the final chapter **Summation**. It sums up the findings of the researcher. Further scope for research and recommendations are also mentioned as a final note.