CHAPTER 6

TRANSITION OF THE ORIENT THROUGH COLONIAL INTERVENTION: A STUDY OF *THE GLASS PALACE*

[ Ghosts behind the fence were not men, they were tools – helpless, picked for their poverty. In those days when al-Ghazira was still a real country they were brought here to slip between its men and their work, like the first whiffs of an opium dream; they were brought as weapons, to divide the Ghaziris from themselves and the world of sanity; to turn them into buffoons for the world to laugh at (Ghosh, 1986: 281).]

In his *The Circle of Reason* Amitav Ghosh portrays the lower caste and lower class Indian migrants as ghosts and tools in the hands of empire in the British colonies. Similarly, in his *The Glass Palace* (2000) he describes the middle caste and class Indians who joined the British army for various reasons, as

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….I had something to defend—a home, a country, a family—and I found myself attacked by these ghostly men, these trusting boys? 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 (Ghosh, 2000: 29)?

Aijaz Ahmad’s assertion of a completely different role for the migrants problematizes Ghosh’s negative depiction of lower caste and lower class migrants when he says, “Most migrants tend to be poor and experience displacement not as cultural plenitude but as torment; what they seek is not displacement but, precisely, a place from where they may begin anew, with some sense of a stable future (Ahmad: 373). This observation of Ahmad challenges Ghosh’s idea of lower caste and lower class Oriental diaspora as a kind of machine plugged into the larger machine of capitalism that propelled colonialism and is propelling neo-colonialism. Deleuze and Guattari’s views in this regard are very important who establishes relationship between capitalism and migrant labor:

[I]t was the modern State and capitalism that brought the triumph of machines, in particular of motorized machines (whereas the archaic State had simple machines at best); but what we are referring to now are technical machines, which are definable extrinsically. One is not enslaved by the technical machine but rather subjected to it. It would appear, then, that the modern State, through technological development, has substituted an increasingly powerful social subjection for machinic enslavement. Ancient slavery and feudal serfdom were already procedures of subjection. But the naked or “free” worker of capitalism takes subjection to its most radical expression, since the processes of subjectification no longer even enter into partial conjunctions that interrupt the flow. In effect, capital acts as the point of subjectification that constitutes all human beings as subjects; but some,
the “capitalists,” are subjects of enunciation that form the private subjectivity of capital, while the others, the “proletarians,” are subjects of the statement, subjected to the technical machines in which constant capital is effectuated. The wage regime can therefore take the subjection of human beings to an unprecedented point, and exhibit a singular cruelty, yet still be justified in its humanist cry: No, human beings are not machines, we don’t treat them like machines, we certainly don’t confuse variable capital and constant capital (emphasis in the original) (Deleuze: 457).

This particular idea of human beings as parts of capitalism propelled colonial machine is applied to the working class people of all societies- Indians as well as Western. Amitav Ghosh distinguishes between a victim of ancient slavery and feudal serfdom, which were procedures of subjection. In this depiction, the author resembles “the naked or “free” worker of capitalism” when he highlights the movement of people even in pre-colonial period and informs:

The number of foreigners living in Mandalay was not insubstantial—there were envoys and missionaries from Europe; traders and merchants of Greek, Armenian, Chinese and Indian origin; laborers and boatmen from Bengal, Malaya and the Coromandel coast; white-clothed astrologers from Manipur; businessmen from Gujarat—an assortment of people such as Rajkumar had never seen before he came here (Ghosh, 2000: 16).

The biggest achievement of Ghosh in the words of Heather Hewett is that he “spins his tale with harrowing precision and insight, leaving the reader with a lingering disquiet about how the forces of history can irrevocably alter the lives of ordinary men and women”
Undoubtedly, Ghosh shows how the larger forces changed the world by making use of human beings as its tools. However, the author does not apply this formula to upper class and upper caste Indian Diaspora in Europe and America and portray them as enlightened, nationalist and humane at the same time. He neglects the vital fact that they are also part of large capitalist machine who seem to oppose it which is required for the effective working of the capitalist colonial machine. Ghosh describes the upper caste and upper class Diaspora in very positive terms when Uma, the Collector’s widow visits England and meets Madame Cama from Bombay who appears, at first glance,

[M]ore European than Indian—in clothes, manner and appearance. Yet she, Uma, had never known anyone who spoke more truthfully or forthrightly on matters concerning India. She’d been kind enough to introduce Uma into her circle. Uma had never met such 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 (Ghosh, 2000: 191).

This particular contradiction in the character of Madame Cama as European and Indian at the same time is upheld by John J. Su who says, on “the formal level, *The Glass Palace* emphasizes the conflicting tendencies of the aesthetic by establishing a series of dialectical oppositions through its characters” (Su: 75). The author makes these oppositions more visible in the Indians located in the Orient as compared to Indians located in Europe. He neglects the fact that the Indian Diaspora in Europe and America is not out of capitalism and colonialism because the very idea of nation and nationalism in orthodox terms and
otherwise is a capitalist construct. The author shows that the idea of nation is imported because when his Diaspora characters become part of capitalist organizations in First World or its branches in Third World directly or indirectly they can see India as a nation. Same is the case with the former soldiers of Indian Army who after retirement with the salaries and pensions provided by British colonizers settle in Europe and America and become opposite of what they used to be. One reason behind this reversal may be the economy and caste based jealousy because the British colonialism was providing the similar opportunities to other people as well and that too in some cases to the people from lower castes and classes. Nationalism that could facilitate the transfer of power from the British to Indian elite was the only way to restrict the freedom of the people from the lower layers like untouchables and women. Tanika Sarkar highlights the anti-subaltern nature of the nationalism when she says, “Hindu orthodoxy and cultural nationalists opposed the Age of Consent Bill. They argued that it violated a fundamental life cycle rite, garbhadhan, which made it obligatory for a girl to have intercourse with her husband within sixteen days of her first period” (emphasis in the original) (Sarkar: 601). These nationalists were making use of all the tools of capitalism that reached India through colonialism and opposing both for empowering the subaltern layers. For instance, a Bengali newspaper furiously opposed the Age of Consent Bill meant to empower the Indian women:

> It is the injunction of the Hindu shastras that married girls must cohabit with their husbands on the first appearance of their menses ... and all Hindus must implicitly obey the injunction. ... And he is not a true Hindu who does not obey it. ... If one girl in a lakh or even a crore menstruates before the age of
twelve, it must be admitted that by raising the age of consent the ruler will be interfering with the religion of the Hindus (Sarkar: 60).

Very ironically, Uma the Hindu feminist and nationalist does not care for the plight of the women from the upper strata of Indian society and goes out to experiment her feminism on Ilongo’s mother who is also a mistress of Rajkumar. It indicates that the Diaspora nationalists projected by Ghosh, as Indian Nationalists are only supports of orthodox religion based nationalism. The author draws the attention away from all the problems inherent in the discourse of nationalism and its relationship with colonialism Ghosh concentrates on the lower class and lower caste diaspora and their slight link with colonial authorities.

The Indian diaspora belonging to lower caste and lower class played an important part in pre-British period as well as during British period. Ghosh also takes up the case of poor Indians who migrated during British colonial period and helped the British capitalist ventures in the colonies. H. N. Kunzru also attests the inhuman conditions in which they were forced to live and the role of British Government in their migration when he says, “No Indian can read the story of Indian labour emigration in different parts of the world without a deep humiliation. Its emigration was favoured and supported by the Government of India” (Mahajani: v). Even the colonial records also indicate the hard life of Indian migrants to other British colonies as indicated by a colonial officer H. L. Stevenson who describes the life of a lower caste Indian migrant as “a victim, from the time he leaves his home in Madras, to the day when broken, debilitated, a moral and physical wreck, he is thrown aside . . . to die in the gutter (Rao: 12). However, the situation in India was in no way better as pointed out by Jotirao Phule in his writings where he blames both the
Brahmanical internal colonization as well as British colonization. Under such circumstances migration as pointed out by Ahmad above was the only way left for poor Indians.

Amitav Ghosh in his depiction of indentured labor avoids the insights provided by Phule and many other social reformers who pointed out the grim reality of life for the marginal sections however; he finds some hope in the risky migration because it at least loosens one kind of colonialism. Condition of Indian indentured labor is better than the slaves who were captured from African coasts and then sold in the colonial markets because of two reasons firstly unlike the African slaves Indian indentured labor chooses to leave India on their own due to various reasons such as poverty, caste based discrimination, exploitation by the upper caste feudal lords and many other reasons. Secondly, once they migrated either the future that awaits them is the same that they could expect in India or better, in no case worse than the future, they can expect in India. Not all indentured laborers are successful like Rajkumar however; the best thing is that they are participants in the competition for social, economic and political upliftment, which is denied to them in India due to caste hierarchies as the canonical book of Hindu legislature, Laws of Manu recommends:

No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able (to do it); for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmanas (Buhler: 430).

Hegemonic position of this canonical text in India and the way it is followed by various rulers makes it clear that the situation of lower caste Indians cannot be better in India, going abroad is risky but it provides an opportunity. The upward movement for
indentured labor is scarce and many of them end up in a situation similar to what awaits them in India as pointed out in *Burmese Days*:  

Old Mattu, the Hindu *durwan* … was an old fever-stricken creature, more like a grasshopper than a human being, and dressed in a few square inches of dingy rag….Behold there the degeneracy of the East,’….Look at the wretchedness of his limbs. The calves of his legs are not so thick as an Englishman’s wrists. Look at his abjectness and servility. Look at his ignorance—such ignorance as his not known in Europe outside a home for mental defectives (emphasis in the original) (Orwell: 41).

This depiction of Indian lower caste in Burma indicates that they are exploited by the Indian society for centuries and then taken by British colonial authorities to their colonies as cheap labor. However, Ghosh is different from Orwell in the depiction of lower caste Indians they struggle and make a place for themselves in the world. He makes it clear that by the success of a few Indian poor abroad “we must *not* be deceived by the idea that imperialism is an enterprise of reform” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2000: 294). Primarily the colonial capitalist forces treated Indian poor people as “units of production, not people, were exported across the seas to supply the demand [for labor]” (Tinker: 38) however “somehow they remained people all the same” (Tinker: 38), as in case of Rajkumar. This transformation is possible because the colonial system was not caste-based exploitation that is why it allowed at least a few to move upwards however; Ghosh in this novel does not depict the conflict in the life of untouchables and the subalterns between attraction to develop proximity with colonial masters and the difficulty to come out of Brahmanical colonialism.
Ghosh in this novel is somewhat revolutionary in the portrayal of Rajkumar, a social out-caste as an ambitious person but instead of locating the source of transformation in his self he located it in his being a tool in the hands of British colonial forces when he decides to accompany Baburao, an experienced Indian coolie recruiter to earn money so that he can enter into business something rare for a lower caste in India. If looked as a reaction to Brahmanical colonization as opposed to a reaction to the British colonialism it is an achievement on the part of British colonialism to make an entrepreneur out of an outcaste who is not allowed to save money as per the Laws of Manu, the canonical text of rules and regulations for orthodox Hindus. Many critics do not consider the Indian caste system as a suffocating system for the marginal sections they see only Rajkumar and Baburao’s complicity with the colonizers and describe it as an ill effect of British colonialism such as Shanthini Pillai says:

Yet, this ironically leads recruiters like Baburao (and later Rajkumar himself) to share in the burden of imperial culpability in selling the myth of the “Promised Land” to the peasants in India and by so doing, share the spaces on board the stage of colonialist expansion in the Far East. They are not nameless stagehands or extras but have their own names and their own individualities, thus creatively resignified in the forefront of the stage (Pillai: 56-57).

These critics are either unaware or do not want to acknowledge the fact that these peasants were actually lower caste agricultural laborers without land of their own and the upper caste landlords used to be very cruel to them. Most of them used to be bonded labors and their condition was equal to that of slaves. Therefore moving out of India for them was
like an escape from the worst slavery to a bad one. Baburao, the recruiter explains his own upward movement to the poor people and gives them money to pay off their debts to their landlords which they will not be able to pay off even after generations. He says:

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 as they choose (Ghosh, 2000: 126).

The economic condition of marginal sections in the villages is so bad that people “rushed eagerly forward, some were pushed on by their relatives and some had their hands held forcibly to the paper by their fathers and brothers” (Ghosh, 2000: 126).

The colonial machinery here seems to provide the marginal sections an opportunity that their next generation will not be bonded laborers and if lucky they will be rich. Therefore, the British colonialism is less dangerous for Indians than the Brahmanical colonialism whose complicity with colonialism was not questioned by Amitav Ghosh. The colonial authorities were strengthening the religious orthodoxy in India by translating, printing and canonizing the religious texts that mostly validate the exploitation of lower caste Indians. Macaulay hints at this investment when he says, “The committee have thought fit to lay out above a lakh of rupees in printing Arabic and Sanscrit books” (Macaulay: 128). On the one hand, the British colonial rulers were strengthening the internal colonization and at another level, they were destroying the economic structures necessary for the sustenance of life of lower and middle caste and class people in India.
Susie Tharu points out this exploitation which is responsible for large-scale migration of Indians to the British colonies she points out “the last year of Indian Administration in Bengal, the land revenue totaled £ 817,000. The company administration realized £ 1,470,000 from 1765 to 1766; the permanent settlement was fixed in at £ 3,400,000. In many Bengal provinces, one-third of the inhabitants died in the terrible famine of 1770. With surplus siphoned off systematically, the peasant cultivators had no reserves to fall back on when the crops failed. Thousands of people were also affected by the deindustrialization, most so, perhaps by the collapse of the textile industry, but also of iron, glass, paper, pottery, and jewellery” (Tharu: 145).

The exploitative apparatus of the British colonialism that joined hands with internal exploitative structures of Indian society did not leave any space for the marginalized sections to grow in India. However, the outward movement held some hope as Baburao is not wrong in his promise because at least a few lower caste people move upwards such as Rajkumar and Ilongo. With money in his pocket Rajkumar, moves up the social ladder and his caste become immaterial to the upper caste Indians living in Burma as evident from the letter sent by Uma’s relative to her that says:

At home in India a man like Rajkumar-babu would stand little chance of gaining acceptance in the society of people like ourselves. But here in Burma our standards are a little more lax. Some of the richest people in the city are Indians, and most of them began with nothing more than a bundle of clothes and a tin box.
I fully understand that in India a man of Rajkumar-babu’s station could scarcely hope to be entertained—or even received—by a District Collector (Ghosh, 2000: 135).

This letter also hints at the nexus between money, religion, caste and culture. Rajkumar’s acceptance among the upper caste society of Burma shows that money is the only thing that can lessen the stigmas related to caste. The untouchables who are not allowed in the temples in India because they do not have money are welcomed in the temples once they have money to donate in the temples. Ghosh here is different from the others writing on the issues related to lower caste for him religion is an economic and political issue first and a religious and cultural one later as he says:

Then suddenly one morning, he had dropped down like a hailstone from the sky, right into the Durga temple on Spark Street, the gathering-place of the city’s Hindu Bengalis. He had come perfectly costumed for the occasion, in a starched white dhoti and a gold-buttoned *punjabi*. To ease his entry he had taken the precaution of bringing along a substantial donation for the *purohit*.

It turned out that Mr. Raha was in the timber trade. He was planning to make a bid for a major contract and had come to ask the purohit to pray for him. Like all of his kind the purohit had the intuition of a famished tiger when it came to the judging of potential prey. He did much more than offer a blessing. At the temple there were several employees of the big European banks and timber companies; the purohit made it his business to introduce Rajkumar-babu to all these men….Out of gratitude he’d virtually rebuilt the temple, paving its floors in marble, gilding the walls of the shrine and
erecting a beautiful new dwelling for the purohit and his family (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2000: 134).

Here the author shows how the colonial intervention helps a lower caste move upwards economically as well as caste wise however at the same time the upper caste part of the author blames only the lower caste people for being close to colonial authorities. He is silent about the close association between British colonialism and Brahmanism and the help rendered by upper caste Indians in colonial expansion.

Through the voyage taken by Rajkumar and Baburao along with indentured laborers the writer draws attention to how the individuals feel once they are uprooted from their land though the land may not be supportive. While on the sea, one of the immigrant jumps overboard Baburao jumps after him, saves him, and tries to make him realize his economic value, which though seems too materialistic and inhuman, has a human dimension because in orthodox Hindu society they are considered burden on the earth. Baburao says, “where did you think you were going?’ Baburao crooned, almost tenderly, as though he were singing to a lover. ‘And what about all the money I gave your father so he could pay off his debts? What use would your corpse be, to him or to me?’” (Ghosh, 2000: 127).

Amitav Ghosh in his bid to criticize the colonial machinery highlights the inhuman conditions in which the migrant people are forced to live on the ship when he says:

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 (Ghosh, 2000: 127).
However, the caste-based internal colonization is far worse than the British colonization and circumstances back home are worse than they get on the ship. Mulk Raj Anand describes a colony of lower caste people in his novel Untouchable and this description shows that the life of lower castes is harder in India than on ships or in Burma. A colony of lower caste people in India is “soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcases left to dry on its banks….The absence of a drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink…made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in (Anand: 18-19). This passage from Anand clearly shows that the British colonialism is not worse than the internal colonialism of India, which is not directly questioned by Amitav Ghosh though through Arjun’s contemplation he gives a brief glimpse in the caste based discrimination when he enlists the support of plantation workers to fight British Indian Army. He is confused if independence of India for which the plantation workers are fighting will bring any freedom to their castes when he asks himself, “Did they know of the poverty, of the hunger their parents and grandparents had left behind? Did they know about the customs that would prevent them from drinking at high-caste wells” (Ghosh, 2000: 522)? He hints at the blinding influence of nationalist discourse that enlist the support of underprivileged sections without offering them any freedom and equality that is why Arjun fears “What would they find…wondered, when they crossed the horizon” (Ghosh, 2000: 522)?

Therefore the British colonialism is not that bad for the lower caste because its intervention reterritorialize the nation for the lower caste diaspora because “the diasporic self seeks to reterritorialize itself” (Radhakrishnan: 175) in the new space. This
reterritorialization helps Rajkumar in his new location as a part of colonial machinery and transforms him from an orphan lower caste boy to Mr. Raha. The author is aware that the colonial intervention is transforming the life of the Oriental subaltern positively but only for a few, for the rest of them life is not much different. In the novel the author through the attitude of the contractor shows how for “some of the tappers he had a smile and a quick word of encouragement; with others, he made a great show of losing is temper, gesticulating and pouring out obscenities in Tamil and English, singling out the object of his wrath with the tip of his pointing cane: “You dog of a coolie, keep your black face up and look at me when I’m talking to you…” (Ghosh, 2000: 231). The only achievement of colonial intervention for the subaltern is “a smile and a quick word of encouragement” (Ghosh, 2000: 231) for those who excel in their work which is not available to them in traditional caste ridden society in India.

Uma questions the condition of workers on plantation when she says, “No. But did you see the terror on their faces when that man—the manager—shouted at them” (Ghosh, 2000: 232)? However, it is impossible to bring out a sea change in the lives of people overnight. Uma who had always lived an easy life, does not have the experience of real life of social outcasts in India, however she tries to project herself as a nationalist representative of Indian marginal sections on foreign lands when she questions Rajkumar, “Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your people have done is far worse than the worst deeds of the Europeans” (Ghosh, 2000: 247). Through this question, she tries to expose the British colonialism however; Rajkumar answers her, “You have so many opinions, Uma—about things of which you know nothing. For weeks now I’ve heard you criticizing everything you see: the state of Burma, the
treatment of women, the condition of India, the atrocities of the Empire” (Ghosh, 2000: 248).

This answer by Rajkumar strikes at the abstract humanism of both Western discourses as well as the Brahmanical discourses. However, Ghosh intends to project Raj Kumar as an active and conscious part of British colonialism who is responsible for the exploitation of lower caste migrants on his rubber plantation. The author shows him as an agent of colonialism moving freely between India, Burma and Malaya in the pursuit of business. Melita Glasgow and Don Fletcher also highlight his complicity with the British Empire when they say he “does not oppose but actively attempts to conform and participate” (Glasgow and Fletcher: 76) and confirm him a “mimic men” (Glasgow and Fletcher: 81). Goonetilleke also hints at the relationship between the success of colonialism and contribution of local people in its success when he says, “there was, and can be, no colonialism without collusion, at least in this part of the world” (Goonetilleke: 416). In one of his interviews, Ghosh also confirms this idea of aspiring Indian lower caste diaspora when he says that one of the major themes of the novel is the “complicity between Indians and the colonising power” (Kaiser: n. pag). However, his complicity with the internal colonialism comes to forefront when he does not question the complicity of upper caste and upper class Indians with the Empire rather he projects them as the only characters who question the Empire.

Despite his denial to recognize the dark side of caste based discrimination he is generous in showing that the British colonialism though uproots the lower caste people it provides them opportunities to move upward. Ilongo is another character with Indian roots who is successful in his career. He is an illegitimate son of Rajkumar and when Uma comes
to know this fact, she informs Dolly who takes care that he is provided education that helps him grow.

The Second World War that destroys the career of many people helps Ilongo build his career in a country where he is a second generation Diaspora. The growth of Ilongo’s career challenges the idea of nation as something rooted in geography and psyche. Rather it is based on so many extrinsic factors such as economy, politics, personal choice etc. as evident from Ilongo, born in an untouchable family that too as a result of sexual exploitation his mother becomes “a prominent figure in Malaysian politics; he’d been a minister in the Government and had been honored with a title—“Dato” (Ghosh, 2000: 497).

Another issue that establishes a relationship between Orientalism, colonialism and Indians is the depiction of women in the novel. The author follows the idea of contemporary feminism to show how the recruiters exploit Women indentured labor sexually. He takes the example of Ilongo’s Mother who describes her relationship with Rajkumar as “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.’ ‘That was the only time?’ ‘No. For years afterwards, whenever he was here he’d send for me. He wasn’t so bad, better than some others (Ghosh, 2000: 236). He does not accept her as his wife but keeps helping her financially as she herself says, “Many years ago. He stopped coming after I told him I was pregnant.” “Did he not want to have anything to do with the boy—with Ilongo?” “No. But he sends money.” (Ghosh, 2000: 236).

As opposed to Ilongo’s mother, whose approach to this relationship is practical Uma is romantic about newfound feminism that she applies only on the lower caste people as it happens with all upper caste social reformers and wants Rajkumar to be punished for
his relationship with her and scolds her “Why haven’t you spoken to his wife? Or to Mr. or Mrs. Martins? They could do something. What he’s done is very wrong; he can’t be allowed to abandon you like this.” … “This is a shameful business. I’ll go to the police if I need to…” (Ghosh, 2000: 236-237).

The position of women in upper caste families is no better and the upper caste male are doing the same thing to the women but the author highlights this exploitation only at the lower layers of society. For instance when it comes to the plight of upper caste women especially widows the writer seems to support the Orientalized Hindu orthodoxy in the name of personal choice of individuals as in case of Manju who shaves her head once she becomes a widow. Here instead of showing her a victim of Orientalist discourse on widowhood he portrays her as a naturally Oriental person who shaves her head and commits suicide because she loves her husband as evident here:

She raised the scythe and hacked at it, blindly, because her hand was behind her head. She saw a lock of hair falling onto the grass and this gave her encouragement. She sawed at another handful and then another. She could see the pile of hair growing in the grass around her feet. The one thing she could not understand was the pain: why should it hurt so much to cut one’s hair (Ghosh, 2000: 464)?

Later on, she commits suicide and the author very ironically makes an act resulting out of social-cultural pressures stored in her psyche since her childhood, hopelessness and frustration and gives it somewhat romantic coloring:

She let her hand fall over the raft’s edge and thrilled to the water’s touch. It seemed to be pulling at her, urging her to come in. She let her arm trail a
little and then dipped her foot in. She felt her sari growing heavier, unfurling in the water, pulling away from her, tugging at her body, urging her to follow. She heard the sound of crying and she was glad that her daughter was in Dolly’s arms. With Dolly and Rajkumar the child would be safe; they would see her home. It was better this way: better that they, who knew what they were living for, should have her in their care. She heard Dolly’s voice calling to her—“Manju, Manju, stop—be careful…”—and she knew the time had come. It was no effort at all to slip over from the raft into the river. The water was fast, dark and numbingly cold (Ghosh, 2000: 473-474).

A look into the discourse of relationship between husband and wife and how widow immolation is justified by the Orientalists and how this notion is accepted as canonical concept of Hinduism shows the role of colonial intervention in the transformation the Orient. Instead of challenging this Orientalist intervention Amitav Ghosh confirms the Orientalist construction of the Orient. Many European Orientalist thinkers and writers praised the inhuman practice of widow Immolation and some of them recommended it even for the European women. The British government in India that earned worldwide fame for eradicating widow immolation in reality destroyed and marginalized all the movements and discourses that were against this practice and used to provide both shelter and the means for intellectual progress to the women who leave their homes for various reasons.

European intellectuals supported widow immolation indirectly by creating a powerful lobby of orthodox upper caste Hindus that came into being because of re-empowering of the dead and decayed past in the name of golden Vedic past of India. Many eminent European thinkers and writers supported this inhuman practice. Max Muller is one
of the most powerful thinkers who supported and recommended this practice even for the European women. Similarly, Clarisse Bader argues, “Western women had much to learn from the ancient civilizations, in which women were characterized by spiritual and ascetic tenderness, complete abnegation of self-interest, and unlimited devotion to the family. There awe-inspiring spiritual courage, she, and others seemed to think, was still evident in the women who mounted the funeral pyres of their husbands to commit sati” (Chakravorty: 44-45). After praising this inhuman practice, she criticizes the feminist movements of this region when she traced “contemporary degradations of Indian women to later accretions on Vedic beliefs and practices, and to the growth of the sensuous Vaishnva cults” and held “the decline of Vedic society … a lesson for Europe” (Chakravorty: 44-45).

The official machinery of the East India Company legitimized widow immolation by making some Brahmanical texts the basis of personal law. In 1805, the question of scriptural sanction for sati was put to the pundits of the Nizamat Adalat. Specifically they were asked, “whether a woman is enjoined by the Shaster voluntarily to burn herself with the body of her husband, or prohibited” (Mani: 98)? The response was as follows: “to the best of my knowledge:--every woman of the four castes (Brahmin, khetry, bues and soodur) is permitted to burn herself with the body of her husband” (Mani: 98). Though the pundit responded that the texts did not enjoin but merely permitted sati in certain instances, the Nizamat Adalat concluded:

The practice, generally speaking, being thus recognized and encouraged by the doctrines of the Hindoo religion, it appears evident that the course which the British government should follow, according to the principle of religious
tolerance...is to allow the practice in those cases in which it is by the same authority prohibited (Mani: 99).

Therefore, the colonial authority imposed their interpretation of some Brahmanical texts on the masses who were not following them earlier. It also provided criminal minded ones an opportunity to kill women in the name of religion as stated by Rammohun that sati originated in the jealousy of certain Hindu princes who, to ensure the faithfulness of their widows, “availed themselves of their arbitrary power, and under the clock of religion, introduced the practice of burning widows alive” (Mani: 105). According to him, the princes then sought to legitimize the practice: “by quoting some passages from authorities of inferior weight...as if they were offering female sacrifices in obedience to the dictates of the Shastras and not from the influence of jealousy” (Mani: 105).

The history of discourse related to widow immolation shows how Orient was orientalized and once assimilated by masses as well as writers leads to responses like the one given by Ghosh when questioned on the fate of Manju. Ghosh instead of considering a case of suicide under socio-cultural pressures maintained and consolidated through the discourse of Orientalism finds fault with Manju whom he finds a woman with “fragility, the sense of loss” (Sankaran: 11). Through this depiction, Ghosh confirms that idea of Orient propounded by Orientalist that Orientals are by temperament irrational and are unable to respond to real life situations.

Another issue that relates the novel with colonial intervention in Orient is the issue related to colonization of Burma. The novel opens with the British colonial forces’ attack on Burma; the root cause behind this attack is the greed of capitalists who want to draw maximum profit out of teak wood business. King Thebaw of Burma while led to India for
life long exile reflects on the nature of colonialism that converts people into perpetual refugees, “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” (Ghosh, 2000: 50)? Undoubtedly, most of the characters in the novel are uprooted by the British colonialism directly or indirectly however Dolly is uprooted by the internal colonization of Burma that uproots “Young girls, orphans, many of them just children. They say that the girls are brought to the palace from the far mountains. The Queen adopts them and brings them up and they serve as her handmaids” (Ghosh, 2000: 7).

The colonial intervention changes the life for Dolly as it changes the life for Rajkumar. This intervention in India and Burma destroys the feudal social structures to some extent and allows people from lower castes move upwards slightly. Anshuman A. Mondal comments on this complex situation when he says, “Within the context of a grand historical defeat, then, The Glass Palace explores the complex dynamics of collaboration, complicity and resistance to colonialism and its aftermath. Its characters’ identities and motivations, their ideas and desires are shown to be shot through with tensions as they negotiate their sense of self and evaluate their place in the colonial scheme of things” (Mondal: 113).

Ghosh in this novel shows that unlike the medieval conquests, the British colonialism is propelled by the search for raw materials and markets to sell their products, it stood for a new form of governance that was destroying and consolidating feudalism and the social hierarchies associated with it as per the business interests. To show how
economic ambitions of the British led to attack on Burma the author portrays Burma as a utopian space before the arrival of the British. It is described as a place where women are educated and free, people are prosperous and everything is fine then the British came and destroyed everything.

The first thing that attracted the British to Burma was teak wood, and then comes rubber. The author shows all the people associated with the British companies are outsiders and some of whom reached there before the British and others were taken there by the British. Here the author presents a critique of British colonialism that exploits in the name of progress. To highlight the working of colonial machinery he creates a microcosm of Empire in the form of Matthew’s rubber estate which is a “little empire, Uma. I made it. I took it from the jungle and molded it into what I wanted it to be. Now that it’s mine, I take good care of it. There’s law, there’s order, everything is well run” (Ghosh, 2000: 233). However, different parts of the machine resist the domestication that is why “when you try to make the whole machine work that you discover that every bit of it is fighting back. It has nothing to do with me or with rights and wrongs: I could make this the best-run little kingdom in the world and it would still fight back” (Ghosh, 2000: 233). Ghosh sees human nature resisting the British colonialism but neglects the resistance of internal colonialism that goes on in the name of culture in all society.

The author prefers sociology to science to explain this fighting back when he says that some trees do not produce rubber because they are fighting back on their behalf, because “Every rubber tree in Malaya was paid for with an Indian life” (Ghosh, 2000: 233). The author converts the untouchable body into national body and puts all blame on the empire. He hides the grim reality of the life of the untouchables in India, their social,
economic and cultural marginalization and exploitation at the hands of upper castes that made the life of the untouchables a hell.

Saya John and Rajkumar, the marginal characters from their respective societies join the capitalist colonial enterprise and grow. Anshuman A. Mondal blames them for their complicity with the Empire and concludes that it is “their ability to absorb the colonial worldview, to subject themselves to its hegemony, that enables them to ascend to the pinnacle of colonial society” (Mondal: 115). However, neither the author nor the critics question the complicity of upper caste and upper class Indians surviving on the Empire directly or indirectly like Uma and Indian Diaspora in Europe and America, Indian religious priests and many more. Ghosh fails to go deep into the Orientalist project and questions only the superficial things like dress of Europeans imitated by Oriental subalterns like Saya John and Rajkumar and the Collector. For instance Saya John puts on European clothes to impress the European masters and the Oriental subalterns, for he is “aware that his success as a businessman depended on his performance of the role of a colonial sahib and the authority and assistance derived from it” (Mondal: 115).

The author makes it clear that the natural climate in the Orient does not allow these clothes “no matter how much care he took, Saya John’s costume never survived long intact: the undergrowth would come alive as they passed by, leeches unfurling like tendrils as they awoke to the warmth of the passing bodies. Being the most heavily clothed in the party, Saya John invariably reaped the richest of these bloody harvests” (Ghosh, 2000: 67). The author here presents Orient as Oriental body and goes beyond Orientalists in portraying the Orientals because nothing such happens with the British living and working at the same place. Similarly, Saya John helps Rajkumar in transforming into an anglophile Indian “a
reinvented being, formidably imposing and of commanding presence” (Ghosh, 2000: 132). Here the author becomes a traditional upper caste Indian nationalist for whom internal colonization is nationalism and European clothes for subaltern are colonial symbols.

Here the author develops affinity with the orthodox Hindu nationalists who often quote a line from Macaulay who proposed that the purpose of European education is to produce “a 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 tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (Macaulay: 130). This particular statement has been used against all Indians who fought against the internal colonization. Ghosh here seems to subscribe to the idea mimicry of colonizer by the colonial subject propounded by Homi K. Bhabha who highlights the “ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to menace - a difference that is almost total but not quite” (emphasis in the original) (Bhabha: 91). Slowly he converts the mimicry by Orientals from just mimicry to menace by highlighting the exploitation perpetrated through them however to be a perfect Oriental in both Brahmanical sense and Orientalist sense is far more problematic.

He neither projects identity as a problem for Madam Cama, Uma and the rest of the Indian Diaspora nor problematizes the entire discourse of Hinduism based on excavation and interpretation of Brahmanical texts by the Orientalist that would be causing the identity crisis for Indians. Most of the traditional critics of British colonialism who did not see the project of Orientalism and the imposition of Indianness on Indians as a colonial project, look at Ghosh’s critique of the British colonialism as something revolutionary and
appreciate him highly. Anshuman A. Mondal tries to locate hybrid nature of Rajkumar, Saya John and the Collector the imitators of the British when he says:

The hybrid identity of the mimic man discloses the lack of an essential difference between the identity of the English and the Indian precisely because it unsettles the location of such identities. Where does ‘Englishness’ reside? In ‘blood and colour’ or in ‘tastes, in morals, and in intellect’? In acquiring English ‘culture’, have these Indian mimics become English? If so, what has happened to their Indianness? And what gives the English their identity if anyone can become English? The colonial ‘mimic men’ occupy a hybrid cultural space that is indefinable in static or essentialised terms because they are neither one thing nor the other but something else besides, an excess that cannot be contained within the terms ‘English’ or ‘Indian’. This illustrates an ambivalence within those very terms that renders them uncertain (Mondal: 116).

Most of the postcolonial critics and writers preoccupied with the issue of identity neglect the vital fact that identity has never been stable, and pure, it has always been hybrid. However, Ghosh in this novel tries to project pure Oriental identity that is foregrounded in his preference for a cotton vest and longyi over European clothes. Further even during dinner at the Collectors residence Rajkumar’s uncertainty over table etiquettes is foregrounded as a psychological resistance to the assimilation into a European identity, “Even now, after two years of dinners and parties, he found it hard to cope with this atmosphere of constrained enactment” (Ghosh, 2000: 141). Rajkumar is not just a migrant to new geographical place he is also a migrant to new cultures and trying to learn new ways
of life that is why his imperfect table manners are not cultural resistance rather they are part of learning process of a person caught in different cultures at the same time.

The author here problematizes identity without ascertaining the source of stable identity that challenges the acquired European identity. Rajkumar was born in Chittagong, migrated to Burma at the age of around ten, and lived there for a long-time and acquired Burmese culture along with remains of Chittagong culture that cannot be called the only Indian culture because there are numerous Indian cultures. His Chittagong identity is at peace with the popular Indian identity or rather Hindu identity, these two identities are at peace with his Burmese identity, but these peacefully residing identities are at war with recently acquired European identity.

The King and the Queen of Burma and their daughters exiled to India also form a case to study the problem of identity. The queen even in exile wants to observe the Burmese identity of royal family she was “so insistent on observing all the old Mandalay rules—the shikoes, the crawling—but she wouldn’t hear of any changes” (Ghosh, 2000: 55). However, the servant girls brought from Burma does not want to confirm to their Burmese culture of devotion to the King and the Queen and revolt under changed circumstances and therefore sent back to Burma. Here it becomes evident that the so-called stable identity may not be stable at all. The Princesses also undergo a slow transition towards hybrid Indian-Burmese identity as shown by the author:

In their early years in India, the Princesses usually dressed in Burmese clothes—aingyis and htameins. But as the years passed their garments changed. One day, no one quite remembered when, they appeared in saris—not expensive or sumptuous saris but the simple green and red cottons of
the district. They began to wear their hair braided and oiled like Ratnagiri school girls; they learnt to speak Marathi and Hindustani as fluently as any of the townsfolk (Ghosh, 2000: 76-77).

However, the author highlights the problem of identity only in chosen cases whenever there is an encounter between Orient and Europe that too only in the official spaces, like Collector’s residence, Army mess etc. Ahmad, challenges this idea of asserting national cultural identity which according to him “is usually an illusion induced by availability of surpluses – of money capital or cultural capital, or both” (Ahmad: 291) because the power to assert identity is not a necessity but a privilege and political act because the cultural borders that Ghosh projects as binding on Oriental characters “have always been, and remain, far from absolute. They are permeable for those who possess the resources (financial or other) required to transcend them” (Morley: 197). In other words cultural identities are not absolute in nature and certain economic and political factors always try to project them as absolute in nature.

Despite so many transitions going on in the identities of so many characters, the author foregrounds uneasiness only in the transformation of Rajkumar and Saya John largely and in the transformation of the Collector to some extent. It shows that Orientals feel easy while confirming to Orientalized notions of the Orient. Furthermore, to highlight the problem of identity for the Oriental subject the author homogenizes the European identity. The lifestyle of upper class British cannot be similar to the life style of lower class British. Ghosh hints at this disparity in the form of a passing reference when Saya John describes the life of young British boy who joins the multinational companies churning out British nationalism in the hope of a bright future but end up tragically:
Think of the kind of life they lead here, these young Europeans. They have had at best two or three years in the jungle before malaria or dengue fever weakens them to the point where they cannot afford to be far from doctors and hospitals. The company knows this very well; it knows that within a few years these men will be prematurely aged, old at twenty-one; and that they will have to be posted off to city offices (Ghosh, 2000: 74).

Here Ghosh points out that colonialism is bad for both colonizers as well as colonized but at the same time he highlights the confidence and maturity this colonialism instills in the British youth when he tells Rajkumar “That man is not much older than you, Rajkumar—maybe eighteen or nineteen—and here he is, sick and alone, thousands of miles from home, surrounded by people the likes of whom he has never known, deep inside a forest. And look at him: there he is, reading his book, with not a trace of fear on his face” (Ghosh, 2000: 74).

Though brief, this statement takes him near to Rabindranath Tagore’s who described colonialism supported by British nationalism which in turn supported by capitalism as, “In the West the national machinery of commerce and politics turns out neatly compressed bales of humanity which have their use and high market value; but they are bound in iron hoops, labelled and separated off with scientific care and precision” (Tagore: 16).

The author leaves this dimension after this brief description and takes up imitation of European manners by Indians as a major cultural problem that also becomes a national problem in the novel. Instead of questioning Brahmanism’s collaboration with colonialism, the author only questions the Collector as an individual when the queen says, “Collector-
sahib, Sawant is less a servant than you. At least he has no delusions about his place in the world” (Ghosh, 2000: 150). Moreover, the author makes him introspect that “the position had brought him nothing but unease and uncertainty… There seemed never to be a moment when he was not haunted by the fear of being thought lacking by his British colleagues” (Ghosh, 2000: 186). This type of introspection is absent in case of upper caste exploitation of lower castes except in case of Arjun that too in traumatic conditions of war.

The problem of Indian cultural identity under the British rule is most foregrounded in case of Arjun who like Arjuna of Mahabharata “pauses in battle to question the purpose of war and the kingdom he is fighting for” (Budhos: 5) however unlike Arjuna of Mahabharata, transforms into a rebel soldier from a loyal colonial subject. He is the best example to illustrate how the process of decolonization can lead to tragedy. Unlike his friend Hardy, Uma and other nationalists, who are just interested in the transfer of power, he is aware of internal colonization and ends tragically. However, Ghosh in this novel only foregrounds the effects of colonial hegemony by concentrating on the British Indian Army where “discovery of invisible barriers and ceilings” disillusion the first generation Indian officers with their immediate superiors, and convinces them that “the British colonial regime was not Western enough, not progressive enough” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 1997: 108).

Ghosh highlights that the contradictions faced by the educated Indians are centered on race and the experience of racism for instance the downfall of the collector is due to racism inherent in the colonial setup that alarms the colonial authorities when they are informed of Princesses’ marriage with a servant. Ghosh tries to show that he is made scapegoat because of his Indianness. Through this incident, Ghosh tries to question the
colonial suspicion of Orient in a leading role. However, this questioning of the British colonial hegemony is incomplete without questioning India’s own racism latent in all scriptures and manifest in the cultural and social practices held in high esteem by the Hindu elite. The society that justifies its own racism in the name of spiritualism and Dharma does not have the right to question racism until unless it rectifies its own wrongs.

As stated earlier Ghosh questions the British colonialism in superficial terms especially by establishing relationship between food and cultural nationalism of orthodox Hinduism, in a nation that eats more variety of food than any other country on this earth. Arjun and Hardy’s selection as officer or rather first-generation Indian officers in British Indian Army opens them to new experience especially in the field of food

They ate foods that none of them had ever touched at home: bacon, ham and sausages at breakfast; roast beef and pork chops for dinner. They drank whisky, beer and wine, smoked cigars, cigarettes and cigarillos. Nor was this just a matter of satisfying appetites; every mouthful had a meaning—each represented an advance towards the evolution of a new, more complete kind of Indian” (Ghosh, 2000: 278-279).

Through this scene, Ghosh tries to project that the British authorities are imposing food culture on the Indian officers. He sees it as a colonial intervention in the Indian culture however all these food items are staple food in one or the other part of India. The real problem is that many of the soldiers who come from peasantry rooted in different parts of India are unaware of the life style and eating habits of Indians living in other parts.

He questions the British idea of nation taught to the officers that reads “The safety, honor and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honor, welfare
and comfort of the men you command come next...” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2000: 330) and then goes on to ask:

this country whose safety, honor and welfare are to come first, always and every time—what is it? Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don’t have a country—so where is this place whose safety, honor and welfare are to come first, always and every time? And why was it that when we took our oath it wasn’t to a country but to the King Emperor—to defend the Empire?” Arjun turned to face him. “Hardy, what are you trying to get at?” “Just this,” said Hardy. “Yaar, if my country really comes first, why am I being sent abroad? There’s no threat to my country right now—and if there were, it would be my duty to stay here and defend it” (Ghosh, 2000: 330).

Hardy says their country is in no danger and they are used as tools to expand the empire however, he never asks himself why he joined the British Indian Army, what is the location of his own caste in social hierarchy of India, how his own caste treats marginal sections and why “only certain castes of men are recruited” (Ghosh, 2000: 223). If Hardy and Arjun who are paid with the money collected, by exploiting, the marginal sections do not have a nation then where the nation is for untouchables, social outcastes, people killed for eating certain kind of foods, women, tribal and many other sections marginalized by Brahmanism in the name of Indian national culture. Therefore, the idea of nation foregrounded through the statement of Hardy is the idea of a hollow nation that does not ensure equality and justice to its own subalterns.
The writer makes Arjun realize that his identity of modern Indian is a mirage, makes him feel alienated from himself, and suffers from a psychological breakdown as discussed by Ziauddin Sardar in his “Foreword” to the 2008 Edition of *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Dignity is not located in seeking equality with the white man and his civilization: it is not about assuming the attitudes of the master who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table. It is about being oneself with all the multiplicities, systems and contradictions of one’s own ways of being, doing and knowing. It is about being true to one’s Self (emphasis in the original) (Sardar: vii).

At this juncture Arjun realizes “I wasn’t really a human being—just a tool, an instrument. This is what I ask myself, Arjun: In what way do I become human again” (Ghosh, 2000: 407)? The only thing that makes Arjun different from other nationalists is that he sees himself as both a victim of colonialism as well as a source of exploitation. On the other hand for Hardy struggle for freedom ends with his own success in becoming a “national figure (he was later to become an ambassador and a high-ranking official of the Indian Government)” (Ghosh, 2000: 480). Here Ghosh gives a glimpse into hollowness of nationalism however, he does not denounce the abstract nationalism that opposes the British colonialism but supports the internal colonization.

When it comes to posing a resistance to colonialism, the author acknowledges weakness inherent in the armed revolt against British colonialism and traces the failure of Burmese nationalism to the assassination of Aung San. As he observes “Aung San may indeed have been the only Burmese leader who could have averted the civil war. A few months before his death he had negotiated a landmark treaty with several minority groups
The treaty ... lay the groundwork for what could have been a viable federal union” (Ghosh, 1998: 73).

He also hints at the Oriental nationalism as a byproduct of European nationalism with almost the same features and exclusionary nature. The Burmese nationalism accepts the nation and nationalism as handed over by the British and does not address the problems aggravated by the British colonialism and left unattended for long. He problematizes the idea of national unity without addressing the internal inconsistencies when he says “Burma’s borders are undeniably arbitrary, the product of a capricious colonial history’, but ‘on balance, Burma’s best hopes for peace lie in maintaining intact the larger more inclusive entity’ that its current borders represent. Within that framework there needs to be a process of ‘national reconciliation’ between the various ethnic groups” (Ghosh, 1998: 100-101).

Ghosh’s portrayal of Burma’s failure to emerge as a nation also has its own problems because he does not take into account the neo-colonial intervention in the newly independent nations and in a very subtle manner confirms the Orientalist construction of Orient as stated by Balfour, a renowned Orientalist, “Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government…having merits of their own….You may look through the whole history of the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self government (Said: 32-33). On the other hand, he represents Europe and America, as enlightened spaces where ethnic differences do not matter even the Orientals living in these spaces do not fight with other ethnic groups or the representatives of colonialism.
Ghosh deconstructs the idea of nation only as a rooted concept by creating characters who are migrants, refugees, displaced and born of parents from different races and nationalities. By tracking the movement of these characters, he tries to achieve a historical perspective that entire life is in flux as upheld by Paul Carter who says the “question would be, then, not how to arrive, but how to move, how to identify convergent and divergent movements; and the challenge would be how to notate such events, how to give them a social and historical value (Carter: 101). It deconstructs the notion of fixed and discrete cultures, identities and landscapes only in the Orient as is evident from the life of various characters in the novel. Despite his critique of nationalism, he believes only in the first two lines of a poem by Kipling:

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat; (Kipling: 136).

Like the Orientalists, he cannot find the Orient that can be an equal to the West the ideal condition proposed by Kipling in the next line of the same poem:

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth! (Kipling: 136).

He divides the world into East and West by introducing Indian Ocean as a unifying force for the entire Orient as stated by K. N. Chaudhuri “the Indian ocean can be said to be constituted by four great civilizational fields: the Iranian-Arabic, the Hindu, the Indonesian, and the Chinese” (emphasis in the original) (Chaudhuri: 21). Therefore, he challenges the national identities by bringing in the concept of perpetual movement in the
life of people living here but keeps the Oriental identity as created by the Orientalists intact. Undoubtedly, the colonial intervention has brought largescale changes in the Orient but it is odd to say that Orient could not have undergone those changes on its own as it happened in Europe. Moreover, various cultures, civilizations, economies and political systems are meant to interact with each other and the societies that shut themselves from all outside influences are sure to decline. The major reason behind colonial expansion in the Orient was the internal colonization that is not strongly questioned by Amitav Ghosh.


