

Disposition of Rajkumar in Amitav Ghosh's The Glass Palace-An Optimistic fiction

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh has introduced a character of Rajkumar, an orphan who is transported to Burma from India by accident. In Burma he joined as a labour in tea shop. He started his life with impoverishment. Slowly he improved his capabilities through exploring spirit, Keen perception, and Optimistic attitude and acquires capabilities to take calculated risks. Further, he got friendship business. Slowly, Rajkumar also learnt some techniques in the teak business and started the same, with the help of his Christian friend Saya Jhon. After involved his business he became a successful business man. In this way, Rajkumar characteristics are sculptured in a optimistic way by the author. The present study is narrating Rajkumar's temperament and his remarkable achievements in his life.

The Glass Palace is a fiction was written by Indian writer Amitav Ghosh and it is about dynastic families in mid 18th and early 19th century Burma and India. Rajkumar Raha is the story's main character and protagonist. He is an orphan who later achieves fortune in the teakwood trade, he is first seen in the story as an impoverished youth at the age of eleven . It is the story of Rajkumar who is transported to Burma by accident. As a child, RajKumar is remarkable for his exploring spirit, keen perception, optimistic attitude and his ability to take calculated risks. In this context, the present study is going to concentrate how the disposition of Rajkumar is narrated in an optimistic manner by the author.

The fiction starts with eleven years old boy called Rajkumar running through the city of Mandalay to find a woman called Ma Cho. He is the last existing member of his family and comes to Burma from India with a brilliant entrepreneurial spirit and a hunger for success. Rajkumar works as an assistant on Ma Cho's food stall which takes place in the shadow of the Glass Palace, in which King Thibaw and his wife reside with their daughters, the princesses. As the British invasion comes to tumble the incumbent regime,

everyday citizens of Mandalay are able to enter the preserved building, and it is then that Rajkumar spots Dolly, one of the princesses' attendants, and instantaneously falls in love with her. However, the complete Royal Family and their encourage are hurriedly extradited by the British and forced into house arrest thousands of miles away on the West coast of India.

RajKumar works in a tea stall of a matronly lady Ma Cho. He loves exaggerating his age just to experience like an adult. A well-travelled orphan, RajKumar is worldly-wise. Right at the beginning of the narrative, the author drops enough hints for the legitimacy of his choice of a protagonist. Even though, he is a child, an orphan, yet this boy is created as bold, and extraordinary. Once Raj Kumar lands in Mandalay, his life-long search for places and people begins. He is taken in by the city. 'Long straight roads radiated outwards from the walls, outlining a neat geometrical grid. So intriguing was the ordered pattern of these streets that Raj Kumar wandered, far a field, exploring. And we must remember that this explorer-boy is a complete destitute in an alien city with absolutely no acquaintances. Lastly he goes to Ma Cho for occupation and he obtains a thorough reproach and admonishment at the very outset. But his keen perception helps him to know that this outburst was not aimed directly at him: that it had more to do with the dust, the splattering oil and the price of vegetables than with his own occurrence or with anything he had said.

Luckily, in Burma, Rajkumar happens to meet Saya John, a Chinese contractor from Malaya, an orphan like him, who, having been brought up by Catholic priests in Malacca, had worked as an doubt in a military hospital in Singapore. As a subaltern beneficiary of the Burmese capture, Saya John is a previously prototype of Rajkumar. As a teak service provider for English Company he produces a huge profit that enables him to fulfill his neo-colonialist ambitions of constructing a large house and of enjoying a European life-style. Rajkumar is provided a job by Saya John in his teak transportation business because of the former's exceptional curiosity, worldliness and hunger for money and material: There was something unusual about the boy a kind of attentive determination. Rajkumar respects him as a guide in all matters and

regards him as his mentor who teaches him how to bend the work of nature to your will; to create the trees of the ground valuable to human beings. It is his love and respect for Saya John that prompts him to secure a European Company official who rebukes Saya John.

Even as Rajkumar's swiftly evolving career begins to take shape with the help of Saya John, a victorious teak merchant (Ma Cho's sometime lover), we are given a glimpse into the embarrassed beginnings of a new life for King Thebaw and his family as they strive to settle into the port town of Ratnagiri, north of Goa. Incidents combine to weave Outram House (the name of the residence the British provide to house the family and what remains of their assistants) more determinedly into the life of Ratnagiri than had been imagined. King Thebaw is admired by the local community, and in time the family comes to feel protected and even happy in their fresh surroundings. The appearance of a new Collector stirs up feelings of antipathy towards the colonial regime, but Uma, the Collector's headstrong wife, is able to help bridge the gap by befriending Dolly.

Meanwhile, Rajkumar has been enduring the hardships of the teak trade, having witnessed man and beast working together on an epic range as elephants transport large amounts of wood down from the forests for sale into the British Empire's immeasurably expanding markets. Being the opportunist that he is, Rajkumar starts to make his own way in world after getting guidance from his new friend and colleague Doh Say. Borrowing cash from Saya John, he makes the journey to India to recruit poverty-stricken village-dwellers into the comparatively beneficial (yet undoubtedly perilous) world of early oil-mining in Burma. Having made adequate money this way, Rajkumar does what has been his hallucination for some time: buy a timber-yard of his own, with Doh Say as a big business partner.

Having built a more than unassuming commercial empire, Rajkumar had one piece of unfinished business: to pathway down the only girl he would ever loved, Dolly. Through an Indian association in Rangoon (Yangon), Rajkumar makes contact with Ratnagiri via Uma, and is consequently granted a spectators with the Collector and his wife over a food that of course awkwardly conforms to colonial best perform. To his surprise, Dolly is present, and after some drama, he finally persuades her to leave the family she has been separated with, and return with him to Burma as his wife.

Being a practical businessman, Raj Kumar brings with him a letter for the Collector of Ratangiri from a relative of the Collector's wife Uma Dey. Usually no one from Burma is allowed to meet the overthrown king or staff lest such a meeting may not create problems of revolt at Burma. Uma, who is a good friend of Dolly assembles the meeting between Dolly and Raj Kumar. But before going to that, the letter of endorsement that Raj Kumar brought with him speaks volumes about his character and reputation. He had had several other achievements and had risen to distinction within the business community. And all this at the age of thirty, before he had even had time to marry Raj Kumar babu is not the kind of person to whose humanity you are accustomed. 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. Raj Kumar is an individual as well as a delegate, a symbol of a whole migrated community. His fate and rise have been linked to that of his community and what we get in a wonderful individual picturization as well as functioning of an entire group of people in an alien land.

RajKumar's gathering with Dolly is catastrophic. There is no clue, no meeting point, and no headway. It is all blocked, and clogged. Dolly has her own troubles. She has to clear her psychological picture. But this the researcher shall discuss later while talking about Dolly. For no fault of his, RajKumar receives a cold and aggressive response from Dolly. His dreams are all but broken. As a matter of fate would have it, they are married at Ratangiri. Uma is their benefactor, protector, everything. They would not have been married but for the Collector's companion Uma Dey. RajKumar's life begins as a family man. He gets two sons Neel and Dinu. He celebrates to compensate for all the missed celebrations of his own life. But his life cannot be called perfect as he cascade victim to the turbulent times in his old age and his world is torn apart. Dinu moves away from him, Neel dies and Dolly goes to a monastery. Although the end can be blamed at fate, one fatal flaw is very much of RajKumar's own. One time, Dinu as a child develops minor polio in one leg. Dolly consumes herself day and night in Dinu's care. She becomes more and more recluse. She engraves herself off from the world, including her elder son, Neel and husband. Dinu and his well being remain the central point of her survival for months or even a year or so. It is as though the mother and the son have reentered the prenatal period of oneness. The child is securely in mother's defensive attendance,

her womb and all his needs are accomplished without asking. During this period RajKumar goes into physical relationship with one of the workers forcibly and Ilongo, his illegitimate son is the effect of this extramarital mating. We can only attribute this act on RajKumar's part to his gratis will and the kind of a man that he actually is. Saya Jhon, his adviser, was the same and so is he. Our civilized and often hypocritical rules of morality will not work here simply because this novel, like other good novels, is a true depiction of life. Howsoever absurd such an act may look to the cold, distant gaze, it is perhaps the most natural thing to happen in the mess of life. Devoid of the power of reasoning as to why Dolly has withdrawn, RajKumar succumbs to his physical needs. He remains, despite his achievements, an uneducated orphan.

As far as love stories are concerned, this fiction has many love stories in it. The First one is Dolly and Rajkumar, an astonishing love story, Rajkumar saw Dolly when she was nine years old and longed for her for another 20 years. After becoming a triumphant businessman he came back to India, only to wed Dolly. Another love story is of first princess and of coachman Sawant, even though it is not wrapped in that much detail. Another story is that of Uma and collector, that is more of an arrangement, how collector wants to wed Uma since she is young and can learn contemporary ways of living as a collector's wife. Uma's consent was never taken while taking assessment about her life. The apologize for that came Alison's way, her discovery of true love, only after making love with Arjun, Alison noticed that how much she loved Dinu. Well! Alison and Arjun both died but thank God Alison got likelihood to admit this thing to Dinu. Otherwise, it would have been a difficult life for him.

The fiction, arrangement as a saga of subaltern families, is relatively a thick book which is divided into seven parts: *Mandalay*, *Ratnagiri*, *The Money Tree*, *The Wedding*, *Morning Side*, *The Front* and *The Glass Palace* The earlier part of the fiction is dominated by Rajkumar, Dolly and Saya John, and the latter part by Dinu, Alison, Arjun, Bela and Jaya. The fiction comes full circle with Rajkumar and Dolly living in the end in their countries of birth from where their narrative journeys begin: Rajkumar makes a journey

from India to Burma where as a businessman he makes traverses into India and Malaya and towards the end returns to India as the Second World War refugee. Dolly creates a journey from Burma to India as an exile, and then she returns to Burma to lead a married life. But she is again forced to move along with her husband to India as an impoverished, which is finally followed by her return to Burma

It is during the problematic period in Burma that Rajkumar's upward journey begins. After the fall of the Burmese empire he begins developing the local people and resources and becomes a victorious timber merchant and consequently a rubber business. It is in the year 1885 when the stolen goods were going on in the castle of Mandalay; Rajkumar observes the face of a ten year old girl Dolly who go always an ineradicable intuition in his mind. Later when Rajkumar becomes a foremost business tycoon of Burma, he travels to distant Ratnagiri to claim her hand for marriage. Therefore, the orphan in the beginning of the fiction turns himself into a living myth of material success and affluence by taking advantages of the troubled time of war, colonial antagonism and majestic invasion. Rajkumar implements a utilitarian approach to life and turns every opportunity to his favour.

Rajkumar has always been independent in his way as he be a stray he dissatisfies Dolly in several aspects like having an untruthful child names Ilongo, developing misunderstanding with Uma. He has an unlawful affair with a women working in his land when Dolly was busy in taking care of their second son Dinu. All these characters rotate around the life of Rajkumar who knowingly or unknowingly generates a bond among the families of his, Uma's and Saya John's. Hence, a family creates that bonds, Bond fetches them together looking at themselves as individuals rather than representing their nations. The characters in the novel are not representatives of a particular nation, but as individuals. Their identities are seen not with their nationalistic but as individuals who are in search of their own identities, locating themselves in a liberty where they feel contented by displacing themselves away from the nationalistic myths.

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