

ABSTRACT

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Title of Thesis: **Subject to Rule: The Individual and the State in Amitav Ghosh's Writings**

Findings:

The present thesis focuses on subject-state relationship in the writings of Amitav Ghosh. In ancient times rulers like Ashoka and Hammurabi laid emphasis on the need of a benevolent state where the king would ensure justice for every individual. However, as time passed, the rulers became power hungry, and stopped caring for the rights of the individual. This degradation has been highlighted by Amitav Ghosh, in his fiction and non-fiction.

The thesis highlights the tools with which the state controls the individual. The colonial state uses both legal and military means to destroy the individual. The system of education introduced by the colonizers was intended to show that they have brought literacy, culture and civilization. After independence, the dictators or even democratically elected parties use the bureaucracy and the media to glorify themselves and suppress any voice of dissent. At the same time, they are ready with the army and the police to control any protest launched by the civilians--even if there is peaceful dissent it is dealt with ruthlessly. The state controls all the natural resources and exploits them for the benefit of a handful of people. The idea behind any colonial expansion is the simple greed for natural resources. The colonizers came to India and Africa for its natural resources like teak, indigo, rubber and various other things. Novels like *In an Antique Land*, *The Circle of Reason*, *The Glass Palace*, *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke*, *The Hungry Tide* and some essays of the *Imam and the Indian* provide examples. Even in independent countries, military dictators continue to rule in this fashion. The Government in democratically ruled state too expect the subjects to be governed by rules according to the whims and fancies of the rulers.

The first chapter is of **introductory** nature which analyses the complex nature of relationships between the state and the individual. The second chapter **Psychological Domination** examines how the state authorities use education to create consenting subjects out of the individuals. The third chapter entitled **Military and Economic Domination** focused on how the colonial powers used their superior military might to conquer the economically developed but militarily weak nations of Asia and Africa. They quell any signs of dissent through brute force. The fourth chapter entitled **Subject-State Relationship in History** projects the idea of subaltern history where history is seen as a discourse of power. As a scholar of history, Ghosh presents the historical incidents from the perspective of the common man. The **Conclusion** provides a summing up of the thesis. It also considers Ghosh's prose pieces which focus on resistance to violence perpetrated by the state at all levels.

Amitav Ghosh is the author of seven novels and four books of non-fiction prose. Almost all his books have won literary awards. The relationship between the State and the individual is an important concern in all his works. His presentation is always unbiased, and based on factual events.
