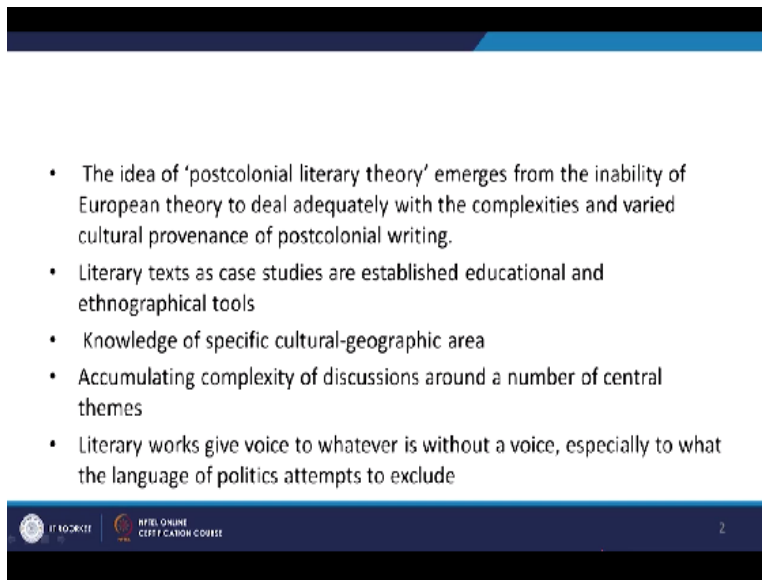


Literature, Culture and Media
Prof. Rashmi Gaur
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Lecture – 25
Postcolonial Reading of Achebe and Amitav Ghosh

Dear participants. Welcome to the fifth module of fifth week. We have seen the development of the postcolonial theory, gone through the major arguments and have also tried to review very briefly the 3 main theorists. In the current module, we would discuss 2 literary texts in order to find out to what extent the postcolonial representation has been achieved in these 2 texts.

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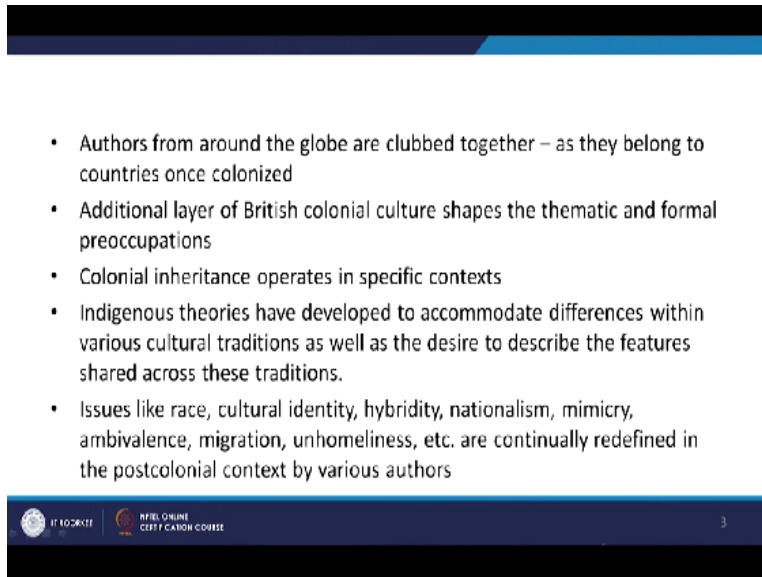
- The idea of 'postcolonial literary theory' emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of postcolonial writing.
- Literary texts as case studies are established educational and ethnographical tools
- Knowledge of specific cultural-geographic area
- Accumulating complexity of discussions around a number of central themes
- Literary works give voice to whatever is without a voice, especially to what the language of politics attempts to exclude

The idea of postcolonial theory as we have seen has emerged from the inability of the European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of postcolonial writing. To take up literary texts as case studies is also an established educational and ethnographical tool because they provide us knowledge of this specific culture, the specific geography, the specific traditions of that particular zone.

And at the same time, we would find that they also present the accumulating complexity of discussions around a number of central themes. Under the postcolonial theory, as we have discussed earlier also, authors from around the globe are clubbed together not only on the basis of their languages perhaps not only because they are writing in a particular language which they

had shared with their colonial masters.

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- Authors from around the globe are clubbed together – as they belong to countries once colonized
- Additional layer of British colonial culture shapes the thematic and formal preoccupations
- Colonial inheritance operates in specific contexts
- Indigenous theories have developed to accommodate differences within various cultural traditions as well as the desire to describe the features shared across these traditions.
- Issues like race, cultural identity, hybridity, nationalism, mimicry, ambivalence, migration, unhomeliness, etc. are continually redefined in the postcolonial context by various authors

But because of the fact that they belong to countries which had been once colonized. All these people and writers have over their scaffolding of literary competence possess an additional layer of colonial culture which has shaped the thematic and formal preoccupations of these writers. I have put the word here the British colonial culture as the texts, which I am going to discuss in this module, are produced by those 2 authors who belong to erstwhile British colonies. We may see that in these texts, the colonial inheritance operates in very specific context.

Indigenous theories have been developed to accommodate differences within various cultural traditions as well as the desire the describe the features shared across these traditions and issues like race, cultural identity, nationalism, mimicry, unhomeliness, migration, etc. are being continually defined and redefined in the postcolonial context by various authors. Today, I am going to discuss the 2 trilogies which have been produced in the postcolonial context and have left a major impact on literary critical theories.

The first one is an African trilogy by Chinua Achebe. The other is an Indian trilogy written by Amitav Ghosh.

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- Two Trilogies:
 - African: Chinua Achebe
 - Indian: Amitav Ghosh
- To retrieve the history of the colonized by telling their story
- Retrieving the history to regain their identity; making the autobiographical novel a popular sub genre among the African writers
- These trilogies do not idealize, exoticize, undermine the values of specific cultures – African or Indian
- Quietly offer a particular world to their readers, confident that the readers will understand its values, even if they do not sympathize with them

Achebe as well as Ghosh have tried to retrieve the history of the colonized people by telling a particular story. In order to retrieve the history, they have gone back to the roots of different situations to find out what were the reasons which compelled the people to surrender to the colonial masters and by retrieving the history, they also want to regain their identity. They make the autobiographical novel a popular genre among the African writers because Chinua Achebe had particularly narrated the history of his own family in a way.

These 2 trilogies by Achebe as well as by Ghosh quietly offer a particular world to the reader without any interruption. They are confident the readers will understand the values, of their text even if they do not sympathize with the world picture which has been presented by them. And therefore, these trilogies right from the beginning neither idealize or exoticize, or undermine the values of specific cultures, be it African or American.

They just try to truthfully present a particular section of reality, a slice of reality before the audience in the hope that they would be able to understand the values and the histories which these writers are attempting to produce. These 2 trilogies have been written in English and therefore, these 2 writers have also had to face certain criticism. Because when they started to write in English, it was considered that this was the language of the colonial masters and therefore, the intentions and the veracity was also questioned.

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- Language is English
- Targeting the Western audience
- Use of African/Indian words (*harmattan, agbala, anghocha*) – local audience or universal acceptance of language?
- Detailed discussions of local practices and ways

It was also said that they are trying to target the western audience only by writing in the medium of English language and also by choosing a narrative structure which is a product of the West. However, we find that both Achebe and Ghosh have used African words and Indian words in order to represent truthfully the understanding of the local truths and maybe we can understand this attempt to incorporate the local audience also.

Sometimes, it is said that by incorporating the words of the other languages in English. For example, Achebe has used the African words and Ghosh has used the Indian or let us say the Bengali words. So in a way, we find that these 2 writers are also struggling for the universal acceptance of their own language so that the speakers of these languages do not have a sense of shame in the use of these languages in the international scenario.

And also in order to suggest before the international audience that their languages also have the power and the capacity and the nuisances to present their arguments before an international audience. They have also presented a very detailed discussion of local practices and ways.

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Chinua Achebe

- The African Trilogy—*Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer At Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964).
- Often criticized for the use of English—The colonizer's language.
- The first part of the trilogy introduces the basic thematic concern of the trilogy: The conflict between pre-colonial African tradition and post-colonial western modernity and influences.
- Umuofia – a group of nine related villages just before the arrival of the whites
- All three novels trace the changes brought about by the European imperialism and colonialism in Nigeria.
- Focuses on the Igbo society—their native oral traditions, folk tales, proverbs, gods and goddesses.

Chinua Achebe's African Trilogy *Things Fall Apart* published in 1958, *No Longer At Ease* following after 2 years and *Arrow of God* published in 1964 have often also been criticized on the basis of these arguments which we have already seen. The use of the language and the use of the structure of the novel. The first part of the trilogy, *Things Fall Apart*, has introduced a basic thematic concerns of the trilogy. Achebe has described the conflict between precolonial African tradition and postcolonial western modernity and influences.

Based on the story of Umuofia, a group of 9 related villages just before the arrival of the whites, Achebe has tried to weave a story in which these 3 novels come together to trace the changes which have been brought about by the European imperialism and colonialism in the Nigerian society. Achebe has focussed on the presentation of the Igbo society, their native oral traditions, folk tales, proverbs, their gods and goddesses and their issues.

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- The novels combine the rhythms of Igbo speech and oral tradition with the conventions of the European novel to create complex post-colonial texts
- The trilogy meditates on the fabric of African society and culture
- Responds to the influx of European modernity, value-systems and so on.
- All three novels trace these changes through the life and experiences of a central (male) tragic hero who is caught up in events which are often beyond their control
 - Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*
 - Obi, Okonkwo's grandson in colonial Nigeria in *No Longer at Ease*
 - Ezeulu, a priest of the Ulu village in *Arrow of God*

The novel combines the rhythms of the Igbo speech and oral tradition with the conventions of the European novel to create a complex postcolonial text. The trilogy mediates on the fabric of African society and culture and also it responds to the influx of European modernity, value-systems, etc. These 3 novels trace the changes through the life and experiences of a central hero. The hero happens to be a male figure who also happens to be a tragic figure, a person who is caught up in the events which are often beyond their own control.

And therefore, we have Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*; Obi, the grandson of Okonkwo in colonial Nigeria in the second part of the trilogy *No Longer at Ease* and Ezeulu, a priest of the Ulu village in *Arrow of God*.

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Things Fall Apart

- Title is taken from WB Yeats' poem "The Second Coming"
- Critically acclaimed and Achebe's most widely read novel
 - An archetypal form of modern African novel in English
 - Written in the tradition of the European Novel
 - Well received in European market, but elicited a mixed response in Nigeria initially.
 - Went on to become the most important text in African Literature
- Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka: "the first novel in English which spoke from the interior of the African character, rather than portraying the African as an exotic, as the white man would see him."

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Things Fall Apart is the most critically acclaimed and the most widely read novel by Achebe. And as all of us know very well, the title of the novel has been taken up from a very famous poem of W.B. Yeats, The Second Coming. Things Fall Apart, the center cannot hold. It is an archetypal form of modern African novel in English which has also influenced the traditions of African novel. Where as in turn, it is also adopted the tradition of the European novel. It was very well received in the European market.

But it also elicited responses in Nigeria which were initially skeptic or mixed but gradually it went on to become a very important text in African literature and also in the postcolonial literature the world over. In fact, if we look at the review of Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, we find that Soyinka has termed this novel as the first in English which spoke from the interior of the African character, rather than portraying the African as an exotic, as the white man would see him.

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- Divided in three parts
- Centers around the life and experiences of Okwonko, the tragic hero, ultimately paves the way for his own destruction as a result of his hubris and,
- Inability to adapt to the changes brought about in the traditional Igbo community with the arrival of the white missionaries who propagate the Christian faith and subsequently the arrival of the colonisers.
- The novel presents a vivid and complex picture of the South-East part of Nigeria, notably the Igbo society.
- The novel is set in the village of Umuofia—the main action unfolds here.

Divided into 3 parts, we find that the novel is centered around the life and experiences of Okonkwo, the tragic hero who ultimately paves the way for his own destruction as a result of his hubris and his inability to adopt the changes which have been brought about by the colonial expansion in the traditional Igbo society. The novel has presented a vivid and complex picture of the South East part of Nigeria, the society is the Igbo society which he has described.

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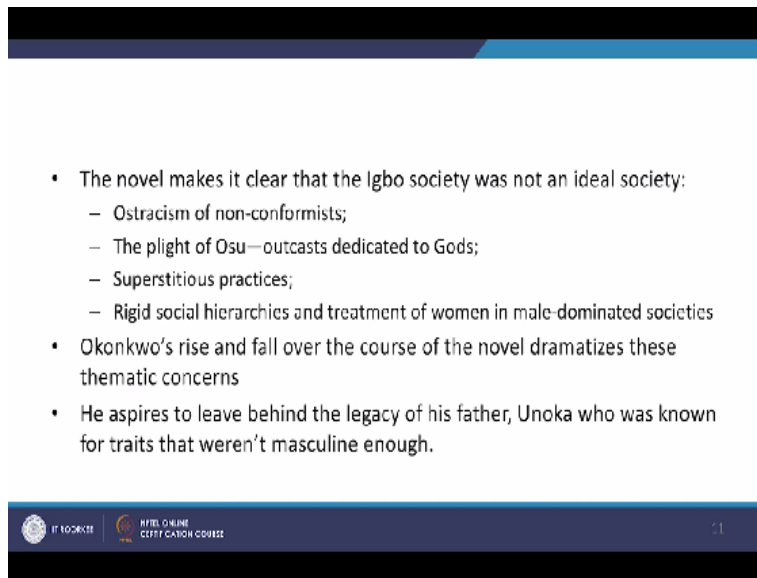
- Complexity of Igbo society, culture, their traditions, language, religious beliefs and so on.
- Steers clear of a romantic impulse to present an idyllic picture of pre-colonial Nigerian society
- Counters the colonial history that erased the complexity of pre-colonial African culture, history and language
 - A realistic account of times which are irretrievably lost
 - Creates an alternative narrative history of Pre-colonial African community
 - Avoids nativism

However, we find that Achebe has fought against every impulse to present a romantic picture or an idyllic picture of the precolonial Nigerian society. He has given a very matter of fact detail of the precolonial life of the villagers with its own complexities, with its own biases and preferences over different issues and therefore, the attempts to read this novel from any other

perspective except the postcolonial one has ultimately resulted into a fierce criticism of this novel as we would see later on.

The novel also makes it clear that the Igbo society is not an ideal society. It has its own issues and complexes.

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- The novel makes it clear that the Igbo society was not an ideal society:
 - Ostracism of non-conformists;
 - The plight of Osu—outcasts dedicated to Gods;
 - Superstitious practices;
 - Rigid social hierarchies and treatment of women in male-dominated societies
- Okonkwo's rise and fall over the course of the novel dramatizes these thematic concerns
- He aspires to leave behind the legacy of his father, Unoka who was known for traits that weren't masculine enough.

It has ostracization of the nonconformists, the plights of those people who have been dedicated to Gods and therefore, they are the outcastes. They have their own superstitions, their own rigid social hierarchies, they also have very ugly treatment as far as the women are concerned. We find that Okonkwo's rise and fall over the course of the novel dramatizes these thematic concerns and puts them into a particular perspective.

Okonkwo has always tried to overcome the legacy or the past which has been left for his fate by his father, Unoka, who was normally known for those traits which were not masculine enough for any traditional Igbo society.

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- Unoka: Has been dead for 10 years at the beginning of the novel
 - Okonkwo is driven by a desire to reject everything that resembled his father who had a low status in the society, and amassed debts.
 - Unoka was a musician who preferred revelry over display of masculine strength, believed in living life to its fullest.
- On the other hand, Okonkwo gains reputation as a wrestler by defeating the most legendary wrestler.
 - Success based on personal achievements, efforts and hard work, prides himself on agility, physical strength and aggression
 - Okonkwo's hegemonic and toxic masculinity (his reactionary attitude finally brings ruin)

Unoka had been dead for 10 years when the novel begins and Okonkwo throughout his novel as depicted by Achebe has been driven by a desire to reject everything that resembled his father who had a low status in the Igbo society and it amassed debts. So Unoka was a musician who preferred revelry over display of masculine strength, who believed in living life to its fullest. But for Okonkwo, we find that these were the feminine traits and he preferred to gain reputation as a wrestler by defeating other legendary wrestlers.

Success for Okonkwo is based on personal achievements, efforts and hard work, and that is why we find that his hegemonic and toxic masculinity does not allow him to look at his own son in a friendly manner.

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- Okonkwo's downfall can be traced to the fear of losing his identity based on a hegemonic notion of masculinity.
 - Display of emotions, feelings associated with effeminacy; the fear of being taken for an *agbala* (a term for a man without a title, and one who is thus seen as womanish)
 - On the constant lookout for effeminacy in himself, but also in others
 - Makes life difficult for Nwoye, his eldest son

Okonkwo's downfall can be traced to the fear of losing his identity based on a hegemonic notion of masculinity. And as we have seen earlier, he does not like his own eldest son, Nwoye, who appears to him to exhibit signs of weakness and he therefore makes life deliberately difficult for him in the belief that these difficulties and tests would make him strong.

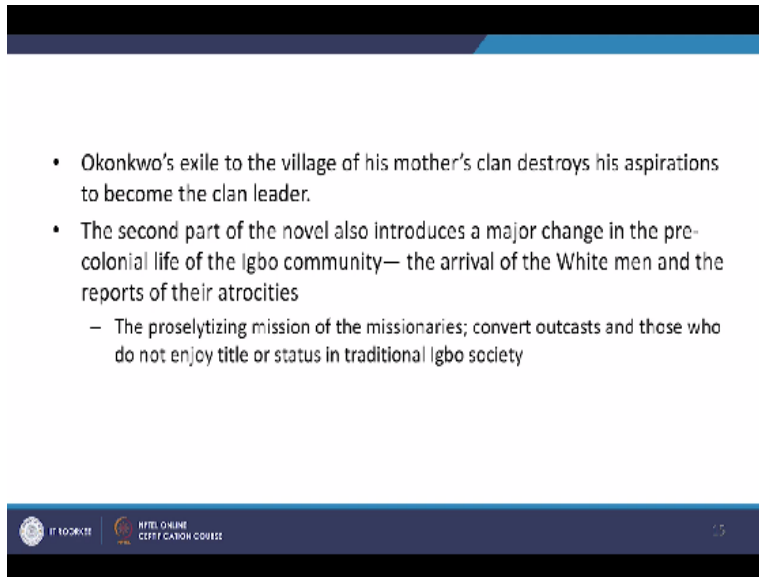
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- Downfall begins with Okonkwo's participation in the killing of Ikemefuna (despite being warned against it)
 - A hostage child who regards Okonkwo as a father figure
- Okonkwo's separation is further compounded when he accidentally kills the son of the man who had warned him not to participate in Ikemefuna's death.
 - Exiled for 7 years as punishment for the killing of a boy – a crime against the earth goddess

Downfall begins with Okonkwo's participation in the killing of Ikemefuna even though people had warned him against it. Ikemefuna was a hostage child from another village who had been in the custody of Okonkwo and who had always regarded him as the surrogate father. His separation is further compounded when he accidentally kills the son of the man who had warned him not to participate in killing of Ikemefuna. He is exiled from his village for 7 years as a

punishment for the killing of a boy which is seen as a crime against the earth goddess.

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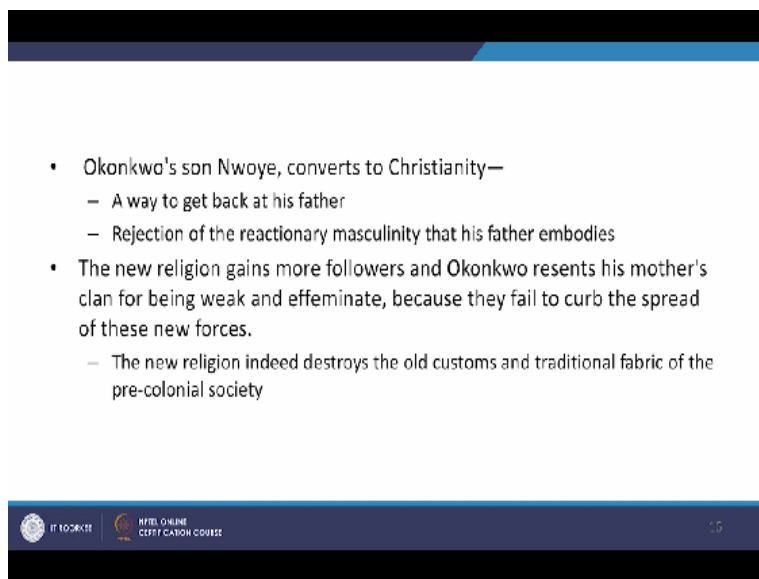
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- Okonkwo's exile to the village of his mother's clan destroys his aspirations to become the clan leader.
- The second part of the novel also introduces a major change in the pre-colonial life of the Igbo community— the arrival of the White men and the reports of their atrocities
 - The proselytizing mission of the missionaries; convert outcasts and those who do not enjoy title or status in traditional Igbo society

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So we find that Okonkwo's exile to his village also introduces us to another major change in the Nigerian society which was happening simultaneously and that was the arrival of the White man and the reports of their atrocities. The proselytizing mission of the missionaries who were ultimately able to cover the outcasts and those who did not enjoy title of status in traditional Igbo society started clashes with the patriarchal society of the Igbo people and Okonkwo led the distress of the traditional Nigerian societies towards the colonial powers.

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- Okonkwo's son Nwoye, converts to Christianity—
 - A way to get back at his father
 - Rejection of the reactionary masculinity that his father embodies
- The new religion gains more followers and Okonkwo resents his mother's clan for being weak and effeminate, because they fail to curb the spread of these new forces.
 - The new religion indeed destroys the old customs and traditional fabric of the pre-colonial society

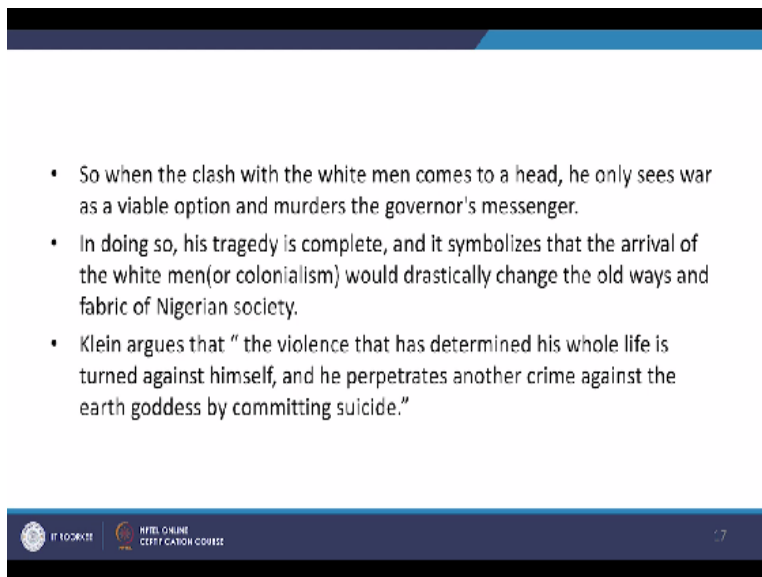
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Okonkwo's own son, Nwoye, whom he had always disliked convert to Christianity because to

him it offers a way to get back at his father and respond to his own needs to reject the reactionary masculinity which in his mind has been embodied by his father. So the new religion gains more follower and Okonkwo resents his mother's clan for being weak and effeminate, because they fail to curb the spread of these new forces.

The new religion indeed destroys the old customs and thereby the traditional fabric of the precolonial society. And in the novel, we find that Achebe has described how the spread of the religion coincided with the spread of the colonial empire and also gradually we would find as we would see in Ghosh's trilogy, the spread of the religion coincides with the spread of the colonial empire and these 2 also coincides with the spread of the capitalist economic forces.

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- So when the clash with the white men comes to a head, he only sees war as a viable option and murders the governor's messenger.
- In doing so, his tragedy is complete, and it symbolizes that the arrival of the white men(or colonialism) would drastically change the old ways and fabric of Nigerian society.
- Klein argues that " the violence that has determined his whole life is turned against himself, and he perpetrates another crime against the earth goddess by committing suicide."

So when the clash with the white men comes to a head, we find that Okonkwo sees that war is only a viable option and therefore, he murders the governor's messenger. However, in doing so, we find that his tragedy is completed as he symbolizes that the arrival of the white men would drastically change the old ways and fabric of Nigerian society.

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- Thus, Achebe, presents the story of the transition from pre-colonial Nigeria to Colonial Nigeria from the lens of the life and death of a tragic figure like Okonkwo who represents the old belief systems which cannot survive under colonialism.
- Comparisons with Neelrattan Haldar in the Ibis trilogy

So we find that Achebe presents the story of the transition from precolonial Nigeria to colonial Nigeria from the lens of the life and death of a tragic figure like Okonkwo who represents the old belief systems which cannot survive under colonial empire. Comparisons with Neelrattan Haldar, a major character in the Ibis trilogy by Amitav Ghosh would not be inappropriate at this point.

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Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* Trilogy

- Historical fiction
- Comprises of *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015).
- Time period—First half of the 19th century
- Mainly deals with events surrounding East India Company's opium trade between India and China.
- Trafficking of coolies, indentured labourers to sugar plantations in Mauritius.
- Events that lead up to the First Opium war.

Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* Trilogy is a historical fiction. It is not autobiographical as was Achebe's trilogy. However, we find that it has very meticulously recorded historical details of India under the colonial rule. It comprises of *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke*, and *Flood of Fire*. The time period which it has covered is the first half of the 19th century and it mainly deals with the events surrounding East India Company's opium trade between India and China.

At the same time, this trilogy has taken up the issues of trafficking of coolies, indentured laborers to sugar plantations in Mauritius and events that lead up to the First Opium war.

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- The trilogy is named after the ship *Ibis*, on which the majority of the characters meet each other for the first time.
 - *Ibis* is transporting indentured labourers and convicts from Calcutta to Mauritius.
 - Gets stuck in a storm; a mutiny breaks out on the ship.
 - Two other ships get caught in the same storm: the *Anahita*, a ship transporting opium to Canton, and the *Redruth*, which is on a Botanical excursion to Canton
- Some *Ibis* passengers make it to Mauritius, others find themselves in Canton and Hong Kong and are caught up in the events leading up to the first Opium war.

The trilogy is named after the ship *Ibis* on which the majority of the characters meet each other for the first time. *Ibis* is transporting indentured laborers and convicts from Calcutta to Mauritius. And these laborers and convicts also include Neelrattan and Deeti, the 2 major characters of the trilogy. The ship gets stuck in a storm along with 2 other ships *Anahita* and *Redruth* and some passengers make it to Mauritius.

Others find themselves in Canton and Hong Kong and these characters are caught up in the events leading up to the first Opium war.

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Sea of Poppies, the first novel of the trilogy is set prior to the First Opium War

Main characters:

- Deeti, an ordinary, pious village woman
- Zachary Reid, an American sailor born to a 'quadroon' mother and a white father
- Neel Rattan Halder, a rajah/Zamindar who incurs significant debt because of his investment in the opium trade
- Benjamin Burnham, an evangelist opium trader.

By the latter half of the novel, numerous characters in the book find themselves onboard Ibis which is destined to Mauritius.

The first novel of the trilogy, *Sea of Poppies* is set prior to the First Opium War. The main characters are Deeti, an ordinary and pious village woman who becomes a victim of circumstances and in order to escape forced sati victimization, she decides to join that ship in order to escape the Indian society. Another major character is Zachary Reid, an American sailor who is born to a quadroon or an interracial mother and a white father.

And he is a person who is trying to escape the racism of his own country. However, he finds better situation when he comes to India. Neel Rattan Haldar is a Rajah or a Zamindar who has incurred significant debt because of the investment in the opium trade and in order to escape his debts, we find that the company ultimately manipulates to entrap him into certain forgeries. And then he is sent to jail and as a convict, he is being sent over this ship.

Another passenger is Benjamin Burnham who owns this ship and who is an evangelist opium trader. By the latter half of the novel, we find that these characters and several others find themselves onboard Ibis which is destined to Mauritius.

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- In the *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh depicts the plight of the peasants who are doubly exploited
 - Compulsive farming of poppies, they go bankrupt monetarily and then it leads them to choose indentureship in faraway islands
- Ghosh also shows how colonialism facilitates the inroads of capitalism into Indian society.
- One of the most acerbic and poignant critiques of colonialism produced so far by Ghosh.

In the *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh has depicted the plight of those peasants who are doubly exploited. For compulsive farming of poppies, the peasants have to go bankrupt monetarily and then it leads them to choose indentureship in faraway islands to escape the tax. Ghosh shows how colonialism facilitates the inroads of capitalism into Indian society. And it is one of the most poignant critiques of colonialism produced so far by Ghosh. It is more extensive than another novel by Ghosh also, *The Glass Palace*.

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River of Smoke follows the lives of characters who survive the storm and mutiny that befalls Ibis in the previous novel. The novel follows the lives and traditions of Indian migrants in Mauritius. The plot of the novel is set in Franqui town.

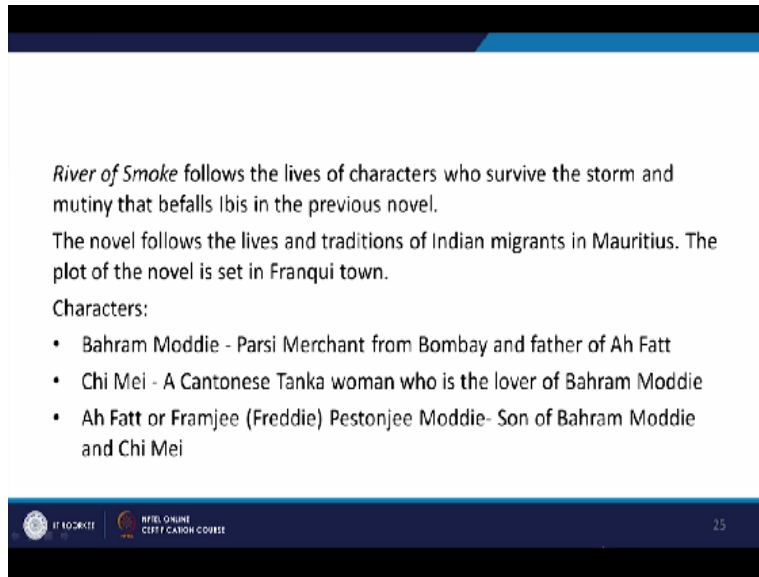
Characters:

- Bahram Moddie - Parsi Merchant from Bombay and father of Ah Fatt
- Chi Mei - A Cantonese Tanka woman who is the lover of Bahram Moddie
- Ah Fatt or Framjee (Freddie) Pestonjee Moddie- Son of Bahram Moddie and Chi Mei

River of smoke follows the lives of characters who survived the storm and mutiny that befalls Ibis in the previous novel. And this novel follows the lives and traditions of Indian migrants in Mauritius. Lives and traditions because most of the Indian migrants carry the load of the

traditions also from India.

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River of Smoke follows the lives of characters who survive the storm and mutiny that befalls Ibis in the previous novel.

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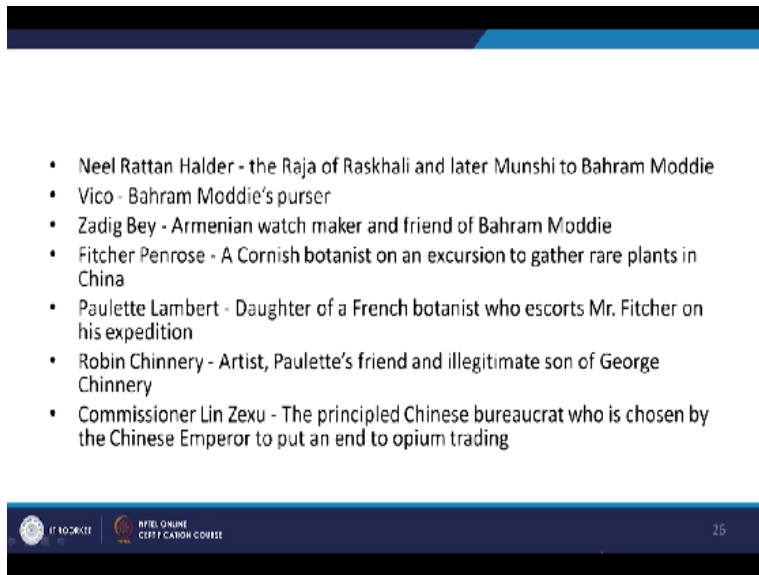
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The plot of the novel is set in Franqui town and major characters are Bahram Moddie, his lover, Cantonese Tanka woman and his son.

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- Neel Rattan Halder - the Raja of Raskhali and later Munshi to Bahram Moddie
- Vico - Bahram Moddie's purser
- Zadig Bey - Armenian watch maker and friend of Bahram Moddie
- Fitcher Penrose - A Cornish botanist on an excursion to gather rare plants in China
- Paulette Lambert - Daughter of a French botanist who escorts Mr. Fitcher on his expedition
- Robin Chinnery - Artist, Paulette's friend and illegitimate son of George Chinnery
- Commissioner Lin Zexu - The principled Chinese bureaucrat who is chosen by the Chinese Emperor to put an end to opium trading

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And at the same time we find that some of the characters from the previous novel are also there including Neel Rattan Haldar, Paulette, etc.

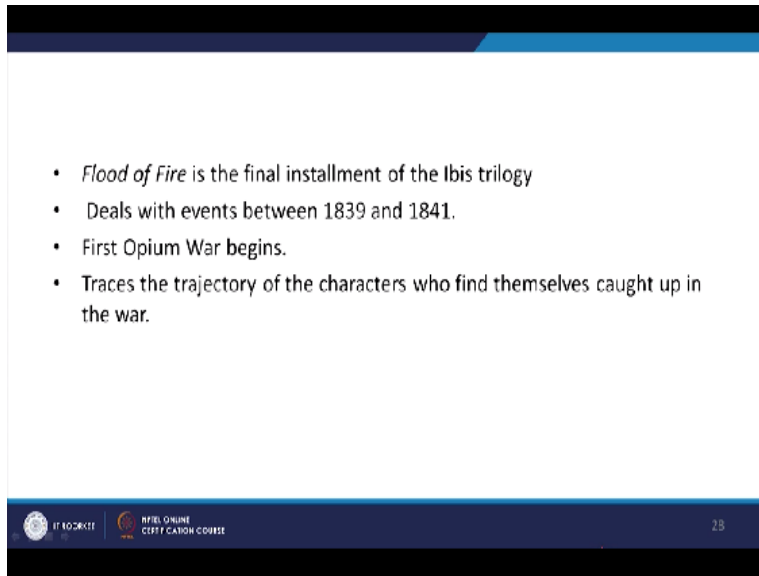
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- Commodification of labour and the intrusion of capitalism into Indian society in *River of Smoke*, the second novel of the trilogy.
- Ghosh draws a detailed picture of how opium enslaves the entire social system of India. Ghosh actually tries to draw different facets of the history of opium trade and the Opium Wars.
- Ghosh through the portrayal of subaltern characters compels the readers to see many things which are not mentioned in the documented history of opium trade and Opium Wars.
- The labour force, whether they are the farmers or the workers in the opium factories, are monetarily dependent on opium, and in their leisure hours they use it as a drug.

We find that commodification of labor and the intrusion of capitalism into Indian society has been a major feature of the *River of Smoke* which is the second novel of the trilogy. Ghosh has drawn a very detailed picture of how opium enslaves the entire social system of India. He tries to draw different facets of the history of opium trade and the Opium Wars. Through the portrayal of subaltern characters, he compels the readers to see many things which are not mentioned in the documented history of opium trade and Opium Wars.

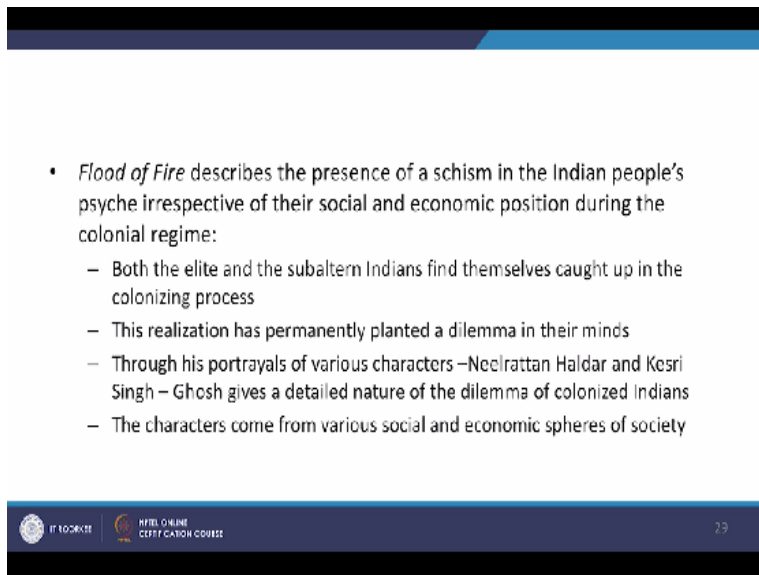
The labor force, whether they are the farmers or the workers in the opium factories, are monetarily dependent on opium and in their leisure hours, they use it as a drug. Consequently, it tears apart the social fabric as represented by Deeti's character in this trilogy.

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Flood of Fire is the final novel of this Ibis trilogy and it deals with events between 1839 and 1841 where the first Opium War has actually started. It also traces the trajectories of characters who find themselves caught up in the war.

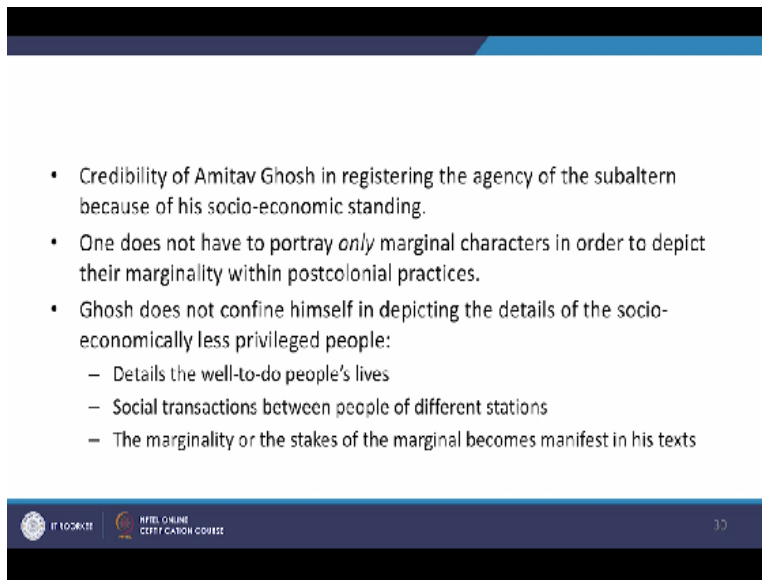
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Flood of Fire describes among other aspects of postcolonial experience, the presence of a schism in the Indian people's psyche irrespective of their social and economic position during the colonial regime. Ghosh describes very clearly how it is not only the subaltern but also the elite Indians who find themselves in a situation of being participants in the colonizing process and this realization has permanently planted a dilemma in their mind.

Through the portrayals of various characters, particularly the characters of Neel Rattan Haldar, a Zamindar and Kesri Singh in the Flood of Fire, Ghosh has given a very detailed nature of the dilemma of colonized Indians who belong to different socioeconomic strata. These characters Neel Rattan and Kesri come from different social and economic spheres of society but neither of them is able to avoid the schismatic effect of the colonial empire.

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- Credibility of Amitav Ghosh in registering the agency of the subaltern because of his socio-economic standing.
- One does not have to portray *only* marginal characters in order to depict their marginality within postcolonial practices.
- Ghosh does not confine himself in depicting the details of the socio-economically less privileged people:
 - Details the well-to-do people's lives
 - Social transactions between people of different stations
 - The marginality or the stakes of the marginal becomes manifest in his texts

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Like Achebe's questioning, Amitav Ghosh's critique has also been related with this credibility of registering the agency of the subaltern partially because of his socioeconomic standing and also because he was writing in the medium of English. But Ghosh's novels have shown us that one does not have to portray only the marginal characters in order to depict their marginality within postcolonial practices.

Ghosh does not confine himself in depicting the details of the socioeconomically less privileged people but at times he has also given us the details of the lives of well-to-do people, influential people and especially the social transactions between people of different stations and social fabric. The marginality or the stakes of the marginal becomes manifest in his texts through these transactions.

So we find that these 2 texts have very effectively portrayed the postcolonial reality through various thematic representations and through the delineation of various characters, in African

and in Indian context, these 2 writers are 2 significant writers who have in their writings internalized the quintessence of the postcolonial theory and have presented it very beautifully and successively. Thank you.