

Abbreviations

TGP - *The Glass Palace*

THT - *The Hungry Tide*

SOP - *Sea of Poppies*

ROS - *River of Smoke*

FOF - *Flood of Fire*

Chapter I

Chapter I

Introduction

Literature and anthropology are closely related. Literature is a social institution as it has a direct impact on culture. In tribal societies, literature started as a part of folklore and ritual. "Literature is a fiction and it is the mirror that allows humans to see themselves reflected in their manifestations" (Iser, "What" 177). Literature has a social function to perform both in primitive and modern society. Anthropology borrows ideas from literature. Anthropologists consider literature as the construction of text within a text. Literature and anthropology analyze and research cultural poetics such as history, myth, language and ritual practices. Ethnographers usually borrow techniques and theories from literature to discuss anthropology. The anthropologists have helped in shaping contemporary literary criticism as they reflect upon multiple cultural experiences. Thus both literature and anthropology are considered as inseparable.

Mark Edmundson states, "Becoming an English major means pursuing the most important subject of all - being a human being" (1). Anthropologists study about culture and also the intricacies of the language. Anthropologists consider literature as a means to understand the situation of an individual. In "A Strange Romance: Literature and Anthropology", Geertz rightly says,

The most important instruments of cultural anthropologists are not tape recorders or video cameras - as valuable as they and other technical aids (polls, experiments, formal models) may be - but in-wrought perceptions. It is on their ability to entangle those perceptions somehow with the

equally cultural, equally in-wrought perceptions of the people they are studying that their analytic reach, their power of witness depends. (29)

Anthropologists consider stories as valuable data as they feature human culture. Anthropologists analyze culture and provide an alternate perspective of the development of human society along with development in literature. The relation between anthropology and literary narrative are explored in this dissertation. The anthropologists have explored the relationship between culture and storytelling. Ursula K. LeGuin rightly quotes, “We read books to find out who we are. What other people, real or imaginary, do and think and feel is an essential guide to our understanding of what we ourselves are and may become” (7). The study of literature and anthropology reconsiders and redefines our place in the world.

The word anthropology is derived from the root word, ‘anthropo’ meaning human and ‘logos’ meaning to study. Many anthropologists travel around countries to learn about the cultural life of people and to analyze about ancient societies. Anthropology encompasses all these perspectives for the better understanding of human society.

In the present day, the area of anthropological study has been widely extended from the study of ancient society to present society which encompasses literature, art and culture, which also relates to tradition, war, class struggle and so on. Anthropologists have focused their research on the impact of capitalism, environment and population. Anthropology is inter-disciplinary in nature as it brings out the relationship between human beings with their language and literature. Ancient societies are gradually changing because of the advancement in technology and the impact of the market system. Due to

globalization, the cultural variation has reduced to a single culture because of assimilating tendency. Racial variation and linguistic variations too are gradually declining because many languages have become extinct.

Anthropology is the study of human beings as social organisms and the manner in which they interact with each other in their milieu. Anthropologists require evidence from human societies to compare between two cultures and their study is evolutionary, holistic, comparative and field-based. Anthropology consists of the following major divisions:

- (i) Archeology - is the study of ancient human culture, history through human examination of the left out. It mainly focuses on pre-historic, the time before the development of writing.
- (ii) Socio-cultural anthropology- is the study of different culture of human beings and how it shaped the world around them. The work of cultural anthropologist is to collect data about another culture and to analyse its effects upon the world economy and political practices.
- (iii) Biological anthropology- is the study of the human body as biological organisms through genetics, primates, human ancestry, evolution and the ability to adapt. There was a shift on differences by Sherwood Washburn due to the development of new physical anthropology. The physical trait which was used to determine the race could not determine the intelligence and morality. The biological anthropologist work on primatology which is the study of living relatives of human beings and non-human primates. They also focus on paleoanthropology which is the study of fossiled bones and teeth of our ancestors.

- (iv) Linguistic anthropology is the study of human languages. They analyse the interdependence of language with cultural, historical and biological context.
- (v) Applied anthropology - is the study of applying anthropological theories to solve human problems. Some of the fields include medicine and economics.

Literary anthropology involves two fields of study that is literature and anthropology. Literature plays a major role in exploring an individual's experience based on cultural, social and historical background. Literary anthropology explores different concepts namely cultural hegemony, historicism and social setup. Anthropologist explores myth and the oral-recounting in various cultures. Literary anthropology throws light on the entire human society which includes narrative consciousness and creativity in social life. Fiction and anthropology coincide, clash and crumble within one another. Stories were created through imagination whereas memoir, journalism and social sciences represent the reality regarding people, places and events. Story tellers borrow ideas from different fields of social science resulting in the reformation of truth.

In 1920s and 1930s anthropologist wrote various fiction based on ethnographic details. The works of Franz Boas' student, Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* and Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* were greatly criticized. Anthropological facts were included in Clifford Geertz's *Thick Description*. Geertz works were mainly influenced by postmodern critiques.

Clifford and Marcus's book *Writing Culture* speaks about the reviews of the anthropologists relationship with literature which mainly deals with ethnographic truths. This book was later followed by the feminist response in *Women Writing Culture*. These works kindled the spirit of the anthropologist to understand that ethnographic

composition is a social document. The politics of sexual and racial difference brings to light the crisis of cultural representation through literature. Anthropologists try to reconsider their perspectives regarding politics and poetics of ethnography through literature.

Literary anthropology is the study of human cultural disposition which is closely associated with psychology and ethnography. Traditional ethnographic anthropology is also called as literary anthropology. Wolfgang Iser, in his book *How To Do Theory* states, “We still have ethnography, which is basically what the practitioners of anthropology are concerned with, but we also have philosophical, cultural, historical, even literary anthropology, distinguished by their respective objectives and their methodological presuppositions” (131).

Anthropology of literature has different meanings and the phenomenon varies from one another. Anthropology chose literature as its subject and so literature became the subject of its investigation. “Since literature as a medium has been with us more or less since the beginning of recorded time, its presence must presumably meet certain anthropological needs” (Iser, “Towards” 263-64). Richard Van Oort, in *The Critic as Ethnographer* states,

For if humanity is defined as the culture-using animal, and if culture is defined as that object which invites symbolic interpretation, then it follows that literary studies stands at the center of an anthropology founded on these assumptions. For who is better trained than the literary critic in the exercise of searching for symbolic significance, of reading beyond the literal surface to see the deeper, more sacred meaning beneath? (622)

A German anthropology online webpage states Wolfgang Iser's ideas in the following words: "This study, first published in 1993, regards literature as a mirror of anthropological (human) equipment and generates a form of this understanding which - according to the author - cannot be gained from cultural anthropology, nor from philosophical anthropology" (qtd in Markowski 89). Wolfgang Iser is one of the founding fathers of anthropology and he considers literature as an important data for anthropological research. Iser's anthropological project states, "Fictionalizing is what determines the position of the human in the world. The human being is human (and not an animal) because it creates fictions, in other words, mediatory structures of imagination that help it understand not only the world but also itself" (qtd in Markowski 89).

Human beings tried their best to explain unimaginable things or to discover or to find a place in this world with the help of storytelling. "We know that we live, but we don't know what living is, and if we want to know, we have to invent what is denied us" (Iser "How" 275). Thus literature creates a connection between the mundane and the transcendental world. Literature attempts to interpret the unknown existential dilemma by creating structures within society.

One could use literature as a medium in order to spotlight why human beings are prone to be with themselves and simultaneously outside themselves. We need fictions to come to grip with ends and beginnings. We are sure that we are born and that we shall die, but we have neither experience nor knowledge of either of them. (qtd in Markowski 91)

Gabriele Schwab comments on Iser's theory as "Fictions become our uncanny doubles, reflecting to us something we otherwise cannot perceive" (73). Iser comments

literature as, “Decisive means of shaping cultural reality” (qtd in Markowski 91).

Literature acts as a connecting link not only between human beings and the transcendental but also integrates knowledge and experience. From the anthropological point of view, there is no difference between literature and existence. Both anthropology and literature are discourse regarding human existence and development.

T.S. Eliot in his introduction to *The Waste Land* states that Jessie Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* and James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* was influenced by early anthropological works. The most striking feature is that Eliot uses anthropological resources in his poetry. In the last two decades, Marcus and Clifford confronted the method of anthropology such as observation, fieldwork, categorizing data and they also stated that anthropology should be treated as literature rather than as science. “Ethnography is seen more often as a species of creative writing than as science and the realism of conventional accounts is considered to be as limited in its formal scope as its content is often deceptive” (Grimshaw and Hart 46).

“Anthropology is literary in character is anchored in literary criticism, deconstructionist thought in post-structuralism and in the new social history and postmodernism” (Brady 5). Literary anthropology considers, “The anthropologist as an author, or writer, the anthropologist as a poet- or in a more focused rendition- surrealism as ethnography’s quiet ally” (Poyatos 137). With the help of narrative techniques, anthropological evidence, facts can be converted into a fictionalized narrative.

The famous works such as: *Literature and Anthropology* (1986) edited by J.Hall; *Between Anthropology and Literature* (1993) edited by Paul Benson; *Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs and Culture* (1998); *Literature as a*

Source for Anthropological Research by T.G. Winner; and *Literature and Anthropology* (1989) edited by P.A. Dennis have brought out the interdependence of literature and anthropology.

There is a mutual relationship between literature and anthropology wherein interdisciplinary writing and research becomes common. “The analysis and understanding of literary texts is a broad, cultural perspective” (Poyatos 335). Anthropology can be called as a “discipline to replace theory and more of a branch of anthropology rather than a literary theory” (Poyatos 331-33). These statements strongly emphasize the symbiotic relationship between the two domains of knowledge: anthropology and literature. “Anthropological research in literary studies does not require such actions, as it oftentimes encourages using the tools and instruments of the literary realm, without forcing a complete resignation from the scientific language” (qtd in Lebkowska 35). The concept of ‘Thick Description’ was propounded by Clifford Geertz which means scientific observation of human behaviour. Thick Description adds meaning and explanation of people’s behaviour based on the collected data by the social scientists. Both Greenblatt and Elaine Showalter have used the concept of thick description propounded by Geertz while representing women’s culture in literature.

“Literature is a beacon of light for culture. Even a poorly written novel can be a fascinating portrait of a specific culture and its documentary value will grow unquestionably as the years go by” (Poyatos XV). “From early epics to contemporary novels, multiple varieties of literary realism that could be distilled can be systematically researched as invaluable, and so sometimes the only source of documentation of cognitive and sensual systems, etc” (Poyatos XII). Literary critics have explicitly brought forth the multi-layered

borrowing between literature and culture through which the value system of a society is realized.

Similarly to the anthropologist of literature beginning his/her work on the outskirts, at the cracks of the texts by noticing subtle and discrete, often insignificant, factors such as smells, places, sounds, postures, and gestures – all to reach such fundamental cultural dimensions like time and space - works the protagonist of an avant-grade autobiography in his attempts to define himself, while constantly moving, holding to methods of the review and inventory. (Poyatos 273)

The works of literature inclusive of all genres is a form of cultural representation that thematizes in different ways. To develop a connection between literary discourse and anthropology many concepts such as hybridity, assimilation, alienation are brought in. These concepts act as groundwork for the relation between literature and anthropology. Literary discourse has expanded its domain by becoming inter-disciplinary in nature. Literature has become inclusive of the marginalized culture, historical and philosophical discourse.

The most important truth in literature is that facts are diluted and reality is presented as a reflection. “The goals of the poet and anthropologist are the same” (Poyatos 181). Literature becomes the source of objective knowledge because the facts presented in literary work are accepted as truth in every culture. “Literature is the richest source of documentation for the analysis of human behaviour” (Poyatos XXII). Scholars who study literature from the anthropological perspectives find themselves at one side of the spectrum researching for facts amidst the imaginative description.

Writers are not obliged to strictly stick with the code of descriptive honesty. Novels and other examples of fictive writing are not designed by their respective authors as descriptive ethnographies of actual, real societies. Realism can be the goal of some fiction writers, but it never equals the descriptive accuracy. But this kind of accuracy should be a standard for all ethnographies. It is not a praise of ethnography, nor a critique of literature – it is merely an observation of the fact that they both are separate disciplines with their own, respective historians, aims and techniques. What is literature's strength could be ethnography's weakness, and vice versa. (Poyatos 97)

Vincent O. Erickson defines himself as the cultural anthropologist. When he was posted with the question if literature and anthropology could be connected, he answers thus, "I don't claim that there is no use for literature in anthropology" (qtd in Lebkowska 41). The aim of a writer and an anthropologist are similar. "They help in bettering the human condition, through a better understanding of his place in the world. However, both the techniques and means used for that purpose can cause conflict" (Poyatos 105).

In the literary discourse, the protagonist or the narrator plays the role of an anthropologist, ethnographer and so on. Wolfgang Iser is considered as the patron of literary anthropology. He attempts to identify literature as a kind of anthropology as it reveals cultural development within social groups. Iser considers literature to be privileged and it explores the world by examining the existing culture. "Two-fold role of literature and function of anthropology allows for multiple readings, interpretations of people, places, perspectives both real and imagined" (qtd in Lebkowska 41-42).

An anthropological perspective of literary discourse is termed as literary anthropology. Literary anthropology considers the literary text as a handbook of reality. Cultural anthropology deals with various traditional values, social and cultural practices that help in formatting the society. Fiction represents the world that we live in, thus provides data for the cultural anthropologist. “Literary anthropology is the study of people and their cultural manifestations through literature” (Poyatos 95). Wolford states that literary anthropology combines the cultural literary studies with that of humanistic anthropology. “Literature can provide superb introductions to social and cultural customs, beliefs, artefacts, behaviour, and roles” (Wolford 1265).

Vincent O. Erickson questions, “Does literature help us to obtain a clearer picture of society and its culture? How does literature reflect the social structure of a society and its concomitant behaviour patterns? How does literature complement, contain or contradict assumptions about culture...?” (qtd in Poyatos 99). Anthropological literary study is an interdisciplinary research which connects both past and the present.

Clifford Geertz interprets culture as a text, “Hence the ‘revitalizing’ of the cultural contexts... [literature] was not merely to represent cultures, but also to be representative of them – as if an object ethnography” (qtd in Evans 429). Literature interprets and promotes diversity and thus literary writing gains anthropological dimension. “If literature is understood to be a part of culture, reading literature is obviously going to point us to something like cultural studies; however, if we are to say that culture no longer exists as we knew it, then not only will our understanding of contemporary literature change, but so too will our relations to literature from other places and other times” (qtd in Evans 439).

Anthropology brings in the true facts based on social, cultural and historical events whereas a novelist's facts are based on subjective relativity. Anthropological writings can be fictitious as it considers to recreate the existing reality and there is no clear distinction between where anthropology ends and fiction begins. "The auto-ethnography which is now more fully woven into the narrative in ethnographic writing; the second is a shift toward 'insider' or 'diasporic' ethnography in which ethnographers work with a deep sense of connection to the places and people they write about" (qtd in Byler 2). Silhol's states about literary anthropology thus:

. . . should keep the original formula in mind, Conscious/Unconscious, and never estimate unconscious desire. Always remember reading is not analysis, and in your research distinguish between the text as discourse of a subject, remaining aware that meaning is not simply there but is always constructed, so that the analyst also has to reconstruct the portrait of the subject he/ she is examining. (304)

Clifford James in *Writing Culture*, speaks about the possibilities to understand anthropology. "Ethnography is an emergent interdisciplinary phenomenon. Its authority and rhetoric have spread to many fields where "culture" is a newly problematic object of description and critique" (Clifford 3). Fiction writers grasped their ideas from the external worlds such as historical facts, social practices and personal experience which act as a backbone of the story and then apply imagination to restructure reality through their narrative.

Ethnographer tries to record the cultural and social practices as authentic as possible. An anthropologist states that the success of an ethnographer lies in the clear and

genuine recreation of human life, place, character and dialogue. According to Paul Stoller, “(In a sense, writing a text for the future) is as a whole, a combination of evocation of place, the sonorous representation of dialogue and the sensitive portrayal of character” (qtd in Martins175). Thus, anthropologist recreates the world just as the novelist does in his fiction.

A writer can never be disconnected from his social and cultural life. The sociology of human beings, their everyday life, their tradition are reflected in fiction. Literary text plays a major role in constructing social values. A writer reflects not only the world but also about the people and their culture. A novelist reveals in the course of the narrative, the social background in which the story is set; thus novelists become indigenous ethnographers. Ethnographers involve themselves in decoding both cultural metaphors and literary metaphors so that the culture could be transported to the readers. “Literary processes — metaphor, figuration, narrative — affect the ways cultural phenomena are registered, from the first jotted “observations”, to the completed book, to the ways these configurations “make sense” in determined acts of reading” (Clifford 4).

A close link between literature and anthropology can be found not only in character portrayal, dialogue, imagery, metaphor and descriptive passages but also in readers interpretation of words according to the situation and context. Cultural anthropology has undergone transformation through decades. During the years society has undergone many changes such as colonial, post-colonial resulting in migration, globalization and multiculturalism. The more the world comes in contact with the changing nature, the writer and the anthropologist has to stick to the reality of the

contemporary world. These social movements and changes had affected both literature and anthropology.

Paul Stoller states, “Anthropology must break free of academic constraints, write a text that is timeless and that will engage the reader because of the personal qualities of the writing” (qtd in Martins 176). Clifford Geertz states that anthropologist powerful tool is his in-wrought perception. James Clifford clearly states that anthropological writing should be broken down to method, objective and analysis.

[T]his ideology has crumbled. [The essays in his book *Writing Culture*] see culture as composed of seriously contested codes and representations; they assume that the poetic and the political are inseparable, that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic processes. They assume that academic and literary genres interpenetrate and that the writing of cultural descriptions is properly experimental and ethical. Their focus on text making and rhetoric serves to highlight the constructed artificial nature of cultural accounts. (Clifford 2)

Stoller denotes narrative as a living material. According to him, “Life does not go in a straight line, from point A to point B, although many times our writing about life goes from point A to point B” (qtd in Martins 178). The experience of a human social behaviour recorded in the literary text is subjective, creative and interpretative. Thus a literary text is not just an imaginary narrative rather it attempts to recreate reality.

This mutation makes the test habitable, like a rented apartment. It transforms another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient. Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they

furnish with their acts and memories; as do speakers, in the language into which they insert both the messages of their native tongue and, through their accent, through their own “turns of phrases,” etc., their own history; as do pedestrians, in the street they fill with the forests of their desires and goals. In the same way the users of social codes turn them into metaphors and ellipses of their own quests. (de Certeau xxi- xxii)

Fiction writing is an art which exhibits the aesthetic qualities like creativity and imagination. It is difficult to separate literature from social behavior. Anthropology reconstructs the day to day activity of different cultural groups through writing which is based on literary strategies. There is a strong bond between literature and anthropology with the new advent of writing, research and social practices.

Anthropology explains human social behaviour and pattern. Amitav Ghosh as an anthropologist and as a novelist stresses the importance of bringing two fields together. Ghosh states that both literature and anthropology benefit from each other.

The one most important thing I learnt from anthropology (especially fieldwork) was the art of observation: how to watch interactions between people, how to listen to conversations, how to look for hidden patterns. This has always stayed with me and has influenced everything I’ve done, especially my journalism. The other thing anthropology did for me was that it took my interest in language in new directions. I became very interested in linguistic anthropology and especially in sociolinguistics. These interests have also stayed with me and have greatly enriched my novels. (qtd in Stankiewicz 541)

Traditionally anthropology means science whereas literature means art. An anthropologist when doing his ethnographic writing, he brings in the details of the cultural and social practices of that particular ethnic group. A literary writer brings in imaginary characters, the world and stories to blend with the facts. Amitav Ghosh is an anthropologist and a novelist and so his novels can be analyzed from the anthropological perspective to document socio-cultural background, linguistic pattern and also the tradition and identity that are prevailing in the society.

Indian writing in English has contributed to the field of fiction, prose and poetry. The development of novel has certain definite patterns and has its progress from its imitative stage to realistic stage and later developed to psychological and then to the experimental level. The creative genius of the three novelists Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao discovered the potential of Indo-English fiction. The list of Indian Booker prize winners are Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Aravind Adiga. Salman Rushdie wrote a path-breaking novel *Mid Night's Children* and his work *Shame*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *Fury*, *The Satanic Verses* were very controversial.

Vikram Seth wrote *The Golden Gate*, *A Suitable Boy*, *An Equal Music* and *Two Lives*. His first book focuses on lives of young professionals in San Francisco. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* became a commercial success and she won the Booker Prize and also The Times Bestseller award. Jhumpa Lahiri focuses on the cultural identity of the immigrants. Her first novel *The Namesake* and *The Interpreter of Maladies* won prestigious Pulitzer Prize.

Amitav Ghosh was born on July 11, 1956. He is the son of a former Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian army. Due to his father's job, he travelled a lot and he grew up in

Sri Lanka, East Pakistan, Iran and India. He was born in East Bengal and he migrated to Calcutta. In 1976, he received bachelor's degree in History from St. Stephen's College of Delhi. In 1978, he completed M.A Sociology in Delhi University. He pursued Ph.D in Social Anthropology at Oxford University in 1982. In 1979, he went to Tunisia to learn Arabic and in 1980, he completed his fieldwork in Egypt for his doctorate degree. He then worked as a journalist in *The Indian Express*, *The Hindu* and *The Granta* and he was a Visiting Professor at various institutions around the world.

Ghosh is the recipient of numerous awards. *The Circle of Reason* is his first novel that won France Prix Medic Estranger award and it was translated into many languages. His novel *The Shadow Lines* won Kendra Sahitya Akademic award in 1989 and Ananda Puraskar award in 1990. In 1997, he won Arthur C. Clark's award for his novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome*. In 1999, he became the winner of Pushcart Prize award for his essay *The March of the Novel*. He won Frankfurt award for his novel *The Glass Palace*. The novel *The Hungry Tide* won him Hutch Crossword Book award. In 2007, he was awarded Padma Shri by the Indian government. In 2008, he won Vodafone Crossword Book award for *Sea of Poppies* and it was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize. He also received British Book Design and Production award, IndiaPlaza and Golden Quill Award, Tagore literature award in 2012. The *River of Smoke* was shortlisted for The Hindu Literary Prize, Man Asian Literary Prize, DSC Prize and NPR listed this book as the year's best historical novel and the novel *Flood of Fire* was shortlisted for The Hindu Literary Prize in 2015. In December 2018, he was conferred the 54th Jnanpith award and he is the first Indian writer in English chosen for this honour.

Amitav Ghosh has also written essays, book reviews, political commentary, academic expositions, autobiographical articles and translations from Bengali. Some of Ghosh's oeuvres are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), *Flood of Fire* (2015) and some of his non-fictions include *Kinship in Relation to the Economic and Social Organization of an Egyptian village community* (1981), *In An Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia*, *At Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the turmoil of our times* (2005) and *The Great Derrangemnet: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016).

The Circle of Reason is a saga of a young master weaver Alu, who is suspected to be a terrorist. Alu encounters a cast of characters when he is chased by an inspector and he travels from the Persian Gulf to North America. Ghosh draws the reader into the lives of characters and incidents and his narrative produces surpassing beauty. *The Shadow Lines* is about a young boy who grows up in Calcutta and later lives in Delhi and London. The two families Datta Chaudhari in Calcutta and the Tresawsen in London are linked through friendship. The novel deals with the absurdities of dividing people based on geographical borders and the tragedy they encounter. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is a melodramatic thriller which revolves around the historical figure Ronald Ross who discovered the malarial parasite in Calcutta. Antar is an Egyptian clerk who works in International Water Council at New York. He comes across the damaged identity card with the help of his super intelligence computer. The identity card belongs to L. Murugan, former colleague of Antar who disappeared in Calcutta in 1995. Murugan was fascinated by Ross's discovery of malarial parasite and he came to Calcutta to do further research on it.

The Glass Palace, deals with the social, political and cultural lives of the people of India, Burma, and Bangladesh. This novel deals with the life of three generations and is interwoven with many stories. The novel is divided into seven parts. The novel opens with the 1885, Anglo-Burmese War. The two ministers are guarding the Royal family members and they were ready to hand over them to the Britishers so that they could earn rewards. The first part of the novel 'Mandalay' which showcases the exile of King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat along with their royal family members and it also shows how Britishers conquered Burma. The second part is 'Ratnagiri' which speaks about the effects of colonialism. It shows how King Thebaw's rule came to an end and how Burma became the part of British empire. Colonialism changed the life of Indians and the Burmese. The third part 'The Money Tree' deals with the success of Rajkumar in timber business. The fourth part 'The Wedding', speaks about second generation; Rajkumar's son Neel marries Manju. Arjun and Dinu are fascinated by the rule of the Britishers. The fifth part 'Morning Side' speaks about the result of Second World War in Malaya. The sixth part 'The Front' showcases the suffering of the characters during the Second World War. The last part 'Glass Palace' speaks about the Indian National Movement and the Indian Independence. The three stories run parallel in the novel. The first generation story is about Rajkumar, Dolly and B.P Dey and Uma. The second generation is about Neel and Manju's life. The novel mainly depicts the colonial past of Burma, Malaya and India.

The novel *The Hungry Tide* is a contemporary story of adventure, love, identity and history set in the tiny island of Sundarbans. Life is extremely dangerous because of the attacks of deadly tigers, unrest and eviction of migrants. Floods occur without any warning. In this island, the lives of three different people collide, Kanai Dutt, a translator

from Delhi comes to meet his aunt and uncle, Nilima and Nirmal. Piyali Roy, a young marine biologist comes to Sundarbans in search of rare dolphins. Fokir, a young illiterate fisherman saves Piya from tides and helps her conduct research upon the dolphins.

The novel focuses on the Morchjhapi Massacre of 1978-79. The government of West Bengal forcibly evicted thousands of Bengali refugees settled in the island. The past is recollected through Nirmal's diary. The novel deals with environmentalism and humanism.

Sea of Poppies is set prior to opium wars. The story begins with Deeti, who is married to Hukham Singh, an opium addict. After the death of her husband, her life is doomed when she is forced to perform Sati. At that time, rescue comes in the form of Kaula, an untouchable ox-cart man and they both flee to join the ship, Ibis as indentured laborers. Zachary Reid, an American sailor becomes the second mate of the ship Ibis with the help of the head of the lascars, Serang Ali. The ship Ibis is refitted to carry indentured labourers. Neel Rattan Halder, a wealthy raja of Zamindary of Rakshali is forced to sell off all his estate because of the debts which he had incurred in the opium trade. Opium trade has come to a standstill and there is no money left to clear his loan. When Mr. Burnham proposes a deal with Neel, to sell off all his ancestral property, he refuses telling that it would make him turn against his relatives and attendants. Burnham forges Neel's signature in documents and files a law suit against him. The court punishes Neel to work as indentured labourer for seven years in Mauritius. He joins Ibis, along with Ah Fatt, an opium addict. Paulette, a French orphan was taken care of by Mr. Burnham family. Her father was a botanist and her mother died when she was young. She tries to run away when Mr. Burnham tries to misbehave with her in private and also tries to get her married to his elderly friend Mr. Justice Kendalbushe. Finally, Paulette boards Ibis. The stories

merge and the ship Ibis becomes the home for destitutes. After great struggle, Neel, Jodu, Kaula, Ah Fatt, Serang Ali escaped from Ibis and ventured into the sea.

The second part of the trilogy *River of Smoke* is set in Canton coast in China. The ships are caught in the ravaging storm of 1838. Bahram Modi, a Parsi opium trader from Bombay owns the ship Anahita, the ship Redruth is owned by Fitcher Penrose, which is on an expedition to collect rare plants from China. The Ibis carries indentured labourers to Mauritius. The story traces the lives of people in Canton. Bahram Modi, the son-in-law of a rich Parsi shipbuilder Rustamjee Mistrrie, enters opium trade with the help of his father-in-law and gains huge profit. After the death of his father-in-law, his brothers-in-law plan to sell the export division. Bahram plans to buy the export division for himself and he decides to ship a large consignment of opium. He has a son named Ah Fatt through Chi-Mei, a Chinese boat woman unknown to his Bombay family. The novel traces the efforts taken by Fitcher Penrose to collect rare plants. Paulette joins Fitcher in search of the rare golden camelia flower. They are helped by Robin Chinnery, an illegitimate son of the painter George Chinnery. Ah Fatt and Neel escaped from Ibis and Neel joins Bahram as his Munshi.

The final part of the trilogy is the *Flood of Fire*, is set in 1839. The British Foreign Secretary has asked colonial British India to send the military expedition to attack China. Kesri Singh is a soldier in the East India Company. He travels in the ship Hind, from Bengal to Hong Kong along with Zachary, who tries to find his future in opium, Shireen Modi, the widowed wife of opium merchant, travels to China to find the reason for the death of her husband who died in a mysterious manner and also to find his illegitimate lost son. The war breaks out in Hong Kong and opium flows into the market like a monsoon flood.

Ghosh's oeuvres are translated into nineteen languages and he was honored as the jury of Locarno Film Festival. More than receiving awards and honors, he is considered as a significant, popular contemporary author. His works include two important themes: fictionalizing facts and his concern for preserving nature. Global issues such as partition, marginalization, environmental problems are addressed by him in his novels. Ghosh explores the multicultural scenario in his novels. Ghosh's novel travel across time and space as he brings in the historical facts and events. The effects of these changes in both the human and non-human world are the recurring motif of his novels. He deals with the themes of history, diaspora, politics, travel and ecology.

This dissertation proposes to analyze the novels *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide*, *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke*, *Flood of Fire* and to prove that Amitav Ghosh's fictional works are based on extensive research and fieldwork. The novels selected for study are fictionalized version of historical facts. As an anthropologist Amitav Ghosh brings in true facts and as a fictional writer he brings in imagination and he blends in both facts and fiction to form factual fiction. The thesis aims to prove Ghosh novels are an amalgamation of literature and anthropology.