CHAPTER V
CRITICAL ELUCIDATION

Ghosh meditates upon a core set of issues in all his works, essays and journalism. Each time he does so from a new perspective, and he is specially concerned with contemporary streams of literary criticism. The troubled legacy of colonial knowledge and discourse on formerly colonized societies, peoples, and ideas; the ambivalent relationship to modernity of the so-called developing or ‘Third’world; the formation and reformation of identities in colonial and post-colonial societies is meticulously explained in his fiction. In many of his public pronouncements, Ghosh has disavowed the idea that his work is a representative example of Postcolonialism, or that he is a ‘post-colonial’ writer. Indeed, he has claimed that he does not really know what the term means. Nevertheless, Ghosh is on friendly terms with many of the critics and theorists who have done much to define the field, and who in turn acknowledge his work as a crucial index of many of the themes, issues, and problematics that constitute the multi-dimensional nature of the post-colonial predicament today. A critical examination of Amitav Ghosh’s writing is thus an opportunity not only to ascertain and evaluate his own predilections and concerns but also to explore the limits and possibilities of postcolonialism itself as a critical practice.

Out of six novels, all the novels are quintessential postcolonial novels. Post-colonial criticism has become academically compelling criticism. Post-colonial theory explores the textual criticism of post-colonial literatures.
Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin White masks* (1952) and *Wretched of the Earth* (1967) and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture & Imperialism* (1993) are considered to be the promulgators of *Post-colonial criticism*. These seminal works have strongly recommended the reclamation of the past of colonized nations only to subvert the hegemony of the colonial nations. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith & Helen Tiffin’s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) with a broader cultural circumscription of all the colonized nations provided a strong base for *post-colonial criticism*. This is further continued and consolidated by Gayathri Spivak Chakravarthy In *Other Worlds: Essays in cultural Politics* (1988), Homi K.Babha’s *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *Location of Culture* (1994). These works have interrogated the identities of colonialism. The concocted colonial identities of Nation, Nationality, and National representations are interrogated and the male centered perspectives are demolished. All the six novels that examined for the thesis engage in the critical negotiation of past history by Amitav Ghosh. The presentation of past history is with ambiguity. The ambiguous nature of past history has revealed the dichotomy of the past history as glorious and inglorious which interface fiction. The usable past becomes the glorious past and the unusable past becomes the inglorious past.

All these novels need to be examined in understanding the dichotomy of ‘Colonialism’. It needs to be examined in relaxation to ‘internal colonialism’ and external colonialism. India is a country, which suffered from ‘Internal colonialism’ since the beginning of its civilization. It continues
to suffer from ‘Internal colonialism’ even after the demise of colonial period. Women in India are the victims of ‘Internal colonialism’ as well as the external colonialism. The victimization of women in ‘Internal colonialism’ went on unabatedly in silent acceptance. Post-colonial criticism has also revealed and questioned the patriarchal mechanism in victimizing women by creating the passive images of contemporary women. The protagonists in all these six novels are the victims of internal colonialism.

Carrying the mantle of the passive roles of women, the protagonists tried to liberate themselves. It is only with post-Colonial criticism the issues of confrontation dealt by these works can be deciphered. The protagonists in all these novels in the process of liberating and defining themselves tried to establish alternative roles. The protagonist in “Sea Of Poppies” (2008) is confronted by the horrifying future carrying the burden of innocent past life in India. There is a juxtaposition of the life spent in India and the life being lived in the northern Bihar. In the process of living in northern Bihar, she obliterates the conventional images of motherhood. ‘Sea of Poppies’ of Ghosh perfectly presents the juxtaposition between the pre-colonial India and post-colonial India. The very transformation of the protagonist from a submissive domestic life is rendered in all its appreciation. This obviously presents the radicalization in the very construction of social identities and positions. The social maturation in the character provides a space in which the pre-colonial constructions of Nation and Nationality are interrogated.
In *The Imam and the Indian* and as well as in *In an Antique Land* of Ghosh, we see the exploration of history. Ghosh subscribes to the values of their own culture. The emotions and passions are linked with their past. These people along with the people form the shared past history from “Composite Communities”. In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh showed the search for her uncle Dinu, Raj Kumar’s granddaughter. She seeks to reconstitute her grandfather’s history and also the history of Aung San Suu Kyi through Dinu. She visits Burma and peeps into past of her uncle Dinu.

Jaya comes to acknowledge the girlhood and the typical motherhood, looking for her son’s safety after the sudden demise of her husband in an accident. Experiencing ‘others’ the children of migrants bear the burden of carrying the past. We are shown through Jaya’s retrospection and scanned Psyche that these children carry with them the past history of “origin” of their parents and grand parents and are treated as a secondary citizen even though they are born and brought up here. Jaya feels shattered when she goes on to search for her uncle Dinu from corner to corner in Burma, when she meets him at once shading their faces “green with broken eye shadow”, to different ideas for collecting memories with each other. She is called by name, are you Dinu? I am your niece, daughter of your own brother Neel grand daughter of Rajkumar and Dolly your parents. Thus, Jaya faces an identity crisis as her identity is defined in terms of the past history of her parents and grand parents.
In the novel *The Glass Palace* along with the discussion of colonial rulers and their subjects, Queen Supayalath carries on a discourse that unruly depicts ‘cruel politics’. If the Indian princes constitute the other in the power game between the British and themselves, it is Queen Supayalath who is symbolic of woman as the other in human relationships. As living in Burma, Jaya is brought into light by the skills of her research. The journey of Jaya’s research from her childhood to maturity is full of enriching experiences.

Post-colonial criticism has initiated significant changes in the discourse of nationalism of colonized countries. It offered genuine criticism of the evolution of the feeling on Nationalism. It has projected the idea that Nationalism has emerged to check the growth of capitalism and Industrialization. Ernest Gellner in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) observed that Nations are not inscribed into the nature of things. Nations are like planned things. They are like constructed buildings. The very idea of the nation is considered to be a myth. Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) argues that nations are imagined political communities. The essential symbols like national flag, national bird, national animal, national anthem that stood for the significance of nationalism are all prepared cultural artifacts by the so-called pre-independent national leaders.

Post-colonial criticism has also revealed the very cultural strategy involved in identifying the land of the nation with the body of the women. This is intentionally schemed to incite the sentiments of the common people.
The occupation of their land is projected as the molestation on the dignity of their woman. The colonial occupation is interpreted on these lines only to invite the participation of the common people in the so-called struggle for independence. It is pertinent to observe that in the larger struggle for Independence the very crucial aspect of the Independence of women is excluded. It is from this perspective Partha Chatterjee in his influential book *Nationalist thought and colonial world (1986)* considers nationalism as a derivative discourse. He considers that idea of Nationalism is in complicit with the elite sections of the society. Post-colonial criticism has also revealed how the nature and subjectivity of women’s life is exploited by the national leaders in their struggle for freedom. Particularly Mahatma Gandhi is understood to have exploited the subjectivity of Indian womanhood in his methods of staging hunger strike, non-cooperation and non-violent demonstrations. Gandhi has exactly employed the nature and psyche of Indian womanhood. Post-colonial criticism has revealed the ways in which the subjectivity of Indian womanhood is exploited like Deeti in *Sea of Poppies* (2008) only to further undermine the social positions of Indian women and Gandhi is no exception in the scheme of Indian patriarchy.

The women protagonists in these novels are the representatives of post-colonial critique of Indian society. Deeti, Munia, and Paulette in *Sea of Poppies* and Dolly and Uma in *The Glass Palace* are the apt representatives of post-colonial critical spirit. The life related to the mother and daughter weaves between the pre-independent and post Independent India.
presenting the glimpses of usable past and unusable past. The holocaust during the times of partitions strongly signifies the inglorious past.

The post-independence situation which Jaya constructs her life to the level of challenging the intellectual hegemony of researcher is nothing but the obliteration of all the imposed social roles. The self-affirmation that Deeti exhibits reveals the true colour of colonial intrigues that multiplied gender inequality and discrimination.

Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* is also a quintessential post-colonial novel. Moreover, the theme of *Sea of Poppies* perfectly suits the post-colonial propositions as it presents the position of Indian women in pre-Independent and post-Independent situation of India. The colonial and the social displacement of Indian nobility and the kingly class in *Dancing in Cambodia, at Large in Burma* is well crafted within the post-colonial critical framework. One of the protagonists in *The Glass Palace* Jaya displays the required wisdom to understand British colonialism better than the other male characters. In the male dominated culture of *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* Piya and Deeti, win the legitimacy to inherit the rule purely on their own. In this process, they overcome the conventional hurdles of Kabutri, the daughter of Deeti and Tutel, son of Fokir considered as the natural heir to Fokir and heiress to Deeti. Princess Soumphady becomes the true representative of Indian Culture by ably implementing the dancing lessons and principles of ruling the nation after the King Sisowath. Enacting the conventional role of wife and as well as mother, Deeti upholds the dignity
of the Indian culture by disallowing the cunningness, cruelty and perverted intrigues of Chandan Singh who is a colonial representative. She also realizes that the ultimate legitimacy to rule the nation rests with the ‘people’ and obliterates the patriarchal authority. The way Deeti registers protagonism is the way, which unravels the intrigues of conventional images and symbols meant for manufacturing the so-called pseudo nationalism. Post-colonial criticism of the nationalism of colonized nations finds sagacity in the very interpretation of Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*.

Colonialism had condemned millions to a life of subservience and dispossession. At this juncture, the anti-colonial nationalisms promised a new dawn of independence and political self-determination for colonized people. In the twentieth Century, the myth of nation has proved highly potent and productive during several struggles against colonial rule. Under the development of created constructed myths, the nation became highly mobilized as a powerful symbol, which anti-colonial movements used to organize against colonial rule.

The colonial rule has dismantled the political structures of many nations and the worst hits were the countries of the South Asian region. Many countries had become the British colonies. In the South Asian regions, it was India, Burma and Malaysia that suffered from the colonial oppression. These countries are known for their rich cultural heritage, richest natural resources and abundant wealth.
The British intrusion into these lands in the name of business exemplified the strategy of colonialism. However, the intrusion into the serene lands had no effect on the part of the commoner. In fact, the commoner thought that the colonial rule came as a liberating agency from that of the monarchical rule, which they are facing. Especially in Burma, the commoner had developed an aversion towards their King Thebaw and the Queen Supayalat. The opening chapters of *The Glass Palace* reveal the aversion of the Burmese crowd towards their superior authority. "Through all the years of the Queen’s reign the townsfolk had hated her for her cruelty, feared her for her ruthlessness and courage" (34). The looting of the King’s palace by the Burmese Public clearly shows their aversion. When the British had seized Thebaw from power, it was the public who has to lend the support through difficult phase of time. Instead of that, they turned against him and they indulged in looting their own King’s Palace. The King has failed as a good ruler. That was the reason why they considered the British as the liberating agency. It is here the question of state comes into light. In the countries, which are governed by the state, people develop a sense of looking after the well-being of each and every individual. This tendency provides source of revenue for its people and sets the standards of living. By doing so, the state gains a perfect control over its people and the social hierarchy runs with perfection. But if the state fails in providing livelihood and other necessities for its people, it loses control over them and hierarchy gets dissolved.
The British intrusion into Burma had changed everything. Thebaw lost his power and so the Queen. Their own people had looted their palace. It was a huge humiliation for the royal couple. They never noticed the growing unrest in the public of their rule. When the British came into the land the crowd seized the opportunity to sneak into the palace. Until the British arrival, no commoner in the country had dared to enter into the palace. They knew that it would result in summary execution. But now everything has changed. The King and the Queen were thrown out of power. The Queen’s reaction when she saw the mob inside their palace shows her impotence.

The King and the Queen along with trusted servants were shabbily been discarded from the country to a remote coastal village in India. No one in the country felt sorry for their eviction from the country. It was the colonial rulers ploy in exiling the King’s family from their own land in order to erase them completely from the public memories. Earlier, the Indian Mughal King, Bahadur Shah Zafar too was exiled in the same manner. The colonial rulers exiled him to Rangoon from India.

The colonial rule has a huge affect on the members of the elite group in Burma as well as in India. Prior to the British occupation, they had a strong food hold in the country. But now they have lost their grip on the soil. In order to raise their voice against the colonial rule their number is limited and they needed the support of all the people. Until then, they never considered the other people and the social hierarchy had created a great abyss between them and the subaltern people. “Many once colonized nations have struggled
with the internal differences that threaten the production of national unity” (McLeod: 2000). The term ‘Subaltern’ is used to signify the many different people who did not comprise the colonial elite. The colonial elite includes, the lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and the upper middle class peasants.

The production of a unified imaginary community became nationalism’s greatest strength. The nationalist elite claims that their ‘modern’ attitudes are coterminous which ‘popular consciousness’ and enjoy the support of the people, deemed to be a unified singular entity sharing the same political aims. The myth of the nation functions as a valuable resource in uniting people to raise their voice against the pangs of colonialism. It worked against the differences created out of gender, racial, religious, dialectical and cultural differences.

It is obvious that the British occupied Burma and India resulted in creating a sense of Nationalism. Prior to the British arrival, there were differences in people. However, the arrival of the British has changed everything. The internal differences were set aside and the idea of nation had been created. In Paul Gilroy’s Words, opines:

...through elaborate Cultural, ideological and political processes which culminate in feeling of connectedness to the other national subjects and in the idea of a National interest that transcends the supposedly petty divisions of class, region, dialect or caste’ (1993:49)
Post-modernism has paved the way for significant changes in the systems of representation. Initiating viability in the systems of representation, it created discursive systems to decenter the subject. It has inscribed multiple fictive selves. It broke the conventions in narration and encouraged fragmentation and reflexivity. Tim Woods in *Beginning Post-modernism* (1999) observes that Post-modernism interrogates the ontological relationship between narrative and subjectivity (7). Embracing the cultural milieu post-modernism abolished the cultural divide between high and popular forms of culture. The philosophy of post-modernism rests on the propositions of Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Jurgen Habermas. Jean Lyotard in *The Post-modern condition: A Report on knowledge* (1979) presents the demise and incredulity towards ‘meta narratives’. He welcomes the emergence of ‘Mini’ or micro narratives’. He argues that the so-called western narratives do not hold legitimacy for enlightenment. He is suspicious of all claims of truth. He warns that beneath the apparent objectivity there lies the dominant discourse of terror (*Post-modern condition*). These perceptions are further characterized by Jean Baudrillard’s *Simulations* (1983). Baudrillard proposed three Principal ideas: simulation, implosion and hyper-reality. The image becomes more real than the real and disguise the reality in simulation. The demarcation between the simulation and image implodes the reality. Hyper-reality is the state where the distinction between objects and representation is dissolved. Habermas in *modernity – An Incomplete project* (*Post-modernism: A Reader*, Thomas Docherty ed. 1993) urges for ‘universal
pragmatics’. Post-modernism found its further illustration and consolidation in Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari’s proposition of ‘Schizoanalysis in Anti Oedipus (1972), A thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia (1980).

This initiated the way for the analysis of ‘self’ in the light of plural and multiple identities and displaced consciousness.

When we examine these novels from the literary and critical prescriptions of post-modernism, pertinent critical perceptions emerge. All these novels undoubtedly subscribe to the propositions of post-modernism. “Mininarrations’ of women protagonists in these novels displace the centrality of male representation and subjectivity. Micro level narrations of life in Dancing in Cambodia at Large in Burma, In an Antique Land, The Imam and the Indian, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, & Sea of Poppies dismantle the so called male centered perspective of life construed as ‘universal representation’. The small events that take place in the lives of the women characters become the apt representations of mini narrations of life. Dancing in Cambodia at Large in Burma and The Imam and the Indian are the best illustration of mini narrations. As the collection of stories, it has portrayed several dimension of life from perspective of women. Every perspective of women’s life presented in each story justifies the post-modern perspective of mini narrations.

In the Post-modern arena, architecture was one of the first areas, which was debated and defined. Because buildings have a highly visible public profile, affecting most peoples lives. Architecture has become not just a reflection of, but also a decisive agency in the creation of a new society.
The modernist architecture omitted Glass structures but the Post-modern architecture regenerated the glass structures. It is observed as deconstructive architecture. The Derridian notion of deconstruction is subscribed by Ghosh in making Glass Palace to acquire a symbolic significance. Deconstructive architecture is described by Derrida as a ‘Socius of Dissociation’. Glass is widely used in the corporate world. It brings a separate identity where the people inside the Glass-structured buildings dissociate themselves from the outer world by making themselves invisible and the observer visible. In the novel, *The Glass Palace* becomes an object, where in the individuals or commoners of Burma assimilate their positions by seeing the reflections on the Glass Palace. The mirrored images not only project their position but also the position of the society in which they live in. The insider’s invisibility creates the element of absence, which the observer’s reflexivity becomes an element of Post-Modernism.

*The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies* succinctly project the aspects of Post-modernism. The title of the novel itself connotes Post-modern element. Ghosh uses this Glass as a metaphor, which has an inside meaning. In the post-modern arena, architecture was debated and defined. Because buildings have a highly visible public profile, affecting most peoples lives. Architecture was to become not just a reflection of, but also a decisive agency in the creation of a new society. One of the principal features of Post-modernist architecture is the historical ambivalence. Paulo Portoghesi regards
Post-modern architecture as the ironic reintroduction of the past and history into spatial constructions.

The Post-Modern in architecture can therefore be read overall as re-emergence of archetype, or as a reintegration of architectonic convention, and thus as a premise to the creation of architecture of communication, architecture of the image for a civilization of the image. (1982:11).

Amitav Ghosh in choosing the title for his novel, *The Glass Palace* reflexively quotes historical characteristics of the palace and makes ironic use of local context. The modernist architecture omitted Glass structures but the post-modern architecture regenerated the Glass structures.

The application of *New Historicism* brings in new insights of thematic interpretations of these novels. New historicism dismisses eschatological or theological connotations of conventional historians. The accessibility to the facts of past and the interpretation from our points of view creates a new history. The motto of New Historicism is based on Michael Warner’s phase: “the text is historical and history textual” (“Literary studies and the History of the Book”, *Book 12*, 1987, P.5). The emphasis of Frederic Jameson in the *Political Unconscious*: “Always Historicize” is also the crux of New Historicism. Stephen Greenblatt who has coined the term “*New Historicism*” in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980) is usually regarded as its beginning. However, similar tendencies can be identified in work by various critics published during the 1970s, a good example being J.W. Lever’s *The Tragedy of State: A study of Jacobean Drama*. A simple
definition of the new Historicism is that it is a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period. That is to say, new historicism refuses to ‘privilege’ the literary text: instead of a literary ‘foreground’ and a historical ‘background’ it envisages and practices a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other. This ‘equal weighting’ is suggested in the definition of new historicism offered by the American critics Louis Montrose: He defines it as a combined interest in ‘the textuality of history, the historicity of texts’. It involves ‘an intensified willingness to read all the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts’. Stephen Green Blatt’s brilliant studies of the renaissance have established him as the major figure commonly associated with New Historicism. Projected the aspect of making or promoting one’s ‘self’ is the crucial aspect of human history.

Drawing the example from the period of Renaissance, he revealed how people trained, managed and fashioned their ‘self’ with very example from the life of Queen Elizabeth, who ruled awakened England into renaissance against the wished of papal authority, unraveled the ways adopted by Elizabeth to promote and consolidate her ‘self’. Queen Elizabeth identified and consolidated her image with the image of England by declaring that she has wedded England. She has sacrificed her personal and domestic life to watch the progress of England in all aspects of the promotion and making of ‘self’ is one of the crucial aspects of New Historicism. However,
comparatively, Queen Supayalath who ruled Burma did not rule peacefully. However, she also did not identify her image with the image of Burma. She did not sacrifice her personal and domestic life to the progress of Burma like Queen Elizabeth. Moreover, it makes us to perceive history from a New dimension as is aptly represented in the themes of Ghosh’s novels taken for study.

Many Indian English novelists have turned to the past as much to trace the deepening mood of nationalism as to cherish the memories of the bygone days. A close study of the contemporary novel reveals writers preoccupation with our historic past and the unabated interest of the readers. In the novels that depict the past are those treat some event of national importance that has had wide repercussions.

Ghosh concept of history colours all his writing. The Glass Palace presents history as a collective memory, which gathers in a symbiotic fashion all that existed in past into all that happens in the present. His narrative method combined with his treatment of history weaves delicate connections between different phenomena, so that no event becomes absolutely autonomous. This generates the mobility with which history traverses past and present, creating an acceptable fluid pattern of history of time. There is no attempt on the part of the writer to squeeze history into a preconceived shape. Certainly, Ghosh’s sense of history retains its historicity, a happy outcome that has eluded many great writers. In his hands, history becomes a process,
which hinges on characters who without losing their ‘realistic’ eccentricities are still representatives of important historical tendencies.

History can be fashioned by the way of individuals look at their culture. Each aspect of history, each character and event is gathered into a process of constant change, which after all, is the real meaning of history. Viney Kirpal’s comment is illuminating: “The sudden realization of the reality of history in which the individual has an important part to play is reflected in the Indian novel of the 1980s” (1990:xxi)

Describing history as an unending dialogue between the present and past, the historian E.H. Carr observes that its dual function is to enable man to understand the society of the past and to increase his mastery over the society of the present (1973:55). It is in this sense that Amitav Ghosh’s writing is part of “the multiple search for a new dimension of reality which could combine past and present…” (56).

In Mukul Kesavan’s words, Ghosh “buffs his imagination against the grit of recorded lives” (2002: 1). Ghosh thus explores historical moments and constructions in order to give form, and thus content, to his own narrative impulses and gives us complex pictures of interpenetrating lives of individuals, the interaction between their individual narratives. *The Glass Palace* according to Ghosh was: “*The Glass Palace* was like an Odyssey... at some point that my book was about much more than just individual characters. It was also about the history diaspora in Southeast Asia, which is

Ghosh is constantly looking for ways in which he can render history interface fiction; in a certain sense, he is also seeking to pit fiction against history, to challenge the letter’s implacability with the former’s potentiality more of human qualities. In an interview, Ghosh defended his choice of fiction over history:

I think fiction has always played that part. If you look at Tolstoy’s War and Peace...I think difference between the history historians write and the history fiction writers write is that fiction writers write about the human history. It’s about finding what happens to individuals, characters. I mean that’s what fiction is...exploring both dimensions, where as history, the kind of history exploring causes, causality, is of no interest to me (2000:30).

Ghosh inherent fascination with the cyclical patterns of history and its dissemination in society and culture is conductive to the acceptance of such a notion about migrancy, hybridity and diaspora in which the tension between the states of de - and re – territorialization never quite dissipates, but is held in a constant delicate balance between the memory of a past and for a future. In *The Glass Palace*, he returns to his own now distinctive brand of historical fiction that he had first introduced with *The Shadow Lines* but this time the sweep is larger, the canvas more epic, and the stories personal still and yet somehow grander. And there are recognizable historical and political figures the last of the Burmese royalty and of course the chimeral hope of a nascent
Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi—to etch the realistic borders of the fictional lives of Rajkumar and Dolly, Saya John, Uma, Dinu, Neel and Manju, Arjun and Kishan Singh. And Jaya Rajkumar’s art historian granddaughter, who makes almost an expected cameo appearance toward the end of *The Glass Palace*, and ties its loose ends together as best as she can perhaps only a historian can. The novel is, in some senses, an elegy for the diasporic condition that is a product of history that leaves behind kingdoms and palaces and moves, in the exilic mode, toward a near hopeless regeneration. But it is not the story of kings and queens; they merely provide the backdrop for Ghosh’s incisive historical sense—and sensibility.

The story spans more than a century in the history of the Sub Continent, people get involved in unexpected relationships across countries and cultures, wars are fought, rebellion quelled, political and ethical issues are debated, fortunes are made and lost. Ghosh reports everything accurately, thoughtfully—his precision backed up by meticulous research. Ghosh gives detail description about military manoeuvres, models of automobile and aircraft, drilling of oil, timber trade, food, clothing, every detail is historically specified. He gives vivid details about timber trade so accurately and he mentions about the tais; a small wooden structures even.

In Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and in *Sea of Poppies* the protagonists like Piya and Deeti try to fashion them ‘self’ with the contemporary culture. Through Piya’s ‘self’ is trained by the people in sundarabhans. She imbibes it into her ‘inner self’ and becomes responsible for
her destructive actions. In her fascination to train and churn a new ‘self’ from the incomprehensible cultural situation of America, she destroys her ‘inner self’.

In Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* Jaya as the narrator of the story trains her ‘self’ and explores into the history of Aung San Suu Kyi’s ‘self’. She studies the history of the making of her uncle Dinu. The history of her grand parents and her uncle is set against the history of partition and Independence of India. The self-exploration of Jaya, the grand daughter of Rajkumar into the ‘self’ of Aung San Suu Kyi the greatest freedom fighter of Burma proves to be a genuine critique about the social positions of women in the pre-Independent times.

Ghosh’s *Dancing in Cambodta, At Large in Burma* is the third essay in the book, “*At Large in Burma* is another study of the ‘self’ of Aung San Suu Kyi. She is reflected on the author’s three meetings. The way Suu Kyi has constructed her ‘self’, fashioning herself to the circumstances of Kings of Burma and the British is similar to the life of Queen Elizabeth who made her ‘self’ as the ultimate image of England. Suu Kyi learns the required intrigues to rule her nation almost undaunted by the destruction of her family life. Imbibing the machivellian spirit, she disallows the dominace of British, as well as her father’s opponents, by conquering the barrier of gender. Suu Kyi’s personal history becomes the history of her nation.

However, Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* also demands a serious elucidation from this perspective. The way Deeti tries to establish her ‘self’ against her
husband's brother and uncle and her husband's brother Chandan Singh's influence as well as Bhyro Singh her husband's uncle reflect the contemporary conditions in which women exploit and lead their lives. Deeti tries to make her own history of life by violating the rules of the society to make love and marry to an untouchable Kalua. She creates her 'self' in her own world of absolute love. Creating her own 'self', she becomes a victim of the treacherous society and its domination. Similarly, all the women characters in *Sea of Poppies* are after creating and promoting of their 'self' for example miss Paulette Lambert who created her own 'self'. She also acquires her 'self' by resisting the male domination and exploitation.

So, the attempts of all these women protagonists in finding, making and promoting their 'self' against the discriminating and unfavorable conditions of life is a new versions of history that subscribes to the propositions of New Historicism. The 'self' of all these protagonists demands New Historicists propositions of 'negotiation' and 'circulation'. The themes of Amitav Ghosh's novels undoubtedly mark the positions of 'Return to History or the Recovery of the Referent'. The untraced genuine history of the World is traced from the thematic representation of all these women protagonists of Amitav Ghosh.

All the novels of Amitav Ghosh have cross-cultural interactions. The definition of culture itself is divided in its significance, since the term is open to a variety of interpretations. (Raymond Williams *Culture and Society*, 1780-1950.254). But as Gerald Graff and Burce Robbins observes: "the conflict between culture in the anthropological sense and culture in the
normative sense leads to a thrifts way of using the term, one that refers neither to a people’s organic way of life nor to the normative values preached by leading intellectuals but to a battle ground of social conflicts and contradictions” (255). (Gerald Graff and Burce Robbins *Cultural Criticism Redrawing the Boundaries*, ed Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn. 1996:421).

It is this lived experiences of cultures that from the “textual sites” of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Imam and the Indian*. In his work, he foregrounds the experiences of a woman forced to confront her marginalization within his own (Indian) culture, while attempting to forge an identity with in alien (American, England) culture, both of which are entrenched in patriarchal ideology delineating Ghosh’s attempt at negotiating the cultural and ideological divides.

Amitav Ghosh provides for the contradictory interactions of culture, ideology, and identity. Deeti initially thinks that marriage would bring her freedom. She oscillates between fear and fantasy. Her notions of marriage are rather vague, derived as they are from the exaggerated art of Indian films, movie magazines advice, opinions on ‘Ladies magazines’.

In *Sea of Poppies* Deeti’s initial expectations of a change in her marriage status and in anticipation of new experiences invited states, Amitav Ghosh indicates the dilemmas of miserable conditions of the Indian woman whose social role, by tradition and customs, are defined by a patriarchy-encoded culture. As Sandra Gilbert Susan Gubar observes:
“Women in patriarchal societies have historically been reduced to metamorphosis” (7-8) (Sandra M.Gilbert and Sasan Gubar *The mad woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and The Nineteenth Century imagination*, 1979, 1984). Deeti is an object whose subjective self conforms to and is confirmed by male ideology and discourse.

Deeti, who has believed that she would be “free” to experience a life different and distanced from that exploited society which she left behind in India, finds her existence in nebulous, undefined social space that spoiled women paradoxically reinforces her indigenous cultural moorings. She is reminded of her “Indian ness” among the Americanized and British Indians. Marginalized by the patriarchy of Indian culture, Deeti is equally at sea in her “adopted” culture.

Meeting their own village friends in the Ibis, Deeti is struck by their fancy talk and social behaviour, so untypical of the Indians she knew in the Ibis, which is in Maurichious Island. Deeti’s sense of her own identity and marginality frames all of her responses to her new environment, which consists of generally of her own village Bhojipuri, mostly Bengalis the ethnography of Indians, Including “Americanized” Bengalis, who constitute “the experience of being abroad” is one of the many reversals of ideological positioning Ghosh employs in *Sea of Poppies*. Deed’s mistaking that she remarried to an untouchable in social circle of Indians for “Cultural experience” presents her from experiencing life on the outside that would shape her earlier imagination. However, after she eloped with an
untouchable person, she can neither negotiate the cultural barrier nor find a 
voice that answer in her miserable condition.

Deeti feels she is not of her own cultural group, afraid of her family 
members who seek her sign, and diffident about meeting her own people in 
the Ibis. She also spends most of her time isolated from the world outside. 
She observes women in the Ibis like Heera, Munia and who lead their 
complicated lives, who read and watch T.V. represent the trials and troubles 
of Indian women in contemporary Indian society. Gradually she gets 
herself isolated and seldom speaks to her second husband Kalua. While 
Kalua gets very close himself for her protection in the Ibis among her own 
family members. Deeti almost shrinks and shivers to vacuum. She develops 
illicit relationship with her family members of Bhojipur. However, Deeti 
has committed the ultimate sacrilege, the betrayal of her gendered Indian 
culture. “She was much more worse off than ever”. For Deeti the Ibis 
becomes the other reality. Her final unexpected betrayal of Bhyro Singh 
who is flogging her second husband Kalua without mercy.

Amitav Ghosh’s *The Imam and the Indian* also portrays multicultural 
theme. The characters are caught in the web of multicultural entanglements. 
Living with objectivity and compassion these immigrant characters mostly 
struggle for identity and commitment to life in the multicultural milieu of 
Afganistan, Bengal, Khabul, Burma and the beyond. We find most of the first 
generation migrants facing cultural dilemma and trying their best to retain 
cultural identity and cultural practices in their beliefs and values. John
McLeod in *Beginning Post-colonialism* observes, “these beliefs, traditions, customs, and values along with their “possessions and belongings” are carried by migrants with them when they arrive in “new places”. The clash between their values and beliefs of their own culture and concept of “home” and their beliefs baffle in old Egypt when Ghosh went for research. However, among the second generation these emotional links are loosened as we see in the life styles of old Egypt’s villagers.

Patriarchy, which is the ruling social system almost all over the world, ordains that woman’s place is the home; her role as a wife and mother is quite often synonymous with her total human existence. The term “family” derives from Latin “Famulus” which means a household slave and familia signifies the totality of slaves belonging to the one individual who is the male head, the limitation imposed on woman for her family function is not however confined to the West, despite the Latin Philological lineage. In India, in China, Greece and Rome, woman has always been relegated to background for her family roles and the task of civilization “has become more and more man’s business.” One therefore expects the presentation of women in literature, created and dominated by man, to be mere role-fulfillments.

In contrast to Europe, the Indian subcontinent has refused to evolve through successive stages of history and continued an archaic existence and this failure illustrated in the repeated political defeats, economic subjugation, marked sterility in the creative efforts in every field of human knowledge has led to a total ossification of the Hindu Psyche. The ancient modes and ideals
instead of undergoing revision and transformation in consonance with the changing time have tended to dominate the ethos in decadent forms. Therefore, the ever-obedient, every-suffering sita who ended her life in self-immolation has remained the dominant feminine archetype.

Since the totalitarian expertise in destroying the identity, the very soul of human being is now a recognized phenomenon, it should not shock us to see that women steam-rolled and flattened into the family roles tend to be dehumanized insofar as they are invariably stripped of all the individualizing traits of a sentient being. Shouri Daniels describes the “female incarnate” thus: “She has no shape or form. She is every thing or nothing. She is fluid. Pour her into any mould and she takes it... Ideals and principles lie outside her nature” (4). As she is the void, she becomes a being only insofar as she can be regarded as an object in relation to man who is of course the subject.

In Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land*, the Word “antique” which means “ancient” is deliberately used to portray woman as “antique” and in “antiquity,” woman as metaphor for “land,” is used. Woman as always passive and submissive like land.

Elaine Showalter in her theory of feminist criticism has talked about the analysis of women according to the three socio-cultural and psychological critical categories of Feminine, Feminist and Female-aesthetic. Feminine is the concept of womanhood, the traditional role of the woman, in relation to the patriarchal society where she is understood always in connection to the male. She has no identity of her own but is venerated as a mother in relation
to the father, as a sister in relation to her brother, as a wife in relation to her husband and as a daughter in relation to her father.

According to Elaine Showalter, “In the Feminist phase or the winning of the vote, women are historically enabled to reject the accommodating postures of femininity and use literature to dramatize the ordeals of wronged womanhood” (2). Feminist is the concept of the theory that they are fighting for their rights, trying to break from the ideological form. Feminist was a stance or tone of women that strives for the recognition of their rights and the fight for their identity as individuals in the society.

According to Elaine Showalter, “In the Female phase women reject both imitation and protest-two forms of dependency and turn instead to female experience as the source of an autonomous art”(3). Female is the concept of the theory that conveys woman is an individual. The movement towards the understanding of woman as a female, as power, as an erotic symbol of desire is the recognition given to her maturity.

In the novel In an Antique Land, the presence of woman is not felt in most parts of the novel and if present, woman is always mentioned in relation to the male. The names of all the women characters are not mentioned. One of the women characters whose name is mentioned is Ashu-Ben Yiju’s wife. Ben Yiju married Ashu who, according to Goitein, was ‘probably beautiful.’ Ashu is not mentioned anywhere else in the entire corpus of Ben Yiju’s documents, although her children figure in it frequently. BenYiju did not once refer to her in his letters or jottings.
Busaina, Khamees’s sister’s introduction is physical. She is mentioned a tall and sweet looking. She is referred to have left her husband and moved back to Nashawy with her children. Although she had given her husband two fine, healthy children, the two of them had never really got on. They had quarreled all the time and in the end things had come to such a pass that her husband had announced that he was going to marry again. She and her husband used to quarrel all day long because she had to have her way in everything. He did not accept this, as he might have wanted a submissive woman as his wife, who would never decide anything by herself and would always depend on her husband for everything and accept his decisions.

Khames’s wife did not have children, and having failed to father any children, he had taken a second wife, but with no result. His wife had walked off in a rage, shouting to the world that it was his fault that he was childless, not hers. He does not accept that it is because of his fault that he is childless as hinted by his first wife and goes on to take a second wife, but with no result. Amm Taha says that he uses Hoopoe’s blood for a spell for women who cannot bear children. It signifies that it was considered that if a man could not father children it would only because of his wife’s fault.

Ben Yiju’s daughter name is not mentioned whereas his son’s name Surur is mentioned. This indicates that women were not considered important—even to mention their names. Ben Yiju’s daughter is mentioned in his letters as “I have left a daughter, his sister.” The wives of Imam are mentioned. They are identified as Imam’s first wife and Imam’s second wife.
Sakkina, Shaikh Musa’s wife, is portrayed as a shy woman. She was so shy to answer the author that Ahmed had to speak for her. She was very young and she was a fraction of her husband’s age.

For many of the women characters their physical appearance and their clothes speak for them, as is the case with the three women in sheikh Musa’s house—one in the first bloom of her adolescence with a gentle, innocent face and a rosy complexion. She was pale, pretty, and self-possessed young woman, dressed in a long, printed skirt, the other was dark and thickest, and she was wearing a black fustan and the author goes on to say that her clothes and her bearing spoke of a college, or at least a high school education. The author knocks at the door of Ustaz Sabry’s house and a woman dressed in the severe black robes of an elderly widow. She is described as a thin lady with thin, fine-boned cheeks. The identity of these women is physical. Women are also portrayed as objects of entertainment. The girl dancer mentioned in Nashawy was young, dressed in a simple, printed cotton dress, with a long scarf tied around her waist whose dance was a source of entertainment to the people gathered.

Most of the women characters perform the duties of a servant. The two women in Shaikh Musa’s house come into the room carrying a pair of trays loaded with food, Sakkina appears in the doorway and gives Hasan a tray with three glasses of tea on it. Shaikh Musa’s wife ushers the guests into the guestroom, showing them the way with a kerosene lamp and goes back to bring some tea and food, later she gives the lamp a final scrub and opens the
door to show another room. The women carry food for their men out to the fields. Imam’s first wife brings in a tray of tea, and women walk towards the town balancing baskets of vegetables on their heads. These women are nameless and perform functions.

Abu-Ali would always berate his wife or roar abuse at her. In another context, a vendor says that he would rather divorce his wife than sell the fruits for a lesser price in the market. Here women have been portrayed as a commodity. The other women characters mentioned in the novel are Ahmed’s mother, Nabeel’s mother, Ismail’s mother, Ali’s mother, Amm Taha’s first wife and his second wife. To conclude, Amitav Ghosh is being provocative, he is drawing attention to this antiquated attitude of the patriarchal society towards women.

The natural school of criticism that comes to the fore to analyse the themes of Amitav Ghosh’s novels is Feminist literary criticism. It has circumscribed the contemporary classifications of First World Feminism, second World Feminism, third world Feminism, Fourth world Feminism and also Dalit Feminism. The radical expansion in the definitions of Feminism has covered extensive and variable aspects in the lives of women. From the contemporary understanding, Feminism tries to analyze the social positions and representations of women in colonized countries and western locations. It has also raised number of conceptual, methodological problems involved in the study of representation of gender. Therefore, the conceptual clarity is required in interrogating these novels in the light of Feminism.
John McLeod in *Beginning Post-colonialism* (2000) says that first world Feminism is confined to Europe, America and Australia. Second World Feminism is confined to Soviet Union and communist allies Feminism. Third World Feminism is confined to the Africa and under developed South Asian Countries. Though this is an unhappy generalization, it has proved the limitations of the first and former classifications of Feminism. In order to bring in the legitimacy to the classifications in Feminism, Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherford have introduced the concept of ‘double colonization’ in *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post Colonial Women’s Writing* (1986). This refers to the ways in which women have experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. This is obviously applicable in the social position of Asian women as they continue to suffer from caste and gender discrimination. Critically examining the limits of First World Feminism, Gayathri Spivak Chakravarthy in her seminal essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ in *Colonial Discourse and post-colonial theory* (Williams and Chrisman 1988) brings in the methodological approach to the experiences of third world women. Apart from these discontinuities, one needs to acknowledge the emergence of South Asian Feminism in relation to the increasing presence of immigration from South Asian countries to the West. South Asian Feminism examined the existential problems of South Asian women in the West. Another pertinent classification of Feminism is Native-Aboriginal-Dalit women’s Feminism addressed as ‘Fourth World Feminism.’
Native women of America, Canada, Aboriginal women of Australia and Dalit Women of India are addressed as ‘Fourth World Feminism.’ As Native-Dalit Population is addressed as ‘Fourth world, Feminism related to these women is considered as Fourth world Feminism. Fourth World is the term, which coined by Manuel George and M. Posluns in the Fourth World: an Indian Reality (1974). Noel Dyck in his book Indigenous Peoples and the Nations: ‘Fourth World’ Politics in Canada, Australia and Norway (1992) provided the political consolidation of Native American, Native Canadian, Australian Aboriginal and Maoris of Newzealand. Gradually the term found its wider application by circumscribing women and Dalits of India as part of Fourth World. Feminism of Asian women and South Asians is also considered as ‘Fourth world Feminism.’

It is in the light of these perceptions of Feminism the themes of the novels of Amitav Ghosh like Dancing in Combodia at Large in Burma, In an Antique Land, The Imam and the Indian, The Hungry Tide, The Glass Palace and Sea of Poppies 2008 should be analyzed. Dancing in Combodia at Large in Burma, In an Antique Land, and The Hungry Tide thematically stand for South Asian Feminism as they take deal with the existential problems of immigrant women in the West. The Glass Palace and Sea of Poppies represent third World Feminism as they take us into the pre and Post-colonial times of India. The changing social transmission of India is viewed from the Feminist perspective. Sea of Poppies 2008 sets the tone for the Fourth world
Feminism as it has emphasized the theme of Dalit’s betrayal, exploitation, plight and emancipation.

Feminist Criticism was the direct product of the Women’s movement of 1916. Because Feminism has become a vital aspect in literature in contemporary society and the female perspective, expressed through women’s writing of all kinds is considered to be more than a valuable connective to an all male view of the universe. In exploring the question what is it to be woman lie the history of mankind: “History of mankind is the history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man towards woman having indirect object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her.” (10) (Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions of the First Women’s Rights Convention In America, Seneca Falls, 1848). It is perceived that the very subjection of women is consolidated by religion. The Holy Bible holds such observations and perceptions: “Wives submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. (Ephesians, 5:22) The Holy Bible). This concept of women consolidated by Christianity affected their status for centuries. Gradually women lost the right to control their lives and as a result, they were deprived not only of human rights but also of humanity.

Literacy spread rapidly and women began to utilize the power of the pen. Betty Frieday, the mother of Modern Feminism with the publication of Feminine Mystique (1963) initiated this new change. The new women’s movement expanded into a commanding political force. “Women are an oppressed class . . . We are exploited as sex objects” (42). This is obvious in
the life of Deeti in *Sea of Poppies* (2008) Deeti is also shown by Amitav Ghosh as breeder of domestic servant. So like this women are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, our prescribed behavior is enforced with threads of physical violence” (Lisa Turtle. *Encyclopaedia of Feminism*, (42).

Feminist writings were of crucial interest to the Post-colonial discourse for two major reasons. First, both patriarchy and imperialism could be seen to exert different forms of domination over those subordinate to them. Because of this, it was important for the experiences of women under the patriarchal influence to come out to the forefront and expose the undue cruelty beheld on them by men. It was necessary for the women to oppose this male dominance over them. We observe that women continued to define the borders of the community, class and race. They tried to exert feminism in their works. Though the writers try to depict the women as strong and focused in their vision to succeed in lives, they were, however, ablest to succeed in their lives only in the space allotted to them by the men.

The protagonists in the most of the contemporary novels belonged to the third world of feminism. These protagonists were exposed to the changed socio-cultural situation. Traveling in contemporary situation has facilitated the third world women for empowerment. The women, once they became mobile, automatically tended to make themselves dynamic and in turn became agents responsible for social change.
‘Traveling’ in its general understanding is the action executed by men. It is related to the acquirement of knowledge. Travelers are always men. Their journeys have always changed the discourse of the world. The literature evolved out of the travelers is also patriarchal in perception. The accounts of the travelers to India like Al Berune, Fahien, Huien Tsang, Morcopolo, Nicolokantin etc have offered a very different version of Indian history, which stood in negation with the official version of history. The history and literature created by the travelers though had its specific distinction, is not devoid of male perspective. To subvert this perception, third world women writers make their women protagonists to travel across the globe. Every journey initiates a new vision and creates a ‘new self’ in the lives of the women characters presented by third world women writers. It is this perception that almost decides the theme in The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide and also Sea of Poppies to the greater extent and in other novels to the lesser extent. The traveling enables women to overcome the obstacles like gender, class, race, caste etc.

The Feminist writers tried to stamp their authority in a male dominated environment as best as it is possible to them. It was a very difficult path, as the women had to break through years of male dominance, taboos and beliefs that had heavily impregnated the society. In addition, critics argued that colonialism operated very differently for women and for men. This was so because women were subjected to both general discrimination as colonial
subjects and specific discrimination as women addressed as 'double colonization.'

It is from these perceptions one should view the contribution of women writers of the nineties like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Gita Mehta, Gita Hariharan, Bharati Mukherjee, Uma Vasudev and Arundhati Roy. Undoubtedly, it is understood that they have perceived a good job in exposing the fallacies of the male-dominated society and letting the public beware of the various atrocities heaped upon women who dared to cross the various rigid boundaries that were laid on them by society. The novels of Amitav Ghosh like *The Glass Palace, Dancing in Combodia at Large in Burma, In an Antique Land, The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* 2008 have beyond a shadow of doubt, been successful in opening the reader's mind and heart to view the life of a woman from a women's point of view.

The debate in several colonized societies over the deleterious effects of gender or colonial oppression on women's lives continues to hold its significance in the analysis of the society. Feminism, like post Colonialism, is concerned with the ways to which representation and language were crucial in order to identify the formation and construction of subjectivity. Both for the patriarchal as well as the matriarchal community, language was crucial in order to identify formation and for the construction of subjectivity. Language subverts patriarchal power and brings more authentic forms for negotiating gender equality.
In a totally male dominated environment, it was a major effort for the women writers to expose what society called as the mechanics of patriarchy. To fight against the cultural mindset in men and women, one of the first things that these women writers did was to make their writings more eclectic. They began to write based on the findings and writings of other criticisms. This is vividly presented in these novels. Secondly, instead of attacking the male version of writing, they now decided to explore the nature the feminine world by trying to reconstruct the world of suppressed emotions. Lastly, attention was given to the need to bring about a new game of women’s writing in a way that, previously neglected women writers were now given new prominence. Another critical issue that was handled by these women writers was the issue of ‘Style in language’. It was Jane Austin who devised a technique for writing that was perfectly natural, elegant and proper for the use of women writers. Women could now write in clauses that were linked in loose sequences, rather than balanced and patterned as used by male writers.

The women protagonists of Amitav Ghosh like Dolly, Piya, and Deeti and also Miss Paulette were trying to cement the prominence of women in a male dominated society. The observation of Deeti, in Sexual/Textual politics justifies the action executed by these women protagonists in these novels: The relationship of women like as mother, as wife, and as friend. These relationships are completely devalued; indeed, I have never come across a woman who does not suffer from the problem of not being able to resolve in harmony, in the present system. As per as Ghosh’s observation of Deeti is
concerned which finds illustration in the theme of *Sea of Poppies*. It is also observed that this is the theme of the relationship between mother Deeti and daughter Kabutri. Kabutri became victim of maternal apathy. Kabutri did not know what it was to be a child like.

Mother daughter relationship is very crucial and it is this relationship that helps the daughters over come the ambivalences and to gain confidence to go out into the World. Kabutri does not have a sympathetic shoulder to weep on. She could never share her feelings with Deeti. However, she yearned for affection, for some sign of a special concern. Though Deeti succeeds to marry a Dalit Kalua, she fails in securing any space for herself as well as for her daughter in the family or in the society. Being the victim of gender discrimination, she survives to acquire the intellectual heights of Bhyro Singh a high-caste Rajput.

It is injustice and inequality that tends to unravel the fact that feminism is the consequence of the culture or society shaped and governed by men to suit their needs and interests regardless of women’s basic needs and happiness. In her eventual realization, she understands that society is meant for the pleasure and profit of male sexuality and women need to fight against these things courageously. *Sea of Poppies* is perceived as Post-modern feminist novel that evokes sympathy for the condition of women in a particular cultural milieu.

*The Glass Palace*, which is a political novel, also depicts fate of Queen Supayalath and Thebaw with those of the country at large.
*The Glass Palace*, presents women characters, who represent the readers though not explicitly but rather implicitly the various differences between the ruling class and sub-altern class. To examine the novel from feminine discourse of the status of women in princely India, it conveys that even in the princely state a woman is more dependent on man and her marriage is even less a matter of personal choice. Marriage is a political arrangement in India. Since it is a patriarchal system women are innocent victims of it. One of the examples of this moribund tradition is the treatment meted out to a widow like Deeti who is ritually cursed herself by her own family members who assembled at her husband’s funeral in *Sea of Poppies* (158,177). The novel *Glass Palace* is set in the three South Asian countries Burma, India and the Malaysia, which share the history of colonialism. In the novel, the Burmese Queen represents the ruling class and Dolly represents the sub-altern class. In a way, the Queen could be categorized as the member of the ‘First world’ which ‘referred to the rich’ (BP: 174), bourgeois class in the ‘Third World’ frame.

Normally people think that when a women rules the country, the empowerment of women will take place. Margaret Thatcher and Indira Gandhi, the two prominent women leaders ruled the great nations, Britain and India. Even in their rule, women suffered the problems of inequality, gender discrimination and the male oppression in the society. Queen Supayalath was not far from them. She was the dynamic ruler of Burma. Powe politics was everything for her. She did nothing towards the upliftment of the Burmese
women. She recruited many girls in the palace only for servitude. All of these girls were orphans who had neither families nor friends.

*Sea of Poppies* the novel from feminine discourse of the status of women in India is revealed that a woman is more dependent on man like Deeti for her second marriage. For example, there is a superstitious tradition of *Sati* (Pyre); that Deeti the central protagonist is ritually cursed herself in order to escape from the cruelty of her own brother-in-law’s lust. Fortunately, she was rescued from *Pyre* (Sati) by Kalua. *Sea of Poppies* tries to redefine the tradition. The true satis is not woman who jumps into the funeral pyre of her husband but one who has will to continue when the familiar world fragments around her. (158,177).

In this sense, Deeti is true sati, because she is whole-heartedly ready for sati, in order to escape from sexually harassment of her own husband’s brother. I think she thought, “It is better to die a celebrated death rather than to exploit sexually by Chandan Singh” (158). Her own husband’s brother, to Succumb to all kinds of pressures and trials are exploited at significant junctures in Deeti’s life. It made her stand apart from the rest of her contemporaries and the dignity with which she manages to suffer the dignities imposed on her and maneuvers herself through the rigmarole of political maze that surrounds her. According to Kalua, though he is an untouchable and downtrodden, he did not frighten for the upper Caste people’s harassment and also he tried to with stand on his will. Here in this point of view a man cannot govern unless he confronts his fear. Another major influence on him are
Zachary the pilot guide and Nob Kissin who consoled him at the time of flogging but who also passes on him and his nationalistic ideas on them at the judgment.

Deeti’s story is the story of unwanted Indian wife who in spite of her humiliations at the hands of her second husband proves to be a good wife in the society. Even before her’s first husband’s death, she is also tried to be good and loyal wife though she is sexually harassed by her own brother-in-law Chandan Singh who always tried to exploit her sexually and mentally.

From the beginning of her arrival as a bride into her husband’s house, she was utterly abandoned by her husband, because he was an impotent, an afeemkhor and an addict of opium, as well as she was also raped by her brother-in-law in her very first wedding night, she was conceived by a daughter named Kabutri. From then onwards she was being sexually tortured, harassed and exploited by her family members. In the same way, Chandan Singh used to tease her like why should you waste your looks and your youth on a man who cannot enjoy them. Besides the time is short while your husband is still alive – if you conceive a son while he is still living, he will be his father’s rightful heir. Hukam sing’s land will pass to him and no one will have the right dispute it, otherwise my brother’s land and his house will become mine on his death. So that if you keep me happy, you well be well looked after. So, like this Deeti suffered a lot from her own family members. When she becomes a mother, she worked very hard for the sake of her daughter. She also worked hard in poppy fields as well as in the house.
She always stood by her lame husband up to his cart and factory. She also maintained rigid behavior from her brother-in-law.

Thus, she deprived her of the rights of maternity, just as her brother-in-law had raped her, of the dignity of being a wife. The very moment of great shame comes to her that when she discovers that she was conceived by her husband’s brother’s sexual plot. However, proves herself as a strong woman and goes to great lengths to as a strong woman to overcome from her brother-in-law’s sexual harassment. She has a mind of her own. She rejected her mother’s in-law advice saying that you would become Draupadi of Mahabharata. Because there is the inner meaning of her mother-in-law. Later Deeti came to know the meaning of the words of her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law and Bhyro singh, Uncle of her husband have tried to create a right impression on the thing, which had committed by Chandan Singh in her very first wedding night. Actually, any Indian woman cannot agree to have polluted wedded first night, but never allow a strange man even to touch to put his arm around her body. As the Deeti heard when her husband Hukam Singh said that opium is my first wife, then her heart and mind have been sunk and all her hopes were dashed to the ground. Later onwards Chandan Singh have started black mailing her. However, it is a life and death problem for Deeti.

Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* mainly concerns Piya Roy who is an American Cytologist. Piya’s fiery independent spirit had forced him to do research on river dolphins so that she could be able to leave to Sunderban’s
Mangroves, the place she visited and the place she detested. Her frustration for sudden demise of Fokir, through uncongenial atmosphere at the remote area of Sundarbans in a heavy Cyclone made her desperate. Piya cannot tolerate with sudden demise of Fokir in a heavy storm. Already Kanai Dutt loved Piya when they met together in Calcutta railway station. However, when he came to know that she loved Fokir, he is frustrated towards Piya even at the time of seeking Fokir in the storm. He also tried to stop Piya to go forward for seeking Fokir, but she did not heed the voice of Kanai Dutt. However, all his attempts were failed.

However, Piya is ready to leave to America after the cremation of Fokir, but her love for him did not die (419). She is responsible for Tutel’s further life upto un ending suffering. Because she loved Tutel as she has the love of Fokir. She felt happy for the under standing of Moyana and Neelima for establishing the trust for the small children. Piya with her trodden youth, oppressed existence and frustrated dreams should drift towards Tutel, and his mother. She transgresses the “Love Laws” as a representative of the Fokir’s son. Tutel, a child of broken home; when Fokir died by the Cyclone at the very young. “A viable disable age”, Tutel was nearly five years old boy. Piya had seen the sufferings of his mother. It is the memory that Piya could never put out of her mind, and ruined her conjugal life. She “drifted into sundarban mangroves like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport” (424).
The feminine quality of the novel *Sea of Poppies* is also evident in some of the small but authentically feminine actions of some of the characters. Deeti had been cornered by her own brother, and husband, betrayed by her brother-in-law, insulted by the Bhyro singh uncle of her husband and rendered destitute by the people of her own family members. “She has no right any where- as daughter, wife, sister and citizen” (177,191).

It is pertinent to observe that the novelists have succeeded in superseding themselves. They celebrated liberty of women as a thematic presentation. The protagonists in these novels embrace themselves in a claustrophobic fixed system of beliefs. In the process of social maturation, the protagonists chum out new philosophy of life. Death is certain and plays a decisive role in the theme of all the Amitav Ghosh novels. For example, in *Sea of Poppies* Deeti’s life is a long tryst with life and death. To Deeti apparition of fate of Shani appears to present itself in a myriad forms. Deeti has been allowed to use all the devices to an organism to preserve itself. Finally, trials and troubles occurred in a concrete shape.

In Ghosh’s *The Glass palace*, in the story “Temporary Matter”, Rajkumar and Dolly tried to avoid each other after the death of their first son. First, the arrival of the any son was a symbol of the fruitful love for Dolly and Rajkumar, but the death of their son marks the death of their love. It also marks their love and sensitivity for life in general. In Ghosh’s novel *Sea of Poppies*, the death of heroine’s husband gives us an entry into the novel. In Ghosh’s novel *The Hungry Tide* the heroine Piya Roy came to sunderbans for
research on river dolphins. She experienced the sudden demise of Fokir in the Cyclone, with this, every one left her alone to face the realities. In the novels, like *Sea of Poppies*, *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide* Ghosh suddenly thrusts us into a sad depressing situation like death. The sad demises of Hukam Singh, Fokir and Neel. The fragmentation was so skillfully done and emotions played with so well, that the reader gets totally enthralled by these books. Ghosh’s skillful handling of the subjects regarding the death and life go hand in hand.

Death is as much a part of life as life itself is, so the necessary intermingling of the two concepts gives the reader the ability to deal with both these concepts. It also gives the reader the ability to deal with both these concepts calmly. For example Piya’s life, though short, was full of run and adventure. The author had vividly described how the people of characters used to go to history house to have fun. As a result, Ghosh could have conveyed, so many things by having history as a background. So the reader feels so overwhelmed because he or she had the feelings that have taken for granted.

All these novels of Amitav Ghosh like *Dancing in Cambodia at Large in Burma*, *In an Antique Land*, *The Imam and the Indian*, *The Glace Palace*, *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* subscribe to the aspects of narratology and carry the innovative techniques of narration. The themes of all these novels are under Post-colonialism in between the past and present with history interface contemporary issues and methods of narration.
The theme of *The Glass Palace* and *The Imam and the Indian* veers between pre-Independent (past) and (present) Post-Independent situation. *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* and *In an Antique Land* also hold the similar thematic oscillation. *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* effectively convey the flip flaps in narration of all these above six theories.

Another pertinent critical aspect to be considered is Althusserian reading of these novels. Louis Althusser, a Algerian Marxist critic also known as structural Marxist critic in revisioning Marxist Interpretation of literature talked about the ideological structures and ‘repressive structures’ in his popular essay ‘Ideology’ state Apparatuses: Notes toward and Investigation’ in his book *Lenin and Philosophy of other Essays* (1980). He considers ‘Family’ and ‘Educational Institutions’ as ideological structures. They are equally oppressive and exploitative like Govt Structures (Army, Judiciary, Political party system etc.). It is pertinent to observe that the lives of women are exploited in vortex of ideological structures. Marriage and family are the institutions that bind the lives of women and disallows them from liberation just like Deeti, Piya, and Paulette.

However, women protagonists in *Sea of Poppies, The Hungry Tide, The Glass Palace* and *The Imam and the Indian* are the victims of ideological structures and as well as male dominated society. In their struggle to liberate themselves from the ‘ideological structures’, they confront the repressive structures of the society. They become sacrificial beings in the process of liberating and establishing alternative structures of living. It is from this
perspective Althusserian reading paves way for Marxist Feminist reading of these works. Marxist Feminism which is particular in considering ‘personal identity’ with ‘class identity’ becomes the justified critical application. Lillian Robison a Marxist Feminist critic in her work *Sex, Class and Culture* (1978) identifies the systematic exclusion of women in every cultural production. The themes of the six works reveal how the women protagonists struggle from the systematic exclusion.