Conclusion

The research initiated here began with the discussion of narratology as theory and narratological aspects in the novels of Ghosh. It is an attempt to study the presence of different narrative techniques in the selected novels of Ghosh. It is further an endeavour to analyze various narrative techniques that helped the novelist to carve a way for unknown, undignified, ignored and dispossessed group and to shed light on their personal saga of life at the vast backdrop of history.

From this detailed study of the narrative techniques deployed by Ghosh it is quite clear that novel in the hands of Ghosh as literary genre has witnessed significant experimentation and innovation. In his recent novels Ghosh has evolved markedly different from his previous novels. For being a historian, a traveller, a journalist and an anthropologist, the genre of Indian novel has grown in the hands of Ghosh in a very different manner. It has emerged as a particular body of imaginative discourse mainly occupied with human predicaments, revisiting historical and cultural hegemony. To achieve the imprints of Indian and continent’s sensibility, Ghosh has remained busy in achieving formal decolonization of the novel. He has used varied aspects of narratology with the motive to make the novel free from colonizers’ sensibilities, ideologies and the way they used these narrative devices. By using different narratological techniques, Ghosh as a novelist has contested and tested the limits of the novel as genre on the following grounds:

i. Amalgamation of different genres and blurring all divisions—generic, aesthetic, literary, political, social, cultural and national.

ii. A quest to develop a report with colonized audience focusing on the histories of the countries like Bangladesh, Burma, China and particularly India.
iii. An intricate amalgamation of Indian oral narrative tradition with new
generic variety of polyphonic narration.

iv. A preference for indigenous or local English.

v. A sense of cosmopolitanism and contemporariness along with
consciousness of individual which is there at the centre of the novels.

vi. A great urge for complete freedom from the limitation of the novel form
and for cultivation of new artistic and narrative devices that may enable
the novelist to capture the atmosphere of particular time and place.

vii. A conscious use of narratological techniques to make novel an adequate
vehicle of his vision.

Different narratological devices in the novels have been instrumental in
projecting these compelling concerns and govern Ghosh’s craft of fiction. The present
study is an endeavour to analyze and unravel the various narratological elements and
aspects that underlie in constituting Ghosh’s novels. It also makes an effort to reveal how
these narratological features and elements can be construed—how do they work, what do
they reveal, what are the implicit motives and meanings hidden in the narrative? The
study has examined and investigated various issues and problems in relation to
narratological aspects such as, the narrative voice, omniscient narrator, reliable and non-
reliable narrator, time and space, ellipsis, analepsis, prolepsis, gap, delay, the temporality
of narration, etc. What is true about genre of novel is that it is a unique and highly
efficient mode of narrative which expresses and raises many issues. Ghosh expresses his
love for fiction as he says: “. . . you see this is exactly what I love about novel. It allows
you that range, those different forms of exploration” (*The Hindu Literary Review*
Sunday, Sept. 3, 2006).

A conscious depiction of the narrative strategies in the works of Ghosh confirms
the need to read and understand his novels from diverse perspectives. Ghosh’s novels
portray undocumented past and have sincere concern for ordinary, unhistorical figures of
the past—the suppressed, the subjugated, the colonized and the subalterns. It is from the
points of view of these oppressed people that Ghosh espouses the need to see the world
over-looked by traditional historiography, and different narratological devices in his
hands become subservient in portraying different points of view.

To draw conclusion about the work of such a prolific writer like Ghosh or to
analyze the vast canvas of his narratives is like showing mirror to the mighty sun.
Moreover, the work of a writer who is in continuous process of writing cannot be
concluded as the unknown is yet to flow out of Ghosh’s writing desk and the last sequel
of the *Ibis* trilogy novel, *Flood of Fire* is yet to be published. Keeping all these
developments in view and also noticing Ghosh’s own artistic sensibility and his views
which give his novels an open-endedness that resist cloture, drawing any sort of
conclusion appears to be a futile exercise as much is yet to be teeming out from this
master’s mighty and miraculous mind. He himself asserts at the end of *The Circle of
Reason*, “Hope is the beginning” (457) as he doesn’t believe in any final chord.

The discussion in the earlier chapters reveals that a narratological reading of
Ghosh’s novels opens up new perspectives in literary criticism. The reader is able to
understand his characters who express their distinctive world views and ideologies. In
traditional novels the authorial voice regains to be supreme, having complete control
over all the characters but in Ghosh’s narratives the authorial voice is not heard as
dominant one, but as an uninvolved, unprejudiced and harmonious reviewer or
commentator, equal with other narrators neither on high nor on low position but reveling
equal status.

In Ghosh’s novels the third person unlimited omniscient narrator mostly narrates
the story. His works are highly and diligently researched works, so the narrators in his
narratives are mostly reliable. An omnipresent third person unlimited narrator narrates more than what he experiences actually in comparison to limited and reliable narrator and in Ghosh’s narratives the omnipresent third person unlimited narrator is on equal footing with reliable narrator.

After the introductory chapter, the theory of narratology is discussed in second chapter. Narrative voice, as an important aspect of narratology, is discussed in Chapter three. With the help of different narrative strategies, Ghosh’s fiction reveals the facts from unexpected charters and horizons. This establishes Ghosh’s crafts of narration which provides credibility to all opposite viewpoints or ideologies equally. With the presentation of multiple viewpoints and different representations of lives of various characters through different kinds of narrators, Ghosh’s readers are engrossed in different aspects of life and begin to feel the commonalities all human beings share. The fact is that his characters are human beings who are full of flaws, not the god like creatures. In Sea of Poppies, Deeti being highly revengeful, drugs her mother-in-law (who later dies due to over dose of drugs) just to know the truth of her wedding night. She runs off with Kalua, leaves her daughter to deprive her of mother’s love, affection and care and to face the unknown destiny ahead. Here the implied reader can never be on Deeti’s side. In The Circle of Reason, Zindi grabs Jeevanbhai Patel’s shop very cunningly. In The Glass Palace, Rajkumar exploits the Indian and Burmese labours and amasses wealth by unfair means. Piya, in The Hungry Tide, uses poor Fokir for her project and inadvertently exploits him but later regrets and develops a feeling of guilt at Fokir’s death. But, despite all these flaws, all the characters are unique in themselves for their unique qualities of confidence and conscientiousness to understand the quintessence of life.
Polyphonic novels depict contradictory viewpoints expressed through multiple narrators and characters. Ghosh uses the polyphonic narrative method to depict the contradictions that prevail in the society. In *Problem of Dostoevsky* Bakhtin observes:

Dostoevsky’s work has been broken down into a series of contradictory philosophical stances, each defended by one or other character. Among these also figure, but far from the first place, the philosophical view of the author himself. (*Problem* 05)

In polyphonic novels the freedom of character is important and they freely express their views and ideologies. *The Hungry Tide* presents the opposite voices of Piyali Roy on one side, and Kanai, Fokir and the villagers on the other side related to killing of tigers in the village. In *River of Smoke* there are different voices that emerge on the issues of opium war and opium trade. In *The Glass Palace* varied voices, conflicting opinions and contradictory ideologies are represented through the Collector and his wife; Rajkumar and Uma; Dolly and Rajkumar. *Sea of Poppies*, a saga of human exploitation—presents the suppressed voices of indentured migrants like Deeti, Kalua and others on one side, and the thunderous and authoritative commands of those on dominant positions like British colonizers—the Captain, the Judge and Mr. Burnham as well as the locals like—Hukam Singh, Bhyro Singh and the Jamindars—on the other side. In *River of Smoke* there are British officials, Indian and Chinese traders on one side and on the other, there are King Charles, Commissioner Lin and the Chinese Emperor representing opposite voices on the issue of surrender of opium. These examples from different novels feature Ghosh’s narrative strategies of using polyphony, different narrative voices and imparting proper time, space and freedom to each character to express his / her ideology and feeling.

There are not only outer conflicts but inner conflicts as well. The presence of omnipresent narrator, stream of consciousness, interior monologue also causes
polyphony in the narrative. The presence of these narrative devices helps the characters in finding their inner voices. This gives the answers to the inner conflicts these characters mostly fall trap into.

Amitav Ghosh imparts sufficient time and space to female characters by using the techniques of point of view and polyphony as narrative strategies in his novels. Different voices of women characters are presented in the chapter ‘Narrative Voice’. This shows his innate sense of observation of characters that signifies his strong sense of gender awareness. This is an effort to give voice to marginal section of society. Ghosh’s fiction portrays women from all strata of society—housewives, working women, doctors, prostitutes, tantrics, villagers, servants, slaves and even the Queen of Burma. Deeti, Paulette, Piya, Moyna, Kusum, Zindi, Mrs Verma, and Kulfi are some of the women characters who are capable and insightful enough to understand their surroundings. They are not mere puppets in the hands of others rather play their roles equally and assertively. They are not mute but quite vocal and volatile. They are keen observers and ardent thinkers who have the aptitude and vision to form images, inferences and understand complex discursive formations. In the larger process of struggle they make their presence felt and fulfill the roles assigned to them.

Ghosh’s novels reveal his characters’ worldwide movements. He himself has a passion for travel and has visited and lived in various locations of the world. This has helped him to get knowledge of various cultures and languages. His own experience of travelling appears to have direct impact on the representation of the experience of immigrants. Sometimes different voices of the migrated and the dispossessed show the uncertainties of their future life in the foreign lands. Though their insecurity and alienation do not attach them to the foreign places yet they strive for their sources of
happiness, joy, satisfaction and peace through the ardent faith in their beliefs and recourse to their folk culture while enjoying togetherness with their companions.

In 1981, *Midnight's Children* revolutionized the Indian fiction scenario as Rushdie, in his novels, decolonized English language by domesticating it. In the West the academia, the readers were awe struck to see the confidence, fluency and ease with which an Indian writer handled a foreign language. Ghosh, like Rushdie, has done a lot of experimentation to decolonize English language in order to express the cultural distinctiveness of different historical periods in India and other places. The language used in different novels of Ghosh draws much attention of the reader who has to put extra efforts while grasping different meanings from different languages, jargons, argot, pidgin, etc. This reflects the seamless interweaving of history and fiction, public events and private lives which find reflection in Ghosh novels along with other post-colonial writers.

Ghosh has coined new words and new symbols taken from local cultural traditions to reflect indigenous socio-cultural practices. The most common and appropriate medium to give expression to the culture and tradition of a country is its language. Ngugi also defines the indivisible relationship between culture and language, “Language carries culture and culture carries particularly through orature and literature the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world” (*Decolonising*15). This is in opposition to the traditional monological narratives in which the author holds an omniscient position. As polyphonic narratives, Ghosh’s novels accommodate all the utterances of all the characters speaking different languages giving them equal status of that of the narrator.

The open-endedness is another essential and noticeable feature of Ghosh’s novel. Using polyphony, heteroglossia and open-endedness most of his novels do not reach a
finalizing point, however there remains a big question mark in the mind of the reader as the ideological tensions of life are left unanswered by leaving the gaps, delays, and absentees for the readers to construe the narrative in the manner they wish. Ghosh’s works can be seen very clearly in the context that Bakhtin gives. The polyphonic novels move towards inconclusiveness, unfinalisability and open-endedness. Bakhtin views that “it is not possible to say the final word about anything in human sphere whatever may be case in physical sciences” (Problems 166). He applauds Dostoevsky for determining his theory of fiction on this rationale. Bakhtin says about the endings of Dostoevsky’s novels:

> Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not been spoken. The world is open and free, and everything is still in the future and always be in the future (Problems 166).

These characteristic features of polyphonic novels are prevalent in Ghosh’s novels as he has not given any closure to his novels and goes for fundamental open-endedness and unfinalisability. Following Dostoevsky, Ghosh too gets unburdened by letting ideological tensions unresolved and leaving many ambiguities for the readers to interpret the way they want. It is reader’s privilege to interrogate and interpret the text in a truly polyphonic novel. In the end of The Circle of Reason each survived character moves in his own direction, disburdened of false dreams. Their new journey has the same elements of hopelessness, rootlessness and alienation pricking their conscience. Yet the last line of the novel is an ultimate example of positivity in life: “Hope is the beginning” (457), though nothing is solved or resolved here.

In The Hungry Tide, the main characters Piya and Kanai are again the displaced fellows though with certain visions but not certain future, as they decide to live forever
in Lusibari. What would be the result of such a life? The reader with curious minds may enjoy the food of thought while thinking what will happen next? What’s the logic of living such a displaced life? How much is it practical and feasible? The questions remain there for debate regarding the fate of the people left on the Ibis in the mid of their sea journey in *Sea of Poppies* and about the life of the people after the opium war in *River of Smoke*.

The open-endedness of Ghosh’s novels opens the narrative to numerous interpretations. The reader is always on the move with the writer and tries to build up the story along with him, finding his own distinct meanings in it. Most of the Euro-centric narratives generally lead to the ending where everything is finally resolved. Ghosh counteracts such European narrative traditions using ambiguity, suspense and open-endedness.

Ghosh doesn’t force the psychological connection of the events on the reader. But it is through various interpretations and varied experiences of the readers about his narratives that they initiate a change in their perspective. To reveal the inner self of the characters in his novels, Ghosh incorporates those narrative techniques that clearly reveal their inner psyche of the characters. Ghosh follows the great masters of narrative technique—Marquez, Proust, Satyajit Ray and Tagore. Like them, he is also innovative in all terms—narration, narrative voice, language, style, structure and dialogues. His readership is cosmopolitan. He believes in cosmopolitanism and that’s why he experiments with English language.

In Ghosh’s fiction the narrator or the second self of the author or the implied author performs a significant role in developing the fictional experience of the reader. The third person limited or unlimited omniscient point of view is important as it can develop a multi-layered tension of narration to the work of fiction. The omnipresent
narrator has an access to the thoughts and feelings of one or more characters. The reader is communicated about such thoughts and feelings through many narrative devices. Narrative distance, which is one such device, is determined in a fictional work through direct discourse, indirect discourse and free indirect discourse. In Ghosh’s novels all these three methods are used very frequently. It is through these methods that the narrator reaches the thoughts of a character. Free indirect method is used in abundance in his novels.

In this postcolonial and postmodern world, a plot with a clear cut beginning and ending, chronological sequence of events and the use of reliable and omniscient narrators can no longer be sufficient to present the point of view of colonized and oppress people. Ghosh’s novels possess not only the postmodernist characteristics, i.e. non-linearity, discontinuity and fragmentation but at the same time he follows Indian oral narrative tradition that provides background to his narratives expressing its complexity. Ghosh does not wish to be misread and misinterpreted.

Ghosh’s novels may also be called the hybrid products of all major trends in literature. These novels present post-colonial, post-modernist and existentialist strand simultaneously. Ghosh, though an ardent admirer of Indian oral narrative tradition with great intensity, still opens to all international currents available to him. While remaining rooted firmly in his native trends and traditions, Ghosh very playfully and convincingly synchronizes the postmodernist trends with the elements of oral narrativity. His novels follow the tradition of oral narrative which gives his novels a distinct sheen, splendour and structure. But this does not mean that his novels lack variety. His novels are as diverse in the treatment of narrative strategies as any of his contemporary Indian, Australian, African or European counterparts. This is clearly evident through the study of his novels which have divergent dimensions both thematically and technically.
In the past, the people used to take recourse to narratives and stories that played an important role in their lives. They used to share their feelings and unburden themselves from day-to-day life problems. These things kept them lively and active. Now this aim is fulfilled on a bigger platform i.e. novel. It is the reason that Ghosh’s narratives incorporate the vernacular languages thus showing great affinity with oral narratives in the past. He wants his narratives to recreate and restore the hybrid language; the language people spoke to its original power to present the true account and atmosphere of a particular period of history. By recreating the atmosphere of the past, Ghosh wants his readers to participate in his novels. He wants them to get absorbed in narrative actively. His readers are boosted to create the novel with him and to help in constructing the meaning.

Ghosh’s novels attempt impossible in the art of fiction writing. They transcend the most intrinsic attribute of craft of novel which is the sense of time, space and place. It is one of Ghosh’s achievements that he attempts to break away from conventional limits of novel form and broaden its scope, dimension and possibility. The conventional setting of the novel limits it to a particular locale and it essentially revolves around a sense of place. Locale of the novel presumes monolingual and mostly linked with homogeneous culture. Against certain fixed background or within framework of particular context the story line grows, events held, situations unfold and characters interact. But on the contrary, if sometimes the setting is suffused with multi-lingual, multi-cultural scenario, the novel may fail badly to present the spirit of the atmosphere or the mood—the essential components of the location. Ghosh’s narratives manage this balance in depicting the setting and the background.

In this age of globalization and revolution in the field of science and technology, the conventional methods of writing appear insufficient to reflect the new experiences of innovative minds and the new scenario that modern era has contoured. The main
exponents of traditional fiction—chronology, linearity, and coherence are replaced by incoherence, non-linear and fragmented narration. In his essay “Petrofiction: The Oil Encounter and the Novel” Ghosh presents this very dilemma and limitation of the novel form and hopes for the cultivation of an artistic device that may enable the novelist to capture the atmosphere of the place that is no place at all but “crowded, multilingual, culturally polyphonic presence of the Arabian peninsula . . . ”(Imam 89). Thus, the expression ‘Petrofiction’ is the representation for such novelistic technique that succeeds in breaking limitations of sense of place and Ghosh emerges to be a pioneer in invading this new genre. In this sense the word “Petrofiction” metaphorically represents transcendence from the limiting aspect of sense of place that limits and restricts novelistic imagination of a novelist.

As also discussed in previous chapters, it is quite evident that Ghosh’s earlier novels The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines and The Calcutta Chromosome are in sharp contrast to his later novels The Hungry Tide, The Glass Palace, River of Smoke and Sea of Poppies in terms of their form and narrative devices used therein. In his earlier novels the structure and the plot are highly complex due to subtle manipulation of time and space. But in his later novels there is a trend towards simplification of the plot. These novels simplify the management of time and space as compared to the first three novels of Ghosh, which have spiral movements and double helix patterns.

The aspects of time and space, which Ghosh deals very thoughtfully in his novels, help him to present variety of characters in diverse and exotic geographical settings that change with each of his work. Most of Ghosh’s novels begin in medias res. So, he has to go back to reveal the past story in flashback. To interconnect past with the present the writer resorts to narrative strategies like memory, recall, flashback, interior monologue, stream of consciousness etc. which have become integral and important
aspects of narrative strategies. The writer rewrites the past interconnecting it with the present to recover and retrieve the early days.

Like other Indian narratives, Ghosh’s novels also reveal a tendency to root the text of the narrative in space rather than time. The spatial narrative is favourite in Indian narrative tradition. In European tradition of story telling the major emphasis is on time. The plot evolves through time. Little attention is given to spatial dimension in European narratives. The concept of time in Indian narratology has its base in the Vedas which advocates that time is eternity. There is no eagerness to locate the events in calendar years. In the Puranas time is regarded to be pre-historic, old and ancient; long-long ago the time of one’s imagination. In Ramayana the places like Ayodhya, Lanka, etc. are important locations as the events of the story take such a trajectory. Fourteen years of Rama’s exile are not meticulously accounted for nor do they follow any calendar. In Mahabharata also most of the parts of India are brought within the compass of the narrative but the stretch of time from beginning to wherever the course of events leads us is left vague; almost magical. The structure of the Indian narratives mostly admits interruption, discontinuities, digressions, gaps, jumps and deviations. In their time and space manipulation, Ghosh’s novels also observe these tendencies.

According to the 19th century European novels, narrative is a continuous account of all the events covered by the story. The story line is believed to be very important. It is meant to maintain the illusion that nothing is left out. The reader is made to believe that the account of all the events given by the narrator / author is reliable, complete and comprehensive. The story line has a linear concept of time and follows the biographical account of the main protagonist or hero. It also admits a beginning, middle and end. But at the same time, one can also observe that as early as Cervantes’ Don Quixote or Sterne’s Tristram Shandy, are the examples that show that the European novelists were
also playing with time and plot. There were other 19th-century writers that also dealt with time, space and plot and created skillfully crafted novels, e.g. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, etc.

Most of the Indian novels also dismiss the linear flow of events. They appear to follow a cyclical time concept of Indian narrative tradition. In *Panchatantra* also there is no apparent beginning or end. Here the end of one narrative is mostly the beginning of another. The time model for the course of events is provided by the pattern of the cycle of seasons. So the flow of time is not linear as the events get repeated at intervals and not strictly regular at intervals. The ancient oral narrative form of *Puranas* also resorts to endless or never ending recursive pattern of events. The classical or folk narratives also enjoy this endless continuity and Ghosh’s narratives flow in the same current. About his plans, while writing the *Ibis* novels, Ghosh comments in an interview with Michelle Caswell published in Book Browse.com: “I have some idea about where the narrative might lead but experience has taught me that books have minds of their own. There’s no point thinking about where they’ll go. One never knows till they’re written” (“An Interview with Amitav Ghosh”).

Contrary to colonial historians, who constructed historical records to focus on European sensibilities, the post colonial writers like Ghosh focus on the opposite aspect of the story. To incorporate major events, experienced by the people of different nations and to accommodate the historical, cultural, social, political and national contexts against which these events are comprehended and registered, much time and space is demanded, which Ghosh renders to those colonized, undocumented and ordinary people—the victims of the colonial period.

Ghosh’s novels, in restoring Indian history and culture, give Indian English fiction a relevance and vitality. Through using the narratological devices like different
kinds of narrators, repetition, polyphony, focalization, shifts in focalization, memory, recall etc. he raises many logical and ideological issues that are distinctly different from the issues mainly confronted in other Indian English novels as well as European and American novels. This dissimilarity may serve the reader to comprehend Ghosh’s novels with better perspective. The issues like how world histories are inextricably linked to personal histories and how usually they have profound effects on intimate family history are well expressed in Ghosh’s novels. He points out in the same interview with Michelle Caswell, how his personal history which was affected due to historical movements informs his novels:

It is often wars that create a collision between history and individual lives. In circumstances of war, as in such situations as revolution, mass evacuations, forced population movement and so on, nobody has the choice of stepping away from history. The 20th century visited many such calamities on Asia and The Glass Palace attempts to chronicle the impact that these events had on families and individuals. My family’s history has undoubtedly played a large part in opening my eyes to these events, for my family was divided not only by the partition of India and Pakistan, but also by the Japanese conquest of Burma in 1942. (“An Interview with Amitav Ghosh”)

The present study deals with the fictional works of Ghosh that reflect a confluence of different narratological devices. As Ghosh’s works merge the undocumented histories of ordinary people and chronologically ordered histories of real historical characters, a lot of imagination, intention and insight is required to mix and combine such details to reconstruct history. The information that Ghosh gathers for in his novels, is the result of careful research and observation of the factual details like evidential records, testimonials, journals, dictionaries etc. from history. It further needs
intuitive insight to represent them through spatial-temporal dimensions and also through proper narrative voices in his fiction. Ghosh does justice while incorporating all these details in his narratives. Much time and space is imparted to all the details in Ghosh’s fiction by drawing exact and graphic picture of a particular period. The atmosphere, the sound, the food, the culture, the religion, the festivals, the seasons, the plants, the trees, the rivers, the riots, the languages, the costumes—every minute detail is presented through the keen observing eyes of the writer. This also determines the rhythm of the narrative which makes the pace of the text slow or speedy.

Although the narrative which Ghosh pursues is not very much different from that of the other artists in Indian Writing in English, yet there is a domain in which he is perhaps unsurpassed and unparalleled, i.e. his keen observation and crystal clear vision, the imprints of which are visible in his narratives. His visions and observations are conveyed with distinctiveness of artistic measures. To convey his vision, Ghosh recourses to use of different metaphors that run through his narratives to depict reality and develop the narrative. In Ghosh’s novels there is an ample use of metaphors as narrative device that helps the writer to widen the scope of different viewpoints. Metaphors like windows, maidan, river, birds, sewing machine, weaving, pictures, photos, paintings, ship, dolphins, camera, etc. are used repeatedly by the novelist as explicative mediums to foreground the aesthetic appreciation of life.

In this continuously changing world, life becomes a wonderful platform for social intercourse, cross-cultural connections, inter-society tolerance and acceptability of practical life. The metaphors like camera, sewing machine, photography, claws, GPS gadget, etc. symbolically highlight the over enthusiasm and dependence of modern generation to achieve technological advancements. All this happen at the cost of ignoring the real essence of life. In the same way ‘history’ becomes a ‘stage’ in Ghosh’s narrative from where images emerge to develop Ghosh’s fictional scene. He proceeds from one
vision to the next. The finished narrative is an attempt to correlate the important scenes in his novels through the chains of imagery that weave into one another and recreate the complexity of original impression. It is an appalling narrative created by a series of crucial scenes that encompasses the dynamic center of Ghosh’s novels.

The present study also depicts how the amalgamation of the traditional oral narrative and the new generic variety of narrating in Ghosh’s works remains unparalleled in contemporary literary scenario. The incorporation of traditional myths of that of Nachiketa (COR) and the fabricated fictionalized myth like Bon Bibi (THT) into the body of the texts, give the texts the local colour of culture. The use of this strategy also gives innovative dimension to his fiction. This also transcends the boundaries set by the upper-class society for the ignored, mute and dispossessed people who have their own unique culture.

Another forte of Ghosh’s narrative craft is the employment of mysticism and magic realism to present the voices, ideologies, beliefs and psyche of his characters. Mysticism is linked with supernaturalism, visions, dreams, myth and even folk practices of healing. It enables people to build a spirit of belongingness to a larger section of society. It situates their suffering in the wider social milieu which is the utmost and sure way of healing to them. The novels of Ghosh also focus on this hidden aspect of the secret mysterious group that is in fact far ahead of all the developments and advancements in science and technology. Such visions and mysterious encounters help the people to see beyond the darkness of ignorance with the light of inner mind and also warn them to work against their conscience. Thus, Ghosh understands the richness and importance of Indian mysticism which is presented through epics, mythology, ballads and folk culture. Ghosh’s narratives incorporate darkness of mysticism, superstition, visions, premonition, *tantras* and rituals having their own light of intuitive insights and
wisdom, engraved deeply into the psyche of the followers and believers. Holding yajanas, worshipping their Gods and Goddesses in temples and shrines, possessing and adoring their pictures and recalling mythical legends are the peculiar ways of these people for upholding confidence and redressing their grievances. These distinct voices presented here have the special purpose of giving privilege to the believers of such visions and notions over highly scientific and theory based ideologies of people.

Amitav Ghosh, being highly experimental and innovative, has initiated the commencement of qualitatively different genre, one that merges different genres on equal footing—history, anthropology, geography, travelogue, myth, journalism, painting, photography, horticulture, science etc. As an experimentalist, Ghosh has very successfully incorporated in his novels the feature of generic hybridism, as he has inserted different other genres like diary writing, letters, manuscripts in the form of journals, excerpts from poems, memorials and travelogues. The strategy of using genre of different kinds often help the author to narrate an event of the recent or remote past as Deeti’s drawings and Robin Chinnery’s painting in River of Smoke and sometimes to impart information about events of near future, e.g. the journals, edicts and proclamations in River of Smoke. This narrative strategy helps the writer to familiarize the situation in more extended way and to interweave past and present events. Nirmal’s diary, Rilke’s poetry (THT), the letters of Robin Chinnery and Commissioner Lin, the paintings of Robin Chinnery, Deeti’s sketches on her ‘Memory-Temple’ wall, Robin Chinnery’s detailed commentary on different plants’ species (ROS), the letters exchanged between Uma and Dolly (TGP), between Arjun and Manju (TGP) and Deeti’s drawings (SOP) are some of the examples that show the use of inserted genres in abundance.

Ghosh’s inventiveness in incorporating and handling photography in his novels can also be studied in this aspect. Ghosh uses photographic realism. This again assists
him to re-capture past and to collect maximum data and information about the person
who is photographed. After observing Queen Victoria’s portrait in *The Glass Palace*,
Dolly is reminded of the brutal ways in which the Queen forced her decisions and also of
the inhuman carnage of people during her reign (TGP 114). In *The Hungry Tide* Lucy
Hamilton’s photograph at Nilima’s house takes the reader to the colonial period when the
British exploited the colonizers as well as the rich natural resources of the colonies.
Photographs become a sort of instrument where the strings of the past vibrate to make
the people listen to the lost melodies of the period. Ghosh as a novelist is still
experimenting in his novels by incorporating different aspects of narratology. This is one
of the characteristics of polyphonic novels. Ghosh’s novels in this sense follow Bakhtin
as inclusion of these genres shows that: “... the boundaries between fiction and non-
fiction, between literature and non-literature are constantly changing as the novel is a
developing genre” (*The Dialogical* 33).

In the proceeding discussion, it is observed how Ghosh’s novels are the hybrid
product of both Western literary conventions and Indian oral narrative tradition of story-
telling. He has employed the narrative strategies and techniques that are taken from
Indian age old culture of oral narrative tradition. Sometimes he amalgamates these
strategies with the Eastern strategies. Ghosh’s novels differ from the European novels
not only in their social and historical background but also in their aesthetics.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, there have been charges levelled against
Ghosh’s writing from time to time. Regarding the use of narrative techniques, some of
his novels are said to suffer from inadequate description or exaggeration or unrealistic
characterization, motivation, psychology and depth or from inadequate dialogues, or
from alleged problems in the conception and handling of time and space or from
complicating language because of his use of complicated jargons, argots, etc. Some
critics observe that the novel *The Glass Palace* is faulty for being unnecessarily
prolonged, River of Smoke for being too slow in its pace and The Circle of Reason for being too complicated and unnecessarily stretched in the last section. Sanjaya Sipahimalani writes in his review on the novel River of Smoke, “It’s eddies and swirls are for the most part satisfying to navigate, even though its many tributaries do tend to drain it of energy. As one of Ghosh’s Cantonese characters would have said, this is a book with ‘plenty-big cargo-La’” (“A Sea change into something rich and strange”). With respect to their themes, some of Ghosh’s novels are targeted for being too politicized, personalized, autobiographical or preoccupied with culture-conflict or unnecessarily fascinated with remote past. With respect to ideological matters, some critics claim that there is too much didacticism and not enough of the right kind.

There is no doubt that the markedly complicated narrative patterns of Ghosh’s earlier novels pose big challenge to the uninitiated reader. At the same time the reader who is used to Western literary tradition finds it hard to digest the political and functional commitment of a post-colonialist and post-modernist novelist and dismisses Ghosh’s novels for exaggerating the colonial issues or dismissing them as mere propaganda or aesthetically deficient. It is also evident that literary value of a work is also historically and culturally determined. So the question of keeping the one as normative to other does not do justice. Every writer has his own viewpoint and ideology. To analyze and examine Ghosh’s novels through the yardstick of the Western literary tradition would be intentional fallacy. It could be like analyzing the poetry of Milton through the theory of romanticism.

The proposed research work on Ghosh fiction aims to reveal narratology in his novels. Ghosh uses the narrative strategies like memory, recall, analepsis, prolepsis, gaps, jumps, ellipses, delay, myth, vision, metaphor, reminiscence, etc. to present diligently each condition and location while accentuating history as background in his novels. In his novels different narrative voices, polyphony, point of view, heteroglossia,
focalization, omnipresent narrators and other kinds of narrators, character focalizers, parallel and embedded narratives, interior monologue and stream of consciousness—and other narrative techniques work together to present divergent views of his characters and to depict human predicament at the huge backdrop of history.

Ghosh rewrites history as a process where the past and present intercourse in a dynamic way. The straight, linear and progressive narrative of the Western tradition is replaced by the spiraling, un-ended and multi-voiced stories of people. The interest of the narrative in the development of plot is discarded for the sake of the process of amalgamating multiple stories. Ghosh uses different narratological devices and techniques to interrogate time, space and voices of characters to get over the insolvability of problems.

While studying Indian English fiction the reader should not dismiss the basic difference in the genesis of the Indian writing in English. At the same time, this does not mean that Indian English fiction can be given any sort of concession. In this light in order to understand Amitav Ghosh’s literary works, his novels need to be evaluated properly. This is to suggest that in order to understand the narrative techniques used by the novelist, the reader instead of looking for what he lacks, should focus attention on those aspects that define his post-colonial and post-modernist fiction as a distinctive area of imaginative exploration.

Thus, the analyses of narratological strategies in a text is one of the most important and daunting tasks to understand the work of any writer. The reader must observe carefully and imbibe deeply all the movements in the text. He has to maintain his pace with that of the rhythm of the novelist. He has to completely focus his critical reading on the aesthetic priorities and principles pointed at in the thesis. He must keep in mind the basic issues and concerns underpinning the art and craft of the novelist.