The title of the thesis is ‘Narratology in the Selected Works of Amitav Ghosh’. The research initiated here begins with introduction of the writer, discussion of narratology as theory and study of narratological aspects in the selected novels of Amitav Ghosh. It attempts to study the presence of different narrative techniques in Ghosh’s novels which have become instrumental to understand his novels. The present thesis is also an effort to analyze these narrative techniques that help the novelist to carve a way for undignified, unknown, ignored and dispossessed groups of people and to shed light on their personal saga of life at the vast backdrop of history.

Chapter one ‘Introduction’ aims to present a brief autobiographical account of the writer to highlight the reasons and circumstances that influenced and shaped Ghosh’s sensibility as a creative writer to a considerable extent and also gives a brief introduction of his works both the fictional and non-fictional, critics’ views on his novels and also the layout of the present thesis. The chapter also spells out the approach to be adopted in the discussion of the novels of Ghosh, particularly understanding of the narrative strategies used in different novels.

Chapter two ‘Theory of Narratology’ deals with the theory of narratology in general and how it studies a text in particular. The study of a narrative is called narratology. Narrative means anything that tells a story. To study narrative is to study all parts of the narrative in relation to each other and this is what narratology and narratogists do. Narratology is the art of storytelling in which the author uses different narrative techniques. It is a term coined by Tzvetan Todrov (1969) that deals with the general theory and practice of narrative in all literary forms. In this chapter all the main
narratologists have been discussed in brief but to make the study more comprehensible and focused it follows Rimmon-Kenan as a model narratologist.

Chapter three ‘Narrative Voice’ deals with different narrative voices in Amitav Ghosh’s selected novels through the study of the typology of narrator, character focalizers, multiple narrators, points of view, focalization, focalization shifts, polyphony, heteroglossia, reliable and non-reliable narrators, etc. and how these strategies are employed by him in his novels. Ghosh follows both Western story tellers and great Indian narrative tradition of story-telling and there is preference for multiple narrators, shift in focalization, polyphony, freedom of reader and diegesis rather than mimesis mode of narration.

Chapter four ‘Time and Space’ deals with temporal and spatial manipulation in relation to Ghosh’s novels selected for the study. The novelist may expand and contract time in his narrative. Most of Ghosh’s novels begin in media res. So the characters in his novels move back and forth in time, very frequently. Temporal distortion is a narrative technique that uses a non-linear timeline. Most of Ghosh’s novels use non-linear timeline, memory, recall and reminiscence through using anachronies to link past to the present. This also affects the spatial setting of the novel depicted through use of narrative devices like scene, summary, gap, delay, spotlight, acceleration, deceleration, ellipsis open-endedness, etc. in the narrative. The characters in Ghosh’s earlier novels are always pre-occupied with past memories. In this way the structure of his earlier novels like, The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines and The Calcutta Chromosomes becomes vague and disjointed. In The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, and the two Ibis trilogies–Sea of Poppies and River of Smoke, the writer uses both linear and non-linear patterns and time shift is not as frequent as in his earlier novels.
Chapter five ‘Narratology and History in River of Smoke’ deals with the role of narratology in depicting history in Ghosh’s novel River of Smoke. While depicting the historical period of opium war in River of Smoke, he presents a counter-narrative of China opium war in 1838. By using different narratological devices in a remarkable manner, Ghosh exposes historical discourse and argues for projection of those historical events that are deleted from the memory of the readers with the passage of time. The whole chapter focuses on the study of narratology in relation to history in River of Smoke. For Ghosh literature has a function, similar to that of history. The story, the theme, the title, the background, the location, the language, the dialogues, the typology of the narrators, the narrative voices, the character focalizers, the modes of narration, the plot, the movement of the narrative, etc.—all work together to depict the period of opium trade and opium wars.

In the present study, the thrust of the discussion on narratology has been based on the classification of its main aspects: story, text and narration. Based on an analysis done in the second chapter the study focuses on the examination and understanding of the narrative strategies with reference to selected novels of Ghosh in the successive chapters. The concluding part deals with all the findings of the present work while discussing how by using different narratological devices, Amitav Ghosh as a novelist, has contested and tested the limits of the novel as genre on various grounds.