



Re-Envisioning Historical Narratives Through Amitav Ghosh's Literary Works: An Intersectional Exploration of History and Literature

Deepak Basumatary

Associate Professor

Department of English

Kokrajhar Govt. College, Kokrajhar

Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's literary oeuvre is characterised by a scrupulously researched quality that evokes a sense of verisimilitude akin to that of a lengthy documentary that has been transformed into a narrative work of fiction. Ghosh does not purport to offer a historically accurate account, but rather he endeavours to recount the stories of those events and episodes from history that have been either overlooked, neglected, or sparsely documented. By situating his fictional works within specific historical frameworks, Ghosh brings to life these seemingly "minor" events and episodes, thus presenting an alternative interpretation of historical facts through his literary craftsmanship. Ghosh's fictional narratives serve as a means of reconstructing history by retrieving and reclaiming such "minor" events and episodes. His seminal works, including *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), as well as the recent novels comprising the Ibis trilogy, are all examples of such fictional narratives that seek to extricate and retrieve forgotten, vanished, and effaced episodes and events from the annals of official history.

Keywords: Canvas, Narrative, Polyphony, Subaltern, Liminal

Introduction: Blending Fiction and Documentary

Amitav Ghosh's narrative oeuvre portrays history as an adjective to the imagination. His fictional writings are meticulously well-researched and can be regarded as a long documentary that employs a fictional narrative. In his novels, history serves as a frame and canvas for his stories, from his debut novel *The Circle of Reason* to his recent novels in the volume of the Ibis trilogy, including *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke*, and *Flood of Fire*. Ghosh employs an uncanny way of unravelling the past, often through the discovery or chance encounter with hitherto unknown or forgotten materials such as photographs, letters, journals, historical documents, dictionaries, journals, newspapers, etc. According to Nandana Dutta, Ghosh employs an archival moment to open up an interpretation of contemporary history and make it the primal scene around which the novel proceeds and upon which it is structured (2015: 19). For instance, in *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh depicts the narrative through old newspaper reports of communal violence in Calcutta and erstwhile cities of East Pakistan in 1964. Similarly, in *Sea of Poppies*, his chance discovery of a historical record of the ancient opium trade in Asia takes the readers back in time and opens a new perspective on opium trade, which played a significant role in the history of Asia.

Ghosh's literary works display a conflict between competing discourses and contested meanings of history with materials that are usually overlooked by official history, such as photographs, letters, journals, historical documents, dictionaries, journals, newspapers, etc. The logic behind the incorporation of these materials is to break away from universalising, totalising perspectives and to move towards local, fragmented systems and modes of analysis (1990: 2). In *The Shadow Lines* (232), Ghosh argues that the linear representation of historical narrative is akin to a neat ordering of Euclidean space where these materials do not find a privileged space or are ignored to restore order. These materials gradually become relegated in conventional historiography and these voices and evidences become silenced in the competing discourses and contested meanings of history. However, Ghosh considers these materials as important sources that contain and reflect the truth and reality of history experienced by the masses. Therefore, the liminal voices become the foundation of Ghosh's fictional narratives, which provide a space for their voices to be heard and valued. Ultimately, Ghosh's works confront the limitations of official history and open up a new space for alternative histories that are often ignored or silenced.

Expanding Horizons: Transcending the Linear Historical Narrative

Ghosh's works of fiction present a space-time continuum where the gaps and silences in history are filled with voices that exist in the threshold of time. The narrative in history involves the process of reconciling the past with the present, which is achieved. However, this process is selective and disregards the voices that exist in the margins. Historians prioritise meanings amid multiple and contested interpretations of history. While reinstating order out of the "chaos" produced by various discourses, they choose, sever and carve up historical events. According to Claude Levi-Strauss, a truly total history would confront them with chaos, and cancel itself out, rendering its products naught. He says, "Therefore, history is never history but history – for" (1971: 511–525).

However, literary narratives integrate various aspects of the world, and not just the past. They address the environment, the natural world, people's position within it, and issues beyond the scope of history. As Ghosh notes, "narrative makes it possible for people to perceive and think about places, and moments in time, that were previously unseen or invisible" (Ghosh, Amitav. Interview by Aseen Khan. "History is at the Heart of the Novel." Novel Interview, Duke University, 28 April 2012).

The space-time continuum created in fictional narratives by Ghosh extricates and contextualises the events and episodes of the past from the complex set of competing discourses and contested meanings of history with the present. The presence of this paradigm in Ghosh's works renders relevance to his narratives.

Ghosh's fictional narratives offer a unique perspective that is not limited to the history but extends to the environment, social issues, and natural world. They create a space-time continuum that goes beyond the linear historical narrative and provides an opportunity to contextualise the past within the present. The fictional narratives are not constrained by the evidentiary trail that characterises historical narratives, but offers a holistic perspective by incorporating the natural environment, people's relationship with it, and the impact of historical events on the present.

Ghosh's primary endeavour is to understand the complex historical events and its impact on people's lives through his fictional narratives. The space-time continuum created in fictional narratives by Ghosh allows readers to engage with history in a way that is not possible through traditional historical narratives as it provides a multiple lens to see and understand the world by offering a wider range of insights into the social, economic, and political issues.

Furthermore, the fictional narratives of Ghosh take a critical stance towards the dominant historical narrative that is often selective and leaves out liminal voices. By according due importance to the hitherto liminal voices that are usually silenced by the dominant narrative Ghosh's narratives are not limited by the constraints of history. Alternately, it presents an added perspective to understand the past and its influence on the present.

Ghosh's works of fiction are not just stories but an alternative means of understanding the world in a holistic way. The space-time continuum created in his fictional narratives offers an opportunity to contextualise the past within the present and understand the impact of historical events on people's lives. This paradigm of space-time continuum in Ghosh's works extricates and contextualises the events and episodes of the past from the vortex of competing discourses and contested meanings of history with the present. It renders relevance to his narratives and offers an alternative perspective that is inclusive and acknowledges the voices that have been silenced by the dominant narrative.

The recurring themes of Ghosh's writings are the silences and gaps in the history of South and South-East Asia, mostly during the colonial and postcolonial period. The majority of his writings are an endeavour to unravel the causes of this turbulent history that has irreversibly changed the fate and destiny of the people. Official histories often overlook the liminal voices, but Ghosh accords importance to these aspects in his fictional narratives as they are found to be the true determiner of reality, as felt and experienced by the masses. In his work, *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh highlights the narrator's alienation through the following lines: "...serene confidence in the centrality and eloquence of her experience, in her quiet pity for the pettiness of lives like mine, lived out in the silence of voiceless events in a backward world" (*The Shadow Lines* 104).

Unveiling the Liminal Voices: Ghosh's Quest for the Silence of Voiceless Events

In his fictional narratives, Ghosh directs his attention towards the "silence of voiceless events" with the aim of bringing these liminal voices to the forefront and providing them with a privileged place in history. But, unlike a historical narrative a fictional narrative lack what is called the evidentiary trail. Despite this limitation, Ghosh's fictional narratives argue that the voices that are often ignored and forgotten contain truths that are universally acknowledged. These voices are often suppressed and erased from public memory and consciousness. Ghosh himself has acknowledged that his work is characterised by the ability to integrate a diverse range of aspects of the world into his narrative. However, he also concedes that the absence of references renders it difficult for him to support his claims. Unlike a historian, he cannot make truth claims, but he maintains that both fictional narratives and historical accounts are necessary exercises.

Ghosh's focus on the "silence of voiceless events" speaks of his commitment to bringing marginalised voices to the forefront of historical discourse. His approach is informed by the belief that these voices contain truths that are often ignored or suppressed. However, the veracity claimed by a fictional narrative faces numerous challenges that are unique to it. Unlike historical accounts, fictional narratives lack the evidentiary trail that is considered essential in proving the credibility of a given account. Yet, Ghosh asserts that of these, fictional narratives and historical accounts, are complimentary to each other.

Ghosh's assertion that liminal voices contain universally acknowledged truths is significant in that it speaks of the importance of recognising and acknowledging the voices that are often marginalised or ignored. By recalibrating his narrative method, Ghosh successfully provides a nuanced understanding of the past, although the lack of an evidentiary trail in fictional narratives is a hindrance in establishing the credibility of a given account. Notwithstanding this lacuna however, Ghosh's works are an important resource that throws light on the past in all of its complexity.

Informed by a commitment to provide a complete understanding of history, Ghosh's approach integrates multiple aspects of the world into a narrative. His focus on the "silence of voiceless events" retrieves marginalised voices to the forefront of historical discourse. Ghosh's work takes into account the politics behind the complex interplay of power and marginalization that influences the understanding of the past.

Unveiling the Complex History: Ghosh's Novels Analyse Nation and Nationalism

Ghosh's narrative oeuvre is characterised by the significant value that liminal voices acquire within it. Ghosh examines the intricate history of the region through the prism of liminal voices. The concept of nation and nationalism is scrutinised in Ghosh's novels. This is an issue that Ghosh explores in great detail in *The Shadow Lines*. In this novel, Ghosh presents the character of Jethamoshai, Thamma's uncle, who states, "I don't believe in this India-Shindia. suppose when you get there they decide to draw another line somewhere. What will

you do then? Where will you move to...? As for me, I was born here and I'll die here" (*The Shadow Lines* 213). This theme continues to reappear in different forms in Ghosh's subsequent novels, such as *In an Antique Land*, *The Glass Palace*, and *The Hungry Tide*.

Ghosh demonstrates the interconnectedness of recurring violence in the Indian sub-continent and the concept of nation and nationalism, which has sparked a sense of competitive nationalism among various nations, nationalities, and ethnicities. The Morichjhapi incident stands out as a pivotal moment in Indian history, a direct result of the prevailing "narrative of infiltration" (Schendel 195) propagated by competitive nationalism. Through his narrative works, Ghosh delves into marginalised voices, enabling him to present a distinctive perspective on the history of South and South-East Asia. By transcending conventional historiography, Ghosh's novels unveil the untold narratives of this region.

In Ghosh's novels, liminal voices represent the marginalised and disenfranchised individuals who exist in-between the dominant historical narratives, often ignored or silenced by traditional historiography. By exploring the history of the region through liminal voices, Ghosh is able to offer a complete and more nuanced picture of the region.

Ghosh's novels explore the complex social and cultural identities that exist within the region and challenge the idea that these identities can be neatly categorised into nationalistic boxes. For example, Ghosh in his novel *The Shadow Lines* challenges the concept of the nation-state where he questions the validity of the India-Pakistan border. Ghosh interprets that idea of nation, nationalism, and nation-state is alien to the Indian socio-cultural and historical milieu.

By using multiple narratives multiple narratives and perspectives, Ghosh presents a broader and a nuanced representation of the region's history. This enables Ghosh to challenge dominant historical narratives and offer alternative interpretations of historical events, through a more complex and subtler understanding of the history of South and South-East Asia.

Ghosh's novels possess a subtle form of irony. This is due to the fact that the ideas of nation and nationalism, which were used to combat British colonialism, were appropriated and wielded. Ghosh's works serve as a problematization of the concept and ideology of nation and nationalism, whilst simultaneously critiquing mainstream historiography that disregards liminal perspectives. It is important to note that Ghosh's novels should not be classified as a sweeping national imaginary, nor can they be categorised as another "national allegory" within the realm of Indian novels written in English.

The novel *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh is an illuminating example of how literature can revive the memory of forgotten historical events. The book conveys the story of the ancient opium trade, which had been lost in the public's collective consciousness. Nevertheless, opium played a crucial role in shaping the destiny of Asia and the lives of countless people. The British had a monopoly on the opium trade in Eastern India and Asia, and they were determined to retain control at all costs. Despite this, the official historical narratives often neglect this fact. Ghosh's statement in the book is noteworthy: the war will not be fought for opium, but for freedom, including the freedom of trade. According to Ghosh, free trade is a God-given right that applies to opium as much as it does to any other commodity (*Sea of Poppies* 106).

In his novels, Ghosh unearths the unexplored realms of historical events by employing an imaginative historical perspective that includes marginal voices in the storyline. In this sense, Ghosh challenges conventional norms by transforming the uncharted territories and episodes of history into a fictitious narrative through the creative utilization of marginal voices in a space-time framework. By utilising such a strategy, Ghosh's literary oeuvre enables readers to navigate the past in a new and innovative manner, thereby enriching our understanding of history.

Amitav Ghosh's body of work showcases his distinct approach of delving into marginalised perspectives, questioning prevailing cultural narratives, and employing multiple viewpoints. Through his novels, Ghosh surpasses conventional historiography, unveiling obscured tales from South and South-East

Asia. By centering on liminal voices, he presents a holistic panorama of the region's history. Additionally, Ghosh's literary creations challenge the very notion of the nation-state and propose alternative understandings of past occurrences.

Bakhtin's Polyphonic Technique: Ghosh's Novels and the Employment of Liminal Voices To dismantle the grand narrative, Ghosh defied traditions with the intention of utilising diverse media forms, such as photographs, newspaper reports, letters, journals, historical documents, and dictionaries. Through this approach, Ghosh aimed to systematically challenge the claims and assertions of hegemonic or official history, which were influenced by complicity. By doing so, previously marginalised events and episodes that were disregarded in the grand narrative could be documented and acknowledged.

Ghosh employed liminal voices in his novels as a strategic technique to create polyphony, as described by Bakhtin (1984), within the narrative. A notable example is the conversation between the Egyptian-Arab Muslim and the Hindu narrator in "*In an Antique Land*." Polyphony, characterised by the simultaneous presence of diverse perspectives and voices, serves as a resistance to the modernist idea of consensus, totality, homeostasis, and normativity ingrained within hegemonic or official history. Consequently, Ghosh's incorporation of liminal voices in his fictional narratives opened up new avenues for diverse modes of perception.

In the contemporary context, it is pertinent to recollect the assertions made by Hayden White in his book *Metahistory* (1973). In White's opinion, the scientism and claims of objectivity of history are repudiated as both history and novel are essentially the same as they share a common essence, which is narrative. The primary task of a narrative is to liberate the self of other people's inventions, which are the 'meta' narratives that indoctrinate individuals. The line that divides history and fiction (novels) is narrow and slim, as per White's belief. In Ghosh's fictional narratives, the two often overlap and complement each other, allowing novels to create narratives that make history, or rather the telling of history, possible in a space-time continuum.

The Transformative Influence of Narratives: Redefining Our Worldview

Narratives play a crucial role in shaping our perception and understanding of the world, as they have the power to continually shape and reshape our experiences. Ghosh challenges the notion of history as a fixed and objective account of the past, emphasising the influence of individual agency in its construction. Through his novels, Ghosh suggests that history is perpetually rewritten and reimagined by those who possess the ability to share their stories. By employing an alternative narrative approach that amplifies marginalised voices, Ghosh effectively engages and makes his work accessible to a wider audience.

According to Ghosh, narratives hold immense significance as they enable people to perceive and comprehend places, individuals, and significant moments that often lie beyond the realm of their consciousness—hidden, unnoticed, or disregarded. This belief is evident in Ghosh's novel, *The Shadow Lines*, where he states, "we could not see without inventing what we saw, so at least we could try to do it properly. We had to try because the alternative wasn't blackness—it only meant that if we didn't try ourselves, we could never be free of other people's inventions" (*The Shadow Lines* 31). This quote underscores Ghosh's conviction in the utmost importance of narrative, highlighting its capacity to liberate us from the constraints of others' interpretations and allow for genuine understanding and personal freedom.

Moreover, Ghosh extends the use of narrative beyond the portrayal of historical events, and delves into the intricate interaction between individual experiences and the wider social and political frameworks. In his novels, he deftly explores the profound influence exerted by these broader structures on the lives of ordinary people. An exemplary instance can be found in *The Shadow Lines*, where Ghosh meticulously examines the repercussions of border conflicts, illuminating how decisions made at the highest echelons of power can reverberate across individuals and communities, shaping their destinies in profound and lasting ways.

Ghosh's fascination with narrative manifests through his skilful incorporation of multiple narrators and perspectives. Through the presentation of events from diverse viewpoints, Ghosh masterfully constructs a tapestry that captures the intricacies and nuances of the world. This approach not only enriches his storytelling but also serves to question the notion of a singular, definitive truth, proposing instead that truth is inherently subjective and influenced by individual perspectives.

Ghosh's application of narrative unveils a profound preoccupation with the ethical and political ramifications inherent in storytelling. Within his novels, he possesses a keen awareness of the power dynamics that mould the creation and reception of narratives, and he dedicates himself to leveraging his own writing as a means to confront and contest these dynamics. By bringing the role of narrative to the forefront in shaping history and society, Ghosh presents a compelling analysis of prevailing power structures, while simultaneously creating opportunities for alternative voices and perspectives to flourish.

Ghosh's novels skilfully blend diverse layers and perspectives of the world, creating a captivating narrative that effortlessly intertwines different aspects. His literary work shines a bright light on historical events, presenting them through the powerful voices of marginalised individuals. By doing so, Ghosh effectively deconstructs the notion of an unbiased, universally accepted history, revealing its inherently fictional essence. Through his novels, Ghosh not only questions traditional historiography but also encourages readers to embrace a rich and multifaceted understanding of the past, offering a thought-provoking and nuanced perspective.

History's East-West Journey: Europe's Apex and Asia's Origin

According to Hegel, history travels from east to west, with Europe being the absolute endpoint of history, whereas Asia marks its beginning (1975: 197). For a long time, politics has dictated historiography, with mainstream or official history being Western and hegemonic in its orientation. This implies that the mainstream or official history is a narrative representation of the Orient from the Western perspectives. Edward Said argues that the common Western speculation about the Orient is prejudiced, with the assumption that the Orient is incapable of representing itself (Said 1978). This means that the validation of the Orient is deemed credible only after it passes the critical scrutiny or is subjected to validation by the West. This norm is even evident in the mainstream historiography of post-colonial India.

Gandhi once wrote, "History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world . . . How kings played, how they became enemies of each other, and how they murdered one another is found accurately recorded in history" (1997: 89). This suggests that history is typically limited to the chronicling of major events and episodes, without necessarily providing a narrative where the liminal voices can be heard. There is often a lack of a comprehensive narrative in the mainstream historical narratives, which is supposedly based on "solid" evidence, capable of integrating different elements and episodes of history into a cognizable narrative.

The hegemonic nature of Western mainstream or official history has posed a challenge to the development of an all-inclusive historical narrative. This has led to the marginalization of alternative voices and perspectives that could have enriched the historical discourse. The exclusion of these voices has made the mainstream historical narrative incomplete and, in some instances, inaccurate. The Western-centric view of history has also contributed to the perpetuation of stereotypes and misconceptions that, in turn, have fuelled prejudices and discriminations against the Orient.

The mainstream historical narrative's exclusion of alternative voices has had far-reaching implications for public policies and national identities. It has served as a tool to legitimise the oppression and marginalization of various groups, such as women, minorities, and diverse ethnic and religious communities. Additionally, the marginalization of alternative voices has reinforced a sense of cultural superiority among Western societies, enabling the justification of imperialism and colonization.

To address the challenges associated with constructing a truly inclusive historical narrative, it is imperative to embrace alternative perspectives and voices. This necessitates a fundamental shift in the way history is both taught and studied, placing significant emphasis on integrating diverse elements and episodes into a comprehensive narrative. Recognising the limitations of the mainstream historical narrative is crucial, as it allows us to acknowledge the invaluable role that alternative voices play in enhancing the discourse and expanding our understanding of the past.

It can be argued that the dominant nature of Western mainstream or official history presents a hurdle to the development of a fully inclusive historical account. Rather than completely discarding the mainstream historical narrative, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Instead, we should view this as an opportunity to enhance the conversation by embracing diverse voices and perspectives. Achieving this will necessitate a fundamental change in how we approach the teaching and study of history, prioritising the integration of different elements and episodes into a comprehensive narrative. It calls for a readiness to challenge existing stereotypes and misconceptions, and to embrace alternative viewpoints and voices. Furthermore, it requires acknowledging the constraints of the mainstream historical narrative and appreciating the role of alternative voices in enriching the discourse.

Unearthing Hidden Histories: Ghosh's Literary Exploration through Neglected Evidence

In received history, liminal voices of the past are relegated to minor anecdotes, found in various forms such as photographs, newspaper reports, letters, historical documents, and dictionaries, among others. However, Amitav Ghosh's literary works challenge this norm by employing these neglected forms of evidence as 'an archival moment' to explore hidden histories. In his novel *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh utilises newspaper reports to investigate the cause of the 1964 riots and subsequent violence in Khulna. Similarly, *In an Antique Land* uncovers the "lost" pre-colonial and post-colonial history of India through cultural exchange and conversation between individuals from different spaces, both culturally and spatially.

Furthermore, Ghosh's fictional works *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *Sea of Poppies*, the first volume of the Ibis trilogy, utilise 'an archival moment' to interpret contemporary history and rediscover forgotten or erased events and episodes of history. Ghosh's novels skilfully explore the intricate tapestry of the Indian subcontinent's history, a rich narrative shaped by foreign invasions, colonialism, and punctuated by instances of violence and riots stemming from religious, linguistic, and ethnic disparities. These issues are traced back to the concept of nation and nationalism, which Ghosh problematises through the "alienness" of the 'nations of the colonial other' (2003: 154).

Ghosh's approach to history differs from traditional historiography as he brings to light the often-ignored records and pieces of evidence like photographs, letters, historical documents, dictionaries, journals, etc. that are given little or no value in official historiography. Through his works, Ghosh discovers a rich texture of stories and evidence, albeit liminal, which opens up windows of perception. By utilising these neglected forms of evidence as an 'archival moment,' Ghosh's works offer alternative perspectives on history and challenge the dominant narrative that has excluded liminal voices. Through his works, Ghosh not only brings to light hidden stories but also offers a new way of experiencing and understanding history in all its complexities.

Amitav Ghosh's literary works transport readers on an immersive journey through time, delving into the intricate tapestry of India's history and its neighbouring nations. In his book, *In an Antique Land*, Ghosh introduces us to an Indian slave ship called MS H.6 that had been forgotten in the annals of history. Through the introduction of an Egyptian-Arab voice in the form of an Egyptian Muslim village Imam and an Indian Hindu narrator, Ghosh reflects on the fact that people-to-people contact existed through centuries of Indian, Egyptian, and Indo-Arab ties of commerce and trade, which is often ignored.

Through the exploration of the ancient royal palace of the King of Burma known as the Glass Palace, Ghosh's literary masterpiece, *The Glass Palace*, intricately unravels the entwined history between the Indian subcontinent and Burma (Myanmar). The subsequent exile of the King of Burma to India shows us how the fate and destiny of the high and mighty, as well as the common people, are shaped by and connected to various political upheavals. However, these stories often remain out of the consciousness of public memory.

Similarly, in *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh uses an obscure journal on the Sundarbans to delve deeper into the history of this massive mangrove forest that lies next door to Calcutta but is unbeknownst to most of the people, even to those living within its vicinity. The narrative of *The Hungry Tide* takes us on a journey of the Sundarbans, a journey that unravels the beauty of the forest and the land, the complex ecosystem of the mangrove forests, and the precarious co-existence of people and predators.

In the dark alleys of the Sundarbans, Ghosh uncovers a concealed secret entrenched within this vast jungle. This revelation unveils a profound narrative shedding light on the intricate historical tapestry of India, encompassing the subcontinent's colonial turmoil and the violent sectarian conflicts it endured. As depicted in Ghosh's journal, the Sundarbans bore witness to and retained evidence of the clash between governmental forces and a multitude of refugees during the 1970s. Beyond being an immense mangrove forest, Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* portrays the Sundarbans as a metaphor of ambiguity and the fragile existence of its inhabitants, exemplified by characters like Fokir, who epitomises the quintessential Other. Ghosh's literary works illuminate the interconnectedness between the Indian subcontinent's history and that of its neighbouring nations, urging us to recognise the importance of delving into the experiences of those who endured those transformative eras. By illuminating forgotten historical accounts, Ghosh creates a platform for dialogue and comprehension, fostering connections among people despite their differences. His works stand as a testament to the potency of literature in nurturing empathy and constructing bridges between cultures.

Conclusion: Exploring Historical Events through Alternative Lenses

Amitav Ghosh's approach to history diverges from that of a traditional historian. Rather than presenting a conventional interpretation, his fictional narratives offer an alternative lens through which to view historical events. By interweaving seemingly unrelated occurrences from the past, Ghosh constructs a cohesive narrative that aims to provide a broader understanding of history. His focus lies on the often-overlooked voices at the margins of mainstream historiography, resulting in his novels being regarded as a form of subaltern history or a recovery of "little voices." However, it is crucial to move beyond this established interpretation of Ghosh's works, which has become stagnant.

In his novel *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh delves into the experiences of migrants and indentured laborers, shedding light on their backgrounds, motivations for leaving their homes, and the realities they faced. Through this exploration, Ghosh uncovers a previously erased history surrounding the old opium trade, which has been largely forgotten. It is important to note that Ghosh's major novels, including *Sea of Poppies*, do not present fictional narratives as an alternative history in opposition to official historical accounts. Instead, they serve as an expedition and rediscovery of the vast array of history, filled with gaps and silences that lack a cohesive narrative.

Ghosh's novels strive to amplify the voices that have been historically silenced and marginalised. Through this endeavour, he aims to foster a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the past. By acknowledging the experiences and perspectives of those excluded from mainstream historical accounts, Ghosh's writing highlights the significance of recognising their narratives. His intention is to create a nuanced understanding of the past, one that extends beyond dominant narratives of the time.

Blending fiction with meticulous historical research, Ghosh's works offer a distinctive perspective on history. By doing so, he creates narratives that are engaging and accessible to a wide audience. Additionally, Ghosh's writing serves as a commentary on contemporary issues, showcasing the interconnectedness of different cultures and societies while shedding light on the enduring impacts of colonialism on our present world.

In conclusion, Ghosh's engagement with history through his fictional narratives constitutes a valuable contribution to the field of historiography. His works provide an inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the past, emphasising the voices that have been historically silenced and marginalised. Offering a unique perspective on history, Ghosh's novels present an engaging and accessible narrative. Moreover, his writing serves as a reflection on contemporary issues and highlights the interplay between diverse cultures and societies. For anyone interested in history, culture, and society, Ghosh's works are an essential read.

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