

I. Introduction

Ghosh at a Glance

Amitav Ghosh, one of the iconoclasts, writer of supreme skill and intelligence, no lesser than Rushdie and Fanon, is exceptional emerging Indian literary voice in postcolonial universe of the day. He is renowned not because of a productive writer of book after book but of dexterously amalgamation of personal experience and the epochal events of human history. He was born in Calcutta in 1956 and spent the majority of his childhood in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), Sri Lanka, Iran, and India. So experiences of displacement are happened to occur in his travelogue and fictions. After graduating from St. Stephens college in Delhi, Ghosh went on to study Social Anthropology and received a master of philosophy and a Ph.D. at oxford university in 1982. In 1980 he went to Egypt to do field work in the Fella heel village of Lataifa. Since then he has published many books, done field work in Combodia, lived in Delhi and written for a number of publications. In 1999, Ghosh joined the faculty at Queens College in the City University of New York as Distinguished Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature where he currently teachers writing, film and literature classes. Now, he lives in Brooklyn, New York with his wife, Deborah Baker and two children.

As a young personality, he was greatly influenced by the stories of partition, Independence and the Second World War. These stories about war and the Indian soldiers of the British Army, who fought against the Germans and the Japanese, had indelible impression on his mind. The narrative of his parents and the socio-political changes in India in the turbulent decade of the 1940s had a deep impact on Ghosh and thus form an integral part of his fictional landscape. From his father, he learnt that

many Indian officers and soldiers had ambivalent feelings about serving in the British colonial Army that also shapes his recent novel *The Glass Palace*

During his modification years, Ghosh learnt through conversation and silences about the military subterfuges and politics of his father generations. This aspect of historical reality fascinated him and he used these memories to construct a concept of freedom and its numerous connotations in the modern world, a dominant theme of his most well known novel, *The Shadow Lines*.

His writing career began as a journalist at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi and in 1986, his first novel, *The Circle of Reason* went on to win one of France's top prestigious literary awards, *The Prix Medici Estranger* in France while he was teaching as a lecturer in the department of Anthropology at the Delhi School of Economics, at the University of Delhi. The novel was translated into many European languages. His second novel, *The Shadow Lines* (1988) evokes the postcolonial situations, cultural dislocations and anxieties in the period between 1962 and 1979. The novel is against artificial international borders. It deals with the shallowness of international borders, lines of control frontiers and boundaries. Through the description of the pain of partition, riots and communal hatred Ghosh drives home the idea of unreal borders. There is no substance in such strict borders. In the third book *In an Antique Land* (1992) there is a creation of his experiences as an anthropologist and of his interaction with four languages and cultures spread over three continents and across several countries. It describes the expectations of an anthropologist during field work in an Egyptian village, which he assumes to belong to a settled 'authentic' culture. This book underlines unarmed nature of Indian trade and commerce before the advent of Vasco- de- Gama in India. It is a seamless blending of facts, fiction and history.

Written in a unique experimentalist postmodern form and complex and imaginative story of quest and discovery, his novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome 1996* combines several themes and techniques. It is written with a purpose to undo the western sense of superiority and its monopoly over scientific research. It is a lovely piece of work which brings science, religion, myth, nihilism, transcendental philosophy, Indian superstitions, logic, rationality and so on together at one place. It is an attempt to rewrite the story of Ronald Ross's discovery of the life cycle of malaria mosquito and how it causes the disease to human beings.

His travelogue, *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma (1998)*, reveals his perception about the socio-political situations in both Cambodia and Burma. It gives impetus to decolonization in its own way and proves that the colonizer or the dictator cannot kill people. His booklet, *Countdown (1999)* of 106 pages with 13 unmarked chapters exposes the nuclear lobby in India as well as in Pakistan. The book grows into a mild satire on petty politics of Indo-Pak government. Ghosh feels that reasons behind this nuclear testing are not related to the security of either nation. Nuclearization is not going to solve anything rather it is a kind of mass-dream with which the people are expected to forget their plight. So, Ghosh challenges and interrogates the views of leaders of India.

Amitav Ghosh, being an indigenous writer from once colonized country, believes that "writing is an integral part of self-definition" as it works as an anti-colonial strategy opposed to totalitarian system for the sake of personal and cultural identity and of historical reconstruction. Writers like Ghosh in postcolonial context establish a restorative connection with that which colonialist discourse had denied—the internal life of the colonized, their experience as historical actors. So, the narrative of the present are based on history concerned with colonial times, the build

up to independence and its immediate aftermath. The narrative moves to rewrite the history since the national liberation of the people in the regaining of the historical personality of that people, it is their return to history. Such writers urge to rewrite the past to cancel colonial stereotypes. They search for evidence of a rich and varied pre-colonial existence— tales, military victory against colonial forces, portraits of self-determining leaders and so on. So has been the case with Ghosh.

With the collapse of imperialistic explanations of the world, Amitav Ghosh endorsed his position as a postcolonial writer who seeks a quest for mastery over history and self as offering political and historical insight in polyglossic cosmopolitan writing, *The Glass Place*. Ghosh wants to fill the gap that indigenous writers see themselves as still colonized, always invaded, never free of a history of white occupation with the historical representation of colonialist or invader in his recent published text. For Ghosh, colonization and related process work in a permanent referent. He just cannot move out of this paradigm. Whatever he may write, his perspective is always there somewhere in his mind as a guiding principle. He talks of double standards of the west and western sense of superiority inside the bush of civilizing mission. His works deals with the most recurring theme of diaspora, displacement, exile, rootlessness, Indian politics, pollution, international borders, the relationship between childhood and adulthood, scientific research, art, music, culture, nuclear lobbies, World Wars, communal hatred or riots and what not.

History is Ghosh's prime obsession and fiction is imbued with both political and historical consciousness. Being a social anthropologist, Ghosh weaves the social , political and historical experiences in his complete expression to explore the human relationship. So all his characters are not seen as autonomous entities. The theme of colonialism and its impact on life and culture of indigenous people had not yet been

deployed in his previous text in such a way that could create the counter imagery of Euro-canon. Ghosh, therefore, fabricates then Burmese history of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries- the colonial invasion period through his memories and imaginative faculties of fictional world in his recent published novel, *The Glass Palace*.

As he is one of the iconoclasts, Ghosh pays his attention on the rubric that history and fiction should be accounted with equal light and weightage since both are the creation of cultural artefacts. So there is no more contradistinction between the history and that of the fiction. The rupture has been demolished and the history of colonial Burma has been foregrounded from the view point of subjective reality rather than of objective Truth. Since no objective truth is accessively accountable with embeddedness of socio-politico-cultural context of the text but it comes rather in fragmentation where author's personal dislikes and likes work. That is to say is that some portions are left and some are accounted in accordance of author's desire and wish. So there is no 'Truth' as such but 'truths' and all are as valid and viable as another. So there should be no hierarchy and binary opposition between the official and non-official version of history. It creates the situation of return/remove from History to histories. Pluralistic, polyglossic notion dance over the arena of the postmodern novelistic genre i.e. novel, *The Glass Palace*.

The novel impregnates *The Glass Palace Chronicle*– "a famous nineteenth century history" of Burma (532). It functions as another version of history of state's official one. So the text, *The Glass Palace* can be read as an epitaph of colonial history of Burma. It avails us the democratic nature of history unlike that of autocratic totalitarian history. It is the history in a textualized form. So it is the reason why this dissertation aims to look and analyse the text from the view point of New historicism

as it is relied on the motto of historicization of the text and that the textualization of history.

The Glass Palace: An Outline of the Novel

The Glass Palace, published in (2000) by Random House, is one of the most readable novel not only in oriental countries but in the occident as well. It is practiced in both critical and popular circles for Ghosh's supreme skill and intelligence to present the past events, personal experiences and impact of epochal events in individual lives. Among Ghosh's works, *The Glass Palace* is the one that brings international fame to Ghosh, garnering literary prizes and so was eligible for the prestigious prize, The Commonwealth Writers prize. But he withdrew this prize-winning book from the final list citing "objections to the classification of books such as mine under the term commonwealth literature". In a letter to Vince, prizes manager of the London Book Trust, Ghosh said, "the term commonwealth is a misnomer. If applied to literary and cultural groups and he did not even know the publisher had entered his book for the prize". Ghosh went to say, "I would be betraying the spirit of my book if I were to allow it to be incorporated within that particular memorialization of Empire that passes under the rubric of the commonwealth." He further says:

The Glass Palace is eligible for the commonwealth prize partly because it was written in English and partly because I happen to belong to a region that was once conquered and ruled by Imperial Britain. Of the many reasons why a book's merits may be recognized these seem to me to be the least persuasive. That the past engenders the present is of course undeniable; it is equally undeniable that the reasons why I write in English are ultimately rooted in my country's history, yet the ways in which we remember the past are not determined solely by the brute

facts of time: they are also open to choice, reflection and judgment.

(qtd. from online essay, *Inside Dope-1*)

So Subha Tiwari believing on Ghosh's notion writes, the spirit of this books is anti – colonial" (106). Similarly, Akshya Kumar in the book review of *The Sunday Tribune* on 22nd October , 2000, deciphers that " the novel outdoes theory as well as history in terms of its subtle treatment of colonialism. *The Glass Palace* is an instance of novel overtaking history as an authentic and reliable source of understanding the micro-level subtleties of colonial politics" (6)

The Novel, *The Glass Palace* is set primarily in Burma, Malaya and India and by the careful accumulation of a throng of interconnected stories, Ghosh succeeds in elaborating a complex canvas which , evocative of the diversity of individual experience, depicts the matrix of political and economic pressures in which it is caught. The characters entangle with stormy tumultuous calmaties of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of both Burma and India from colonial expansion to the fraught years of the Word Wars, imperial decay, independence and establishment of democratic government in these countries. It depicts a story of three families across three generations, spreading the wings across the world from Malaya to New York. The novel begins with the shattering of a Kingdom and the igniting of a great and passonate love, and it goes on to tell the story of people, a fortune and a family's fate. Woven into this stunning work is the story of Rajkumar, a poor "boy of eleven-not an authority to be relied upon", lifted on the tides of the political and social chaos occasioned by the British invasion that "crossed the border on 14 November ,1885, when soldiers forced the royal family into exile to unfamiliar territory of India, Rantagiri from the glass palace (3,25). Rajkumar gradually succeeds in becoming, with the loyal help of his friends Doh Say, Saya John and others, a rich and powerful

member of the Indian community in Burma. Thereafter, he tracks down Dolly, devoted maid and bound to ill-fated magisterial Queen Supayalat, with whom he had fallen in love at first sight as a boy during the British takeover of Mandalay. Dolly now lives in the distant Indian city of Ratnagiri, where she has made a lifelong friend of Uma, the unruly wife of the Indian District Commissioner assigned to look after King Thebaw and his family. Through Uma's good offices, Rajkumar finally gets to marry Dolly. All this happens by the end of Chapter Sixteen. The rest of the forty-eight chapters of *The Glass Place* concern, during a period of history both harrowing and exciting, the interaction between three families: of Dolly and Rajkumar in Burma, Uma and her brother in India and of Saya John –Rajkumar's mentor – and his son Mathew in Malaysia.

Through the intertwining stories of Dolly and Rajkumar, the Burmese history of the twentieth century is told across three generations, spread over three interlinked parts of the British empire: Burma, with its conflicting undercurrents of discontent; Malaya, with its vast rubber plantations, and India, amid growing opposition to British rule. The story moves into another generation through Arjun, an Indian officer and soldier of the Empire, one caught in the crossfire between old loyalties and new aspirations. With World War II and the terrifying arrival of the Japanese juggernaut, Rajkumar is again set adrift. In an ocean of refugees fleeing war and devastation, he and his family make a treacherous one thousand-mile trek across the border to India for the evacuations. The door to Burma closes behind them and the glittering light of an extraordinary civilization is at last extinguished.

The novel not only grasps the reach and fall of empires across the twentieth century, but also maps with unerring skill the rival geography of the human heart. The

books ends with a snapshot of Aung San Suu Kyi in 1996, the sixth year of her house arrest under the generals:

Suddenly, there was a great uproar. 'There she is', Dinu said [. . .]' A slim fine –featured woman stepped up. Her head was just visible above the gateshe was wearing white flowers above her hair. She was beautiful almost beyond belief [. . .]She's the only one who seems to understand what the place of politics is . . . what it out to be . . . that while misrule and tyranny must be resisted, so too must politics itself ..that it cannot be allowed to cannibalize all of life, all of existence [. . .] this is the most terrible indignity of our condition not just in Burma, but in many other place too[. . .]that politics has invaded everything, spared nothing . . . religion ,art, family, It has taken over every thing . . . there is no escape from it. (541-42)

Literature and its analysis perform many tasks. It preserves human consciousness. Socio-politico-cultural circumstances of a particular era of a society is reflected in it. It refines sensibilities. It provides entertainment and relaxation. It also reflects the ethos of people and a period of time. In this sense *The Glass Palace* succeeds in preserving the issue of colonialism and its aftermath. As the forces of history can irrevocably alter the lives of ordinary men and women, Ghosh highlighted his text as an argument against British colonialism which caused the tide of social and political chaos, that the impact of brutality of foreign regime and the consequences of empire had on families and individuals. So, along with the family's interwoven stories, Ghosh portrays the horror of colonialism that began in the 1880s and displays how the Burmese life and culture had been devastated by the foreign rule and how the country got depleted of its valuable natural resources – teak loggs, ivory, petroleum,

deposing royal family into the exile that led a life of increasing shabbiness and obscurity in an unfamiliar territory of another's land and so suffered from the ethos of unhomeliness.

As plurality and multidimensional issues have been deployed in the text, *The Glass Palace*, the novel has been read and interpreted from various perspectives. However, the approach and methodology of the present thesis dissertation is to look upon Ghosh's attitude of history and fiction. History for Ghosh, is no longer a set of fixed, objective facts. The facts do not exist unless they are interpreted. History like literature, is a text which needs to be interpreted with which it interacts.

A text, in Foucault's view, speaks of 'history' but not as it described by those of former scholars of traditional Marxists and historicists who had adverted to social and intellectual history as a background against which to set a work of literature as an independent entity or had viewed literature as a reflection of the world view characteristics of a period. Instead new historicists conceive of literary text as situated within the institutions, social practices and discourses that constitute the overall culture and of a particular time and place and with which the literary text interacts as both a producer and of a social, cultural, political energies and codes. So, a text becomes a 'history of otherwise' in that it presents a historical situation not as a "background" but as something with which it can have constant interaction, for text is both product and the propagator of the power structures of a society. The work of literature both influences and is influenced by historical reality. It shares the belief in referentiality, that is, a belief that literature both refers and is referred to by the things outside. In this sense it echoes Derridean view that "there is nothing outside the text", in the special sense that everything about past is only available to us in a textualized form that is, in other words the historicization of the text and textualization of history.

The concept of the historicity of the text arose because of the thinking that sought to connect a text to the social, cultural and economic circumstances of its production. The text is not to be read with the motto of art for art's sake. But it is to be read in connection with all discursive practices and power relations expressed in it by language, that is, as argued by new historicists, necessarily dialogical and materially determined.

Similarly the idea of 'textuality of history' came as a jolt to the age-old search of metaphysical spirit that was said to be all pervasive throughout the historical movement. This was because new historicists tended towards less fact and event orientedness. They realized that 'Truth' about what really happened could never be purely and objectively known. They, therefore, developed a theory of history which was no more linear and progressive, as something developing towards the present. Such a view considered history to be less identifiable in terms of specific eras, each with a definite, persistent and consistent spirit of the time that emphasized on both indeterminacy and various truths. That is the removal from capitalized 'Truth' to the 'truths' what can be termed in Gadamerian sense the plurality of subjective truths rather than the 'Objective Reality'.

Historians are the ones who give pattern to history using their imagination. The historian plays a significant role in the making of history in this sense, history is, like fiction, a subjective phenomenon. As history is subjective phenomenon, there could be many versions of history. So, for Ghosh, history is no longer a homogeneous and final version. By history, it is understood and paid attention to the official version of history because it is the only version of history that is available to us. However, Ghosh challenges the validity and reliability of the official version of history by providing the colonial history of Burma of late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries in an alternative way, through the novel, *The Glass Palace*. He views the official historical discourse as one of the many versions of history. It is not necessarily absolute and final version of history. It is rather a cultural artefact which is affected by a vast web of economic, social, political and so on factors of that era.

Since the writing and reading are always historically and socially situated events, performed in the world and upon the world by ideologically situated individual and collective human agents. In any situation of significance, the theoretical indeterminacy of the signifying process is delimited by the historical specificity of discursive practices, by the constraints and resources of the reading formation within which that signification takes place. So the project of this study is, then to analyse the interplay of cultural, specific discursive practices including those by which cultural canons are formed and reformed. By such discursive means, versions of real history, and experiences, deployed, reproduced and by such means they may also be appropriated and contested as in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*.

Thus the present study aims to show the blurred demarcation between that of age-old dispute of history and fiction and Ghosh challenges the validity of the official version of historical discourse of Burma by the chronologicalization of colonial Burma within this text.

Now, the thesis proceeds towards defining the lexicons used in the title that govern the whole idea in the dissertation. These pivotal and long disputable words are: history and fiction.

In a *Glossary of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams defines 'fiction' as:

any literary narratives . . . in prose or verse . . . invented instead of being an account of events that in fact happened; . . . based on biographical, historical or contemporary facts are often referred to by

compound names such as fictional biography, the historical novel and non-fictional novels. (94)

In words of Martin Gray, the term implies, "things imagined as opposed to fact . . . nowadays used to novels and stories collectively". Gray further writes, "art creates fictions through which we interpret and organize the world about us" (*Dictionary of Literary Terms*-86). It denotes imaginative works which occupy a category distinct both from writing which purports to be true and also from forms of deceit and lying. It implies, in David Daiches sense, in *Critical Approaches to Literature*:

any kind of composition in prose or verse which has for its purpose not the communication of fact but the telling of a story (either wholly invented or given new life through invention) or the giving of pleasure through some use of the inventive imagination in the employment of words. (4-5).

In their views, fiction is only imaginative products no relied upon. Reality does not come under its trajectory, but Gerald Graff brings contrastive idea. He views there is no such meaning as factual or fictional. He foregrounds the post structural notion that "literary meanings are fictions because all meanings are fictions, even those of nonliterary language, including language of criticism. In its most extreme flights, this critical view asserts that 'life' and 'reality' are themselves fictions" (qtd. from Jeremy Hawthorn's *Contemporary Literary Theory*, 120).

On the other hand, *The Oxford Advanced Learns Dictionary of English* defines 'history' as a 'series of past events or experiences connected with an object, a person or a place – systematic description of past events" (590). This official history is that version of history which is approved by the sate authority 'true' and is generally accepted both inside and outside the nation. Moreover, it is prescribed as a subject and

discipline to be studied in academic institutions like school and university. It is highly institutionalized beliefs of the past events recorded in the systematic way reliable to all. 'All' signifies the authority and agencies in general. It is believed that history teaches virtue by concrete examples and the historian dealing with fact cannot deal with abstract ideas and tied with facts only. It is claimed that it preserve the outer empirical world as it is. It is the ontological facts. Talking about history in *Poetics* Aristotle, argues , "history tends to express the particular" and the difference between the poet and that of the historian lies " not by writing in verse or in prose....the true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen" (Adam, 55). That is to say that historian deploys with facts and what s/he writes is the truest for all. But it is forgotten that history itself is the creative work of art, since while composing history there happens to be entangled with the bias-ness and likes or dislikes of the historian as he/she is the human being. So objective reality of anything can never be accounted either in history or somewhere else. So commenting of Collingswood's statement with regard to historical truth-"meant to be true"-is confirmed by Hayden White who argues that " literary artists give us truer because they are more honest, representations of the human experience of historical events than do historians themselves." Similarly paying equal weightage regarding "truth" in history and that of fiction , Christopher Blake in his article, "Can History be Objective" argues that "asking this question is like asking 'Can novels be well written?! And James B. Conant further adds, "history is not a deductive science and there are no rules for detecting fact." (qtd. from Gupta's *Historicizing Memory in Shadow Liens*-277). Therefore, Pallavi Gupta proves that:

novelists reconstruct events, often as accurately and carefully as any historian, " putting real people in imaginary situations and imaginary

situations in documentary narratives, augmenting the significance of historical events by plausible, internally consistent, but more obviously unvariably depictions of the subjective intentions of the people. (278)

Like Rushdie's novels written on the subcontinent as *Midnight's Children* (1980), Amitav Ghosh in *The Glass Palace* undercuts the ideology of nationalism by questioning official history. The concept and ideology of Nationalism is constructed on the basis of official history. In Ghosh's novel, the fictive nature of history is exposed by juxtaposing it with memory and experience, that both creates and invents. This aspect demonstrates that history and along with it the ideology of nationalism are inventions.

Unlike earlier generations of novelists who did not like history or historians, for whom history was a nightmare from which they were trying to awake and who would have escaped from history into world of art, not only are these novelists currently who have come to appreciate the uses of history but a number of them want to claim for their own. The list is endless starting from Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and ending with Carlos Fuentes, Allan Sealy, Maxine Hong Kingston et al. Nowadays, postmodern theory has questioned the separating of history and literature by stressing on the similarities rather than the differences between the two modes of writing. Linda Hutcheon observes that in post-modern theory both history and literature are "identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality" (qtd from *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow liens*, 77).

So, Amitav Ghosh explores the dialectic of history and fiction, of imagination and facts in his book. The author uses established notions of history and

historiography to serve his own novelistic concerns. The role of memory and experience in the field of historiography and the undercutting of history through the construction of other narratives or histories are some of the important concern of the novelist. Juxtaposing it with memory and experience, he exposes the fictive nature of history. After all, memory and experience both creates and invents and the author suggests that history and the ideology of nationalism are also inventions. Thus, in this age-old debate, Amitave Ghosh upholds the value and importance of imagination and suggests that there is shadow line between reality and imagination. There is no dividing line between imagination and reality, that is an event from what is remembered as memory is all important, for imagination is experience in reality. Therefore, the novel. *The Glass Palace* demonstrates history as an invention by Juxtaposing it with a memory and experience that can invent in an alternative version. In this way, the hierarchy of history and fiction, notion of giving the former priority over later, thus, gets blurred.

Along with other details and requirements the present study goes on to present brief outline of the propositions.

In the first proposition of the study, Ghosh undermines the traditional notion of viewing history as a set of fixed, objective facts. For Ghosh, history is rather a subjective phenomenon, in the creation of which the memory and process of recalling memories function and so history is not chronologically autonomous whole but can be occurred in freshmentary form. Fiction, on the other hand, is not unreal product of human imagination. it rather contains facts too. It, sometimes, helps to uncover the truth which is neglected or concealed in the official history. In this sense, history and fiction, are no longer opposites; they are rather complementary to each other. Thus, the demarcation between history and fiction is blurred.

The second proposition of the present study is that Ghosh challenges the validity of the official historical discourse of colonial Burma. In his view, official historical discourse is not the absolute and the final revision of history. It is merely a version which is based on the biases and prejudices. Moreover, it is an ideological construct which functions in favour of state ideology. To counter the official version of history, Ghosh, through *The Glass Palace*, provides an alternative version of history of colonial Burma of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this way, by providing an alternative version to the official history, Ghosh keeps the official historical records in question. To put it differently, he undermines any claims to absolute truth in the official version of history. So, it can be said that it is removal and turn from 'History' to histories, not 'Reality' but realities or truths. That is in Gadamerian sense, every understanding is as valid as another. There is no final 'Truth' but truths.

The present research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter is introduction which includes the introduction of the author, a brief outline of *The Glass Palace*, an introductory outline of the present study and critical perspective on the novel by various critics. The second chapter develops a theoretical modality that presents the debate on the nature of literature and history, and the relation between them. It also shows how the terms history and fiction overlap. The third chapter will be the textual analysis based on the theoretical tool developed in the second chapter. And the last one is the concluding chapter of this research. On the basis of the textual analysis in chapter three, it will include the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters and demonstrate how Ghosh blurs the demarcation between history and fiction, and challenges the validity of so called official historical discourse of colonial Burma in the twentieth century.

Critical Perspectives on *The Glass Palace*

The magnificent, poignant and fascinating novel. *The Glass Palace* (2000), by one of the outstanding Indo-Anglian postcolonial writers, Amitav Ghosh, deals with the themes of fictionalization of colonial history of Burma in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The novel integrates the facts and fictions together all at the same place by breaking the rupture of history and fiction.

However, many critics have seen the novel from various perspectives. Pankaj Mishra, in a review of *The Glass Palace* in "The New York Times" takes the novel as the uprising challenge of third world people against British colonization. He describes;

Ghosh as one of few postcolonial writers "to have expressed in his work a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and disappointments of colonial people as they figure out their place in the world" [. . .] and catalogs the evolving history of those regions before and during the fraught years of the second world war. (7)

Extending this theme of resistance against British domination, Meenakshi Mukharjee writes "as the most scathing critique of British Colonialism":. She further adds:

No school book taught us anything about the country's past before it became part of the empire and I am embarrassed to admit that my first acquaintance with Mandalay and emperor Thebaw was through a silly Rudyard Kipling jingle about a British soldier and Burmese girl (qtd. from online essay *Of Love War and Empire 2*).

Rukmini Bhaya Nair does not criticize Ghosh as Aijaz Ahmad does to Edward Said regarding the metropolitan stance. Rather taking him positively she opines, "orient is now increasingly represented" (170). She reverses the notion of Eurocanon comparing third world writers. She writes:

Indian writer like Ghosh who lives in the west but writes about 'elsewhere' is almost forced today to occupy an inter-generic cusp: [. . .] other Indian, writers in English subject to similar urges and a compatible geographical dislocation include both Vikram Seth (*From Heaven Lake*) and Salman Rushdie (*The Jaguar Smile*). (171)

She also looks at the novel from the perspective of diasporic stance and further adds: "The theme of new diasporic beginnings after great upheavals such as the one symbolized by the Burmese royal family's resettlement in Ratnagiri in India or Saya John's son Mathew's creation of the wondrous 'Morningstar' plantation in faraway Malaysia" (168). But her conscience is not to the point of textualized history of Burma during colonial period.

On the other hand, Subh Tiwari takes this novel as the projection of "the cruelty of colonization and its impact on the lives and mind of the colonized" (106). Though she believes on the impossibility of decolonization, "As Arjun says, we rebelled against an empire that has shaped everything in our lives; colored everything's in the world as we know it. It is huge, indelible, stain, which has tainted all of us. We cannot destroy it without destroying ourselves (106). She accepts the novel as the massive resistance against the Eurocentric notion. She disputes, "we can easily see as to why Ghosh withdrew *The Glass Place* from commonwealth Prize Short Listing. Commonwealth is a remnant of colonization. The spirit of this book is anti-colonial" (106).

Another interest demonstrated by critics while analyzing the novel is its emphasis on the politics of twentieth century and the despotism of Indian military on the lives of individuals during British invasion in Burma in 1980s. So, Ralph Blumenan, in a short online review of the text, *The Glass Place*, argues:

It is a story of three families across three generations of interesting personalities, complex, sometimes strange, often moving. Politics throughout the 20th century impinges on them, and especially interesting is the position of men who had joined the Indian regiments of the British Army and who came to see themselves as mercenaries who held down the Burmese and were used to fight for British cause against the Japanese. (Para 1)

Cerida comes with similar view with ecological view point that she opines:

I did learn some thing about the history and politics of the area, enough to know to move but again the story didn't touch me enough emotionally, they always seem to be just characters in a book and not real people experiencing the chaos and upheaval. But when Ghosh writes about the elephants and their trainers, WOW! what a difference ! The relationship between man and beast and the trust and respect each has for the other. The chapter about elephants and anthrax was outstanding and does put you through the wringer emotionally. (Para 2-3)

She opines that the novel is all about the history and politics in which real people can never happen to meet the Chaos and upheaval caused by the imperial invasion. so, it is dry as it does not arouse curiosity but one can be emotionally aware when s/he become empathizer with the wild beast which were used to be the loading teaks, given training and innocently become the partner of human being helping on their business but they unformtunately become victim of anthrax domesticated by Europeans in South East Asia.

The above cited critics have looked at the novel, *The Glass Palace* from the perspective and issue of colonialism and diaspora. The present researcher is going to study the text from the view point of New Historicism as the text blurs the demarcation between history and fiction. But Minna Proctor has gazed upon it as the historical novel and says, "*The Glass Palace* is at once a gargantuan history, family saga, and an adventure story [. . .] on the threshold of the twentieth century" (7-8).

With similar narrative of history and colonial subject, Subhjit Ghosh describes:

This 550 page[s] fictional work with Burmese history woven into the narrative chronicles has family's experiences, their ups and downs, the hatred that exist in Burma for Indo-Burmese family (Rajkumr marries a Burmese lady Dolly) providing us in between with a wealth of incarnation about Burma, the timber trade killer disease like anthrax which attack and kill elephants etcetera without becoming dry and boring. (9)

Ghosh exposed not only the fictional world of history but also the holocaust and anarchy caused by the British colonization in Burma.

In short, the review of literature shows that the novel has been read from the various perspectives viz. colonialism, diaspora, and history. None of the critics has attempted to study it from the viewpoint of blurred demarcation between history and fiction. The present study will explore to discover about the blurred demarcation between history and fiction by applying new Historicism as the methodological tool with reference to Foucault and others.

II. Theoretical Modality

Treatment of History within Literature: A Historical Perspective

Literature is a complex phenomena. Its distinct elements are observed and emphasized in different ages. The dispute on the nature of literature and its relation to other types of discourses is supposed to be inaugurated since Plato, the first prominent figure in western metaphysics. He talks about the dominant form of literature i.e. poetry in *Ion*. He sees poetry as a product of high form of imagination. Therefore, it lacks the truth. He locates reality in ideas or forms. He regards the phenomenal world as merely copies of the ideas. The poet, for him, is "imitating the realm of appearances and makes only copies of copies (qtd. in *Adam* 11). So his creation is twice removed from the reality. And the poet, he further says "is an imitator, and therefore, like all other imitators, he is thrice removed from [. . .] the truths" (qtd. in *Daiches* 15). Since the poet's activity leads men away from truth, Plato considers him dangerous to society. Therefore, Plato comments to banish the poet from the republic or limit him by strict censorship.

On the contrary, Aristotle, a student of Plato, has made a tremendous contribution on literary criticism till the Renaissance to the present, disagree with Platonic view of literature as false, trivial and harmful. He grants the status of it as true, serious and useful. He does not believe that the world of appearance is merely an ephemeral copy of the changeless ideas and change itself but is the fundamental process of nature, a creative force with a direction. Reality, for him, is the process by which a form manifests itself through the concrete, which takes on meaning working in accordance with the ordered principles. Aristotle calls the poet an imitator and a creator as well. The poet, according to him, makes the meaning of events by making their structure in words. Art is thus a sort of improvement on nature which is still

endeavoring to complete. A whole view of the value of imaginative literature is implicit in his discussion of the relation between poetry and history and the nature of literary probability. In *Poetics*, Aristotle deals with platonic notion of poetry as an imitation of imitation. He emphatically comments that the poet does not simply imitate or represent particular events or situation which he happens to have noted but, rather brings out their universal character through his artistic handling. Therefore, he is more accurate than a historian. Aristotle argues, the poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Therefore he concludes: "poetry, therefore, is amore philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular" (Adams 55). He brings the reversive idea and views the universal element of poetry more precious than the particular of history. Poetry is more fundamentally scientific and serious than history since it prefers "probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities" (64). In this sense Aristotle seems to be similar with Sidney.

Sir Philip Sidney, in the late 16th century, takes poetry as the superior form over history and philosophy in his *An Apology of A Poetry*. Sidney argues that the philosopher teaches by perception alone ,and the historian by example alone but the poet employs both percept and example. The philosopher teaches vice and virtue by setting down in abstract argument without clarity or beauty of style and the bare principle of morality so philosophy is too abstract to be persuasive. In the similar vein, the historian teaches virtue by showing the experience of past ages; being tied down to the particular truth of things and not to general possibilities, the example he depicts draws no necessary consequence. Hence history is 'a less fruitful doctrine" (Adams 148). Sidney points out: "The historian scarcely giveth leisure to the moralist

to say so much [. . .] laden with old mouse eaten records, authorizing himself upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay (147).

On the other hand, the poet, thus, Sidney claims is better than philosopher that he teaches men how to behave under all circumstances. Poetry teaches virtue by example as well as by percept. Thus, the poet alone can accomplish this dual tasks. The poet creates his own world where he gives only the good things but the historian dealing with facts cannot deal with abstracts ideas and it is not tied to facts only. So poetry can make them more appropriate and convincing than anything found in history since he opines, all arts have the works of nature as their principal object of imitation and the poet creates another nature better than nature herself. Poet, according to Sidney, creates a golden world in place of nature's brazen. In this sense he may be compared as a creator with God.

The notion of historical study of literature, however, has a long ancestry. John Dryden and Dr. Samuel Johnson in neoclassic era, occasionally paid attention on history in order to explain away the faults of the writers. The historical study of literature mainly flourished during the latter half of the nineteenth century as never before. Historical criticism argues, every writer is influenced by the age in which he lives, and his work cannot properly be estimated without an understanding of the social, economic, religious, political, and literary events and trends which influenced the writer, formed his/her personality and coloured the very texture of his/her work. It examines a work with reference to its social milieu; it relates the writer to his age and thus seeks to account for his shortcomings and excellencies. The Historical Critics viewed literature and history as related to each other. They treated the literature in terms of the period it was produced. So history was the integral part of the literary

creation. The Historical Critics had a conviction that literature is also a recreation of the past. So their function was to interpret the work in the light of the past:

For the Historical Critics, then, the interpretation of a literary work from the past as if it were a work of the present necessarily constitutes a violation of the integrity of the work. For this focus is at once on what he sees to be the chief value of the work, the formulation of a presentation in the literary mode, not simply of some aspects of man's experience but of man's experience in the past. (Handy 304)

Thus, for Historical Critics, literary work belonged to the time it was created. The history became significant to them because it was essential for the interpretation of literary work of art. The criticism, for them, was "not simply the elucidation of the work but the elucidation of the work in the light of what he regards as its most essential characteristic, its unique quality of pastness" (304). This is to say, in other words, that the literary work, for them, was the product of the history. Literature, therefore, is related with history.

In the middle of 19th century, Hippolyte Taine, generally recognized as the father of the historical method, published *History of English Literature* in which he treated literature as a documents for the analysis of an age and people. Taine argues, "we seek in literature an insight into the inner life of the author" (Adams 609). That is to say that biographical knowledge is only a step to the greater end of understanding a whole people and their moral condition. The end of literature is to put in a total historical vision. For Taine, the job of the Historical Critics was to "retrace from the monuments of literature, the style of man's feelings and thoughts for century back" (609). He views literature as a product of social and natural forces – race environment and epoch. For Taine, the study of literature is valuable and superior to history

because literature, even more than religion and philosophy, is the warmest and fullest revelation of the motives by which civilizations are determined. In words of Taine, "a great poem, a fine novel, the confessions of a superior man are more instructive than a heap of historians with their histories" (Adams 619). Because it offers us the psychology of a soul, frequently of an age, now and then of a race. It can be more valuable than history if its purpose is to serve as documents for historians.

Throughout the nineteenth century, there were simultaneously two contradictory approaches to literary history. One presented it as linearity of isolated monuments while the other, historicist, saw literary history as part of a larger cultural history. The philosopher Karl Popper (1902) uses the term 'historicism' to describe any study of history which attempts to predict on the basis of 'laws, patterns, trends and so on. The laws of history may be founded on God (Plato), the spirit of man (Hegel) or materials forces of production (Marx). This use of term tends to blur distinction between different approaches. Historicism was the offspring of Hegelian idealism. The history, according to Hegel, "is the story of the 'world spirit' gradually coming to consciousness of itself" (*Gaarder* 364). The world spirit is progressing throughout history in the modes of literature, "like religion and philosophy by which absolute spirit comes to consciousness of itself" (Adams 533). All knowledge, in words of Hegel, is human knowledge, therefore, truth is subjective, and the existence of any 'truths' is above or beyond human reason. Hegel believed, there were no 'eternal truths', no timeless reason since human condition changed from one generation to the next. History, for him, is one long chain of reflections" with a "dialectic process' where negation of the negation i.e. "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" is always working (364-65). Hegel saw history as the self realization of the human spirit – the rational expression of human freedom. History is the development

of "spirit" in time. Particular events and physical reality in general are part of a large 'absolute spirit of history'. According to Hegel all aspects of the national culture express a "national spirit which is a temporary form of the absolute spirit on its path through history. "The notion of the 'Zeitgeist' (spirit of the age) shaped the thought of major cultural historians' (qtd. in *Selden Theory* 420). Hegel produced an approach to the study of literature and its 'background' which has profoundly influenced twentieth century studies.

Twentieth century has been proved to be quite revolutionary from the view point of development of diverse new critical trends. New criticism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, new historicism, feminism, post colonialism and cultural studies etc. are the leading critical dimensions evolved in the contemporary global situation. E.M.W. Tillyard, a prominent 20th century historicist, published his books *Shakespeare's History Plays* and *The Elizabethan World Picture* in 1943, are generally regarded as the representative of old historicism; in which he argued that "the literature of the period expressed the spirit of the age, which centered on ideas of divine order, the chain of being and the correspondences between earthly and heavenly existences" (Selden 104). He saw literature determined by the then history. Tillyard saw Elizabethan culture as a unified system of meanings. Tillyard, in this way, as usual to Old Historicist, finds the pattern in the history and treats the literature as a mirror of history. In the concluding line he remarks "Now this idea of cosmic order was one of the genuine ruling ideas of the age" and anticipating on Tillyard, A. O. Lovejoy writes, "dominant cultural ideas are more directly manifested in the writings of [. . .] authors' (Seldon 420-21).

Following the historical approach of writers, Raymond Williams conceive history not in terms of unity but a complex patterns of contradiction, dominant and

subordinate currents, and declining and emergent energies. Williams acknowledges that literature is part of a larger social organization. He defines 'culture' as a whole way of life which includes social, political and economic organization as well as the creative arts. Commenting on the dramatic form in *The Long Revolution* (1961), he argues "the work of men [. . .] can be seen to have been shaped, not only by the demands of the experience, but by the particular social forms through which the dramatic tradition developed (*Theory* 431-32). Therefore, the play itself, a specific communication, survives the society and the religion which helped to shape it, and can be recreated to speak directly to unimagined audiences. In this sense there is reciprocity to each other between history and literature. Thus it was certainly an error to suppose that values or artworks could be adequately studied without reference to the particular society within which they were expressed, but it is equally an error to suppose that the social explanation is determining, or that the values and works are mere by-products. Williams brought the ambivalence attitude towards the relation between society and literature. The art is an activity clearly related to the other activities, with the production, the trading, the politics and so on. He opines, "a good deal of history has in fact been written on the assumption that the bases of the society, its political, economic and social arrangements, form the central core of facts, after which the art and theory can be adduced" (Seldon 433). The relation between literature and society can be seen to vary considerably, in changing historical situations. As a society changes, its literature changes, though often in unexpected ways, for it is a part of social growth and not simply its reflection. According to Raymond Williams, art and society constitute the whole entity. It is a total expression of a way of life. In this regard, Raman Seldon in the introductory section entitled "History and Society" writes:

The sociology of literature is concerned largely with the ways in which social and economic changes modify, facilitate or inhibit the writer's productive activity. The introduction of commodity production, the invention of printing, photography or the silicon chip, the waning of 'liberal ideas', and changes in cultural milieu and the writer's relationship to production are some of the historical conditions which radically affect the nature of art. (*Theory* 402)

Literature, thus, is modified by the socio-politico-cultural background of the particular age in which it is produced.

As being literature a part of the history, it cannot be separated from without loss. So, a prominent critic, Rene Wellek in an essay entitled "Literary Theory, Criticism and History" suggests, ". . . a literary work can be interpreted only in the light of history and that ignorance of history distorts a reading of the work [. . .] the critic needs the help of the history is the most complex facing literary study" (*Lodge* 555). He views all knowledge about literature has its place in history, and literary study cannot be divorced from historical relations. He opines that the most perfect works of the particular periods can be grasped only in its particular forms as a dialectical process in history otherwise it would be difficult to express it. The difference between history and literature, he argues, can be seen only on the methodology of handling things "not with documents but with monuments" (559). A historian has to reconstruct a long past event on the basis of eye-witness accounts. On the other hand, the literary person has direct access to his object – the work of art. He has to rely on documents to examine, interpret or evaluate the work itself. In other words, in short, a literary person must be a critic in order to be a historian. In this sense, there is no distinction or rupture between the history and the fiction. Literature,

therefore, ultimately is a chorus of voices – articulate through the ages – which asserts man's defiance of time and destiny, his victory over impermanence, relativity and history.

Ontological or Textual criticism, regardless of biography, history, sociology, psychology etc. takes words, diction, language, image, meter, tone theme etc. under consideration to create the being of the text. For the ontological critics the text under consideration is the thing in itself and it is examined and analysed without any consideration of such extrinsic factors. Anglo-American New Criticism, the most dominant theoretical movement in the mid-twentieth century, challenged the historical view of literature put forward by Hippolyte Taine. New critics treated the literary text as an object essentially independent of its author and historical context. All the leading personalities of the New critical school, in one way or the other, focused their emphasis on the textuality of the text. They took guaranteed of full power on the text considering it as an autonomous self-sufficient entity. Rejecting positivistic literary scholarship, they insist on the difference between literature and other kinds of writings and only focus on the structure and the interrelatedness of various parts in a work in their analyses. They paid attention on the close reading of the text, i.e. the textuality of the text. T.S. Eliot, one of the leading and apocalyptic personality in the terrain of literary scenario, also rejected the chronological conception of literary history. His emphasis on depersonalization' and the expression of thought and feelings through the description of things, 'objective correlative' is an attempt to make literary text a powerful object in itself. T.S. Eliot, in his essay *Tradition and Individual Talent* says, "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality" (Adams 764).

W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley collaboratively published two famous essays, "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy" in which they attempted to construct the theoretical basis for an alternative to positivistic scholarship. They argued that a text should be treated as an object in the public domain avoiding totally from the author's experience and intention at the time of writing. The author's experience and intention are matters of historical interest that do not determine the meaning of the text. If criticism is based up on the intention of the author rather than the objective features of the text, it results the intentional fallacy. On the other hand, analyzing the meaning of the text in terms of the effects that it expresses upon the reader, there happens to occur the affective fallacy. New critics, thus, treat the literary text as an object essentially independent of its author and historical context.

What so ever objective new critics' pretended to be, they always focused on the 'unified whole' or organicity' or the 'organic whole' of the text rendering a 'unified experience' to the readers. They did not deny the connections of literature with the real world. They felt that literature can enable people to cope with the problems of everyday human existence. In this sense, once again, commenting on New criticism Rene Wellek says, "The New Critics did not mean and could not be conceived to mean a denial of the relevance of historical information for the business of poetic interpretation. Words have their history; genres and devices descend from a tradition; poems often refer to contemporary realities" (Lodge 555).

Model of New criticism is not linguistic one, they seem to coincide with structuralists' notion of text as a 'sign' because they often are interested in the use of language in terms of paradox, ambiguity and icon. Structuralist literary theory has been derived form the linguistic theory of the French speaking, Swiss linguist,

Ferdinand de Saussure regarded as the father of modern linguistics with the posthumously published book *Course in General Linguistics* by his disciples esp. the brilliant one, Charles Bally. Regardless of diachronic model favoured by the philologists, Saussure established his own model – synchronic model – in order to explore the nature of language itself; which is viewed as related to a culture and its activities at a single historical moment. As structural critics account a language as a self-sufficient system, the meaning is not determined by the subjective intention and wishes of its speakers; it is the linguistic system as a whole which produces the meaning which is arbitrarily conventional within the linguistic terrain. Therefore, emphasizing on this notion, Terry Eagleton in his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, writes about structuralism:

. . . Saussure viewed language as a system of signs which was to be studied 'synchronically' – that is to say, studied as a complete system at a given point in time rather than 'diachronically'; in its historical development. Each sign was to be seen as being made up of a 'signifier' (a sound image, or its graphic equivalent) and a 'signified' (the concept of meaning). The three black marks c – a – t are a signifier which evoke the signified 'cat' in English mind. The relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary one: There is no inherent reason why these three marks should mean 'cat', other than, cultural and historical convention. (96-7)

Saussure's account of the system of language asserts that the object of study is 'social' and not individual. He regards language as one among many 'semiotic' (sign) systems where 'binary opposition' plays very significant role. Therefore structuralists believe, literary systems too can be expressed in terms of binary oppositions. Saussure viewed

the linguistic sign as arbitrary and as having meaning only because it participates in a system of conventions. Meaning is dependent upon differential relations among elements within a system, i.e. it is a diacritical, not referential. In fact, structuralism is not particularly interested in meaning per se, but rather in attempting to describe and understand the conventions and modes of signification which make it possible to 'mean', that is, it seeks to discover the condition of meaning. So the first and for most task of structuralism is to describe and analyse that system. Structuralists, thus, usually begin their analysis by seeking general principles in individual works, though there is also a tendency to explain/interpret individual works by referring to those general principles. They seek unity or unification in the literary system as a whole to explain the individual work. They also tend to treat the text as a function of the system of literature, divorcing it from historical and social context. In this regard structuralism raises the epistemological and ontological questions about the condition of the textuality and believes "the field of the writer is nothing but writings itself" (Rice & Waugh 48). This seems to be echoing with Derridian assertion that "there is nothing outside the text" (Barry 175). In other words, the text has no relation with the other outer world. For them, the socio-political and economic forces are nothing, but the aspects of signifying processes.

The structuralists treat signification as a stable and systematic process, the proponents of "post-structuralism" dwell upon the 'instability' which they argue is inherent in signification. Poststructuralists/Deconstructionists, along with New critics and structuralists, overlooked the historicity of the text and alienated it from the external reality. The term 'post structuralism' does not refer to a body of work that represents a coherent school or movement. It is sometimes taken as a critique of structuralism, sometimes a development of it. Though language remains a central area

of interest, post-structuralism takes up a more radical reading and/or critique of Saussurean theory. Saussure argued that language is a system of difference, with no positive terms. Identities do not refer to essences and are not discrete but are articulated in differences; identities are events in language. In the system of difference proposed by Saussure the sign, made up of the signifier and the signified, is arbitrary, fixed by social contract. Once formed, the sign becomes a totality; signifier and signified are inseparable and the sign's form and meaning are self-identical. In other words Saussure had argued that the continuum of the phenomenal world was 'cut up' by language; but once this process was complete, then the relationship between the arbitrary signifier and arbitrary signified was fixed and they achieved a stable one – to – one correspondence.

Post-structuralism questions this assumption, arguing that signifiers do not carry with them well defined signifieds; meanings are never as graspable or as 'present' as this suggests. Any attempt to define the meaning of a word illustrates the point for it inevitably ends up in a circularity of signifiers, with the signifiers sliding over the continuum of the field of the signfield. Signifiers are open to multiple meaning areas. Post-structuralism argues then, that the sign is not stable, that there is an 'indeterminacy' or 'undecidability' about meaning and that it is subject to 'slippage' from signifier to signifier. So, if literature, the author and the text no longer have an identity outside of difference, neither do they have a single, fixed and determinate meaning; they are relativized and unstable. Post-structuralism in its more purely formal deconstructive models, deconstructing the principles of ordering and the 'metaphysics of presence' tends to view all language as a web of signifiers bound up in

an endless play of textuality (textuality being the condition of existence of signifiers where they refer endlessly to other textual occurrences, rather than to a pre-text).

Falling under trajectory of language, the major exponent of 'Deconstruction', the French philosopher, Derrida, argues that the text is taken not as referring to a pre-text but as inscribed within a web of textuality and difference. Derrida has been seen as almost synonymous with the post-structuralist enterprise. He has consistently critiqued and extended structuralism, rigorously following through the most radical implications of the Saussurean theory of language logocentrism, the land mark of a 'metaphysics of presence' is, for Derrida, the very foundation of western thought; it is undermined by Saussure's theory of language in which identities result only from difference. But, as Derrida shows, Saussure himself falls into a logocentrism. In *Of Grammatology* Derrida criticizes Saussure on the grounds that he privileges speech over writing. Typically, Derrida, reverses the privileged term of the binary opposition, to show how speech can be seen as a form of writing (rather than vice versa); and how both exist in a mutually reciprocal dependence marked by "difference".

Derrida reads Saussure radically, transposing difference to *différance*-where meaning is matter of both 'différance' and 'deferring'. Meaning is never self-present in the sign, for if it were then the signifier would simply be the reference for the signified, the signifier 'standing in' for the absent 'presence' of the concept that lies behind it. Meaning is a result of difference, but it is also deferred, there is always an element of 'undecidability' or 'play' in the unstable sign. This leads to an emphasis on the signifier and on textuality rather than the signified and meaning, since there is no point at which the slippage of signifiers can be stopped, no final resting point where the signifier yields up the truth of the signified, of that signified is just another signifier

in a moment in différances. In other words, there happens to be the chain of signifiers without final signified. That is why it creates aporia in the either text.

Deconstruction is a two fold strategy of, on the one hand, uncovering and undoing 'logocentric rationality' —(the belief that there is an ultimate word, truth, or reality which can be the foundation of our thoughts and experiences) and on the other, drawing attention to the language of the text, to its figurative and rhetorical gestures and pointing up the text's existence in a web of textuality, in a network of signifiers where no final and transcendental signified can be fixed. Deconstruction appears, therefore, not as a rigid method or explanatory metalanguage – (all masterful discourses, such as criticism, which aim to explain other discourses), but more as process and a performance closely tied to the texts it deconstructs. However, as Derrida notes, such strategies cannot ultimately escape logocentrism, they can only push at its limits; deconstructionist texts are themselves not beyond deconstruction. Therefore, commenting on deconstruction, Raman Selden writes, "Having reversed the 'violent hierarchy' speech/writing, a deconstructive reading proceeds to displace the new hierarchy which has been created, leaving us with a sense of the necessary indeterminacy of all signifying processes" (*Theory* 381). Similarly, considering on post-structuralist notion of Derridian deconstruction, Rice and Waugh comments:

Post-structuralism is contradictory in that, on the one hand, grand and overarching theories tend to disappear and at, on the other, a cluster of pre-occupations and assumptions, about language, textuality, subjectivity, difference, tend to drive theorizing in all the most recent critical movements; postmodernism, post colonialism, gender studies, queer theory, cultural materialism, new historicism. (*Modern Literary Theory* 180)

The implications of deconstruction for literary criticism, and of Derrida's work in general are profound. Literary studies has traditionally been concerned with the interpretation of texts, with revealing the 'meaning' behind the text (be that meaning the author's intention or the 'truth' of the human condition). Deconstructionist logic disrupts that interpretive mode. If the meaning of the text is unstable, undecidable, then the project of literary interpretation is compromised; interpretation is doomed to endlessly repeat the interpretive act, never able to reach that final explanation and understanding of the text – it is haunted by the continual play of difference'.

Jacques Derrida, belonging to the Yale school of critics, tries to deal with the problem of the metaphysical assumptions of western philosophy since Plato by avoiding determinate concepts in his own discourse. All his terms are overtly deconstructed. Difference', 'gram' 'supplement', 'trace' and so on, contain marks of indeterminacy. Indeterminacy is the condition of humanity, it describes our uncertainty and humility in the face of experience. Thus, he concludes that the transcendental signified is under the chain of the signifiers i.e. the signifier of the signifier without its finality always in processes. In other words, plurality of possibilities, therefore, give impossibility of meaning within the textuality of the text.

Derrida's work represents the seminal moment in the shift from structuralism to post-structuralism along the axis of language, the work of the French historian and cultural theorist Michel Foucault has been at the center of what is referred to as the 'discourse trajectory'. Foucault's work has been concerned primarily with the configuration of 'discourse', 'knowledge' and 'power', and it is through these three key notions that he elaborates a complex theory. In his earlier work, he emphasizes 'discourse'; in his later work the emphasis shifts to power.

For Michel Foucault the 'social' is produced in the network of discourses and discursive practices through which one seems to acquire knowledge about the world. Broadly, Foucault's argument is that it is the modalities of discourses and discursive practices that actually produce both that knowledge and the social itself, and the modalities function differently in different historical 'episteme'. An episteme is an historical period that is unified by the rules and procedures – the modalities – for producing knowledge. So, Foucault opines, "The history of episteme is not a matter of progression or continuity, but of discontinuity" (qtd. in *Modern Theory* 184). But, he does not mean the total disruption and absent of the history. It passes only through circularity rather than in the linear development of progressivity. So, McHoul and Grace write history "as an immaterial but ever-present 'Geist' or spirit" (Primer 8). According to Foucault, power is productive – power produces discourses, as well as sets its boundaries. This insight, more than any other, was the starting point for constellation of critical practices which is now referred to as the 'new historicism'. Foucault opened up a new way in the post-deconstruction impasses of literary theories by reaching beyond the traditional hierarchy of binary opposition. This might be perhaps the reason why Rice and Waugh write commenting on Lacan, Derrida and Foucault as "the names of problems, not "author's of doctrines" (*Theory* 180). Following Nietzsche, Foucault denies that history can ever be objectively known. Historical writing can never be a science. 'It always becomes entangles in troops" (Selden 102). Nietzsche believes that language is essentially figurative and not referential or expressive. There is no original unrheterical language: discourse is always shaped by 'desire' which in turn is communicated in troops and figure. In an essay entitled "The Will to Power", Friedrich Nietzsche opines that every drive is a kind of lust to rule. The world runs with the individuals having 'a will to power'. The

'will to power' is at work in all sorts of human behaviour and valuations. He views power as the only important thing in the world. Every one desires it. "The only thing that all men want," for Nietzsche, is "power, and whenever is wanted is wanted for the sake of power. If something is wanted more than something else, it must represent power" (Nietzsche 511).

As everyone is desirous to will to power "interpretation" "has become incomprehensible" because of "plurality of interpretations". There are no facts, everything is in flux, incomprehensible elusive." Therefore, 'everything is subjective' (*Theory* 383-4). Any form of writing, claims Nietzsche, cannot present truths. Writing, according to Nietzsche, is presented through "a mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthromorphissm." He further says, "Truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions" (Adams 636). He, thus, argues that there are no absolute truths. A theory is 'true' only if it accords with prevailing institutional and political expectations.

Being indebted to Nietzsche, Foucault developed a theory of discourse in relation to the power structures operating in societies. But, like Nietzsche he does not believe all perspectives are equally valid, rejecting conventional views of history and philosophical theories such as phenomenological theories of the subject as erroneous and prevailing Greek ethics over Christian morality. Nietzsche taught Foucault to write a genealogical history of unconventional topics such as reason, madness and the subject which located their emergence within sites of domination. Nietzsche demonstrated that the will to truth and knowledge is indissociable from the will to power and Foucault developed these claims in his critique of all liberal humanism, the human sciences and his later works on ethics. While Foucault never wrote aphoristically in the style of Nietzsche, he did accept Nietzsche's claims that

systematizing methods produce reductive social and historical analyses, and that knowledge is perspective in nature, requiring multiple viewpoints to interpret a heterogeneous reality.

Foucauldian genealogies attempt to demonstrate how objectifying forms of reason (and their regimes of truth and knowledge) have been made, as historically contingent rather than eternally necessary forces. Foucault rejects idealist and humanist mode of writing which traces a continuous evolution of thought in terms of tradition or the conscious production of subjects. Against this approach Foucault employs the term archaeology to differentiate his historical approach attempting to identify the condition of possibility of knowledge, the determining rules of formation of discursive rationality that operate beneath the level of intention or thematic content. It is a rules of formation which were never formulated in their own right, but are to be found only in widely differing theories, concepts and objects of study. His new historical method, genealogy is a new shift in focus, not a break in his work, but rather a widening of the scope of analysis. The genealogist, what he prefers to call the 'new historian' attempts to re-examine the social field from a micrological standpoint to identify discursive discontinuity and dispersion instead of continuity and identity; and also to grasp historical events in their real complexity.

Foucault seeks to destroy historical identities by pluralizing the field of discourse, to purge historical writing of humanist assumptions by decentering the subject, and to critically analyze modern reason through a history of the human sciences. Since Foucault believes that "Discourse. . . is so complex a reality that not . . . only can, but should approach it at different level with different methods" (qtd. in *Postmodern Theory* 40). Hence, no single theory or method of interpretation by itself can grasp the plurality of discourses, institutions and modes of power that constitute

modern society. Rejecting any single analytical framework, he analyzes modernity from the perspectives of psychiatry, medicine, criminology and sexuality, all of which overlap in complex ways and provides different optics on modern society and the constitution of the modern subject.

Foucault describes how modern philosophy constructs 'Man' – both object and subject of knowledge-within series of unstable 'doublets, the cogito/unthought doublet whereby Man is determined by external forces yet aware of this determination and able to free himself from it; the retreat-and-return of-the-origin doublet whereby history precedes Man but he is the phenomenological sources from which history unfolds; and the transcendental impirical doublet whereby Man both constitutes and is constituted by the external world, finding secure foundations for knowledge through 'a priori' categories or through procedures of 'reduction' which allow consciousness to purify itself from the empirical world. The subject, for Foucault, is once and for all dethroned and interpreted as an effect of language, desire and the unconscious. And the subject in the episteme of counter sciences-psychoanalysis, linguistics and ethnology, becomes an epiphenomenon of prepersonal forces.

The philosophy of discontinuity for Foucault does not mean the gradual progress of trend or reason but a transition from one historical era to another. Since things are no longer perceived, described; expressed, characterized, classified and known in the same way. There is no rupture or break so radical as to spring forth exnihilo and negate everything that has preceded it.

Foucault argues that "rupture means not some absolute change but a redistribution of the prior episteme, a reconfiguration of its elements where . . . new rules of a discursive formation redefine the boundaries and nature of knowledge and truth . . . are significant continuities as well (*Postmodern* 44). Rupture is possible

only on the basis of rules that are already in operation. Hence, Foucault employs a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity; historical breaks always include some overlapping, interaction, and echoes between the old and the new.

Following Nietzschean genealogies of morality, asceticism, justice and punishment, Foucault tries to write the histories of unknowns, forgotten, excluded and marginalized discourses such as the discourses of madness, medicine, punishment and sexuality to have independent history and institutional bases. He calls for an insurrection of subjugated knowledge of those 'disqualified' discourses that positive science and Marxism delegitimize. Foucauldian genealogies are therefore, anti-sciences, not because they seek to 'vindicate a lyrical right to ignorance or non-knowledge' and attack the concept and methods of science per se but rather because they contest the coercive effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse'. So the importance of archaeology and genealogy lies as the historical methods that expose the beginning and developments of current subjectifying discourse and practices.

Foucault contradicts himself in claiming that everything is historically constituted within power relations; privileging some realm of the body as a transcendental source of transgression. Since he opines that all social relations are characterized by power and resistance because he further adds "as soon as there is a power relation, there is possibility of resistance" (Best and Kellner-55). According to Foucault, all discourses are produced by power and can be used as a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. He views that discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operates through discourse. Every discourse is involved in power. It is the ordering force that governs every institution. Hence, the discourse is inseparable from power. This is a means of

achieving power. The social, moral and religious disciplines always control human behavior directly by means of discourse.

According to Foucault, truth is not outside power, or lacking in power. It is rather a thing of this world which is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints in a society. So each society has its own regime of truth. Further more the power diffuse itself in the system of authority and the effects of truth are produced within discourses. But, the discourses themselves are neither true nor false. Foucault argues, Truth is linked in a circular relation with system of power which produce and sustain it, and effects of power which it induces and which extend it (Adam 145). Thus Foucault sees the truth as a product of power relations and it changes as system changes. Both literature and history are narratives and they are in the form of discourse. They are entangled in the power relations of their time. Discourse can be a theoretical framework for manifestation of ideology of any society. And by this logic, a discourse never allows freedom to an individual. Foucault takes a historian to be 'embedded' in the social practices. From this view point, history is also written from the perspective of the historian. The position a historian, occupies in a society determines the history he/she writes. The way he/she 'goes inside' the forms of power structures and social practices determines his description of history. In this sense, history is not different from fiction as it is nothing other than fictionalized details of a persons perspectives. Therefore, literary works are nor secondary reflections of any coherent world-view but the action participates in the continual remaking of meanings. In short, all texts, including history and literature, are simply the discourses though which speaks the power of ruling class. Hence, the dividing line between history and fiction is effaced.

The text is not only a literary fact but a social one, i.e. the text is engaged within the context both in its production and narration with social, political, historical and religious factors. It is equally true that the historical context of any text is infinite and hence that the historical and sociological explanation of the literary series must be pursued in details, focus not on literature but on the social totality of which literature is one manifestation.

Literary theories, developed in the modern trends, incorporate in different ways, a number of historical factors; such theories assume that, as part of its meaning, the text refers, to a greater or lesser degree, to events, ideas, personalities, structures, relationship and other sorts of facts itself. History functions as a factor in all literary theory, whether by its explicit incorporation into theoretical framework or by its attempted exclusion. And though much may be made of texts as transcending history; the literary texts take the existence first with the history of authors life as well as the society, he was born and by the time he/she had, composed the particular text and second with the culture and history.

Literary text is simply one of many kinds of texts – religions, social, philosophical, legal, scientific and so on. Literary text is the subject to the particular conditions of time and place and among which the literary text has neither unique status nor has univocal or monolithic meaning. It is because of what Adam puts forward his words, "Foucault's influence in literary theory has been strong among revisionist literary historians known as "new historicists" who study the circulation at power through society and the literary texts that are part of it" (1133) and by that New Historicism emerged out at the formal existence. The tendency of new historicism to view history as a social science and the social sciences as historical became very radical in its textualization of history and historicization of text., That is why the age-

old demarcation between history and fiction has now been blurred. This new theoretical approach is by product of deconstruction and post-structuralism what believe not on binary opposition of any sort so that anything can be at the central canon. So it will be better to say, this theory, new historicism, is also the decentring theory, giving plurality of metanarrative and also demolishing the rupture created by metanarrative. History, like a work of art, has become something like a negotiated product of a private creator and the public practices of a given society. Since 'Truth' about what really happened could never be purely and objectively known rather than the subjective textuality of the text of any kind.

Since the early 1980's critics like Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatts, Louis Monstrose, John Brannigon, Jerome McGann, Christine Gallagher, Alan Sinfield, Jonathan Dollimore and over all Raymond William developed this mode of literary criticism, "New Historicism" or "Cultural Materialism" which deals the text as part and preel of much wider cultural, political, social and economic dispensation and the literary text is directly involved in history. Literature is not simply a product of history, it also actively makes history. So their motto is "there is no longer a difference between literature and other texts, no matter whether these are religious, political, historical or products of marginal sub-cultures that so far have been ignored.

The New Historicism and Its Major Propositional Tenents

Brief Introduction

The term "New Historicism" supposed to be first used in a Michael McCanles essay for the journal, *Diacritic* 10: 1 (Spring 1980) in describing 'The Authentic Discourse of the Renaissance' for the renewed attention to the specific discourses and signifying codes of the Renaissance and how they emerged out of a distinct and very

heterogeneous culture, the label has gained general currency since Stephen Greenblatt introduction, *The Forms of Power and the Power of Forms in the Renaissance* in the reissued periodical as "The Power of forms in the English Renaissance" (1982).

Therefore, the credit goes to Stephen Greenblatt for the formalizing the term into circulation in its current sense. But Jeremy Hawthorn in *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* argues that it was:

Victor Shea who has pointed out that Wesley Morris used the term 'New Historicism' in 1972 to designate a mode of literary criticism derived from German historicists such as Leopold Von Ranke and Wilhelm Dilthey, and American historian such as Vernon L. Parrington and Van Wyck Brooks. However, Kiernan Ryan has suggested that the term is foreshadowed even earlier, in the title of Roy Harvey Pearce's 1969 book, *Historicism Once More*. (235)

New Historicism emerged as an influential movement in the 1970s and 1980s largely in reaction to the lingering effects of New criticism and it is ahistorical approach with Stephen Greenblatt's early studies in Renaissance culture. New Historicism is the dominant theoretical force in literary studies today. "New" Historicism's adjectival emphasis highlights its opposition to the old historical-biographical criticism prevalent before the advent of New Criticism and also to the formalism and, its proponents attribute to the critical deconstruction that followed it. New Historicism is used as an umbrella term to include members of both groupings. One belonging to Cultural poetics including the founder, Stephen Greenblatt is from North American project while under 'Cultural Materialism' trajectory includes the British neo-Marxist critics, Raymond Wiliam and other a number of British scholars – Johanthan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield, Catherine Belsey etc.

In the earlier historical-biographical criticism, literature was seen as a (mimetic) reflection of the historical world in which it was produced. Further, history was viewed as stable, linear, and recoverable—a narrative of facts. In contrast, New Historicism views history skeptically (historical narrative is inherently subjective), but also more broadly; history includes all of the cultural, social, political, anthropological discourses at work in any given age and these various 'texts' are unranked—any text may yield information valuable in understanding a particular milieu. Rather than forming a back drop, the many discourses at work at any given time affect both an author and his/her text; both are inescapably part of a social construct.

The writings of Michel Foucault and equally of Raymond Williams constitute a major influence on the New Historicists, who have succeeded in defining or suggesting new objects of historical study, with a particular emphasis upon the way in which causal influences are mediated through discursive practices.

The notions of ideology of neo Marxist thinkers, Louis Althusser, the dialogic nature of literary texts by the deconstructionist, Mikhail Bakhtin, thick description of the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz and power/knowledge relations of Michel Foucault have profound and affluent effects for the development of New Historicism.

The Fundamental Assumptions and Concepts of New Historicism

New Historicists acknowledge the importance of literary text to be analyzed with an eye to history. They view that there is an inseparable relationship between literature and history. There is no primary and secondary characteristics between history and literature because literature is to be embedded within history. New Historicists are more interested in the relationship between history and literature. They tried to reconstruct the bridge between literature and history dismantled by New critics, structuralists and Deconstructionists. They opine that we cannot know texts

separate from their historical context. But unlike old Historicists, they emphasize that all interpretation is subjectively filtered through one's own set of historically conditioned view points because they believe that all human beings, historians live in a particular time and place, and their views of both current and past events are influenced in innumerable conscious or unconscious ways by their own experience within their own culture. Hence, there is no 'objective' history.

Old Historicists saw a pattern in history. They viewed history as a set of fixed, objective facts. Literature for them, contends Selden in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, was "a part of a longer cultural history". He further says that old historicists studied literature "in the context of social, political and cultural history" (Selden 104). Texts, therefore become the production of certain historical operations. Historical forces shape literary texts and literary texts reflect the historical forces. This helps to show how literary texts and history are interrelated. However, Old Historicism views the history as superior to literature because history shapes and produces literature.

New Historicists deconstructs the linear progression of events. They believe that any events have causes that are usually multiple, complex and difficult to analyze. Causality is not a one-way street from cause to effect i.e. a linear, causal relationship of events: event A caused event B or so on. That is to say, in other words, that all events including the creation of an artwork are shaped by and shape the culture in which they emerge (Tyson 280). In similar manner, Lois Tyson, further analyzes that "our subjectivity or selfhood, is shaped by and shapes the culture into which we were born" (280). In this regard, historians too cannot be untouched with the socio-political cultural experience within which s/he interacts. Therefore, objective analysis of the facts is impossible. There are only different interpretations of facts and

one interpretation is as reliable or not as another. Because individual identity is not merely product of society and neither of individual will and desire. Instead individual identity and its cultural milieu inhabit, reflect, and define each other. Their relationship is mutually constitutive and dynamically unstable. For every society constraints individual thought and action within a network of cultural limitations while it simultaneously enables the individual to think and act. So, our subjectivity, consciously or unconsciously is a lifelong process of negotiating our way among the constraints and freedom offered by the society in which we live at any given moment in time.

New Historicist views historical accounts as narrative, as stories, that are inevitably biased according to the point of view, conscious or unconscious, of those who write them. Whatever pretensions they make to be objective, they fall inside the pitfall of biases that becomes able to control their narrative. So history is the subjective process rather than the pure facts. This seems to be echoing the Gadamarion notion of truths. According to Gadamar, every understanding is subjective since we are always wearing the spectacles, framework of time and place. we have been preoccupied with the 'fore structure' as a result true interpretation of anything is mere illusions. We are always in process of 'Truth' which is deferring i.e. it is under Derredian 'Defférance.' In other words, there is no final 'Truth' as such but 'truths'. And so is history. New Historicism, thus, is characterized by, as Lois Montrose says, "A shift from history to histories" (411). This is to say that history is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events 'because history is characterized by the forces of heterogeneity contradiction, fragmentation and differences. That is why New Historicism could be called as the post-structuralist historical criticism. New Historicists assert that the historians, like authors of literary

texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to that particular era. So they can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective. Because, according to New Historicists, we cannot transcend our own historical situation. We are shaped by conditions and ideological formations of our own era. Greenblatt in this sense says that in all his texts and documents, he never found a free and pure subjectivity. For Greenblatt, "the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society" (qtd. in Selden 107).

Hence, human being can never have an autonomous role as Emile Zola points out that we are never free but always captive of heredity and environment. In this sense, any acts of reading, whether of history or of the literature, too are embedded within a particular social and cultural situation. We can never "escape history even if this history is regarded as multiple and in a process of unceasing transformation" (Benett and Royle 114). We, therefore, cannot avoid the history. According to Montrose, we "live in history and that the form and pressure of history are made manifest in our subjective thoughts and actions, in our beliefs and desires" (*Redrawing* 394). Our knowledge and understanding is part of history. So our "own voice", claims Stephen Greenblatt, is the "voices of the dead". The voices of the deed are "heard in the voices of living" through the "textual traces" (*Modern Criticism* 496). Hence, we can never have a disinterested and objective interpretation, evaluation or creation of a text.

History, for New Historicists, argues M S Nagarjan, is another text even as literature: "literature is another cultural artefact which reveal to us the different social systems that operated when the texts were written, even as history is" (*Theory* 177-79). Connotating with this view of history as a cultural production, Lois Tyson,

considers "history, a text that can be interpreted in the same way as literary critics interpret literary texts." And furthermore, Tyson, adds, history is known only in its textual form "in the form of the documents, written statistics, legal codes, diaries, letters, speeches, tracts, new articles and the like in which are recorded the attitudes, policies, procedures and events that occurred in a given time and place" (*Critical Theory* 283). This is to say that events either major or minor are not represented within the territory of grand narratives like history but also prevailed in either documents. Because, everything, in words of Hans Bertens, "Is cultural" and "can be read and picked apart like a literary text" (*The Basic* 181).

New Historicists, take a historical text as a discourse. Discourses, according to Foucault, are social constructs by means of which ruling powers maintain their control. A discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience. Discourses do not exist on a permanent basis. Discourses all the time are dynamic, unstable interplay among discourses: they are always in a state of flux, overlapping and competing with one another i.e. negotiating exchanges of powers. For Foucault, all discourses are social constructs by which power is maintained and in every society, the production of discourse is controlled, organized, redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its materiality; and also power always circulates through various discourses, as religion, science, fashion, law and so forth; and we accept them as natural or normal or right. So history is one of the discourses normalized as the metanarrative because of power relation. Therefore, it should be analyzed and interpreted from view point of subjective analysis as the literary and other texts are handled. Because "anything goes" in words of Tyson, "towards the

writing of history" (*Theory Today* 286). Historians' psychological and ideological positions are materialized while writing history. Thus a human lens is needed for viewing the historical issues at hand.

Literature has become simply a writing like others under the consideration of cultural studies, opines Paul Hamilton in his essay "Reconstructing Historicism". He points out, "The art of writing has now become just another kind of writing. The difference between fictional and non-fictional uses of language is not a special difference . . . Literature has become impossible; all we have is writing" (*Literary Theory/Waugh* 394). He says that literature is treated as a mode of history taken as further evidence of the times in which it was composed. History, like art, changes with its interpretation. We happen to live different histories within the same time frame. For Alexander Kojève, "without history, we are effectively dead" (Waugh 397). History, for him, is a narrative which makes sense and tells of a common attempt to realize Reason to embody the Idea. So we should re-conceive our notion of history.

As New Historicists view literature and history as inseparable and mutually constitutive to each other. Louis Montrose, a prominent New Historicist critic, views literature and history as fully interdependent. He propounds the key concern about studying history with post-structuralist orientation. He adds, New Historicism is "a reciprocal concern with the historicity of the texts and the textualities of the histories." He explains that by "the historicity of texts", he means that all texts are embedded in a specific historical, social and material context. Literary texts too are the material products of specific historical conditions. Literary texts, therefore, must be treated along with its historical context and granted it as history. On the other hand, by "the textuality of histories", he means that, "access to a full and authentic past" is never

possible (*Redrawing* 410). This is to say that objectivity of history is impossible. Thus subjective interpretation of history is accountable facts. In other words all of our knowledge and understanding of the past exists only in the realm of narrative. The past is mediated by the texts. And literary texts too have affluent role in mediating history or vice versa. Literature, in this sense, works as a vehicle or a means for the representation of history. It depicts the historical contexts of a particular time and place. So, one does not need to go for the historical accounts in history only. They can find it in another fields of written documents such as the literature. Literature reveals the processes and tensions by which historical change comes out in the phenomenal world.

Borrowing Derridian notion about "there is nothing out side the text, Peter Barry in his book, *"Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory"*, discusses that whatever the thing that we have in the present situation is the matter of past in the form of textualization. We cannot perceived the things of past in original virgin state but "with missed and added." It is only subjectively interpreted facts in the form of written documentation that represents the typical tempo-geographical context of the society. So, Barry writes, "The past is available to us in textualized form" since every aspect and feature of reality is textualized (175). This sounds with Foucauldian belief that social structure are determined by dominant "discursive practices. In other words, discourses are produced and shaped within the social, political, religious, economical or materialistic bases of cultural aspects. This is, in short, every discourse in form of knowledge, is structurally shaped in a given society to the particular moment. New Historicists, therefore, probe history as represented, projected or recorded in the written documents as texts such as legal, medical, penal documents, travels writing, anecdotes, an anthropological narrative,

literary texts and so on. Because the events and attitudes of the past get their being only as writing, therefore, New Historicists pay their attention so powerfully and minutely on written documents of each and every sorts with the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts. So any kind of hierarchy and rupture are distorted for New Historicists. In this sense, New Historicism, seems to be the Marxism dimension of postcoloniality as it prefers to see the struggleless field proposing utopian world. Thus, the pioneer figure of New Historicism, Stephen Greenblatt asserts that New Historicists are occupied in "an intensified willingness to read all of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts" (qtd. in Hawthorne 236).

In a process of study, distinction and discrimination of any sort is quite unacceptable for the New Historical critics. They wish to dismantle the boundary and give equal weight and significance both to literary and non-literary texts. Equality regardless of superiority or centrality and history as text and text as history have become main motto of New Historicism. Because they account literary production as a cultural practice. So all cultural practices should equally be considered without absolute distinction between or among them. For this rationality, Greenblatt, points out his opinion as art "does not simply exist in all cultures; it is made up along with other products, practices, discourses of given culture" (*Theory* 504). This is to say that all types of arts along with literature, are embedded within the socio-politico, cultural and economic circumstances in which they are produced and consumed. But these social circumstances are unstable process in themselves. They go under change with temporality since everything is in flux. And literary text are considered as a part of a longer circulation of social energies. So Greenblatt, further adds, there can be no "art without social energy (503). Literary works of art, thus for New Historicists, are by–

products of a particular culture and at the same time they influence that very culture. That is the dialectic process. Each is indebted to other.

Regardless of master narrative of classical Hegelian Marxism, history for Janson is "untranscendable horizon" (qtd. in Montrose 410). This is to say that history is now perceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations. So New Historicism believes on the dialecticisms between the past and the present to historicize them. It becomes necessary to historicize the present as well as the past since the past "shap[es] the present and the present reshapes the past" (415).

Recent post-structuralist historical theories of textuality have argued that the referent of a linguistics sign cannot be fixed, that the meaning of a text cannot be stabilized. Writing and reading both are always historically and socially situated events, performed in the world and upon the world by ideologically situated individual and collective human agents; therefore, Louis Montrose claims, the project of a new historical criticism is to "analyze the interplay of culture-specific discursive practices, including those by which cultural canons are formed and reformed". Discursive for Montrose means, "versions of the real, of history are experienced, deployed, reproduced, and by such means they may also be appropriated, contested, transformed" (415).

Both cultural criticism and New Historicism draw heavily on the same philosophical sources, in particular the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault; they share the view that human history and culture constitute a complex arena of dynamic forces of which we can construct only a partial, subjective picture. Both fields share the common ground belief that individual human subjectivity (selfhood) develops in a give-and-take relationship with its cultural milieu. Both fields are

interdisciplinary and anti-disciplinary approach in their nature, both of them argue that human experience, which is the stuff of human history and culture, cannot be adequately understood by means of academic disciplines that carve it up into such artificially separated categories as sociology, psychology, literature, and so forth. So they incorporate any kinds of analysis for any aspects of culture. New Historicism, thus, includes beliefs and concepts of the cultural products theories or cultural studies such as Marxism, Feminism, lesbian/gay/queer criticism, and postcolonial/African-American criticism and so on to explore some aspects of culture. No disciplinary approach is sufficient and complete to itself. One borrows from another. All are complimentary and reciprocal to one another. So literary criticism, in words of Hillis Miler, has been "transdisciplinary project of cultural analysis, is [. . .] studying the ways in which discursive forms and processes constitute 'history, culture, society, politics, institutions'"(qtd. in Montrose 412). Many scholars are calling for the introduction of other theoretical discourses into New Historicism. Christopher P Wilson in his online essay, "Containing Multitudes: Realism, Historicism, American Studies", argues that "many of the modern approaches to criticism have some elements of Historicism embedded "(qtd. in Kermode 6). This is to say that New Historicism combines multiples distinct theoretical approaches to examine the texts such as Greenblatt does for studying Renaissance literature with application of psychoanalysis, feminism and postcolonialism. In the essay entitled "Two Households Both Alike in Dignity: The Uneasy Alliance between New Historicists and Feminists", David Bevington describes in detail the relationship between the New Historicist and Feminist camps and notes that "most of the differences have been set aside by 1995. The groups are even collaborating on many projects" (qtd. in Kermode 3-4). Likewise in an anthology entitled *Redrawing the Boundaries: The*

Transformation of English and American Literary Studies, the introduction written by Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn, addresses proposing mainly that literary studies in 1990s are in a period of flux and change. Emphasizing literary studies as "Frontiers", Greenblatt and Gunn, opine that these frontiers are coordinated, integrated and exist" only to be endlessly crossed, violated, renegotiated" (*Redrawing*, 6-7). New historicism, in short, can be said, has become the interdisciplinary approach, encompassing divergent field of approach for scrutinizing the literary work of art in the present day.

One of the leading personality in the field of New Historical criticism, Jerome J. McGann in an essay, entitled "The Text, the Poem and Problem of Historical Method, in *The Beauty of Inflections*" (1985), demonstrates the move away from formalist concerns or the pursuit of totally coherent theoretical paradigms and advocates a more historically oriented and particularized engagement with the text. His focus is on the circulation and reception of texts against the Kantian notion of the poem as Idea. According to the Mac Gann, the contemporary fashion of calling literary works as 'texts' are totally aside from the events and materials describable, which transcend their concrete and actual textualities." This usage of the word text does not mean anything written or printed in an actual physical state rather it is "Ideally – The Text" abstracted out of all concrete and written texts which have ever existed or which will ever exist, i.e. a "final, definitive 'Text' which will be the timeless object, unconnected with history" (Rice and Waugh 293). Commenting on this, McGann puts forward his notion that there is no such "Text" but "texts" for particular and various purposes" (294). It is a "critical idea" as 'verbal construct" at the level of an immaterial, non-particular pure Idea. He means to say that "poetical work is the product of a social engagement entered into, voluntarily or otherwise, by

author, printer and publisher" (296). He proposes that poems are "time and place specific", historical analysis is, therefore, a necessary and essential function of any advanced practical criticism". Every work of art, for him, is the product of an interaction between the artist, on the one hand and a variety of social determinants on the other. Thus, McGann writes:

. . . The works of an artist are produced, at various times and places, and by many different sorts of people, in a variety of different textual constitutions (some better than other). Each of these texts is the locus of a process of artistic production and consumption involving the originary author, other people (his audiences), his publisher, etc.), and certain social institutions. (294)

History, therefore, cannot be isolated from the literary production, consumption, circulation and above all from the literary practices. And interpreting any work of art without history is meant to say committing great mistake and hereasy.

Giving critique over given critique on New Historicism as overtly self-conscious of its method and its theoretical assumptions, Stephen Greenblatt, the propounder of New Historicism, analyzing the point, says that "the most interesting and powerful ideas in cultural criticism occur precisely at moments of disjunction, disintegration, unevenness" (Greenblatt 311). He opines that criticism should encounter obstacles as well as celebrate usual suspects that finds confirmation of its values everywhere. He comments that many New Historicists have narrowed down the boundaries of historical understanding. Instead of a celebration of achieved aesthetic order to an exploration of the ideological and materials bases for the production of this order, they have been more interested in unresolved conflict and contradiction, and concerned with the margin as with the center rather than in

integration. New Historicists in a view of Marxist observer, are likely to seize upon something out of the way obscure, even bizarre: dreams, popular or aristocratic festivals, denunciation of witchcraft, sexual treatise, diaries and autobiographic, description, of clothing, reports an disease, birth and death records, accounts of insanity what Greenblatt take them as bizarre. Such cultural expressions, he takes as 'cooked' – complex symbolic and material articulations of the imaginative and ideological structures of the society that produced them. So he developed a notion of "cultural negotiation and exchange" that is, by examining the point at which one cultural practice intersects with another, borrowing its forms and intensities or attempting to ward off unwelcome appropriations or moving texts and artefacts from one place to another. New Historicism, for Greenblatt, is a critical practice concerned to tread a new path between the demand of strict 'relevance' on the one hand and an ahistorical formalism on the other. Neither human subjects nor human artefacts exist outside of history but both are historically shaped with power intervene in the process of history. Artefacts of the past is inseparable from the present. New Historicism, Greenblatt, describes:

. . . does not posit historical processes as unalterable and inexorable, but [. . .] tend to discover limits or constraints upon individual intervention. Actions that appear to be single are disclosed as multiple; the apparently isolated power of the individual genius turns out to be bound up with collective, social energy; a gesture of dissent may be an element in a larger legitimation process, while an attempt to stabilize order in things may turn out to subvert it. And political valences may changes sometimes abruptly; there are no guarantees, no absolute, formal assurance that what seems progressive in one set of contingent

circumstances will not come to seem reactionary in another. (Rice and Waugh 308-9)

He emphasizes that political and social needs shape literary production and reception and argues that criticism must, therefore, examine the ways in which traces of social circulation are effaced to produce the illusion of the 'autonomous' literary work.

New Historicism is concerned not with historical events as events but with the ways in which events are interpreted, with historical discourses, with ways of seeing the world and modes of meaning. Historical events are viewed by New Historicists not as facts to be documented but as "texts" to be "read". That is to say, in the words of Hayden White, "events are real not because they occurred but because, first they were remembered and, second, they are capable of finding place in a chronologically ordered sequence" (Rice and Waugh 270).

Summary of the New Historicism

For New Historical Literary Critics, the literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place, is an interpretation of history. Because literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is, itself, one of those discourses. That is to say that, literary text shaped and was shaped by the discourse circulating in the culture in which it was produced. Likewise, our interpretations of literature shape and are shaped by the culture in which we live i.e., historical analysis is unavoidably subjective in nature.

New Historicism follows a trajectory out of American formalist criticism with its close reading practices, through hybrid mix of 1970s' theory, in order to return to history. Influences and contributions of Bakhtin, Althusser, Hayden White, Gadamer, Raymond Williams, Clifford Geertz and Michel Foucault can be taken at great

consideration. Specific theoretical insights are derived from: Althusser's notion of ideology as contradictory and lived and his concept of the relative autonomy of the text and the interpellation of subjects in history, Gadamer's hermeneutic understanding of the past as ever constructed in relation to a present which is also a development out of the past; Hayden White's view of history as narrative construction or 'stories' and Bakhtin's articulation of all human utterances (including literary texts) as social acts which are multiaccentual and available for divergent uses lay vital role for the development of New Historicism.

Thus, New Historicism rejects both traditional historicism's marginalization of literature and New Criticism' enshrinement of the literary text in a timeless dimension beyond history. For New Historicists, a literary text does not embody the author's intention or illustrate the spirit of the age that produced it, as traditional literary historians asserted. Nor are literary texts self-sufficient artobjects that transcend the time and place in which they were written, as New critics believed. Rather, literary texts are cultural, artefacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in time and place in which the text was written. Because, literary text is itself, part of the interplay of discourses, a threaded in the dynamic web of social meaning. For New historicists, the literary text and the historical situation from which it emerged are equally important because the text and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constitutive: they create each other. Like the dynamic interplay between individual identity and society, literary texts shaped and are shaped by their historical contexts. That is, in short, in Montrose, words, New Historicism as textualization of history and historicization, of texts, with shift from History to histories is subjective interpretation.

III. The Glass Palace as the Glass of Colonial Burma

The Historicity of the Text

As belonging under the trajectory of post-structuralist or post-colonial writer, Amitav Ghosh is well acquainted in English literary universe; and acknowledge the notion of the New Historicism that rejects both the autonomy and individual genius of the author and the autonomy of the literary work and sees literary works of art as absolutely inseparable from their historical context. The role of the author is to a large extent determined by historical circumstances. The work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator and communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society. Literary text is always part and parcel of a much wider cultural, political, social and economic dispensation. Far from being untouched by the historical moment of its creation, the literary text is directly involved in history. It is a "time and place" – bound verbal construction that is always in one way or another political. Just like any other text, literature does not simply reflects relations of power but actively participates in the consolidation and construction of discourses and ideologies, just as it functions as an instrument in the construction of identities, not only at individual level – that of the subject-but also on the level of the larger group or even that of the national state or the more.

Literature is not simply a product of history, it also actively makes history. There is no longer a difference between literature and other texts – religious political, historical. That is to say in words of Paul Hamilton, "The art of writing has now become just another kind of writing. All we have is writing. Since any text may yield information valuable in understanding a particular milieu. There is no hierarchy and rupture among and between official and non-official writing like history and fiction.

All are graded as the same. Therefore, New Historicism is a deconstructive interdisciplinary approach to analyse the literary text.

As Greenblatt opines that history cannot be divorced from textuality and history cannot simply be set against literary texts as either stable antithesis or stable background, the present thesis dissertation has been attempted to study and analyze Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* in the light of textuality of history and historicity of the text, just one more piece in the huge pile of New Historicists texts.

Ghosh believes historical writing as a product of individual perception that is to say that any account of the past-autobiographical or historical – is coloured with personal feelings. In other words, history is individual. Human subjectivity, therefore, plays a vital role in the preservation of past through the narrative. The subjective nature of history accepts that many versions of historical truth are possible. "History, in words of Rushdie, is always ambiguous. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as our perceptiveness and knowledge (*Imaginary* 25). To put it differently, the selection and narration of past events depend upon human subjectivity or individual interest. Each individual reconstructs past in his own version, based on his memory and that becomes the truest one for him. History is personalized that is seen through the eyes of an individual. Ghosh, thus attacks the notion of objective facts and displaces official history altogether to make the official events an appendix to his own story.

The present thesis encompasses to see how literary texts participate in the circulation of discourses, shaping and shaped by the culture in which they emerge and by the cultures in which they are interpreted. Our reading of literature helps us to see the ways in which the circulation of discourses is the circulation of political/social/

intellectual/economic power and also the ways in which our own cultural positioning influences our interpretations of literary and non-literary texts.

The following reading of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* is offered as an example of what a new historical interpretation of that novel might yield. The research relays heavily on terminology associated with new historicism. Specially, the argument proceeds to analyse the circulation of one of the dominant discourses of the period in which it has been written: the discourse of postcolonial literary context which is the dominant issue of the so-called third world literary writer to defy against the Euro-Canon for the self realization of own literary tradition. It is, in other words, an anti-colonial discourse to resist against the colonialist ideology in all its forms.

Amitav Ghosh, a serious, prolific and proponent author of oriental literary scenario, belonging to the postcolonial literary heritage of contemporary literary world situation; deals with the theme of colonialism and its aftermath as his magnificent, poignant and fascinating, novel, *The Glass Palace* unveils the colonial ethos and the double standards of Anglo-Whites. Since he accomplishes the success by exposing the civilizationary mission as mere falsity rather than the expansionary mission, his recent published work can be accepted as the epitaph to the postcolonial audience.

The novel, achieves special significance as it re-examines the exploitative nature and evil eyes of Europeans over non-whites oriental people by disclosing colonial history of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of India, Malaya and especially then Burma. It provides the arena for the readers to dispute over postcolonial discourse.

Talking about discourse, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth, Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write :

Discourse was originally used from about the sixteenth century to describe any kind of speaking talk or conversation, but became increasingly used to describe a more formal speech, a narration or a treatment of any subject at length, a treatise dissertation or sermon. More recently [it] has been used in a technical sense by linguists to describe any unit of speech longer than a sentence. (*Key Concepts* 70)

Foucauldian discourse moves away from the formalistic approach that deals with the language in the sense of a linguistic system or grammar. Rather Foucault thinks of discourse in terms of bodies of knowledge which is closer to the disciplines. Disciplines for Foucault, have two senses: it refers to scholarly disciplines such as science, medicine, psychiatry, sociology and so on and to the disciplinary institutions of social control such as the prison, the hospital, the school, the confessional and so on. In this sense McHoul and Grace write, "Foucault's idea of discourse shows the historically specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social possibility)" (*Primer* 26).

For Foucault, the whole rationalization of a society is a 'myth'. A society, according to him, should be analyzed as a 'process' in several fields, each of which shares the "fundamental experience of society, madness, illness, death, crime, sexually and so forth" (*Subject and Power* 329). And all of these human phenomena are the units of knowledge (i.e. discourses). And the discourses of all such phenomena have their own vocabulary, concepts and rules; the knowledge of which constitutes power and serves as the dominant ideology of society. Foucauldian concept of discourse may be seen to have a number of components which are fairly identifiable; objects (the things any discourse studies or produces); operations (method or ways

treating the objects), concepts (the terms which constitute the unique languages of discourse) and theoretical options (these different assumptions and theories on the basis of which discourses are formulated). With the help of all these components a discourse produces effects and it itself produced,. But all of these components are subject to change. This implies that discourse is always in a process of formulation, correction and transformation, which takes place after a certain epoch. Discourses are all the time are dynamic, one trying to exchange with the other by laws of supply and demand and negotiate with other. Discourses do not exist on a permanent basis. All discourses, according to Foucault, writes M.S. Nagarjan, "are social constructs by which power is maintained. [. . .] in every society, the production of discourse is controlled, organized, redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over this chance events, to evade its materiality" (*Contemporary Theory* 177).

Foucault must be interested in discourse as thought the intention of men who have formulated them. In his view, discourse can be a theoretical framework for manifestation of ideology of any society. And by this logic, individuals are made subjects by the discourses, since a discourse never allows freedom to an individual. He is always guided by the rules of this discursive formation and their effects. Thus, a human subject accomplishes something discourse places him in certain position. The subject is supposed to speak, think or write from the place specifically set for him. It is because discourses are the product of discursive conditions (i.e. rules and criteria) that specify the position of subjects who can identify themselves as 'patients', 'doctor', 'perverts', 'criminals', 'writers' etc. In this light, Nagarajan again writes, "Literary text is one social discourse. Text and context are mutually constitutive. Literary texts shape and are in turn shaped, by historical context" (179). Since literary texts are

cultural artefacts like others artefacts which reveal to us the different social systems that operated when the texts were written. In this regard. Amitav Ghosh foregrounds the discourse of postcolonial issue in his text, *The Glass Palace*.

Postcolonial discourse is a modern rethinking about the past, since the history of colonialism has been the mater of past experiences, sometimes associated with nostalgia. Though postcolonial discourse has not any exact date and place of its origin, it comes into being both as theory and precise after second world war with the noticeable contribution of Said's *Orientalism*, which examines the construction of the oriental 'other' by European discourses of knowledge, that helps to establish the field. So, Elleke Boehmer asserts that postcolonial discourses "are broadly concerned with experience of exclusion, denigration and resistance under system of colonial control . . . and address to the historian, political, cultural and textual ramifications of the colonial encounter between the west and the non-west, dating from the sixteenth century to the present day" (*Literary Theory* 340). It addresses all aspects of colonial process from the beginning of colonial contact and it refers to, in words of Bill Ashcroft, Hareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, "any kind of marginality at all runs the risk of denying its basis in the historical process of colonialism . . . and not only vastly different but even opposed activities" (*The Postcolonial Studies Reader* 18). That is to say, post-colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction. This does not simply imply that postcolonial practices are seamless and homogeneous but indicates the impossibility of dealing with any part of the colonial process without considering its antecedents and consequences. It designates a politics of transformational resistance to unjust and unequal forms of political and cultural authority which extends back across the twentieth, century and beyond. Therefore, commenting over Frantz Fanon, Boehmer again writes, "Through the process of

violently seizing freedom, and asserting political power, the native intellectual learns to re-exercise agency and retrieve a selfhood that was damaged under colonial oppression . . . And it is only through exercising oppositional violence that the colonized 'non-entity' takes history its own hand, as it were and so becomes a maker of its own future, a historical agent for the first time (*Literary Theory* 345-46).

It is understandable that for most postcolonial writers, self-definition through the medium of writing in a particular narrative, has been of crucial importance. So has been the case with Amitav Ghosh who has been the postcolonial empathizer. In the wider socio-political sphere, too, the development of a national literature has been fundamental to the nation-building project of independent postcolonial countries.

Postcolonial writer has sought, and still seeks, to reclaim agency and significance for people from the non-European world, and for the texts and other cultural productions through which they have defined themselves. In so doing, its intention has been to 'counter-marginalize' Europe-and move recently, North America. Postcolonial writers sought to undercut thematically and formally the discourses which supported colonialization-the myth of power, the race classification, the imagery of subordination. Postcolonial literature, therefore is deeply marked by experiences of cultural exclusion and division under empire and it critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship, that sets out in one way or another to resist colonial perspectives.

As the fact has been transparent that any piece of writing is a product of its time, *The Glass Palace* cannot be its exceptional of the same logic. It reflects the motto of the period that is the postcolonial issue dealing with the theme of colonial history of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of then Burma.

Amitva Ghosh, being a serious historicist, brings the colonial situation into the large scale canvas for the audience to be looked upon. He recreates the colonial history of expansion of the nineteenth century of European whites. For this purpose Boehmer writes:

It was in the nineteenth century that the economic supremacy and political authority of Europe, and in particular of Britain, became global. For the British, the post-1815 period, or more specifically, the time of Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901), represented their great age of colonialization. By 1815, the nation had established itself as a dominant power in the world, a pacemaker of European industrialization and expansion. From the Vantage point of 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the entire course of the British nineteenth-century the expansion into new territories, the dissemination of imperialist ideas, the ramification of colonial communication networks across the globe-seemed to have unfolded in accordance with a uniquely ordained pattern. Britain, it was believed, had a destiny and a duty to rule the world, or at least that one-quarter of the earth's surface over which the empire now extended. (*Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* 29)

Though, the colonial expansion started from the sixteenth century with the advent of Renaissance's most denotative instruments like clock, compass, gun etc. and discovery of Columbus Americgo or even before with Norman conquest in England itself in the ninth century, historians have tended to find different period demarcations for the age of empire and its different phases. Evic Hobsbawn gives the

dates 1875-1914 to formal empire, describing it as the final phase in European capitalist domination. But constructive authoritarian British imperialism:

came of age as early as 1783-1820 with a sense of national and Christian mission some one hundred years before the Partition of Africa. The foundations for the colonial power had been laid during the decades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the opening of the South Pacific, the annexation of territory in Southern Africa, and most important, the expansion of dominion in India. In their hey day of British imperialism, "The imperial fleet crossed the border of Burma on 14 November, 1985. (qtd. from *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* 25)

The Textuality of Colonial Burma

As we know that literature and history are inseparable since the history is embedded within the territory of textuality of work of art i.e. literature. Literature is a constitutive part of history in the making of history itself. This is to say that all of our knowledge and understanding of the past exists only in the realm of narrative since the "access to a full and authentic past" can never be possible (Montrose 410). The past is mediated by the texts. Literary texts too have vital role in mediating history because literature works as a vehicle for the representation of history. It reveals the processes and tensions by which historical change comes about. But the history in form of literary text is the product of memory and individual's interest. The selection and narration of past events depend upon human subjectivity or individual interest. And as we know that objective fact of the past in totality is mere illusion, an individual version of history serves as an alternative to official history and it becomes as reliable as the official version is. So the colonial history seen with eye-bird view of

Amitav Ghosh in *The Glass Palace* is relevant and authentic to the claimed of the past. In this light the text, *The Glass Palace*, deals with colonial history of Burma in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by foregrounding the 'discourse of colonialism.'

As the discourse of colonization was overwhelming in global world situation.

Burmese peoples also were sounded of British colonial hegemonic power in their native land. They had been known of English canon. So the royal maids along with their Queen talk:

The British had destroyed the fort at Myingan with immaculate precision using their canon, without losing a single soldier of their own. The Hlethin Atwinwun had surrendered. The army had disintegrated; the soldiers had fled into the mountains with their guns. The Kinwun Mingyi and the Taingda Mingyi had dispatched emissaries to the British. The two ministers were now competing with the another to keep the Royal Family under guard. They knew the British would be grateful to whoever handed over the royal couple; there would be rich rewards. The foreigners were expected to come to Mandalay very soon to take the King and Queen into captivity. (25)

The native indigenous had heard that "The English are going to be here in a day or two. They are bringing the biggest fleet that's ever sailed on a river. They have canon that can blow away the stone walls of a fort; . . . they are coming like the tide: nothing can stand in their way" (17). But they were also well acquainted with the treachery and greed of European and their colonial notion. Therefore, Ghosh nacked the British mission of taking "all the teak in Burma" (15).

The war between Burma and England takes place only because "the Englishmen had protested and refused to pay to the royal custom officers who had demanded the payment for some fifty thousand logs" (211). And instead of payment, the British Governor in Rangoon sends the humiliating ultimatum that:

The British might allow the Royal Family to remain in the Palace in Mandalay, on terms similar to those of the Indian princes – like farmyard pigs in other words, to be fed and fattened by their masters; swine, housed in sties that had been tricked out with a few little bits of finery. (22)

It was quite undigestable to the Royal Couples therefore, Queen replies to the senior minister, Mingyi that "they were kings, sovereigns, they'd defected the emperor of China, conquered Thailand, Assam, Manipur. And she herself, Supayalat, had risked every thing to secure the throne for Thebaw, her husband and stepbrother" (22). As the queen refuses their ultimatum, they planned to attack over Burma that caused the defeat of Burmese armies and because of the British newly manufactured equipment – "free loading rifles, twenty-seven rapid-firing machine guns; the Burmese defenders surrendered without informing king Thebaw and the war lasted with in just fourteen days" (26).

Ghosh also expose the salutary nature of Indian sepoy's working in British army force not for the sake of dignity, pride and any existence of their own that could give any sort of identity but they worked merely for the sake of "money." For "a few coins they would allow their English masters to use them as they wished, to destroy every trace of resistance to the power of the English" (29). Among ten thousand soldiers in the British invasion force – "about two thirds were Indian sepoy's loyal of Britain's foot soldiers" (26). They have been mentally colonized. They believe that

"the British stand for freedom and equality' (284). They were just "mercenaries buddhus (fools)" (347). Therefore people disgests on them and when they see the Indian Army in Burma; they say : "there goes the army of slaves – marching off to catch some more slaves for their masters" (288).

Because of the colonial domination on Burma, mere anarchy and disorder prevailed in the whole nation. And so was the cause with Burmese royal family. *The Glass Palace*, demonstrates the pathetic situation of the royal dynasty. "Power is eclipsed" (41). The Royal Family must have to be ready for exile in India as "the British Government wished to provide them with an escort of attends and advisors;" since the British had decide to be generous in victory over Burma (41). Therefore, they have to live in alien country spending rest of their lives in restriction with facing problems of many things – powerlessness, unhomeliness and so on. So queen, Supayalat addresses to the visitors in Ratnagiri as:

Look at how we live. Yes, we who ruled the richest land in Asia are now reduced to this. This is what they have done to us, this is what they will do to all Burma. They took our kingdom, promising roads and railways and ports, but mark my words, this is how it will end. In a few decades the wealth will be gone – all the gems, the timber and the oil - and then they too will leave. In our Burma where no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to write and read, all that will remain is destitution and ignorance, famine and despair. We were the first to be imprisoned in the name of their progress; millions more will follow. This is what awaits us all: This is how we will all end-as prisoners, in Shantytowns born of the plague. A hundred years hence you will read the indictment of Europe's greed in the difference

between the kingdom of Siam and the state of our own enslaved realm.

(88)

In this way the novel becomes successive to reflect the dynamic nature of power and so how power has been shifted from the Royal dynasty to the Euro-centrality. The power once governed by the king, Thebew, is now under the control of British imperial power that can run the whole nation which was the kingdom of Burmese king.

As colonialism involves the consolidation of imperial power in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, Amitav Gosh's *The Glass Palace* portrays the business of colonial people that:

The British occupation had changed everything: Burmas had been quickly integrated into the Empire, forcibly converted into a province of British India. Courtly Mandalay was now a bustling commercial hub; resources were being exploited with, on energy and efficiency higher to undreamt of. The Mandalay Palace and been refurbished to serve the conqueror's recondite pleasure as: the west wing had been converted into a British club; the Queens Hall of Audience had now become a billiard room; the mirrored walls were lined with the months – old copies of *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*; the gardens had been dug up to make room for tennis courts and polo grounds; the exquisite little monastery in which Thebaw had spent his novitiate had become a chapel where Anglicon priests administered the sacrament to British troops. Mandalay, it was confidently predicted, would soon become the Chicago of Asia. (66)

They did not only change the life style of Burmese in their own taste and interest but also reduced the cultural norms and values. The elephants which were "used only in Pagodas and Palaces, for wars and ceremonies [have been] made to work for human profit." So Rajkumar opines that it was they who "invented everything we see around us in this logging camp. This entire way of life is their creation" (74).

Since the novel brings its raw-material from the colonial period, Ghosh displays the brutality and the discriminative nature of European whites over non-whites native indigenous others. He succeeds in bringing inhumanity of them into the large scale canvas of literary scene to the audience satirizing their notion of "civilizing other" and also for that "the British stands for freedom and equality" (284). Ghosh projects European ideology of nudity. It is bitter satire on British ideology that when there was world war situation in the world politics, people tried to run away towards the safer place. So was the case in Burma. People were rushing towards the evacuation train but "it be only for European." Dinu could not see even a single face that looked Malaya, Chinese or Indian in that train through the window because the train was "only for the whites" (424). Though the whole humanity was in danger, European tried to save the life of their own race thinking that other are just beasts that do not need to be saved. They compared oriental live just with animality and even inanimity. As if they have no rights to live in the world further more so Dinu becomes very much offensive over European and remarks:

You don't understand . . .' Dinu began to plead. It's not just Europeans who are in danger . . . you can't do thins . . . It's wrong . . .' The station master pulled a face, shrugging dismissively. I do not see what is so

wrong with it. After all it is common sense. They are the rulers; they are the ones who stand to lose. (425)

A good many theorists like Ashcroft et al believe that it is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial purity, nor is it possible to create national regional formations entirely independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise through the counter-textuality of the anticolonial resistance; so defining "Resistance", Homi K. Bhabha writes:

resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, not is it the simple negation or exclusion of the content of other culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the differential relations of colonial power. (33)

He looks resistance from the view point of ambivalence since total resistance is impossible within the colonization process. As resistance, opines Stephen Slemon, "is grounded in the multiple and contradictory structures of ideological interpretation or subject formation – which would call down the notion that resistance can ever be "purely" intended or "Purely" expressed in representational or communicative modes (108). That is to say that anti-colonialist resistance in writing is mere illusion. The goal can never be achieved rather intermediary knowledge is produced.

Counter-canonical literary discourse can be foreground to interrogate those patterns which established the English as superior and Antiguan as inferior that can be in many forms. It is only because that texts are implicated in their economic and political contexts and "texts, more than any other social and political product, are the

most significant instigators and purveyors of colonial power and its double, postcolonial resistance," opines Leela Gandhi in her text, *Postcolonial Theory* (142). Therefore, the textual offensiveness of colonial authority can be challenged, on its own terms, by a radical and dissenting anticolonial counter textuality because textuality is endemic to the colonial encounter. So, the subversion of the authority of imperial textuality to replace a western cultural paradigm with its non-western counterpart is possible by the re-reading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record and also by depicting the misdeeds of the colonizers, the suffering of the colonized or the detrimental effect of colonialism on the colonized. In this sense Tiffin observes, "Colonial counter discourse doesn't unmask merely the literary works to which it responds, but the whole fabric of colonialist discourse in which these works participate" (qtd. from Tyson *Critical Theory Today* 377).

The process of colonization and the state of the colonized are very relevant thought of this novel that Amitav Ghosh has attempt to deal with. The very word used for Rajkumar – 'Kaala' is objectionable to the contemporary world, which is decolonized at least in the political sense of the word. What we witness in this text is the actual process of aggression, capture and colonization. So it deals with how the Burmese people are robbed of all grace with guns and artillery. They are the cause root of "destruction of . . . religion, the violation of national traditions and customs and the degradation of . . . race" (15). The British are only giving commands. They supposes to be the efficient rulers of the nation. The soldiers who are invading Burma are Indians. Instead of fighting their common enemy – the British – the Burmese and the Indians are fighting among themselves, therefore Kishan Singh admits an appeal of Hindustani pamphlet to Arjun as, "Brothers, ask yourselves what you are fighting

for and why you are here: do you really wish to sacrifice your lives for an empire that has kept your country in slavery for two hundred year?" (391).

The scene of ousting of the deposed Burmese king is ironically tragic, "In victory the British had decided to be generous [. . .] the British Government wished to provide them with an escort of attendants and advisors [. . .]. But now it was time to leave, the guard of honour was waiting (40-43). Guard of honour for a captive, dethroned king ! Ghosh even mentions "Bahadur Shah Zafar", the last Indian Emperor who was taken to Rangoon in exile by "the British High Command in which Hodson was the Major" (44). Another similar shock happens to meet when we learn that those who wait on Queen Supayalat are supposed to do so on all their fours i.e. both hands and legs on floor. When an English midwife comes as a nurse for Queen's waiting, "She wouldn't go down on her hands and knees while waiting on the Queen, she refuses to crawl. Supayalat fails to make her crawl; she was an English woman" (55). That is nothing but the racial supremacy and hypocrisy what Ghosh makes avail to us for seeing morality of so called civilized and humanly God like people of Europe. Therefore, the text seems to be bitter satire on British imperialism as it exposes every minute details of Britisher's misdeeds.

Apart from these human scenes of colonization, Ghosh also deals with the large question of Europe's greed. Everything becomes a resources to be exploited – woods, water, mines, people, just everyone and everything. "[. . .] Resource were being exploited with an energy and efficiency hither to undreamed of" (66). Forests are cut on a very mass scale without giving any thought to the hazards of ecological un-equilibrium that such as unthinking act would cause. Burma becomes the mine of wealth for the British, "Burma, the golden land became synonymous with poverty,

tyranny and misgovernment" (486). "In a few decades the wealth will be gone – all the gems, the timber and the oil – and then they too will leave" (88).

No ideology is really separate from the psychology it produces. Ideology, writes Tyson, cannot exist without the psychology appropriate to it, without psychology that sustains it" (401-2). It exists within the individual psyche, where it influences – personal identity and perception of other. Therefore, Ghosh portrays mental colonization, is hiding at the heart of non-whites that is even more worse than any other form of physiological colonization. For this reason he heavily criticizes to the Anglophiles in third world country; who are taught to believe in British superiority and therefore, in their own inferiority. Many of these individuals try to imitate the colonizer as much as possible, in dress, speech, behavioural and lifestyle. For example, the garden of plantation manager whom Arjun visited was "dotted with bursts of flower: the flowers were mostly English varieties – hollyhocks, snapdragons, hydrangeas" and the kitchen in "European design" (413). As we see Arjun, an officer in British Army, boasting of his connection with westerners. In his mind, he has accepted that the western style is better and therefore desirable. So he talks with Handry that:

Just look at us, Hardy-just look at us. What are we? We're learnt to dance the tango and we know how to eat roast beef with a knife and fork. The truth is that except for the colour of our skin, most people in India wouldn't even recognize us as Indians. When we joined up we didn't have India on our minds. We wanted to be Sahibs and that is what we've become. (439)

Mrs. Dutt into "a European skirt" proclaims Uma Dey that "liberty" of traveling for women was because "of the great benefits of British rule in India; that it had given women, rights and protections that they'd never had before" (188). Similarly, Beni Prasad Dey, a district's administrative head-collector, dealing with newly exiled Burmese Royal Family in Ratnagiri, keeps forward his points to the king that "the empire is today stronger than it has ever been . . . that can be glanced at a map of the world to see the truth of this and the empire's power is such as to be proof against all challenges and will remain so into the forceable future" (107). He accepts British imperialism with positive connotation and opines that development and prosperity of life of people is highly dependable on British colonialism, therefore he again proceeds to contents to his wife as:

Do you think Burma would be well served by political trouble ? Do you think this man, Raha would have been able to get rich if Thebaw were still ruling? Why, if it were not for the British, the Burmese would probably have risen up against these Indian businessmen and driven them out like sheep. (136)

So is the case with Rajkumar who being convinced that "without the British, the Burmese economy would collapse (306). "Dinn understood that it was through their association with Europeans that Arjun and his fellow-officers saw themselves as pioneer" (279). Many stances can be given where the Ghosh has shown the cruelty of colonization and its impact on the lives and mind of the colonized. Therefore Ghosh probably realizes that decolonization is not easy, perhaps it is not even possible because colonial ethos has been deeply rooted in the inner psyche of the non-west. As Arjun says, "We rebelled against an Empire that has shaped everything in our lives: coloured everything in the world as we know it. It is a huge, indelible stain, which has

trained all of us. We cannot destroy it without destroying ourselves" (518). Likewise, Saya John does not see the English as usurpers. For him, they are superior. From them, he has learnt the art of using everything for his benefit. He says, "Yet until the Europeans came none of them had ever thought of using elephants for the purposes of logging . . . It was the Europeans who saw that tame elephants could be made to work for human profit . . . The entire way of life is their creation" (74). The Europeans for him stand for efficient exploitation. To him it brings profit. He does not know anything beyond his immediate gain, nor does he want to know.

Being a social painter, Ghosh has been succeeded in painting of social and political panorama of South East nations. His latest work, *The Glass Palace* also reflects how people aggrieved against British hegemony as he creates one of the profound character Uma Dey in his novel. She corresponds to one of the nationalist movements leaders of India as a worker of congress party during early twentieth century. Through her mouth Ghosh heavily criticizes the British colonialism as she stands his representative in this novel. Uma was of the class of people who were able to travel relatively easily because her husband's collector, Beni Prasad's death left her with the financial means to explore the world. In the late nineteenth century there were many Indian women who went abroad to study, in much the same way that Uma did. The experience of journeying abroad frequently served to radicalize Indians, men and women alike. So "Uma had begun to understand that a woman like herself could contribute a great deal to India's struggle from overseas" (191). She argues:

How was it possible to imagine that one could grant freedom by imposing subjugation?. That one could open an cage by pushing it inside a bigger cage? How could any section of people hope to achieve freedom where the entirety of populace was held in subjugation? (189)

Uma stands "to be a kind of ideal women, a symbol of purity who . . . tell the truth and involved the British Indian army, who had become dedicated enemies of the empire, as the experiences of living in America and Canada served to turn many of these former loyalists in to revoluntaries" (222-4). She becomes the freedom fighter so people were being told to "boycott British-made goods; women were making benefices of Loncashire cloth." Now, Asian country was against a European power and the Indian papers were full of news of this war that could mean for colonized countries" (105). People knew "the days of empire are over now" (416). So they assembled for the sake of "duty, country, freedom" – men, women, children throwing things in the air (440). The uprising started in the interior of Tharwaddy district:

Where a forest official and two village headmen were killed; the next day rebels stormed a railway station. A company of Indian troops was sent to hunt down the insurgents. But suddenly the rebels were everywhere: in Insuin, Yamthin and Payapon. They appeared like shadows from the forest, with magical designs painted on their bodies. They fought like men possessed, running bare-chested into gunfire, attacking aeroplanes with catapults and spears. Thousands of rural folk declared their allegiance to the king-in-waiting. The colonial authorities fought back by sending more Indian reinforcement to root out the rebellion. Villages were occupied, hundreds of Burmese were killed and thousands wounded. (246-7)

Meanwhile, "Japan entered the war" (385) and Japanese planes came humming over the horizon, "The forest began to reverberate to the sound of explosion" (384). And alone with the world war, Indian National Army's resistance started with "the hope of inspiring revolt in the Indian army providing heroes and

martyrs for the movement" (481). The country erupted with protests and demonstrations; support committees were formed all over India, despite an official ban. General strikers shut down entire states; students held huge public meetings defying curfew orders. Dozens were shot by the police (479). And finally "in January 1948 Burma gained her independence" (481). Then more than sixty years later, "The sound of English cannon rolling in across the plain to the walls of Mandalaya's fort" was heard" (485). And finally there established the democratic government of Aung San Sun Kyi in Burma which is now called "Myanmar" (501).

Amitav Ghosh, being a postcolonial writer, also deals with the issue of hybridity in his recent published text, *The Glass Palace*, as the issue is part of counter-discourse analysis which takes place in the process of colonization. Since there happens to be war, displacement, exile or rootlessness that cause the socio-political and cultural upheavals in any society where people have to sustain their lives creating contact zones that give birth to acculturation, in-between spaces because of the translated cultures where one has to go with the dialectic process of learning, cutting some aspects and adopting the new ones. Therefore, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, write, "theories of the hybrid nature of postcolonial culture assert a different model for resistance, locating this in the subversive counter-discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and so undermining the very basis of which imperialist and colonialist discourse raises its claims of superiority (*Key Concept* 121).

Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, "hybrid" species.

The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivity. For him,

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities, it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the pure and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition, of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sizes of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identification in strategies of subversion, that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the colonial 'hybrid' is the articulation of the 'ambivalent' space where the right of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once, disciplinary and disseminatory – a negative transparency. (qtd. from the *Postcolonial Studies Reader* 34-5)

It is the 'cultural cross-over' of various sorts emanating from the encounter between colonizer and the colonized. It is the ambivalent relationship of the colonizer and colonized. Ambivalence is the mixture of the colonizer and the colonized, where colonized people work in the consent of the colonizer in a colonized society, there emerged a binary relationship between the peoples of two cultures, races, and languages and such relation produced a hybrid or cross-cultural society. Therefore, in the assertion of a shared postcolonial condition such as hybridity has been as part of tendency of discourse analysis to dehistoricize and delocate cultures from their

temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic contexts and to lead to an abstract, globalized concept of the textual that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations. Robert Young suggests that the contribution of colonial discourse analysis, as hybridity:

Provides a significant framework for that others work by emphasizing that all perspectives on colonialism share and have to deal with a common discursive medium which was also that of colonialism itself. Colonial discourse analysis can therefore look at the wide variety of colonialism as something more than mere documentation or 'evidence's. (qtd. from *Key Concepts* 120)

According to him, when talking about hybridity, contemporary cultural discourse cannot escape the connection with the racial categories of the past in which hybridity had such a clear racial meaning. Hybridity thus has become, particularly at the turn, of the century, part of a colonialists discourses of racism. Since "it is not possible to return to or rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity" because "hybridity is the primary characteristic of all postcolonial societies whatever their source" might be (Leela Gandhi 162). Hybrid culture do exist in colonial society where people occupy an "inbetween" space by the 'mimicry' of the colonizer.

Hybridity, thus, is an expression of everyday life in the post-imperial era. It continuously alters the national and international boundaries. It draws on local and transnational identifications and generates historically new mediations. Such 'meditations' are new because they are located outside the official practices of citizenship situated in the interstices of numerous legal and cultural borders.

No race is pure; nor is any caste pure. There is no pure royal blood or anything like that, life is mixing – DNA combinations and permutations take place. Says John

is a fine example of this breed of hybridity. His clothes "a sola topee, leather boots, khaki trousers' are European" (657). He speaks English, Hindustani and Burmese. His face looks like "that of Chinese neither that of a white man nor an Indian" (8). He adopts Christian name "John Martins by "catholic priests from Portugal, Macao, Goa who spoke many languages" (10). Saya himself make a fun of his amalgamated identity:

They (Indian soldiers) asked me this very question: how is it that you who look Chinese and carry a Christian name, can speak our lagnauge? When I told them how this had come about, they would laugh and say, you are a *Dhobi Ka Khutta* – washerman's dog – *Na Ghar Ka Na Ghat Ka* – you don't belong anywhere, either by water or on land, and I'd say, yes that is exactly what I am. He laughed, with an infectious hilarity and Rajkumar joined in. (10)

This is a laughter of mutual sharing. Rajkumar is as much a washermans' dog as Saya John. There is no humiliation between the two. This is simple acceptance of fact, because both belong to the neither culture without fixed clear cultural root and history but are mere wandering refugees living and sharing other's cultural norms and code of the conduct. That is to say is that all that a human being can do is to try to adjust, compromise, live and above everything else form relationships. This forming of new bonds, mixing of races and castes is something that does not stop. After all, this is human life. The collector at one point of the novel is intrigued when he comes to know of the pregnancy of Queen Supayalat's first daughter. He is disgusted. He is at a loss. His sense of class and decency is deeply violated and asks himself that "Was this love then: this coupling in the darkness, a princes, of Bhurma a Marathicoahcman; this heedless mingling of sweat?" (152).

IV. Conclusion

Believing on the trajectory of New Historicism, Ghosh questions the traditional notion of perceiving history by bringing the Burmese history of colonial period in his own version with subjective interpretation in the text. He subverts the traditional idea of viewing history as a record of facts as an absolute truth in the official history book only. He contends history as a discourse like other cultural artefacts working within a society. History, for Ghosh, is no longer a set of fixed, objective facts. It can never be presented in linearity in a reliable manner since one cannot write or understand history without perspective or an interpretation. The history can never be perceived in totality because the past exists in our memory and we choose to preserve only those events which are meaningful and suitable to us and we preserve them in a way that gives meaning to us. So, Ghosh argues that history is a subjective phenomenon which needs interpretation that is always partial. History is, Ghosh implies, what we choose to make of it; the politics and prejudices of a writer, rather than any meaning inherent in the facts themselves, mold the interpretations that we commonly accept as truth.

Generally, by history, we understand the official history – the one which is conveyed through textbooks in academia, institutions or more recently, through the mass media. Ghosh is skeptic about such established notion of perceiving version of history. Since he believes that the past exists in one's mind. So the historian has to remember the past events to present them in the text. For him, history is multiple and heterogeneous, or even more, personal. He refuses any claim to absolute truth in the official version and interrogates the validity and reliability of the official history of any country. The official version of history is not the valid and authentic one, rather it is a discourse like other cultural artefacts created by the state ideology which can

never go beyond the ideology in which it is written on produced and consumed or transformed. Thus, Ghosh urges us to create our own version of personal history and truth that is echoing with Gadamerian view of perceiving truth.

As New Historicism perceives all cultural productions along with history and fiction as discourses or writings without any demarcation and differences among and between them, Ghosh views both history and fiction as a story, a human construct phenomenon. He takes not only fiction but also the history as a creation of human subjectivity. As in fiction, the prejudices and preoccupations of the narrator function in the writing of history. *The Glass Palace* emphasizes the issue that history can never be presented in an objective and unbiased way; it rather remains relative to the historicity of the historian in textualized form, needed to be interpreted. And the interpretations are always partial, provisional, and, in the final analysis, as subjective as artistic constructs. This subjective nature of history gives way to create other versions of history, so *The Glass Palace* does the same function to provide the history in another version. It fulfills the desire of Ghosh as well as readers and the purposes of new historical readings.

The Glass Palace, being the novel of postcoloniality, deals with the issue of colonial expansions colonial practices, brutality of Euro-whites and its after math. It depicts the nudity of European domination over Burmese people in the later part of nineteenth and first early half of twentieth centuries. The novel succeeds in conveying the postcolonial ethos that the reader would appreciate. It unveils the fact about the Europeans and their misdeeds on colonized. It portrays how they depose the royal family, sending them into unfamiliar land of others to exile with the threat of gun power using Indian sepoy in the conquest. It uncovers all the major events taken place on the lives of individuals from the British colonial expansion towards the

world wars, Japanese invasion, the British departure, Burmese first national election in 1947 and autocratic government of General Ne Win in 1962 to the establishment of democratic parliament led by Aung San Suu Kyi and also her house arrest in 1996 in the crowd of up roaring Burmese people – now Myanmar in the present situation. In this way, it can be said that *The Glass Palace* is the novel of history in other version and it chronicalizes the *Glass Palace Chronicle* – a famous nineteenth century history about Burmese Royal Family of King Thebaw, from where the novel perceives its title. Ghosh, thus, challenges the validity and reliability of the official version of history by providing the colonial history of Burma in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an alternative version of history. Therefore, the age-old debate of history versus fiction gets blurred as the rupture and differences between them have been demolished. And also all writings either literary or non-literary have become only writing no lesser than another, accountable with equal light and weight, so *The Glass Palace* has proved the history in textualized form where lies the motto "historicization of the text and textualization of history" with the embeddedness of subjective truths rather than of objective 'Reality', disregarding the notion of art for art's sake.

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