

**POPIED LIVES OFF /ON SHORE: A BARTHESIAN READING OF AMITAV GHOSH'S
*SEA OF POPPIES***

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ABSTRACT

Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* is the first book of his Ibis trilogy. Sailing along the Opium route on board the ship named *Ibis*, the inmates discover many new things about themselves. What invisibly governs and binds their lives on and off shore is the magical poppy seed which produces the alluring drug opium. The paper proposes to delineate how the lives of the lead figures are propelled by this minuscule seed that holds within it enormous strength. The novel is partitioned into three sections: land, river and sea. The inmates dream of boarding the ship, to settle in another place or land where they can forget everything of their past. The ship becomes their new father and mother because life aboard helps them review their lives and revive their latent courage. The sea is the meeting place to erase all differences that they held on shore. The paper attempts to analyse the text based on Roland Barthes' propositions in his essay "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives".

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