



ISSUES AND VISION OF AMITAV GHOSH IN THE CIRCLE OF REASON

Name: Minoo Kantha

Research Scholar

Department of English

Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University

Abstract:

The Circle of Reason, written by Amitav Ghosh in 1986, was his debut novel. The plot opens with a young boy travelling to his destiny with his maternal aunt, Toru-Debi, in the village of Lalpukur. Nachiketa Bose, also known as Alu throughout the novel, is the protagonist of this narrative. The purpose of the research paper is to deconstruct the Issues and vision of Amitav Ghosh in the circle of reason through binary oppositions between **tradition and modernity, eastern and western cultures, and emigration and immigration, postmodernism, and scientific temperament** which are, the key elements of the novel's narrative. To demonstrate how important transcultural awareness is in this age of mobility, open economies, and international migration, Ghosh skillfully weaves together the cultural matrices of many locales in the novel. This paper also charts the evolution of mobility in the era of fluidity and explains how movement patterns have an impact on cultural orientations, sensibilities, and creative expressions.

Keywords: Postmodernism, History, Scientific temperament, Carboic acid, Subaltern, Feminine Consciousness, and Multiple identities, etc.

Three narratives are told throughout the book. The first section is devoted to the story of Balram. He admires Louis Pasteur's achievements and is a rationalist. He is unhuman because of how idealistic he is. He does not talk to anybody. People are nothing more to him than objects to be watched. When he fully indulges his urges, he turns self-destructive. In reality, he runs into his own limitations in Bhudeb Roy. He shares the same pessimism. He is a

member of Congress. Alu, the main character, is Balaram's nephew. He is the only survivor among the family members. The second part of the book tells a different story. An intelligent, relatable, and lively trader works to bring the Indian community in the Middle East together. However, they fail once more in their attempts. The story of Mrs. Verma, who firmly rejects reason, is told in the final section. She wants to create an Indian-style society in the desert once more. Alu, Zindi, and police officer Iyoti Das, on the other hand, abandon Mrs. Verma and her experiments in the desert. Near the end of the novel, these three are searching for newer viewpoints, unrealized hopes, and unexplored concepts. Their only strength is hope.

Ghosh expertly captured the difficulty and plight of women undergoing migration in a globalised environment in this novel. Impressively, this novel offers a depressing assessment of the authoritarian regimes of mobility, where reason and resources are reduced to metonymic and straightforward circular powers on the ground.

The novel focuses on a quite different group of wanderers who were expelled from various parts of India on the fantastic island of al-Ghazira and Algeria to illustrate the search for relevance of those whose lives are affected by globalisation and whose extremely difficult bodies deal with the harsh and severe characteristics of this course and this history. Ghosh's dread of globalisation is best and most effectively expressed in the "Quieted" section. Here, we have a thorough understanding of the many lives, goals, and aspirations of the people travelling on the rickety ship Mariamma as migrant workers to al-Ghazira. Mariamma, which contains the word "amma," is, by chance, also referred to as Mother Mary in South Indian. Overall, they mark a successful beginning for al-Ghazira, a booming port city for trade and commerce. The main character, Alu, is running from an unpolite Indian police officer as well as a ridiculous and outlandish accusation that results from a pointless dispute between his "logical" Uncle Balaram and the conventional and corrupt town landowner Bhudeb Roy.

Above all the novel, *The Circle of Reason* depicts the **Female Consciousness** very seriously. Zindi at-Tiffaha's spouse and in-laws threw her out of her marital home due to her infertility, and she now owns and runs a prostitution business in al-Ghazira. Karthamma and Kulfi are the people Zindi chose to be whores. Rakesh used to sell Ayurvedic tranquillizers across the world, but he would never relocate. The situation and arrangement of Mariamma's employee women best illustrates the contrast between chance and abuse, sharpness, and misfortune experienced by transients. The extremely watchful and reprimanding Professor Samuel observes the Indian women travelling to al-Ghazira to serve as whores in Zindi's home as being imprisoned and oppressed. Zindi is a lady, indeed. What justification could she have had for sending these poor women across the seas if she were not? Why would she hold them in close quarters like prisoners in the lodge? She will place them in bondage in al-Ghazira, I have informed you, the professor says. Something along those lines. Or worse, on the other hand. Alternatively, we also

observe Zindi's perspective: She maintains that the relationships between the females are based on family, not business, and she thinks of her as someone who is supportive of the other females.

“And, as for women, why, when I get to India, I don’t have to do anything. These women find me and come running. Take me, Zindi-no, me, Zindi-didi- don’t take her, she’s got lice. They go on like that. but I don’t take them all. I take only the good girls- clean, polite, hardworking. That’s why I have to go to India myself to look... the whole of al-Ghazira knows that Zindi’s girls are reliable and hardworking And so, I get a little extra, too, not too much. It’s not a business; it’s my family, my aila, my own house, and I look after them, all the boys and girls, and no one’s unhappy and they all love me.” (TCR, pp. 194) [r-1]

Through this novel, Ghosh masterfully depicted the **dilemma and predicament of women** during migration in a globalised world. A sad examination of the repressive regimes of mobility, where reason and resources become metonymic and fundamental revolving powers on the earth, is impressively provided by this story. Due to her infertility, Zindi's better half and in-laws forced her out of her marital home, and she now owns and operates a prostitution business in al-Ghazira. The individuals picked up by Zindi to be whores there are Karthamma and Kulfi. Rakesh used to travel the world selling Ayurvedic tranquillizers, but he would never move. Samuel, an educator, is a man who espouses theories regarding lines and other things.

Mariamamma's worker ladies' condition and their arrangement is the most elucidating of transients' difference of chance and the mistreatment, sharpness, and misfortune. The reason Zindi's fast verbal response is so noteworthy is because it consistently refers to prostitution as a form of "work" and the women who engage in it as "diligent employees" to legitimise both the women's sex work and her own "business". Prostitution is being fought to be recognised and made increasingly obvious as a substantial component of the global economy by framing it as a lucrative job. Because it demonstrates how prostitution causes an increase in not only the places where people live and work, but also in other areas of life, this fight over naming the women and their work, as well as the connection between Zindi and the female migrant workers, is what makes it so fascinating. The generation of simplicity asks that the lines between their private and public settings, such as their homes and workplaces, be blurred because even if these women travel around, they frequently lose their houses. It is also way too important to explain here, making it difficult to comprehend Zindi's anxious wish to regard their economic collaboration as a connection of equal affection and links. The prostitute industry serves as a substitute for productiveness for a lady who has been driven from her own Diaspora of Indian people group and her marital home due to desolation and provides her with a new family. Zindi feels a sense of belonging through Capital that is similar to that of her own, solely male-oriented social network and family. Due to the harshly male-centric system, which makes womanliness appear to be incredibly far from real identification, she is able to construct biased exhibits of the conceptive female

body. By transferring and residing in a surrogate home where she manages the temporary female sex specialists, it is negotiated in a similar manner.

As a result of abrupt changes in his life, Alu is forced to give up his love for Maya, the little daughter of Shombu Debnath. Alu suddenly bursts out and opens up to his uncle Balaram, who is unconcerned about his desire or need for a married life:

"I want ..., Alu blurted out, I want to get married... What I mean is I already know someone. A girl, that's what I mean. You mean...? Balaram looked at him in disbelief. You mean ... love? A love marriage? Alu was almost tearful with embarrassment – Yes, he said, his voice a strangled beat. I want to marry Maya. Maya Debnath". (TCR, pp. 121-122) [r-1]

Whatever the case, Alu is not engaged to marry Maya. He receives permission to depart Lalpukur after being identified as a suspected psychological militant. From this point on, Ghosh focuses on the struggle for personal survival amid chaos and confusion. Alu begins to lead a dangerous lifestyle. An Assistant Superintendent of Police named Jyoti Das is informed about Alu and his movement to incite terror. Alu travels quickly to Kolkata (Calcutta), then to Kerala, and ultimately arrives at al-Ghazira by pontoon. Police are pursuing him in the background at the same time. Even though he is preparing to avoid capture, he must submit in order to use the transport. He traverses the entire Nigiri forest. His life ends up being so extraordinary and distinct from the lives of regular people. He is fearless due to his wanderlust and tendency to run away, which makes it tough for him to endure all of life's challenges and tribulations.

Amitav Ghosh is a child of his age and hence *The Circle of Reason* is a fine specimen of analysing human **History with Scientific Temperament**.

"The past, as Faulkner famously said, is not over, in fact the past is not even the past. One of the paradoxes of history is that it is impossible to draw a chart of the past without imagining a map of the present and future. History, in other words, is never innocent of teleology, implicit or otherwise the actions of the state provide that essential element of continuity that makes time, as a collective experience, thinkable by linking the past, the present and the future. The state as thus conceived is not merely an apparatus of rule but 'a conscious, ethical institution', an instrument designed to conquer the 'unhistorical power of time'." (Ghosh, 2010: 318-319) [r-8]

Historical occurrences are an integral aspect of Ghosh's body of work. In both his literary and non-fictional writings, he delves deeply into the histories of the themes. He examines the current unrest that is a result of the past. He also looks at how the past has affected the present and describes the plight of people who are affected by historical

events. These are people who do not fit into the general scope of history but whose lives were completely altered because of the larger political, social, and national upheavals.

The advancement of humankind through science and technology is a significant component of history. The Circle of Reason makes light of the history of phrenology and the partition of India and Pakistan by describing how refugees from both countries migrated to Lalpukur and settled there. Another noteworthy event is the daughter of Madame Curie's journey to India. The Circle of Reason offers a few humorous allusions to phrenology's past. [OBJ]

History and Science play a significant role in this novel. Balram, the uncle of the protagonist is a firm believer in logic and reason. He studies and practices Phrenology, the study of the head. Balaram is totally fixated on the Reason and tidiness. Without a moment's delay in his Presidency College, he was the legend in his battle about clean clothing. Later in Lalpukur, he began his battle against the germs. We see Alu getting feverishly involved in his uncle's plans of cleaning the refugee shanties with carbolic acid.

Balram is quite inspired and influenced by scientists like Madame Marie Curie and J.C. Bose. The Historical fact that daughter of Nobel Prize Winner Madame Curie and her son in Law visited India on 11 January 1950 at 4:30 in the afternoon is talked about in the novel. Madame Irene Joliot Curie Nobel Laureate in physics and daughter of the discoverers of radium, Pierre, and Marie Curie, arrived in Kolkata (Calcutta) ablaze with glory.

Of, Course Balram had planned for the day ever since the papers had announced the date of Joliot-Curie's arrival in Calcutt on their way back from the Science Congress in Delhi. There were other scientist stars scheduled to arrive on the same day - Frederic Joliot, Irene Juliot- Curie's husband, with whom she had shared her Nobel; J.D. Bernal, the English physicist later to win him Nobel himself; Sir Robert Robinson, distinguished chemist, and president of the Royal Society.

“He had read about the Curies since he was thirteen. Radium had powered the fantasies of his adolescence; he had celebrated Marie Curie’s second Nobel with fireworks. For him Irene Curie was a legend come alive, a part of the secret world of his childhood, an embodiment of the living tradition of science. He would have gladly given up his job only to see her.” (TCR, pp. 16) [r-1]

Characters from the lower echelons of society make up The Circle of Reason's cast. Alu, an orphan, is fated to travel to Lalpukur, a village close to Kolkata (Calcutta), where the novel's plot begins to unfold. All these characters—Alu, Shombhu Debnath, Rakhai, Toru Debi, Rajan, Zindi-al-Aiffaha, Kulfi, Karthamma, Jeevanbhai Patel, Haji Fahmy, and Zaghoul—belong to the underclass and engage in work or professions that are not respected in society. It is intriguing to note that Balaram engages in phrenology, a less esteemed field of knowledge. Ghosh introduces the discussion of Marxism and the class struggle through him. In his classroom, he instructs students in topics like weaving and sanitary concepts.

Most of the characters in the village, apart from those on Bhudeb Roy's side, are from the lower middle class or lower class. More people with comparable backgrounds are introduced because of Alu's journey from the hamlet to Kolkata (Calcutta) and from Calcutta to al-Ghazira. Alu resides at the home of a former prostitute named Zindi in al-Ghazira. Zindi provides sanctuary to a variety of refugees, including those with dubious backgrounds and occupations. Alu's life provides a window into the lives of Gulf refugees. It is interesting to note that The Circle of Reason existed before the author joined *the Subaltern Studies* Group. The writer's interest in the lives of those from marginalised classes is nevertheless raised by this.

The Circle of Reason also establishes the author's worries with issues pertaining to the lives of the weak. Bhudeb Roy has put Alu's life in grave danger. He emerges as a total political bully as the book goes on. He extends a teaching invitation to Balaram, but as time goes on, their rivalry develops into something nasty. Both politically and economically influential is Bhudeb Roy. He is then able to destroy Balaram's universe. He poisons Balaram's fishpond in the first stage and sends his sons to harass Maya. When Balaram burns his public rally and Bhudeb hatches a plan to assassinate the entire family, the argument takes an ugly turn. As a result, the powerful ruin the lives of the weak. Even after the loss of his own family, Bhudeb is not content and persuades Jyoti Das that Alu is responsible for their murder. Alu is compelled to live as a perpetual refugee and is compelled to wander about in order to avoid being imprisoned. As a result, the story includes themes and characters that may be relevant to subaltern studies. The struggle of a less than heroic hero is one of the novel's central themes. Greyish tones are also used to depict the other characters. They are not a part of society's mainstream and, in some sense, belong to the "minority" class.

The novel undoubtedly speaks to the *Complex and Uncharted Journey* of a person travelling from one location to another in quest for food or shelter. Since man's creation on Earth, he has wandered thanks to his expulsion from Elysium for "tasting the fruit of knowledge." His exile illustrates both his migration across territories and his effort to forge an identity. This also makes up a person's epistemological textures, which is a subject for critical analysis. In these situations, some drifters disagree while others adapt into the host country's culture and environment. If the drifters are unhappy, they migrate to the other "location of culture" to acquire temporal power. In this light, I would like to quote,

"Our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the 'present,' for which there seems to be no proper name." (Bhabha, 1994: pp 1). [r-7]

Amitav Ghosh is not an exception to The Circle of Reason CR in parenthetical citations; 1986, which refers to this pale protrusion of a person's "existence," which South Asian authors of fiction have occasionally theorised in their fictional works.

The progression from *Satwa to Tamas* supports The Circle of Reason, which is a vast repository of memories, dreams, and wants. Alu, an eight-year-old orphan with the common Bengali name Nachiketa Bose, appears at the start of the narrative. For him to live with his uncle Balaram and his childless aunt Toru Debi, he is transported to the village of Lalpukur in rural Bengal. Balaram, Alu's foster father, is completely enamoured with the discipline of phrenology, and uses Alu as a case study to demonstrate how the outside and inside of a person can be matched. Balaram makes Bhudev Roy, the dishonest profiteer, his opponent by founding the Pasteur School of Reason. Balaram is the leader of the effort to kill all the germs in the hamlet using carbolic acid, which is also an effort to kill Bhudev Roy and his lieutenants. Money is the germ that corrupts and pollutes the hamlet through Bhudev Roy, the agent. On the other hand, a terrible fire destroys Balaram, his house, and the school. The modernising influence of western civilization, represented by carbolic acid, destroys the old rural lifestyle.

When Bhudev Roy finds out, Alu has already served as a convenient scapegoat; because of his jealousy and cynicism, he declares Alu to be a feared terrorist. With this identification, Alu's situation worsens from this point forward, and his life as a *Diasporic* Bengali youngster begins. Jyoti Das, the assistant superintendent of police, is informed about Alu and his involvement in terrorism. The authorities criminalise Alu, who is an innocent fugitive who joins a wave of diasporic Indians seeking work who are drawn to the wealthy oil economies of the middle east. Zindi, Karthamma, kulfi, Chunni, the professor, and Rakesh are among these diasporic Indians. All these migrants settle into Zindi's houses and use her help to obtain employment in al-Ghazira.

Ghosh is one of the few well-known authors with Indian ancestry among the Indian writers who writes in English. He has made a substantial contribution to *Postcolonial* literature as a journalist, novelist, travelogue writer, and a remarkable master of the non-fiction form, and he has established himself in the English-speaking world. He is an Indian diaspora writer. He uses his experiences on the three continents in inventive ways, and his works have a strong post-colonialist foundation. The three sections of the book The Circle of Reason are titled Satwa, Rajas, and Tamas. The story follows Alu's escapades as a young master weaver in a small Bengali town who is falsely accused of being a terrorist. He runs away from his house and embarks on a global voyage with Jyoti Das, a police officer who enjoys bird watching. He adheres to his uncle Balaram's beliefs, who is a phrenologist and the Book of Pasteur nut. In this book, Ghost employs magical realism as a device. Ghost tries to examine and clarify his metaphysical interpretation of Indian history, philosophy, and culture. To examine the relationship between culture and imperialism, the novel The Circle of Reason contrasts traditional culture with the paradigm of conventional ethnography. Through three interconnected stories that are based on science, philosophy, history, politics, culture, and language, Ghosh illustrates how contemporary western society has destroyed traditional village life. There is a contrast between traditional values and western views. Alu stands for tradition while his uncle Balaram is obsessed and epitomized by the western scientific notion.

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