



Critical Perspectives of the Circle of Reason by Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract: *The Circle of Reason* (1986) is the debut novel of Amitav Ghosh. The novel opens up in a village named Lalpukur where a boy reaches his destination with his maternal aunt, Toru-debi. This is the story of Nachiketa Bose, known throughout the novel as Alu because his head which had so many knots and bumps. The boy is given the name as Alu by his uncle, Balaram. Alu is the central character of the novel through which we can observe the entire action episode of the novel. The hero of *The Circle of Reason* is Nachiketa Bose, but he is called Alu which means "potato." He arrives at his uncle Balaram's house at the age of eight years as he lost his parents in a road accident. Alu becomes gifted at languages. He also masters the technique of weaving. He proves to be a skillful weaver in the village. A surge of events leads to Alu's escape across India, into the Middle East and across Northern Africa, pursued by a determined policeman, Jyothi Das, under the alleged reason that he is a suspect in a terrorist incident. He goes through a flight of the imagination which takes shape on a basis of misdirected laboriousness when Alu's uncle Balaram sets phrenology forcibly to experiment on him. The array of bumps and swelling flourish cheerfully all over his head and showed no signs by any means by dividing into distinct and recognizable organs. It was all very funny and very encouraging as a benefit of new exciting material. It imitated Balaram's paper on the vagueness of the organs of the brain.

Keywords: Postmodernism, History, migration, scientific temperament, carbolic acid.

The novel basically tells three stories. The first part deals with the story of Balram. He is a rationalist and is influenced by the life of Louis Pasteur. He is idealistic to the extent of being inhuman. He has no involvement with people. He treats others simply as objects of observation and/or change. He

takes his whims to extremes and becomes self-destructive. In fact, he meets his own mettle in Bhudeb Roy. He is equally cynical. He is a Congressman. Alu, the protagonist, is a nephew of Balaram. He is the only one to survive in the family. The second part of the novel tells another tale. An earthly, practical and zestful trader tries to bring together the community of Indians in the Middle East. But again these efforts prove to be unrealistic. The third part is the story of Mrs. Verma, who out-rightly rejects rational thinking. She again tries her hand at creating Indian model of community life in the desert. However Alu, Zindi and Iyoti Das, who is a police officer leave Mrs. Verma and her experiments in the desert. At the end of the novel, these three are in search of newer horizons, unformed hopes and ideas. Hope is their only asset.

Ghosh brilliantly painted the issue and problem of ladies amid the migration in a globalized world through this novel. This tale strikingly offers a miserable investigation of the oppressive regimes of movement where reason and assets end up metonymic and simple circling powers on the planet. Concentrating on a very different gathering of vagrants depleted from different parts of India on a fanciful island al-Ghazira and Algeria, the novel denotes the look for significance of those whose lives are moved by globalization and whose exceptionally bodies endure the rough and severe characteristics of this course and this history. The part entitled "Quieted" is the most impactful and all incredible in communicating Ghosh's phantom of Globalization. Here we get a total feeling of the distinctive lives, expectations and yearnings of the travelers of the unsteady and woobly vessel, Mariamma which is conveying every one of them to al-Ghazira as vagrant workers. Coincidentally, 'Mariam' is the south Indian name for Mary and Mariamma is known as Mother Mary which incorporates 'amma'. They are on the whole start for al-Ghazira, a prosperous ocean port of exchange and business. The hero, Alu who is getting away from an uncouth Indian police hardware and a foolish and peculiar charge over a ridiculously shot up immaterial and minor clash between his 'logical' uncle Balaram and the customary and degenerate town landowner Bhudeb Roy. Zindi is a 'madam' who runs a place of prostitution in al-Ghazira after she was removed from her marital home by her better half and in-laws by virtue of her infertility. Karthamma and Kulfi are the people who have been picked up by Zindi to be whores there. Rakesh is an ex-voyaging salesperson of Ayurvedic tranquilize which he would never move. Educator, Samuel is a man who proclaims speculations about lines and others.

Mariamma's worker ladies' condition and their arrangement is the most elucidating of transients' difference of chance and the mistreatment, sharpness and misfortune. The exceptionally careful and admonishing Professor Samuel sees the Indian ladies who are making a trip to al-Ghazira to fill in as whores in Zindi's home as detained and oppressed people: "She is a madam... . On the off chance that she was n't , for what reason would she group these poor ladies over the ocean? For what reason would she keep them close away like detainees in the lodge? I let you know, she will move them into bondage in al-Ghazira. Something to that effect. Or on the other hand more awful". (p.173) On the other hand, we likewise witness Zindi's point of view: "she not only sees herself as being of help to the women, but she also perseveres that the relations between them are not of business but of family":

“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 nhappy and they all love me”. (p.181)

Zindi's quick verbal answer is especially very intriguing for its constancy on naming prostitution as a sort of "work" and the ladies as "diligent employees," in an approach to legitimize both, lady's sex work and her own "business". This flag attempts to consider prostitution the situation of being profitable work, serving to recognition it and make it increasingly clear as a major aspect of the worldwide economy. In addition, what is generally so fascinating about this battle over naming the ladies and their work and in addition in naming the connection among Zindi and the female transient laborers is that it basically makes well detectable the multiplying of not just the seats of home and work as it regularly happens on account of prostitution yet in addition of the family unit and friends. In this manner, even as movement for these ladies includes lost home and the consistently the generation of plainness requests the crease of the spatial segment of home and work, household and common, private and open. Besides, it is excessively essential, making it impossible to note here Zindi's jumpy want to perceive the connection of trade between them as simultaneously likewise a connection of equivalent love and shared relationship of bonds. For a lady who is ousted from her very own Diaspora of Indian people group and her wedded home for desolateness, the prostitution business turns into a substitute productiveness which creates a substitute family for her. Capital duplicates for Zindi that plainness or belongingness which her very own male centric social network and family banishes her from. The structure of male centric brutality that allows her biased displays just as conceptive female body with the end goal that womanliness is very disconnected for abstract acknowledgment. Like in this way it gets haggled by moving and existing in a surrogate home where she handles the transient female sex specialists.

As a result of such sudden changes throughout Alu's life, he is implemented to forfeit or surrender his adoration for Maya Debi, little girl of Shombu Debnath. As no one is worried about Alu's desire or want for a conjugal life, he all of a sudden blasts out and opens up before his uncle Balaram:

“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. 112-113)

Be that as it may, Alu lacks wedded to wed Maya. Being proclaimed a feared psychological militant, he is authorized to leave Lalpukur. From this time onwards, Ghosh draws out the interest and journey for survival of the self in the midst of bedlam and disarray. Alu starts to live on the edge of life. Jyoti Das, an Assistant Superintendent of Police is educated about Alu and his supposed fear monger movement. Alu races to Calcutta, from that point to Kerala, and finally on a pontoon to al-Ghazira. At the

same time, he is pursued the distance by the police. He even needs to surrender going by transports and prepares to get away from the capture. He moves all through the Nilgiri timberlands. His life turns out to be so astounding and detached from the ordinary individuals' life. This vagabondish and getting away nature makes him fearless thus difficult to experience every one of the preliminaries and hardships throughout his life.

Ghosh strikingly depicts the anguish and enduring of the ignored laborers in remote nations who all the time lead a drifter's sort of life. By utilizing the incredible asset of new historicism, Ghosh distinguishes the issues of the transient specialists who expect kindness from the foundation and expert which stays all the time a fantasy. Personality, as an emotional sense is an empowering equality and congruity of the 'genuine me' or the 'internal voice' exemplified in oneself develops and assembles the inward character. In contemporary and present time utilization, character implies it is to resemble others but then additionally to have characteristics that make one not quite the same as others. For example, Alu has a widespread character and furthermore a progressively particular and special individual personality. Character keeps up a consistent harmony among likeness and distinction despite an individual advancement and changing social conditions. Inferable from these changes, the individual absorbs oneself requesting for the change or alteration and furthermore satisfy an inward want and longing for consistency. Alu overall and finish individual, who isn't divided into jobs and contents, takes an interest in a dappled and regularly tormented and divided public activity but then keeps up congruity and uprightness at all stages. At the end of the day, from the individual personality of a being he develops the social character thusly to a national character to an all inclusive personality on worldwide point of view. People with unequivocal theme divided their self to know their identity, what they are doing and where they are going. In any case, in pained and troublesome occasions, there is lost character that outcomes in an emergency.

The epic unfurls in a town named Lalpukur where a kid achieves his goal with his close relative, Toru-debi. The kid's head is very particular from an ordinary individual however it is excessively tremendous with bunches and knocks. The kid is named Alu in light of the odd state of his head by his uncle, Balaram. Alu is the focal character of the novel through which we can watch all the activity of the novel. The legend of "The Circle of Reason" is Nachiketa Bose, yet he is called Alu which implies "potato." This is because of his state of his head which is bumpy, rough and very huge. A clasped hero is not out of the ordinary in some kind of enchantment authenticity. He enters a trip of the creative energy that expands on a premise of misled relentlessness when Alu's uncle Balaram sets phrenology persuasively to chip away at him. The variety of knocks and swelling developed happily everywhere on his head and gave no hints at all of partitioning into particular and unmistakable organs. It was all exceptionally confounding and extremely invigorating as an abundance of new energizing material. In time it incited Balaram's paper on the unclearness of the organs of the cerebrum.

Ghosh depicted this novel with his oeuvre of enchantment authenticity tossing light on such a significant number of striking topics identifying with India around then and the lives of the researchers.

Balaram found the head of Alu like something else from others with such a large number of knocks and stressed a lot over him. He thought his head was a blend of request and contentiousness. Alu is dependably a quiet going individual. He isn't the individual to express his musings and emotions uninhibitedly with his uncle, Balaram. Alu never communicated his preferences with his uncle. He used to go to Rakhal's dad Shombu Debnath's home all the time where he sat quietly watching him sitting in his weaving machines. As he was weaving a material, Alu watched him and his craft painstakingly. At that point he inspired premium and needed to get the hang of weaving. Balaram then felt exceptionally glad as he appeared probably some enthusiasm for taking in a workmanship. He suggested that as a compelling artwork which is associating with the reason. Balaram commented:

“And so weaving, too, is hope; a living belief that having once made the world one and blessed it with its diversity. It must do so again. Weaving is hope because it had no Country, no continent. Weaving is reason, which makes the world mad and makes it human”. (TCR, p.58)

The long opening piece of the novel more portrays Alu who is apprenticed as a weaver with Shombu Debnath, an ace weaver while his uncle Balaram, the town school ace who is charmed well with western thoughts, symbolized by his enthusiasm for phrenology and the works of Louis Pasteur. In his excitement to declare his surprising and ordinary logical theory and interest with tidiness he dispatches the Pasteur School of Reason where he shows the subject of Reason and does drives and camp of sanitizing the town with carbolic corrosive. He takes up Shombu Debnath to show weaving there while his better half shows sewing and sewing. It is his obsession with carbolic corrosive and antagonistic vibe with Bhudeb Roy, the proprietor of town school that achieves his demolition alongside the other individuals aside from Alu who breaks to set out upon whatever is left of his trip to different parts of the world.

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. This time likewise in Lalpukur, he began his battle against the germs. This news by in any case came to Jyothi Das who was researching the actualities of the instance of Balaram as a radical:

“Later it was a puzzle, Jyothi Das lost himself in that labyrinth of cause and effect. While writing his report he found a news paper cutting in the file, a yellowed scrap paper, left there perhaps by some conscientious clerk. ‘Teacher battles with germs’, it said ‘saves thousands’. The report claimed that Lalpukur had stayed Germ-free when thousands of other villages on the border were consumed by disease, because of the efforts of one Balaram Bose, a teacher, who had doused the village in waves of antiseptic”.

(TCR, p.83)

This epic much the same as Ghosh's different books, discards all the basic difference among convention and innovation or discrete oriental and occidental societies. The historical backdrop of weaving and the global material arrangement continue returning in this and every one of his following books even more. It turns into a proverb of that confounded system of incongruities in which all societies are entrapped

and hitched well with their neighbors. At the point when Balaram chooses to make the youthful Alu, a weaver, he persuades by referring to the historical backdrop of the innovation of weaving and how weaving also inspires the obligation of social unsteadiness and permeable limits because of borrowings crosswise over outskirts. As indicated by Balaram:

“The loom has created not separate worlds but one, for it has never permitted the division of the world. The loom recognizes no continents and no countries. It has tried the world together”. (TCR, p.55)

Balaram develops and fortifies the thoughts that society is a movement of development that has nothing to do with national limits using any and all means. Weaving shapes the foundation of this idea and he refers to the case of world fabric exchange which goes through each likely route in spite of the social variations and refinements as:

“Indian cloth was found in the graves of the pharos. Indian soil is strewn with cloth from China. The whole of the ancient world hummed with the cloth trade. The silk route from China running through central Asia and Persia to the parts of the Mediterranean and from there to the markets of Africa and Europe, bound continents together for more centuries- than we can count.... All through the centuries, cloth in its richness and variety, bound the Mediterranean to Asia, India to Africa, the Arab world to Europe in equal bountiful trade”.(TCR, pp.55-56)

This manner, the records of weaving has no meticulous country wide roots, however it rightly navigates multifaceted global routes. It can be study as the high-quality instance of a conventional craft as opposed to western technological know-how and era. It is another image that inquires the concept of wonderful divisions among cultures and countries. Weaving isn't always the most effective requisite issue in the novel but there are types of other styles that hold on recurring within the itinerary of the novel, striking so often a kind of order on a chaotic world.

This novel gives the feeling that is fantastically predisposed by Pasteur. Balaram feels that Alu is so deficient in ardour. He reads out a passage from the ebook to make Alu recognise Pasteur's bravery to inject an unproven vaccine for rabies to a 10 yr vintage boy who was bitten with the aid of a rabid canine. Alu cries afterwards at the quit of the passage. But, at different event that is Alu who stored this e book from the fireplace accident. This ebook performs a completely crucial position in growing intimacy and fantastic courting between Balaram and Alu. On one event whilst Alu takes shelter at Gopal's region, Gopal offers him a number of his garments, a few money and a replica of the e book titled Life of Pasteur. Alu along with this ebook forums Mariamma drastically with out studying of the e-book, however some of its pages come to the assist of Karthamma who rejects to supply the baby with out signing papers after which Prof.Samuel tears the pages and offers to her for taking the signature. The replica of the book of Gopal is left in Al-Ghazira. Afterwards, Alu unearths the copy of Life of Pasteur in Mrs.Verma's library. It become Dantu's replica which turned into proficient to Dantu via Balaram. This ebook completes the complete circle. This

time, Mrs. Verma and Alu cremate the ebook with Kulfi's lifeless body as a symbolism to suggest that the circle is whole.

Coming back to Alu's story, we see Alu getting feverishly involved in his uncle's plans of cleaning the refugee shanties with carbolic acid. But at the level of human intentions the cleaning operation is aimed against Bhudeb Roy. The movement is to finish germs. But Balram symbolizing reason has a natural enemy in Bhudeb Roy who is propagating the personality cult and is engaged in irrational activities. Thus, the movement to finish germs becomes the movement to finish Bhudeb and his types. But events take their own turn. A devastating fire destroys all-Balram, his home and the school. Bhudeb Roy finds in Alu an easy scapegoat. Bhudeb declares Alu a dreaded terrorist. From this point onwards, the dangerous life of Alu begins. He begins to live on the edge, on the brink of normality. Jyoti Das, an Assistant Superintendent of Police is told about Alu and his alleged terrorist activities. Alu rushes to Calcutta, from there to Kerala and finally on a boat to Al-Ghazira. All the while he is chased by the police. He even had to give up travelling by buses-and trains; he moves through Nilgiri forests. Alu's life is away from the normal. The threat of police constantly enhances the thrill of his adventure. The vagabond - like nature of this tale becomes very clear. Besides being a comment on present civilization of root-less-ness, the story of Alu also acts as a means for the reader to get adventurous. Settled in the set routine of our lives, Alu's story kindles imagination. Adventure, threat, danger are deep based in human psyche. Alu's story gives us a chance to live or relive that part of our psyche. It is a depiction of a life without centre. Those interested in the deriving nihilistic joys may do a wonderful Derridian analysis of this book. But that is not my cup, certainly not for the present.

Balram personifies reason. How far an action is relevant to the present day situations-this is his only parameter for judging things and individuals. Reason juxtaposed with religion, provides a full-length debate in this novel. Balram is fascinated by the book, 'Life of Pasteur'. Pasteur is his ideal; logic his God. Rational thinking is his only goal in life. But the author is mature enough to point out the end of rationality in practical situations. Scientific temper, the cause and effect theory do not work in real situations. Balram's case is that of firmness of logic. He cannot look beyond reason. It should be so rationally and so it must be for him. He cannot accept a hair breadth's difference from the upright, straight, unchangeable logical path. That is why Balram's plans are invariably put out of gear when put into practice. The story begins with his childhood. He wanted to study science and emulate great scientists like Pasteur and Jagdish Bose. But his teachers in Dhaka decide that he is good for history and direct him to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the teacher of Philosophy at Presidency College, Calcutta. There at Calcutta, his favorite pass time is to study heads. Many times he faces trouble due to his compulsive habit of studying and commenting on others' heads. But Balram is made of stiff stuff. His uncompromising stand on rationality as the only theory of life wins him a life-long friend, Gopal. He also gets associated with a rationalist society. But Gopal, even though his best friend senses something wrong, 'As he watched Balram go, Gopal had a premonition: a premonition of the disaster he would call upon himself and all of them, if ever he is allowed to take charge of the society. He decided then, with an uncharacteristic determination, that he would do everything in his power to keep that from

happening' (50). Quite similarly Balram's wife also senses foul and puts his books on fire. Alu is able to save just one book- 'Life of Pasteur'. 'Life of Pasteur' is a significant symbol in this novel. But before going to that, let us see how cleverly Ghosh has put prophecy and rationality side by side. Rationality of Balram is juxtaposed with the premonition of his well wishers-contradictory forces are at work. Isn't it a pattern of life itself? Life cannot be defined as black or white. Ghosh is a good writer because his works provide balanced views of contradictory elements. Premonition comes true but rationality does not die, either. Inspired by this book, Balram starts a school in his village called 'School of Reason.' This is the ultimate test of his long cherished dreams of reason.

The role played by the book is quite intricate. When Alu is first introduced to the book (and we too in the process), Balram is worried about Alu's lack of response. He lectures Alu with animated passion. Alu listens to him with 'wide-eyed silence.' Balram is touched. He reads from the book and stops to see tears in Alu's eyes. And when Alu retrieves the book from fire, it is Balram's turn to be wet-eyed. So the book exists as a bond between uncle and nephew-an extension of the tradition of reason from one generation to the other. The greatest win for a rationalist is to win over someone else on her/his side. This rationality wages a war against germs, which are the root of all diseases. The analogy can easily be taken further where carbolic acid as a tool of scientific temper tries to finish diseases, and rationality as the thought offshoot of scientific temper tries to end the ills of society. The cleansing mechanisms in different forms run as a metaphor throughout the novel. In Al-Ghazira Hajji Fahmy makes Adil and his cousin bathe in antiseptic. Carbolic acid is very much part and parcel of Alu's cleaning program. Towards the end of the novel, Mrs. Verma is shown using carbolic acid instead of Ganga Jal. Dr. Mishra remarks, 'Carbolic acid has become holy water' (411). To this Mrs. Verma retorts, 'What does it matter whether it is Ganga Jal or Carbolic acid? It is just a question of cleaning the place, isn't it? People thought something was clean once, now they think something else is clean. What difference does it make to the dead, Dr. Mishra?' (411). Ghosh is of course pointing out to the blind faith of millions of Indians in Ganga Jal even though the water of the life giving river is so badly polluted. In fact, the book, 'Life of Pasteur' is related to Mrs. Verma's life also. Her father introduced her to the book and it was because of it only she became a microbiologist. The story of the book comes to an end only when Kulfi, defying all efforts by Balram and Alu, dies. It is a defeat of reason because the course of action does not go on rational lines. The book itself states, '...without the germ, life would become impossible because death would be incomplete' (396).

The novel consists of three parts that deals with the chaos and insecurity in the life of Alu, the protagonist of the novel. Alu turns up to Lalpukur to live with his uncle, Balaram in the very first part and in the second part Alu runs away from the secret police officer, Jyoti Das who tries to catch him as most wanted terrorist. The first part ends as and when their house is blasted. This part chiefly focuses on the comic characters such as Alu and Balaram, with his changing obsessions with phrenology, teaching, and later the Pasteurian project of cleansing the city with carbolic acid. After all, they also construct a school based on voluntary work and Balaram takes on his germ-fighting project. One can object to this

interpretation that lies mainly in Bhudeb-Roy, the area's corrupt politician, who with the help of the national authorities factually blows up Balaram and his house. The moneyless society is not only annihilated by local and national authorities but also by neo-imperialist oil-traders. Apart from erecting a capitalistic versus socialistic experiment within the novel, the idea from part one is repeated. The subalterns can seize agency, but when they do so the authorities immediately react in order to squash and compress any such agency. The result in both the examples is death. This reinforces that the weaker society can try to take possession of agency but only at the cost of its life. Life and security are in danger of disappearance and extinction whenever the characters try as much as to speak. Characters should die, or wounded or have to flee for their lives. The weaker are in spotlight of their target and in which we hear their voices even as they are being silenced. Ghosh expresses his apprehension and ease with the weaker and the hegemonies which "straightjacket" them, and says that he will afterwards show how this is more explored in *The Calcutta Chromosome*, which can be seen as the first novel in which Amitav Ghosh fully eloquent and expressive about the weaker counter order.

Amitav Ghosh, through the novel, splendidly portrayed the predicament and dilemma of the immigrant women in a globalized world through this novel. The novel offers a gloomy exploration of the tyrannies of migration where reason and resources become metonymic and mere circulating forces in the world. Focusing on a quite diverse group of migrants came from various parts of India onto an imaginary island called al-Ghazira and Algeria. The novel marks the search for meaningfulness of those people whose lives are relocated by globalization and whose very bodies put up with the violent and brutal marks of this route and this history. The chapter entitled "Becalmed" is the most revelatory and all powerful in expressing the Amitav Ghosh's knowledge of Globalization. Here, we get a complete sense of the different lives, intentions and aspirations of the passengers of the unstable and wobbly boat, *Mariam* which is carrying all of them to al-Ghazira as migrant labourers. By the way, 'Mariam' is the south Indian name for 'Mary' and Mariamma is known as 'Mother Mary' which includes 'Amma'. They are all leaving for al-Ghazira, a prosperous sea-port of trade and commerce. The protagonist, Alu who is escaping from incompetent Indian police machinery and an absurd and bizarre charge over a ludicrously shot up insignificant and trivial conflict between his 'scientific' uncle Balaram and the traditional and corrupt village landlord, Bhudeb Roy. Zindi is a 'madam' who runs a house of prostitution in al-Ghazira after she was sent out from her matrimonial home by her husband and in-laws on account of her barrenness. Karthamma and Kulfi are the persons who have been chosen up by Zindi to work as prostitutes there. Rakesh is an ex-travelling sales man of Ayurvedic drug which he could never sell. Professor, Samuel is a person who promulgates theories about queues and others.

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