**A Novel Style: Multilingualism and Magical Realism in Amitav Ghosh's "The Circle of Reason"**

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**Abstract**

The letter states that in the Amitav Ghosh novel The Circle of Reason (1986) Quotidianexcesses, wild coincidences and tangents, against the 'magical real' sensibilities of the picnic epic, tied ideas of language, history and style can go. The notion of a linear shift from the British Empire to the post-colonial world of discrete nations is challenged by Ghosh's portrayal of a sacred world in transverse history.This spread of 'big history' in the long movements and awkward moments of the diaspora is most importantly extracted through the rise of Ghosh, sometimes using the work of Giles Deleuje and Felix Guattari, sometimes surprised and at other times. Can be described. As 'multilingualism' of language.Ghosh portrays a world in which small terms of community influence nation's ideologies in a 'traditional' realist novel - and apparently the organic, implicit words of 'community' themselves fall into the notion that all the history of displacement can be traced and migration.

**Introduction**

The incredibility of India lies first in its multiculturalism and secondly it (India) is composed of multi-lingual states. With the independence, India has been divided into multi-lingual states and territories. Most of the states have their literature in their own languages such as Hindi literature, Marathi literature Bengali literature, Tamil literature, Guajarati literature and so on. About literature, Devi Prasad Poorna has aptly observed as:“Dark is the place where is no sun;and dead is the land that is void of literature.”For the centuries we have witnessed, the narration of the fictional stories deeply rooted in the Indian tradition. Fiction, no doubt, means untrue, or unreal or imaginary. But one must admit that the imaginary or unreal stories, many times in life appear more beautiful than the ugliest reality. Fictional stories have always created the beautiful world of imagination where all the unfulfilled desires are fulfilled, and thus, literature liberates man from the harsh realities of life.Indian English Novel what we consider today, has been imported from the West, in the 20th century.

The Indian English fiction of the phase dealt with limited themes. During this phase the creative Indian writers have shown their consciousness towards the prevailing evil practices in Indian society. Those evil practices had dominated social behaviour of Indian people. Indian English writers took their creative writings as devices of reformation. Their writings were instructive, expressing religious faith and urge for reformation. They focused on the plight of women, humiliated peasants, and the deterioration of aristocracy.

Deen Mohammad (1759-1851), an employee of the East Indian Company, from Patna, Bihar, published his travelogue in English entitled The Travels of Deen Mahomet in 1794. He is said to be the first Indian writer in English. It is Michael H. Fisher, a research scholar who has brought this text to our notice, in his scholarly monograph ‘The First Indian Author in English’ (1796). Deen Mohammad has written this entire travelogue in epistolary form. Earlier, Cavelly Venkata Boria was believed to be the first Indian author in English. C.D. Narasimhaiah says:

‘Indian writing in English is to me primarily a part of the literature of India, in the same way as the literatures written in various regional languages or ought to be...,Sanskrit was not an Indian language, nor were Arabic and Persian, but the one became the very breath of India, that by which all else is known devebhasha, devajanavidya and the other two, Persian more than Arabic, have fathered forth a very sophisticated ‘Indian’ language namely Urdu,..., we can speak of Indian English as they do of American English.” It took two centuries for Indian English literature..., to come to fore.’

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of many genius and talented Indian English poets. Some Indian English writers also produced dramas. Novel is considered as the latest genre of English literature. The term ‘Novel’ is derived from the Italian word ‘novella’ that means ‘new’ and fresh story. Novel is said to be the loosest genre of literature that provides maximum freedom for the novelist. A critic remarks that novel is a story told in prose and above all it is characterized by realism which distinguishes a novel from other kinds of prose fiction in which little regard is paid to reality. Novel is defined as ‘a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions, representatives of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity.’ F. Marion – Crawford, an American novelist describes novel as a “Pocket Theatre” containing as it does all the accessories of drama without requiring to be staged before theaudience. In fact, novel is a long narrative in prose detailing the actions of the fictitious people.

For writing a drama, the dramatist is always restricted by a long preliminary discipline in technique, and through knowledge of principles of drama. For the portrayal of characters, their thoughts emotions and actions, a novel is an effective medium. The novel consolidates the details of history and generalized experience of philosophy of life in such a manner that any other genre of literature cans hardly does. In fact, in a novel, we witness the freedom of movement with a vast canvas. The novelist has his own choice, plot, characters, narration, setting that is time and place of action, style, atmosphere, technique, or implied philosophy of life. These are considered as major components of any prose fiction as novel writing provides freedom for the novelists. A large number of Indian writers have used this genre for their creative expression. Hundreds of novels were published in Indian regional languages. Similarly Indian writers started writing novel in English language. We can find a reciprocal influence between Indian regional novels and Indian English novels.

In the beginning, it was Bengal to establish close contact with the British. The earliest Indian novels were in Bengali. The novel emerged at different times in different regions of India, but they were just historical romance. Later on, we have witnessed the full development of the Indian novel. The process of development of Indian Novel (written in vernacular languages) may be divided into (1) historical romance, (2) social or political realism, and (3) psychological novels that presented an analytical and introspective concern with the individual. In Bengali, Budev Chandra Mukharjee'sAnguriyaBinimoy (1857) was the best seller, but Bankim Chandra really produced only one historical novel, Raj Singha in 1881. These romances were based on history. Maharashtra Jeevan Prabhat (1878) of Ramesh Chander Datta is most closely a historical novel. The first novel written in Bengali was AlalerGharerDulal (Spoilt Son of Rich Family) (1858). In English, Pamela or Virtue Rewarded (1740) of Samuel Richardson is said to be the first novel. And the first Indian English novel is KylashChanderDutt'sA Journey of 48 Hours of 1945, which was published in 1835. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee pioneered the movement of social novels in India. He published his novel, 'Rajmohan's Wife' in 1864. He has a great contribution in the development of the Indian English Novel. Amitav Ghosh highlights in his essay, The March of the Novelthrough History as:

‘He (Bankim) was perhaps the first only Indian writer of modern times in the sense that his literary influence extended throughout the subcontinent, " ... the passages of description in the novel are an attempt to lay claim to the rhetoric of location, of place to mount a springboard that would allow him to vault the gap between two entirely different conventions of narrative.’

Raj Laxmi published The Hindu Wife in 1876, and it was followed by Toru Dutt's Bianca in 1878. At the same time the novels of historical significance were also written. Those were K. K. Lahri'sRoshanara (1881), Lalun, the Beragun or The Battle of Panipat (1884), of Mirza Murad Ali, D.H.Dutt's Bijoy Chand (1888). K Chakravarti’sSarat and Hingam (1895). Lal Bhari Day (1824-94), BehramjiM.Malabari (1853- 1912), Nagesh Vishwant Pai (1860 -1920) and KurpabaiSatthianadhan (1862-94) were the pioneers of Indian English fiction.

It was the time when Indian cultural situation was full of outdatedcustoms, falsely imposed cultural and moral traditions. People were suffocating as the fluttering caged bird by such prevailing conditions as well as by the Hindu orthodoxy and religious didacticism. One Urdu poet, Allama Iqbal expresses the function of the sensitive poet or a writer as:"Mubtela-e-dard koi azu ho roti haiaankh, Kisqadarhamdardsare jism kihotihaiaankh."

The present Indian novel in English has been inspired by the Western Culture and literature. Up to the 19th century, we had very admirable tradition of story-telling. These stories (longer as well as shorter) had been in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and Apbhrams literature. These stories were always motivational, religious and didactic. There were fairytales, parables, fables, folktales, and religious tales. Narrator also used to tell the stories of heroic deeds of his/her forefathers. Sanskrit literature, of course did have tradition of prose fiction that included Subandhu’s ‘Vasavadutta’ (late 6th or early 7th century), Ban’s ‘kadambari’ (first half of the 7th century), Dandi’s Dasa Kumara Charitra (6th century), Dhanpal’s ‘Tilakmanjari’. All were the models of Indian novels. These novels were read and enjoyed throughout India for so many centuries. However, now there is no relation between the ancient novels and the modern novels. Modern novels now seem to have been westernized in terms of structure, style, technique, subject matter etc. It has been, to the much extent, different from the old heritage.

The novelists in those days came as liberating forces. The Indian English Writers, through their creative writings presented the characters who were the victims of oppressive society. The writers were strongly motivated by religion and rationality. They valued only innate human instincts, emotions, thoughts, feelings, aspirations, ambitions, as well as mental conflicts. The genre of Indo- Anglian novel appeared on the literary scene in the 1920's. It was like a toddler, but gradually it succeeded in gathering confidence and establishing itself as a distinct form in the following two decades. Shevantibai M. Nikambe'sRatanbai: A Sketch of Bombay HighCourt High Class Hindu Young Wife (1895) is a novel based on novelist's own experience in which the novelist makes a plea for women's education. R. C. Dutt, in The Lake of Palms: A Story of Indian Domestic Life (1902) advocates widow marriage. Lal Behari Day's GovindaSamanta or The History of Bengal Raiyat (1874) presents peasant's life. Its revised version is entitled as Bengal Peasant Life (1908).

R.K. Narayan wrote A Tiger for Malgudi (1983), Talkative Man (1983), The World of Nagraj (1990) and Grandmother's Tale (1992). The last of the "Big Three" of Indian fiction , Raja Rao could add only one novel, The Chessmaster and His Moves (1988)Which is the first part of triology and two parts entitled The Daughters of Mountain and A Myrobalm on the Palm of Your Hand are unpublished.

Manohar Malgonkar is one of those writers who began their career after Independence. Malgonkar in his Cactus Country (1992), a political novel, has dealt with the Bangladesh Liberation Movement. He also produced Distant Drum, Combat of Shadows, The Princess, a serious fiction Bandicoot Run (1982) and The Garland Keeper (1987). His novels are historical including contemporary history. An eminent scholar B.P. Ingade rightly observed:

‘He (Malgonkar) is at his superlation best in the corpus of his racy, amorphous form of narrative, weaving an interminable fable with interlaced incidents of enthralling beauty. He incorporates into his fictional composition, the colour and glamour, fragrance and social fauna of India he has known so thoroughly.’

The modern Indian novelists seem to be innovative in terms of theme, style and experiment. It is another thing that K. R. S. lyengar has a contradictory opinion. He feels:

‘The Indian novelist is not usually attracted to new technique in plotting narration or characterization. As a rule, description of sex life used to be prudish, but the writing is less inhibited in novels.’

One may love or hate Khushwant Singh, but he is one of the most widely read new Indian English writers. His Delhi (1992) is an ambitious historical chronicle covering more than eight hundred years in the life of Delhi. He took a character of Bhagmati, a "bisexual harlot" as the "objective correlative" of city. It emerges as a Greek mythological figure like Tiresias. Bhagmati helps to present the plight of city that had been dominated and despoiled by many invaders. But his penchant for sex ensures that the history is ultimately drowned in the sea of semen. The sea of semen reaches the height when Khushwant Singh, in his the Company of Women (1999), believes that only lust can be the foundation of love. The women characters are presented having the capability to choose their partners with a sexuality that is hardly believable in patriarchal Indian families.

**AMITAV GHOSH’S OEUVRE – A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

The critical reception on feminism in the novels of Amitav Ghosh marks a notable divergence of interests between the feministic criticism of Indian subcontinent and the western academy. Feministic criticism from Indian academics mostly concentrated on the novels of Amitav Ghosh such as The Shadow Lines, The Calcutta Chromosome, In an antique Land, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies that dealt with the questions of national identity and feminism in the sub-continent. Ghosh repeats some of the national gestures of portraying women as emblematic figures signifying „culture‟, „tradition‟, „nation‟ and authenticity. This is precisely a counter argument for the novel‟sgender politics. In all his other novels there is relatively little debate about the representation of gender and other issues of sexuality. But as a matter of academic speculation, women have become very significant presences in all his other works.

**THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL ELUCIDATION**

In Amitav Ghosh‟s In an Antique Land, the Word “antique” which means “ancient” is deliberately used to portray woman as “antique” and in “antiquity,” woman as metaphor for “land,” is used. Woman as always passive and submissive like land. Elaine Showalter in her theory of feminist criticism has talked about the analysis of women according to the three socio-cultural and psychological critical categories of Feminine, Feminist and Femaleaesthetic. Feminine is the concept of womanhood, the traditional role of the woman, in relation to the patriarchal society where she is understood always in connection to the male. She has no identity of her own but is venerated as a mother in relation to the father, as a sister in relation to her brother, as a wife in relation to her husband and as a daughter in relation to her father. According to Elaine Showalter, “In the Feminist phase or the winning of the vote, women are historically enabled to reject the accommodating postures of femininity and use literature to dramatize the ordeals of wronged womanhood” (2). Feminist is the concept of the theory that they are fighting for their rights, trying to break from the ideological form. Feminist was a stance or tone of women that strives for the recognition of their rights and the fight for their identity as individuals in the society. According to Elaine Showalter, “In the Female phase women reject both imitation and protest-two forms of dependency and turn instead to female experience as the source of an autonomous art”(3). Female is the concept of the theory that conveys woman is an individual. The movement towards the understanding of woman as a female, as power, as an erotic symbol of desire is the recognition givenIn the novel In an Antique Land, the presence of woman is not felt in most parts of the novel and if present, woman is always mentioned in relation to the male. The names of all the women characters are not mentioned. One of the women characters whose name is mentioned is Ashu-Ben Yiju‟s wife. Ben Yiju married Ashu who, according to Goitein, was „probably beautiful.‟Ashu is not mentioned anywhere else in the entire corpus of Ben Yiju‟s documents, although her children figure in it frequently. BenYiju did not once refer to her in his letters or jottings. Busaina, Khamees‟ssister‟s introduction is physical. She is mentioned a tall and sweet looking. She is referred to have left her husband and moved back to Nashawy with her children. Although she had given her husband two fine, healthy children, the two of them had never really got on. They had quarreled all the time and in the end things had come to such a pass that her husband had announced that he was going to marry again. She and her husband used to quarrel all day long because she had to have her way in everything. He did not accept this, as he might have wanted a submissive woman as his wife, who would never decide anything by herself and would always depend on her husband for everything and accept his decisions.

**ECOCRITICISM OF AMITAV GHOSH’S IN INDIAN LITERATURE**

Ecocriticism facilitates understanding the complexities of relationship between man and nature as presented in literature. This relationship varies from one species to another and brings out the characteristics of nature and human being. India is a country rich in ecology and has its roots deeply dug in the environment. Hence it syncs well with the Environment. The Sundarbans is one such place which was is deeply immersed with the planet’s ecology. AmitavGhosh, in his writing, has brought out the beauty of the place and has spoken about the life people lived over there. He has brought out nature and man from his perspective in an eco-centric world.

**SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS IN AMITAV GHOSH’S**

Literature as a reflection of society mirrors the social life and the spirit of the age it represents. Chaucer‟s The Canterbury Tales, Restoration Comedy of Manners and the plays of Bernard Shaw are some examples of this literature society correspondence. While Chaucer‟s Canterbury Tales gives a realistic picture of the morals and manners of the England of his times, Comedy of Manners depicts the artificiality and superficial affections of the aristocratic society of the day, and Shaw‟s plays expose the rottenness of the social life of the 20th century England. Literature also reflects the tendencies and concerns of the age. Social conventions, historical events, religious and political ideals make up a writer‟s background and are reflected in the themes he chooses and the way he treats them. Shakespeare‟s plays were influenced by the Renaissance, a period notable for expansion in commerce, new scientific discovery, religious controversy and an awakened interest in ancient classics. The spirit of enquiry and criticism, religious uncertainty and the demand for social justice that marked the Victorian age is reflected in the literary works of the age.

**Sea of Poppie**

Sea of Poppies is a historical novel that opens in 1838 on the eve of the opium wars. Set in Eastern India and the Bay of Bengal, the narrative begins with the arrival of a former slave ship Ibis at Ganga-Sagar Island. Discontinued as a black birder with the abolition of slave trade, the schooner is refitted to transport grimityas or indentured coolies from Calcutta to the sugar estates in the British colony of Mauritius. The novel unfolds with the events that bring together these „ship-siblings‟ (356) with no difference of caste, colour, religion, language or creed as they move towards a similar fate. The story is divided into three parts- land, river and sea.

**Status of Women**

The status of women in the pre- independent Indian society is portrayed through the life of Deeti and that of the other women characters. Women in ancient India were held in high respect. During the vedic period, they enjoyed equal status and rights with men. The practices of polygamy, purdha system, dowry and sati which came into being during the medieval period deteriorated the status of women in the society. Women were excluded from the formal education system. When Paulette tells the migrants that she had read from a book that there are no snakes in Mareech, Jhugroo satirically retorts, „How would a woman know what‟s written in a book?‟ (390) Child marriage was the norm of the day. The novel records that Neel was betrothed at the time of his birth to the daughter of another landowning family and the marriage was solemnized when he was twelve. Home was considered the right place for a woman but a man was free to live a life he wished for. The Raja had as many mistresses „as there were days in the week, so as to be able to spend each night in a different bed‟ (86). A girl child was considered to be a burden while a male child was an asset to the family. The girls‟ parents were expected to offer money and gifts to the groom to get their daughters married off. Deeti‟s father had to thatch the roof of her groom‟s house as a part of her dowry. He did not begrudge the expense though he could ill afford it. Marriage and motherhood, begetting sons in particular were considered to be the goals of a woman. Deeti is impregnated by her brother in law on her wedding night as the task of the new bride was assumed to beget an heir for the family.

**Caste Discrimination**

The novel also records the heinous system of caste discrimination practiced in Indian society. The caste system was a brutal oppressive mechanism that branded an unfortunate section of the society as untouchables and thrust them to the periphery. For several millennia caste constituted the core of social life in India. It dictated the occupation and the social interaction of a person. Nicholas Dirks in his introduction to Colonialism and culture remarks, „…. Culture in India seems to have been principally defined by caste. Caste has always been seen as central in Indian history and as one of the major reasons why India has no history, no sense of history. Caste defines the core of Indian tradition, and caste is today- as it was throughout the colonial era – the major threat to Indian modernity.

**Superstition**

The novel also presents the superstitious beliefs and practices in the society. People were steeped in superstitious beliefs. Deeti believed it bad luck to draw realistic pictures of people who were alive. The walls of her shrine had portraits of two brothers and a sister who had died in their childhood but her relatives who were alive were represented by diagrammatic images. Her beloved brother, Kesri Singh was depicted by few strokes that represented his rifle and moustache. To leave the dishes unwashed overnight was believed to invite an invasion of ghosts and hungry pisaches and so Deeti goes to fetch water from the river at night when she saw Kalua being humiliated by the zamidars. Deeti‟s childhood home overlooked a confluence of two rivers, Ganga and Karamnasa meaning destroyer of karma.

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