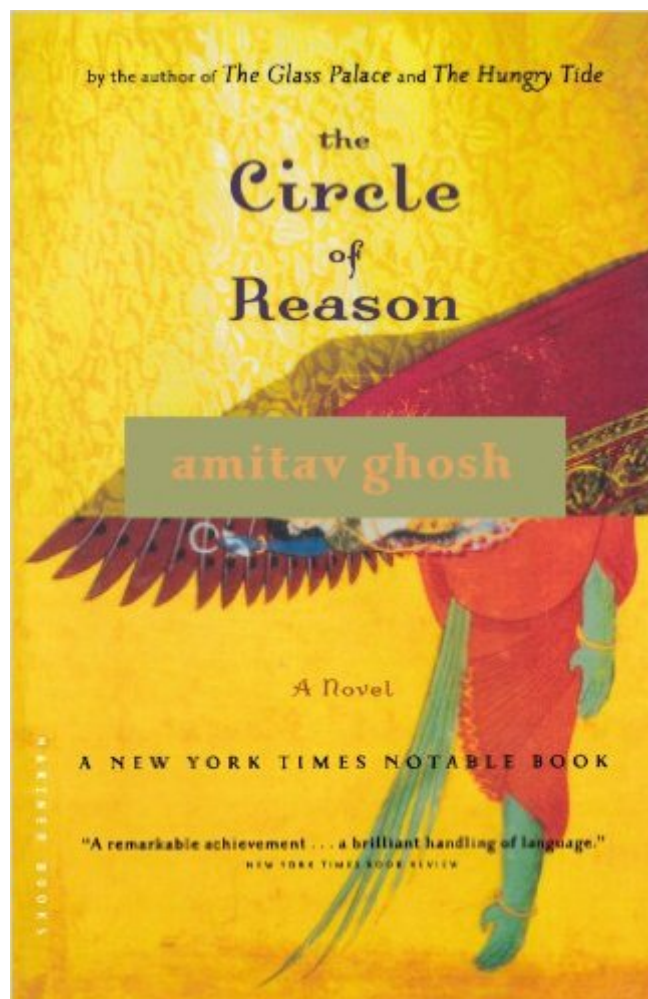


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The Circle Of Reason



Synopsis

Amitav Ghosh's extraordinary first novel makes a claim on literary turf held by Gabriel García Márquez and Salman Rushdie. In a vivid and magical story, *The Circle of Reason* traces the misadventures of Alu, a young master weaver in a small Bengali village who is falsely accused of terrorism. Alu flees his home, traveling through Bombay to the Persian Gulf to North Africa with a bird-watching policeman in pursuit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I became a fan of Ghosh after reading "Sea of Poppies." That was his most recent novel and "Circle of Reason" was his first. The two books cannot be directly compared - they're about different times and places. This book, though a little rough, is very well written for a first novel. Typically Indian, the book has tons of detail and takes a while to make any point. What is untypical, though, is that you don't have to have a glossary at hand. There are a few words from Hindi, but compared with most books by Indian authors, this is amazingly "English" throughout. The book is about the people. They wander from India to the Middle East and on to Africa. Their lives and relationships move the story along. Well developed, there is quite a mix brought together by the events. I kept turning pages from start to finish. I don't think you should pass on this one just because it's not as polished as his later books. It's well worth your time.

Yes, it is long, and for many, including myself, in largely a different language. However, the story is told to perfection. Ghosh displays his talents in this novel, I've read some of his other books but the

way he writes this one is just magnificent. The notion of the germ and how it relates to humanity and post colonialism and all the other aspects is fascinating, but above all it's the story of these people - Alu, Zinda, Balaram etc.. - that really make it. In the end I did in fact cry when I finished it, for the mere fact that it is a beautiful story. I would suggest this book to anyone who enjoys reading, it will really take you to your own place and you'll find yourself not putting it down. Great book, very well written, absolutely worth your time and effort. Beautiful book.

After listening to him in one of his book launches at Bangalore, I decided to buy his first book purely from the experimental perspective and analyze how someone grows as an author. I took some time to read this book but each visit was a journey on its own. The vivid imagination of characters and details was something new to me and I had good time reading it. The language of the book is another reason I enjoyed it thoroughly. I would highly recommend to people who would like to give book reading a try and particularly non-fiction. After reading this book my perspective has changed regarding non-fiction, which I initially thought as total waste of time. Looking forward to reading other titles now.

The Circle of Reason is the first novel by Indian author, Amitav Ghosh. The story of Nachiketa Bose, known throughout the narration as Alu because of his misshapen head, is related from his arrival at his uncle Balaram's house in the Bengali town of Lalpukur, when he is orphaned at eight years old. A boy who becomes gifted at languages and a skilful weaver, a cascade of events leads to Alu's flight across India, into the Middle East and across northern Africa, pursued by a tenacious policeman, Jyoti Das, under the pretext that he is a suspect in a terrorist incident. Ghosh gives the reader a rich cast of characters that are appealing and complex; even minor characters are allotted a potted history in their turn. The plot has quite a few twists, and Ghosh manages to fairly seamlessly include a village squabble, weaving, phrenology and physiognomy, a man obsessed with carbolic acid, the life of Louis Pasteur, a theory on queues, a comparison between communism and capitalism, a self-immolation, an attack with boiling oil, a building collapse, the Hindu epic Mahabharata and sewing machines. An amazing debut novel.

I am waiting eagerly for Ghosh's third volume in the trilogy that starts with Sea Of Poppies and River of Smoke. While flummoxed by the vocabulary (there is, thank God, a section in the end of Sea of Poppies) the scope of the story was massive and the interplay of characters fascinating. For me, The Circle of Reason was more opaque. I could not understand why people did what they did, or

thought what they thought. I managed to get all the way through, but this book, an earlier book, didn't engage me the way more recent books have.

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