

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Critique of Western Modernity: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's

In an Antique Land

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Bishnu Lamichhane

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

June 2010

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
T.U., Kirtipur

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Bishnu Lamichhane has completed his thesis “Critique of Western Modernity: A study of Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land*” under my supervision. He carried out this research paper from December 2009 to June 2010. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Mr. Badri Prasad Acharya

Supervisor

Date:

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Kirtipur

Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled “Critique of Western Modernity: A study of Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Bishnu Lamichhane has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I am highly indebted to my respected supervisor, Badri Prasad Acharya, the Lecture at the Central Department of English, for his scholarly guidance, inspiration, and suggestions from the very beginning to the completion of this thesis. Without his constant supervision and intellectual guidance, this research work would never have been into the present form. Words fail to communicate my heartfelt indebtedness to him.

I am very much grateful to Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, head of the Central Department of English for the approval of this research work in its present shape. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Dr. Arun Gupto, Dr. Sanjeev Uprety, Dr. Rewati Neupane and to all my respected teachers of English Department.

I cannot help remembering my parents- Indra Prasad and Mayadevi, for their continuous encouragement, support, co-operation, love and blessing without which my dream to be an MA in English could have never been possible. I am indebted to my dear brother, Binod for his insightful encouragement and typing. At the same time, I am grateful to the sincere encouragement of my life partner, Bindu and daughter, Angila.

Similarly, my especial thanks goes to Nirmal for his co-operative help and typing; Om Prasad is another name who deserves my sincere thanks for his selfless help. I would like to thank my friends Nabin, Mahadev, Deepak, Binod, Himal, Raju, Prithwi and all of my well-wishers who directly or indirectly helped me to bring the present thesis in this form.

Bishnu Lamichhane

June 2010

Abstract

Amitav Ghosh, in *In an Antique Land* critiques Western modernity on the ground of rationalism, individualism, exclusive nationalism, colonialism and slavery exhibiting its blind spots--exclusiveness and Eurocentric monolithic vision--and at the same time advocates alternative modernities for the need of the revival of pre-modern ethical and moral values--communitarianism, decolonization, inclusive nationalism, hospitality, cosmopolitanism, as well as co-existence among the different races, castes, and people with different religious identities and from different geographical locations. Ghosh, for the purpose, blends many genres within a single text exposing with European's interferences upon the Geniza documents of Masr, and in the Indian Ocean trade cultures, the effects of colonial legacy through Imam's and Effendie's behaviours. He shows the ethical co-existence and cosmopolitanism of Indian ocean world in Ben Yiju's time, valorization of non-western cultures and civilizations with his experience that he gets from Egyptian villages and from the Geniza documents, providing the suitable space for marginal groups and victims.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Introduction to Ghosh's <i>In an Antique Land</i>	1-12
II. Alternative Modernities	13-37
Introduction to Western Modernity	13
Blind Spots in Western Modernity	19
Alternative Modernities	24
III. Critique of Western Modernity in Ghosh's <i>In an Antique Land</i>	38-66
IV. Conclusion	67-69
Works Cited	70-72