



AMITAV GHOSH

Engagements Across the Indian Ocean

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In collaboration with the *South Africa-India Research Group*

This lecture foregrounded the significance of the transnational public debate across the global south, drawing attention in particular to the often disavowed Indian Ocean public sphere.

Amitav Ghosh:
Engagements Across the
Indian Ocean



Ghosh is a writer whose work speaks to transnational exchange in the global south. Why should this interest South Africans?

Since 2000, the shape of the world has shifted. India and China are rising world economic powers and are making their presence felt particularly in South Africa and the rest of the continent.

Consider these figures: trade between South Africa and India shot from R300 million in 1993 to R16.5 billion in 2006. By 2005, Chinese trade with Africa as a whole had reached \$30 billion. South-South trade is expanding faster than any other trade flows in the world - at about 11 percent per year.

South Africa's future will be massively shaped by these developments in the global south. Yet, are we intellectually prepared for this future?

Much intellectual and academic debate is still focused inward on parochial ideas of nationalism or has its eye firmly fixed on the north. We urgently need models that can help us understand

our transnational future in the global south.

Amitav Ghosh is a writer centrally concerned with the intricate pasts and presents of the global south. His novels and non-fiction direct our attention to stories that concern nonwestern forms of transnationalism and globalization. His work weaves together much of the Indian Ocean rim taking in South East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Ghosh grapples with the contradictions of the postcolonial state. Much of his work tells stories about those trapped in various kinds of post-independence violence be it communal carnage in India or the Left Front government of West Bengal forcibly removing refugees: the people's government turning on the people.

As South Africa grapples with its own postcolonial complexities, Ghosh offers us a multidisciplinary vision rooted in the global south that can speak to our emerging realities.

ENGAGEMENTS ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN:
AMITAV GHOSH
IN CONVERSATION

CHAired BY
XOLELA MANGCU
WITH DISCUSSANTS
ACHMAT DANGOR & PAMILA GUPTA



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