



AUTHORITARIANISM AND IDEALISM IN AMITAV GHOSH'S - THE CIRCLE OF REASON

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ABSTRACT :

Questioning of the authoritarianism and idealism are in the usage of historic forms that lay the core of the postmodern genre. Authoritarianism is a blind submission to authority, as opposed to people freedom of thought and action. Idealism as contrasted to realism has an apparent absolute experience. Authoritarianism and Idealism are the two driving forces behind *The Circle of Reason*. The idealism of Balaram dwelling around carbolic acid and phrenology, the quest for the money-free society by Alu and the dream of Mrs. Verma to create an Indian society are ended in failure and turns out to be the opposite in the novel.

KEYWORDS : Amitav Ghosh, *Circle of Reason*, Authoritarianism, Idealism, Balaram, Alu.

INTRODUCTION:

Authoritarianism and Idealism are the two driving forces behind Amitav Ghosh novel *The Circle of Reason*. Balaram's quest, his mission, his motivation, and his energy are revolved around on the idealism of *Life of Pasteur*, phrenology and carbolic acid. Inconveniences and pressures envelope when Balaram deals with rationality. His enthusiasm is activated when Gopal lets the book – *Life of Pasteur*, which goes about as a weapon against the previous' society of Rationalists. When Gopal applies logic to religion, Balaram contends that "the Brahma is nothing but the atom ... The 'Universal Egg of Hindu folklore' is only a sort of Astronomical Neutron" (47). Balaram challenges Gopal's feeling that Pasteur is significantly more prominent as he has changed the life of millions by the revelation of germs. He requires an "enthusiasm for the future, not the past ... for it is that energy which makes men incredible" (50). His quest was to fight out the germ and the dirt from each person. The mission of clean clouts is an endeavor to wash down the society of the dirt however Balaram's first journey fails as it fractures his legs. The authoritarian idea of Balaram flops due to the might opposition. He never takes a lesson from the calamity, yet keeps on cleaning the society and the filthy environment. Nobody comprehends him.

The entry of Nachiketa Bose (Alu) spurts an instance of a lifetime study for Balaram. He is energized as he can carry phrenology into the circumstance of normal life as Alu's head is 'exceptional' with countless 'knots and bumps' (3), as same as an alu, a potato. Balaram invents claws to measure the skills of people by using phrenology. He never comprehends the religious sentiments of the society as he knuckles out the head of Goddess Saraswati from the statue during the *Saraswati Puja* at School. Baram dissents that "It was only reality. It was vanity, definitely where it outs to be, outside the obelion" (31). Balaram faces his defeat yet at the same time takes the plunge, believing that one day he would make success. Balaram's enthusiasm for science makes him famous as he saves the lives of thousands by his balanced demonstration of purifying the town with carbolic acid after war. Acclaim effortlessly wins adversaries as well. Bhudeb Roy is envious that

Balaram has been identified in the daily newspaper as the headline runs: "Teacher fights with germs ... spare thousands" (83). Bhudeb's endeavors fails, and he trusts that an all the more fitting event will mislead Balaram. Bhudeb's rationality obstructs Balaram's advancement. He is even frightened of carbolic acid as it might put a conclusion to his status. The endeavors of Balaram fail, yet he sticks on the expectation of changing the world with reason. Balaram's wife Toru-debi is a metaphor for the sewing machine. She is so submerged in her universe of Singer sewing machine that she guiltlessly trusts that it could spare her family and so she doesn't grapple with the real world. It is Toru-debi who spares the life of Alu through sewing machines. The desire of Balaram – a germ free society brings demise upon him and his dear ones.

Rakhal, Maya's elder brother is a specialist in making bombs; he ascertains that war would require his products. Therefore, he materializes the circumstance and adds credentials to his ability even if it's illegal. Bhudeb Roy's consumerist mind acts too quickly as he makes enormous benefit from it and feel it "a blessing from the sky"(90). Balaram's aim to clean the society of the dirt, especially Bhudeb Roy, results in his regrettable demise.

Amitav Ghosh applies a set of metaphors such as *Life of Pasteur*, phrenology, carbolic acid, linger sewing machines, straight lines, bombs in *The Circle of Circle* to deconstruct the idealism of Balaram. He does not neglect to depict the impacts of industrialism and globalization in *The Circle of Reason* as well. Through the character of Karthamma, he draws out the postmodern society's fixation on commercialization. Karthamma observes that the child will be deprived of the rich conditions if it is born without the form. A page from *Life of Pasteur* posed as the form spares the life of Karthamma. Zindi hires young ladies to work in al-Ghazira and claims a house for the migrants. She wishes Alu too to become a member of her family. The commercialization and the alienation of the postmodern culture are well clear in al-Ghazira. According to the individuals of al-Ghazira, it is impossible for Alu to remove materialism because their very existence is gaining wealth. The laborers are exploited because they are expatriates. Soon, the misfortune inflicts significant damage on the members from Zindi's household. Kulfi is the first to lose her profession. She is thrown out of her cooking work from the rich Arab lady's home owing to the misguided judgment of the mother-in-law that Indians spit into the edibles they cook. When the latter acts it out, Kulfi misjudges her suggestion and does the same. That is the end of the journey for Kulfi.

The circumstance is exploited and the opportunists turn rich. Wealth is amassed because of the exploits of al-Ghazira. Jeevsanbhai Patel is turned an outcast as he wedded a Muslim young lady and with the assistance of her jewelry, he purchases a shop at Souq. But nothing materializes. Fortunately, he finds a groom for the daughter of a rich pearl merchant, because of whom he begins 'New Life Marriage Agency'. It is an absurdity that he gains fame: "as the most successful marriage broker in the Indian Ocean" (222). He is soon, rich with the trade of gold. Hajj Fahmy's family wealth is the result of the discovery of oil in al-Ghazira. Soon the family involve in construction business, trucks, and education. The family blooms with shops and the place is seen increasing its business ventures. The above details show how the people of al-Ghazira become rich exploiting the situation of the country. A few become rich while the other loses their living in their quest for money. Alu gets a weaving job in Hajj Fahmy's loom. His skill is so accurate that Hajj Fahmy utilizes that to make money.

In contrast, Alu fights against the authoritarian concepts of money power. When the shopping mall collapses, Alu is buried deep inside building, then he gets innovative idea of cleaning the filth of money that is materialism. Abu Fahl spots Alu who is safe under two sewing machines. The sewing machines save the life of Alu for the second time. He gets wisdom and plans to wage a "war on money" (241). The people of Ras do not understand what Alu preaches. He educates them about Pasteur and his achievements. It was 'purity', 'cleanliness' the death of the 'germ' that he dreamed it. In today's world, the germ is re-born in the form of money. He wanted that "no money, no dirt will ever again flow freely in Ras"(280) and the people respond that they will "drive money from the Ras and without it we shall be happier, richer, more prosperous than ever before" (281). The money would be collected and at the end of the week, they could avail themselves of the necessities from the *souq* and the price would be detected from their accounts. The shopkeepers are

turned forcibly into workers. It is ironic that the savings are much larger than it used to be. Zindi sees it as a symbol of ruin, which Alu and the people of Ras never foresee.

The expatriates of Ras at al-Ghazira decide to gift the two sewing machines to Alu, which save his life. But Alu could not stop the behavior of Ras's people. The consumerist mentality of the people become evident as they could move through "Iranian Chelo-Khabab Shops, Malayali Dosa Stalls, narrow Lebanese restaurants, fruit juice stalls run by Egyptians ... Yemeni cafes filled the town of Ras"(344). While, the expedition nears the star, calamity set in as the oil men appear from the helicopter. Alu witnesses a blood bath. Professor Samuel, Rakesh and Chunni are taken away while Karthamma is dead. Eventually, the idealist framework of Alu results in a blood bath. The authoritarian policy of Alu suffers a setback and disrupts the life of people of Ras. In this case, the destruction is a thousand times more than the lives, livelihood and the freedom of Ras are lost due to the idealist motto of Alu.

Next Mrs. Verma and her misplaced priorities leads her in failure. Her dream is to create a society of Indians in El-Qued. The only Indians that she knew were Miss. Krishnaswamy, the nurse and Dr. Mishra. The foreigners who visit the desert are Europeans. She loves the town of El-Oued because of the art and the architecture of the Algeria. Yet, it is an irony that she wants to create an Indian society there. The salaries of Indian doctors are much less than French ones. It is evident that everyone goes abroad to become rich. Dr. Uma Verma is upset and remembers her father's word "Stop worrying about it; it won't work. It is pointless. Can't you see the issue is political? Haven't I told you? It's the very same mistake that the Rationalists made" (355). She demands a "proper Hindu Cremation" (405) for Kulfi, as a symbol of Indian culture. Dr. Mishra is against Mrs. Verma's arrangements of cremation. He even quotes, 'Baudhayana' (407) rules and makes fun of Hindu traditions. Mrs. Verma pines "Rules, rules ... all you ever talk about is rules. That's how you and your kind have destroyed everything – science, religion, socialism – with your rules and orthodoxies. That's the difference between us: you worry about rules and I worry about being human (409). Mrs. Verma considers carbolic acid to be a holy water (Ganga jal). It is an irony that she hates her life's quest and does not believe in the authoritarian concept of microbiology.

Thus, *the Circle of Reason* delineates the idealism of Balaram dwelling around carbolic acid and phrenology. While, the quest for the money-free society by Alu ends in failure and the dream of Mrs. Verma to create an Indian society is ironic as the opposite turns out to be true. No idealism is perfect in all the three situations. The metaphor of the loom, carbolic acid, phrenology, sewing machine, straight lines, *Life of Pasteur* is the structure quest of the characters. The whims of globalization are brought out through the inhabitants of al-Ghazira. The truth of rationalism is submerged in the hands of wealth and power.

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