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The Perspectives Of Rationalism And Irrationalism In Amitav Ghosh's The Circle Of Reason

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Abstract

The present study deeply analyses regard rational and irrational things which exploited in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*. The title of the novel examines philosophies of reason or defense of reason, the science and technology is interlinked with these philosophies against irrationality. The study further examines the rational as well as irrational throughout the novel through the character Balaram, who is told here as a rationalist and he follows irrational things sometime. The country India is considered as a irrationality in the life of people. Logic functions well in a practical situation. Cause and effect is not a practical theory. According to the science, in a laboratory the reaction of mixing two substances can be predicted. But people think blindly that these things happen in cause and effect of some supernatural elements. So, rationality is practically following by the people those who are getting common sense, but the irrationality is pursued almost like religions in India by the people do not have common sense in any situation. Even educated people also come under irrationality in India. So, the study brings an utmost theme of rationality and irrationality which is shown in the novel *The Circle of Reason* by Amitav Ghosh in a vivid manner.

Keywords: Introduction, Rationality, Irrationality and Conclusion.

1. Introduction

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta in 1956. As a qualified man, Ghosh published his first novel *The Circle of Reason* in 1986. Ghosh reflects history in his novels. His first novel is an extraordinarily accomplished work of fiction. He has written it in innovatively. It explores new possibilities for the Indian novel in English. Ghosh endeavours to disclose the lives of his contemporaries in land as diverse as India, Bangladesh, Egypt, England etc. The novel is translated into many European languages and has won the prestigious literary Prix Medici Etranger for its French version. Motifs and metaphors are exerted in plenty with the journey motif being the most recurring one. Ghosh has travelled from Bengal to Delhi and later to Egypt and England. The novel is about an eight year old boy an orphan from where he is on the run. Using West Bengal from where he is on the run. Using motif of the journey, Ghosh has drama, suspense and mystery too.

2. Rationality

Rationality belongs to science and its experiments. One should not undergo with the bloody things of supernatural powers, blind beliefs and superstitions. One must include the things under science and its experiments. One can fully understand rationality, when arising why/what questions. Rationality would bring a good path to lead a very good life. But, irrationality is always a social evil. Most of the Western people follow rational way of life. Most of the western people have turned out as rationalists many years ago. But irrationalism spreads some of the African Continents, India and other Eastern countries. A new kind of thinking order is required which assimilates both traditional Indian views with Western sense of rationality. (Tiwari P. 3) Ghosh has constructed the novel with rationality ideology through his characters. At the same time, irrationality over looks in the middle of the novel. A Ghosh point out rationality is the only thing will make people logically. People must come to the practical theory. Irrationality preaches cause and effect of knowledge and blindness. Rationality allows investigation, exposure and experience in life. Moreover, irrationality wins in the minds of the people than rationality.

3. Irrationality

Aryans are framed Hinduism in India. It is considered as a biggest religion all over the India after the fall of Buddhism. Hinduism usually is constructed with irrational ideology along with superstitions, blind beliefs, prejudices the dominance of supernatural in the collective psyche. As a child is born, slowly but surely he/she is taken into the cult of the illogical. Investigation, first hand exposure and experience are not allowed. The Circle of Reason is a revolt against this trend. (Tiwari P. 3) So, new readers cannot find rationality or irrationality in this novel at the first reading. One can certainly recognize rationality as the driving force of the novel apparently irrationality structured novel. As a thinking Indian, the novelist is bothered regard the unhygienic conditions prevailing in the country. Ganga River, it's gone dirty through the irrational activities of Hindu people. So many folds exist within the Indian view that to take the Sanskrit Brahminical cult as the authentic representative of it will lead us to new wrongs. (Tiwari P. 4) So, the intellectual growth only can bring a knowledge and rationality for the life of people.

4. Rational and Irrational in The Circle of Reason

The Circle of Reason deals with two elements, historical and mythological. There are basically three stories. The first part portrays the story of Balaram. He is a rationalist and is influenced the life of Louis Pastuer. He is idealistic to the extent of being inhuman. He does not have any involvement with the people. Balaram is a freak. He claims to be a rationalist. He admires scientists like Jagadish Bose, Meghnad Saha and above everyone else Loius Pasteur. (Tiwari P. 11) The above said people are his ideals. He is interested with the science phrenology. It is a study of the size and shape of people's heads in the belief that one can find out about characters and abilities from this. Balaram personifies reason in this novel. Reason meant with religion which provides a full-length debate in this novel. Balaram is attracted by the book, Life of Pastuer. Pastuer is his ideal, logic is his God. Rational thinking is his only goal in life. Amitav Ghosh is mature enough to point out the end of rationality in practical situations. Scientific temper, the theory of cause and effect do not work in real situations. Balaram's case is that of firmness of logic. He does not look beyond reason. It must be so rationally for him. He does not accept a hair breadth's difference from the upright, straight, unchangeable logic path. Balaram is the character of stiff stuff. He never compromises on rationality as the only theory of life wins him a life-long friend, Gopal. Gopal also connected with the rationalist society.

Rationality of Balaram is juxtaposed with the premonition. Premonition comes true but rationality does not die. The biggest victory for a rationalist is to win over someone else on her/his side. This rationality wages a war against germs, which are the tool of scientific temper, tries to finish diseases, and rationality as the thought offshoot of scientific temper tries to end the ill of society. The rationality is dealt with at end of the novel; Mrs. Verma exploits carbolic acid instead of Ganga Jal.

Hence Carbolic acid becomes holy water than Ganga jal. So, Mrs. Verma retorts, what does it matter whether it is Ganga Jal or Carbolic acid? It is just a question of cleansing the place, isn't it? People thought something was clean once, now they think something else is clean. What difference does it make to the dead, Dr. Mishra? (The Circle of Reason P. 411) Hence, the novelist points out the blind faith of millions of Indians in Ganga Jal even though the water of the life giving river is so badly polluted.

The irrationality in the novel that albeit, the novelist calls Balaram a rationalist and a believer of science and reason, he acts in a very irrational way. Balaram is interested to study about heads, phrenology which is no longer considered a science. As an amateur phrenologist, Balaram gives a verdict on the future of Bhudeb Roy's son. Balaram irrationally refers to the child as the exhibit through scientific reliance. He says a dire prognosis that the baby is a born criminal, and says, he produces almost exactly the structure of the Typical Homicidal. With careful nurture you may perhaps be able to hold him down to were felony, but no further, I fear no further. Pray, Bhudep-babu...prey that you may not be his first victim. (The Circle of Reason P. 24) But the baby dies after a month. It indicates what the specious logic of biological determinism fails to take into account. The irrational activity of Balaram erects on Puja celebrations. At the time of Puja festivals many of the people follow cleansing work. As a rationalist, Balaram turns out as on irrationality that, It wasn't talk of reason, it wasn't the universal atom. It was passion...the greatest man of his time, for it is that passion which makes man great. (The Circle of Reason P. 50) It is the passion that makes balaram who endeavor to clean the surroundings area in his village Lalpukar. It brings about his doom, destruction and death. At the time of Saraswathi Puja, Balaram tries to clean with Carbolic acid, and his love for the study of heads is ironically described.

Agni is a purifying agent. Fire is used for the work of cleansing. The fire is used to clean even in hell. This kind of myth and irrational belief is connected with our story. Carbolic acid is also a purifying agent. At Kulfi's death, paste for Puja is made of Carbolic acid instead of ghee. The novelist points out that India is running in unhygienic conditions, so the novelist complexly responses to appalling dirt and filth in a land people have always talked of purity of soul as well as surroundings. The irrational behavior of people insist on taking morning baths, purifying their homes with havens(fire) and keep fast for internal cleansing. And still, they turn a blind eye to all the garbage and dirt in their holy rivers and holy places.

5. Conclusion

The Circle of Reason makes an unconventional reading. The structure of the novel just symbolizes the chaotic state of today's society. The country India is the symbol of rationality and irrationality. Rationalists also turn out on irrationalism some time as selfishness. Although one should understand that science and its experiments only can bring a salvation for a problem. Irrationalism is always not reconciliation of problems. Rationalism is the belief of scientifically reason. But irrationalism is the belief of blind. Hence the novel travels in these two motifs. For that, the author submits many things as evident through his characters and events in a vivid manner. Apparently, the novel portrays a very good message for society that science is vital than superstitions.

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