

Beyond Redemption: Is Human Perfection Rational or National?

DR. SUNITA SAMAL

PLOT NO-64, BHOI NAGAR, BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA, PIN-751022, INDIA

E-mail-sunitasamal2007@yahoo.com

E-mail-sunitasamal7@rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT:

‘Know then thyself not God to scan,
The proper study of Mankind is man.

It says how man achieves perfection by knowing himself. Plato in his ‘Republic’ says that know thyself is doctrine of enlighten despotism. Truth, beauty and goodness are fundamental virtue realized through unique system of equation with Plato’s which is fulfilled by rationalism. For him, the ultimate reality is change. We cannot step twice into the same stream. For Plato, the unchanging thing in the world is called idea. Plato discusses how man achieves perfection through education and realizes it through division of labor which makes man rational. This chapter analyses Richard Wagner and Frederick Nietzsche’s opinion regarding advent of Christianity and romanticism. It also describes how Hitler comes between two. This also discusses how Hitler of Germany abandoned rationality. Hitlerism explains his ideals of creating a better world by using the full coercive power of the state to eliminate obnoxious. Nazism therefore appears as a form of slavery because it based on conformism. Richard Wagner was a German Philosopher. His extensive writing on music, drama and politics have attracted extensive comment in the recent decade, he wrote a notable essay ‘The Art Work of Future’ (1849). Nietzsche set himself in opposition to German Culture as expressed in Hegel and Wagner, In being anti- Wagner, he was very deeply opposed to the whole way of thought and feeling that relates to fascism and Hitler. There is essentially survival need for redemption and salvation. But Nietzscheism is an explicit rejection of Wagnerism (an extension of Hitlerism) as essentially a doctrine of subjugation. Frederic Nietzsche proposed Wagner’s music as Dionysian rebirth of European culture in opposition to Apollonian rationalist decadence. There is a bourgeois false consciousness and alienation of art from its social context. Adolf Hitler was an admirer of Wagner’s music and saw it as an embodiment of his own vision of German Nation. There continues the debate about the extent to which Wagner view might have influenced Nazi thinking or supposed the rest.

Introduction

.German identified Jew with modernity, capitalism and industrial development. The myth in early 20th century Germany was that Jews were all the core of secret world wide conspiracy to impose a new world order which displacing ordinary Germans. There was tremendous acceleration in Hitler’s dualistic world view that the world can be saved only if Jews were destroyed. The Nazi’s were ultimately determined to replace the Christian heritage of Europe with some thing Pagan past. The Nazi pursuit of Millennium in the name of nationalist racist ideology and extermination of six millions European Jews in death camps are political events which can be understood only in theological context.

It is terrible danger of narcissism and paranoia that run through the pseudo-religion and their hysterical assertion of rightness against all that seems differently that constitute the ultimate risk –the sense that one can only solve one’s problems by destroying other. Goodricke Clarke had wide ranging interest in the history of ideas and western esoteric tradition.(1). With the rise of occult movement at the end of nineteenth century, there was the development of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. Simultaneously, there was change of tectonic scale in the world of ideas. The publication of Darwin’s ‘Origin of Species’ (2) in 1950s was striking deep at the root assumption of established theology. Science changed the way we saw ourselves in nature. As a result, occultism experienced its great resurgence since the late medieval period.

Wagner’s Myth:

In the case of Wagner, Nietzsche treats Wagner’s concept of redemption with considerable irony.

Wagnerism may not be easy to grasp, but all kinds of people listen to Wagner and seem to understand him or at least they get some thing for him. Nietzsche traces Hegel's idea in Wagner. Hitler made much use of Wagner's myth. There are clearly different ideals of persuasion between Nietzsche on the one hand; Wagner and Hitler on the other. Nazi's Germany may be considered magically inspired society in Wagner's sense. It meant a society in which there is meant to be no harmony or feeling.

This is a view more favorable to rationalism than was the romantic. Schopenhaurian outlook so long so discard completely mechanistic world idiotism in phrase from 'Beyond Good and Evil' (3) is one way of looking at rationalism. Art as will power can be seen as expression of a thought held in force of emotional reassurance to conform. Hegel sought to fashion synthesis of a Greek philosophy and Christianity make full use of the labor of his predecessor. As he saw philosophy did not stand between religion and poetry but above both. The philosopher task was to comprehend what religious person and poet feels. What It was Hegel who established the "History of Philosophy" as a central academic discipline. Philosophy is one sided because they owe their origin to a reaction against what is gone before (4).

Conformism and Disengagement:

This sub-chapter analyses Richard Wagner and Frederick Nietzsche's opinion regarding advent of Christianity and romanticism. It also describes how Hitler comes between two. This also discusses how Hitler of Germany abandoned rationality. Hitlerism explains his ideals of creating a better world by using the full coercive power of the state to eliminate obnoxious. Nazism therefore appears as a form of slavery because it based on conformism. Richard Wagner was a German Philosopher. His extensive writing on music, drama and politics have attracted extensive comment in the recent decade, he wrote a notable essay 'The Art Work of Future' (1849).(5).Nietzsche set himself in opposition to German Culture as expressed in Hegel and Wagner, In being anti- Wagner, he was very deeply opposed to the whole way of thought and feeling that cul to fascism and Hitler. There is essentially survival need for redemption and salvation. But Nietzscheism is an explicit rejection of Wagnerism (an extension of Hitlerism) as essentially a doctrine of subjugation. Frederic Nietzsche proposed Wagner's music as Dionysian rebirth of European culture in opposition to Apollonian rationalist decadence. There is a bourgeois false consciousness and alienation of art from its social context. Adolf Hitler was an admirer of Wagner's music and saw it as an embodiment of his own vision of German Nation. There continues the debate about the extent to which Wagner view might have influenced Nazi thinking or supposed the rest.

Beyond Good and Evil:

Since the dawn of 20th century, the philosophy of Nietzsche has had great intellectual and political influence around the world. He wrote the book 'Beyond Good and Evil' as well as his main article is "God is Dead". He saw nihilism as the outcome of repeated frustration in search of meaning. The religious world view had already suffered a number of challenges from contrary perspectives. He shows this intellectualism as a new challenge to European culture which sort of point of return. He finds it is important to distinguish between religion of Christianity and the person as Jesus. He says Jesus denies reality in favour of "Kingdom of God". Jesus refusal to defend him self as subsequent death, is logically from this total disengagement. He criticized the early Christian for turning Jesus into a martyr and Jesus life into a story of redemption of mankind in order to dominate the masses. He concludes, Christianity had become so worldly to parody itself—a total inversion of the world view which was in the beginning nihilistic, thus implying the 'Death of God'. Walter Kaufman put forward the view that powerful individualism expressed in writing would be disastrous if introduced to the public in real politics. (6) Although Nietzsche has famously been represented as predecessor to Nazism, he also criticized anti-Semitism. In the book 'Gay Science' (1887), he criticized nationalism and patriotism and called himself good European.(7)

Know Thyself

For Greeks, perfection of a thing is achieved through its maturation. Greeks are always seeker of truth and says reality is found in rationality. which opposites are related and harmoniously reconciled. We can not divide Knowledge into water tight compartment since knowledge is one without realization of which human being hardly achieved perfection.(8)Alexander Pope (1688-1744) has written 'An Essay on Man' (9) with the following stanza which goes beyond redemption.

'Know then thyself not God to scan,

The proper study of Mankind is man.

It says how man achieves perfection by knowing himself. Plato in his 'Republic' says that know thyself is

doctrine of enlighten despotism. Truth, beauty and goodness are fundamental virtue realized through unique system of equation with Plato's which is fulfilled by rationalism. For him, the ultimate reality is change. We cannot step twice into the same stream. For Plato, the unchanging thing in the world is called idea. Plato discusses how man achieves perfection through education and realizes it through division of labor which makes man rational.

Encounter with Strangers:

To downfall of Roman Empire was marked by rise of Christianity. All human history is majestic unfolding of the plan of divine salvation in which Church mark the decisive movement. Greeks stood for the supremacy for reason and Christianity stood for the supremacy of faith. Most of what we know about Socrates, comes from writing of Plato. Is Socrates is a stranger in Greek Philosophy? People behavior towards stranger is called charity or hospitality. By believing Jesus, Stranger finds redemption (10). The German classical scholars Frederic Schleiermacher made an attempt to solve Socratic problem. In his view, the character of Socratic evolves one time into the stranger into Plato's work. The Athenian Stranger is the main character of Plato's law. Ancient Greece is considered by most historians to be the foundational culture of western civilization. Greek culture was a powerful influence in the Roman Empire. According to Edward Gibbon, the Roman Empire succumb to barbarian invasions in large part due to gradual loss of civic virtue among citizens.(11) Any discussion about redemption can not be relevant without the discussion of Christianity and Roman Empire. Gibbon argued the Christianity created a belief that better life existed after death which fostered in difference to the resent among Roman Empire. Like other enlightenment thinkers, Gibbon held that contempt the middle Ages as a priest ridden superstitious dark age. It was not until his age of reason and rational thought, it was believed that human history resumes its progress. Gibbon's work advances a rational and progress view of History. John Bury (12) with his 'History of Later Roman Empire' utilized much of the same research. He disregarded with his theory primarily on Christianity as a prime factor in the Empire decline and fall. The Church writing had rarely been questioned before. There was a confrontation between history and politics of Christianity. As the happiness of the future life is the Great object of religion has some influence on the Decline and Fall of Roman Empire. The clergy preached the doctrine of patient; the active virtue of society discouraged and the military spirit were buried. A large portion of public and private wealth was consecrated to be specious demands of charity and devotion.

It has often been alleged that Christianity in its political effects was a disintegrating force and tended to weaken the power of Rome to resist her enemies. Gibbon and we are cosmopolitans who know the use of religion as an instrument of social control. The Great Expansion of Rome and consequent transformation work to subvert the ancient order and gradually institutions grew Incapable of effectively meeting new and challenging circumstances of performing the required civic task.(13) A frequently un patriotic capitalism abuses its power in politics by irresponsible speculation.(14) It challenged the prevailing theory of moral decay established by Gibbon as well as the classic clash of Christianity Vs Pagan theory. Bury felt that Gibbon's thesis concerning 'moral Decay' was viable but incomplete.

Christ and Culture:

Encounter of culture and perpetual politics in western civilization is incomplete without discussion of Christianity. The romantic nationalism is not content with narrow sphere of rationalism. Today's correction becomes tomorrow caricature. The encounter between text and interpreter is more interactive and complex than that. Max Weber in his book ' Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism'(15) says that discipline and hard work of Protestantism makes western capitalism possible. Collin Campbell in his book ' Romantic Ethic and spirit of Modern Consumerism (1987) (16) writes that modern times emotions comes to be located within individual as oppose to in the world. Nature as socially produces with no neat boundaries separating social form natural. The commoditization of nature has its origin in the rise of capitalist culture. Is Human perfection lies in his or her rationality or nationality. The struggle between identity and non-identity leads to cultural encounters and perpetual politics in which nations have no escape. Objects did not go into their concept without leaving a remainder perhaps human escapism from sin in Christian culture was a system by which society was controlled through top-down creation of standardized culture and intensified the commoditization or artistic expression .

In 'One Dimensional Man'(17), Marcuse strongly criticized consumerism because it is a form of social control in cultural encounter which says there is nothing beyond redemption. Freud was constituted in struggle with countervailing unconsciousness tendencies which is a part of 'national'. The issue is both dialectical and psychoanalytic account of consciousness has only emerged in modernity. Is it an emancipated society of redemption? Will Durant (1885-1981) wrote the 'Story of civilization' to create integral history(18) He saw the decline of civilization as a culmination of strife between religion and secular elements. Hence certain tension between religion and society marks the higher stages of every civilization. Priestly control of art and letter creates hateful barrier and intellectual history takes on the character of conflict between science and religion Institutions which were at first in the hands of clergy like law and punishment, education, moral, marriage and divorce tend to escape from ecclesiastical control and become secular. Gradually during the time of reformation intellectual classes abandoned the ancient theology and moral code allied with it. Literature and Philosophy became anti-clerical; the movement of liberation rises to an exuberant worship of reason and falls to a paralyzing disillusionment with every dogma and every idea. In the end, society and its religion tend to fall together like body and soul, in a harmonious death. Meanwhile among the opposed another myth arises, give new form of human hope, new courage to human effort to build another civilization.(19)Durant's quote a great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within. Beyond redemption hardly acknowledge that competition is the law of life. Classless society was a biological impossibility. (20)

Decline of the west:

Oswald Spengler wrote in the 'Decline of the West' presented a world view that resonates with post-world war I German culture(21) His world view of declining civilization, Spengler's world historical outlook is informed by many philosophers such as Goethe and Nietzsche among them(22). Is Russian concept of Redemption following National Spirit? In Russia, Spengler saw a young and underdeveloped culture labouring under Faustian form. In burning of Moscow as Napoleon was set to involve shown as a primitive expression of hatred towards foreigner? This was followed by entry of Alexander I into Paris, the Holy Alliances and the Concert of Europe. Here Russia was found into perpetual politics before its culture was ready or capable of understanding its own burden. This would result in hatred directed toward Europe, a hatred which Spengler argues poisoned the womb of emerging new culture. He claims that Tolstoy is its past and Dostoevsky is its future of this culture. Is human perfection found in nation? While they may be compared to or in civilization those used by Oswald Spengler in the 'Decline of the West'. He rejected Spengler's deterministic view that civilization rise and fall according to natural and inevitable cycle. For Toynbee, civilization might not continue to thrive depending on the challenge it faced and its response to them. In this respect, the debate resembled the contemporary one over Samuel Huntington's theory of so called clash of civilization. Is perfection no more confined to nation but to civilization such as Rome? It is said that civilization is what a national culture becomes once its creative impulse as in ascendancy. The history distinguishes between a ahistorical people and collection of people caught between world history as nation states. Thus some people see themselves as part of grand historical tradition and part of redemption. Spengler divides the concepts of culture and civilization, the former focuses inward and growing and later is outward and expanding. However Spengler sees civilization as a destitute of culture. He uses 'race' in the tribal and cultural sense rather than biological sense. He rejected biological definition of Darwinism which can not be accepted What distinguishes a people from a population is inwardly lived experience of 'we'. Darwinism ignores redemption and purely adhered biological view.

A new leader assumes power and creates a new state structure without reference to self evident based for governance need to go beyond redemption. Spengler argues that those states with continuous tradition of governance have been immensely more successful than those that have reject national tradition that aim at perfection. In 1950, Theodore Adorno(23) published an essay entitled 'Spengler after the Downfall'. He discusses human perfection as progress of culture which is deterministic and progressive. Adorno sees the rise of Nazis as triumph of force politics over market. This takes politics beyond redemption.

Chosen people:

Civilizations growth is driven by creative minority which eventually ceases to be creative after passing a part of redemption and degenerated into dominant minority.(24).People resort to archaism (idealization of past) futurism (idealization of future), Detachment (removal of oneself from the realities of decaying world) and transcendence (meeting the challenges of decaying civilization with new insight). From among

members of an internal proletariat who transcends the social decay a 'church' may arise. Such an association could contain new and strongest spiritual insights around which a subsequent civilization may begin to form out of redemption.

In the view of Toynbee, The Civilization as a whole is the proper unit for the study of history not the nation state. So how it possible human perfection is national? Of course it is true for Nazi. He includes both the Greek and Roman civilization within a single category called Hellenic. Popper's doctrine of chosen people is associated with totalitarianism. When he speaks of states around us, the idea does not reside in platonic heaven, but present more or less distorted in these state or nation.

March of History:

In the March of History, the central figures are Herder and Hegel. While leaders of the German enlightenment were committed to cosmopolitanism, the German romantic stress the uniqueness of national culture and successful added more extremes so that cultural pluralism of herder evolved the concept of national culture. Hegel of course excelled in his appreciation of significance of tradition. One should take into account that Hegel is in agreement with religion tradition that extents from Isaiah to Toynbee. Hegel's notion was in which Roman succeeded the Greek—according to Popper, Hegel twisted equality in inequality. Popper links Hegel with Fascist appeal to human nature. Our passions and purposes revolt against reason. Hegel Speaks of War as one of factors that have actually furthered Civilization. There is an ethical element in war. He considered war as good in itself. It is of the very essence of Hegel dialectical approach to penetrate. War is not rational but national.

Since according to Nietzsche 'God is Dead' and Christianity was no longer an option, the aesthetic took center stage in post modern time. But there has been gradual reawakening of Dionysian Spirit in our modern world. Nietzsche too was naturally concerned to persuade people of truth of his own ideas which is an objective and can be interpreted as a conscious development of personal will power. This is the way thinking is sometimes seen as reaching frustration in which personality of Adolf Hitler cultivate the image of an extensively persuasive force of national not rational. One of the major theme of Popper's Hegel chapter is that 'Hegelianism is the renaissance of tribalism. Popper uses tribalism and nationalism as emotional. Popper most ridiculous claim is that Nazi's did find some support for their racism in Schopenhauer and from Richard Wagner. Wagner has read the essence of Christianity. He begins as man stand to nature so stand art to man.

Hitler believed that Aryan superiority was being threatened particularly by Jewish race. Hitler ignored the fact that some of the favorite composers and musician were Jewish. Hitler argued that the combination of Jews and Marxist had already been successful in Russia and now threatened rest of Europe. He argued that communist revolution was an act of revenge that attempted to disguise the inferiority of Jews. The end of Jewish domination of Russia will also be end of Russia as a state. Herder writes that 'a poet is the Creator of nation around him'. To him, such poetry had its greatest purity and power in nations before they become civilized. He says who has lost his patriotic spirit, has lost the whole world about himself. He says there is only one class in state in which both king and peasant belong. Herder sought to harmonize his conception of sentiment with reason, where by all knowledge is implicit in soul. In a certain sense, every human perfection is national.(27)

Concluding observation:

Socrates is recognized for the first time as an instrument of Greek disintegration as typical triumph of 'rationality' against 'instinct'. During the time of flourishing of Christianity there was absence of Apollonian and Dionysian culture which negates all aesthetic value that the 'Birth of Tragedy'. The triumph of Greek tragedy according to Wagner, was only temporary. Some theorists say that decline of civilization is due to strife between religion and secular element. In the view of Will Durant that a great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed from within. The question is how scientific theory of evolution clashes with biblical account of creation. It is man versus nature or study of biology versus Psychology in explaining struggle for existence. Truth is open to revision because of continuity of knowledge. Since Knowledge is one, any type of division between Apollonian and Dionysian is impracticable. No one can stop the idea whose time has come. Both rational and national had its importance in their own time. Christianity has its own importance in his own time and redemption is treated as going

beyond reason and passion.

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