

Theoretical Approaches in the Works of Contemporary German Authors Namely Illija Trojanow and Andreas Altmann

Surya Pratap Singh

Professor, Department of Computer Engineering, Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

Andreas Altmann in his Travelogue "Don't pull the emergency brake too early" considers India's current situation in the context of India's colonial history, whereas in Illija Trojanow travelogue "Along the Ganges" the romantic image emerges, connecting ancient traditions with uncertain modernity. The author emphasizes the sacredness of the Ganges. This romantic image is emphasized by the description of the landscapes of Gomukh in the Himalayas. In contrast to Altmann's travelogue, Trojanow attempts to avoid a Eurocentric perspective. In Trojanow's travelogue "Along the Ganges" the romantic perspective can be clearly seen. Trojanow's journey revolves around the Ganges. The first chapter deals with the origins of the mythical story of the Ganges River and the depiction of the mythical story of the Hindu gods. This depiction of nature and religion is influenced by the ideas of German Romanticism.

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and musical movement. This period emerged in Germany at the end of the 18th century and reached its peak between 1800 and 1850. This period is characterized by its emphasis on emotion, individualism, nature, universalism, the Middle Ages, the glorification of the past, and so on. This period was a counter movement to the Industrial Revolution, aristocratic and political norms, and modernity that had emerged during the Age of Enlightenment. The emphasis is on music, art, literature (especially poetry), and so on. Romanticism also influenced historiography, social science, and natural science. Romanticism had a profound impact on politics, society, and art. Romantic thinkers influenced liberalism, conservatism, and nationalism. The emphasis is on fantasy, unreality, and melancholy, and these legends can be found in folk poetry, fairy tales, sagas, songs, and folk myths. Therefore, Romanticism places value on emotions, feelings, warmth, and sensitivity, rather than reason, intellect, and scientific reasoning. To achieve this goal, the Romantics went back to the Middle Ages, where they discovered religion, superstition, and the authority of God over reason. Romantic authors explored themes from their own and foreign cultures and histories. *Thus, it became their zealous concern to raise the rich treasure of old folk tales, folk poetry, and folk tales.... Romanticism places itself at the service of the mediator for the benefit of the great community of all who are devoted to beauty folk poetry receptive*".

Romantic ideas are recurrent in Trojanow's travelogue. In many places, we learn that Trojanow is deeply involved with the religiosity of Hinduism, and this travelogue by Trojanow begins with the narration of the mythological birth of the Ganges River, also known in India as the goddess Ganga. He delves into the Indian mythical world. The sacredness of the Ganges is emphasized in the opening scenes. On the very first page of this travelogue, Trojanow tells a beautiful story about the Ganges and Shiva, which is interwoven with the beautiful natural landscape, including glaciers. *"Ganga bursts from the glacier with a sustained crash, falls to the earth, and runs off, impetuous, headlong, flailing. Shiva has held out his head, Ganga has seized his head; hard on impact, soft on flowing, she cascades from his forehead, trickles down from his curls."*

Such religiously influenced mythical stories appear in many other places. In the first chapter, one gets the impression that the Ganges and the associated mystical stories and legends of gods are the author's subject in India. He describes the long and complicated stories of Shiva, Parvati, and Ganga, which not everyone in India knows. To understand such stories, one must read ancient Indian religious texts; only then can one explain the story with such clarity and understanding. This longing for India and the associated exotic stories was part of Romanticism. These mythical stories and the power of Indian gods such as Shiva, Vishnu, Kama, Parvati, as well as the sanctity of the Ganges, demonstrate the positive aspects of India. Trojanow tells the story of a demon created by Brahma. To kill the demon, Brahma suggests a way that only Shiva's son can kill him. But the problem was that Shiva had no son. *"Shiva sat on the summit and meditated. While he turned away from the world, it was terrorized by Taraka. The demon sought to subjugate all living beings."*

Therefore, one could say that this is about research into Indian culture and the glorious aspects of Indian culture. Here, Trojanow uses Herder's idea of "cultural relativism." In his book "Ideas for a Philosophy of Human History," Herder speaks of the essentialist idea of a national soul. Herder believed that every culture has a special soul or special qualities, and this is consistent with his "cultural relativism." Therefore, he believed that every culture should be judged by its own values, not by European standards. He believed that every culture has something authentic and thus has a national soul that is lacking in other cultures. According to Herder, culture cannot be the same everywhere in the world, because culture changes according to temporal and spatial circumstances. *"Herder's*

philosophy of history provides a foundation for understanding his cultural discourse. Just as history is shaped by the influence of time and place, so too is culture. Sentiment, mentality, taste, and lifestyle change according to temporal and local circumstances"

According to Miklós Szalay, every culture is not a means to an end, as Europeans say, but rather a higher culture characterized by reason and science. Every culture is unique in itself; therefore, every culture is a *"things in themselves"* meaning every culture has its own purpose. The significance of a culture cannot be judged by the achievement of a specific goal.

At the beginning of the chapter "The Nectar of the Masses," he offers information about the Kumbh Mela festival. This festival is one of India's most famous and largest festivals. In this chapter, he also describes the lifestyle of sadhus, which he observed. He was so fascinated by life on the Ganges and mythology that he translated the verses of a foreign culture into German.

We see that Romanticism was an antithesis of the Enlightenment and capitalism. Romanticism also promotes the dignity of the individual, as it once was in the Middle Ages. Therefore, Trojanow sharply criticizes capitalism, which has forced the people into misery and poverty.

"I have the impression," the man continues, "that the people here are more innocent than anywhere else in the world, perhaps as innocent as the whole world once was, before capitalism destroyed everything."

In Andreas Altmann's travelogue "Emergency Brake: Don't Pull the Brake Too Early," he turns away from Trojanow's romantic image of India. In this travelogue, the oriental approach can be seen very clearly and distinctly. This travelogue records how he experiences India as a traveler through an oriental perspective. This travelogue begins with a description of his flight to Bombay. In this travelogue, the author describes his journey through many cities, primarily Bombay, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, etc. These cities are surrounded by slums. Social issues such as slums, overpopulation, and environmental pollution have been portrayed in recent German-language travel literature. Since then, India has been viewed less as a developing country. In this travelogue, he describes only his experiences, actions, and his journey on the Indian train through India. In this travelogue, locals and India are treated in a very clichéd manner. Altmann attempts to paint a very clichéd picture of India. He depicts things like poverty, beggars on trains, slums, prostitution, corruption, overpopulation, irrationality, superstition, chaos, unpunctuality, etc. He presents all of these in this travelogue in a very satirical and humorous way.

He criticizes not only the beggars, but also the way they beg. He says the beggars' ways are as if they learned from a modern weaver. This is a very sarcastic criticism of the beggars. He attempts to criticize them in a very 'Eurocentric' and occidental way by calling the beggar a 'swine dog.' *"he senses the weakling in me who will eventually no longer want to hear that he's a bastard. The shrill one behaves as if he'd learned from modern web webs."*

He has a very Western and racist view of India. He presents clichés about Indian traffic and everyday life. He generalizes everyday events in India. In this travelogue, he associates white people with scholars and India with fools. He describes the event as if only white people or Europeans are reasonable and rational people on the entire planet. *"Politically correct racism absolves the inhabitants of the Third World of this responsibility, always leaving all blame solely on fate, on white people, on the climate."*

In Edward Said's 1971 book "Orientalism," Said discusses the Eurocentric and Occidental representation of the East by the West. His thesis focuses particularly on the postcolonial aspect of the representation of the Orient. The Orient is always portrayed as a counter-image to the West and is viewed as an invention of the West. According to Said, the East is dominated, colonized, and also civilized by the West *"Orientalism as a western style from dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient"*

He writes without any factual basis. He assumes a European identity and the associated freedom over authority over the East (India). As we just saw, Said speaks about the dominance of West over East, in which there is always a power relationship between East and West.

In this travelogue, one gets the impression that he presents a very seductive image of India by generalizing the truth. He uses satirical language to depict socially critical topics such as slums, prostitution, and corruption in India, manipulating or generalizing the truth without any research. *"One thing is certain: no one comes to Falkland Road to make love. Sex in India is a quick business if you have to pay for it."*

Keywords

Eurocentrism, mythology, orientalism, romanticism.