
International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2231-5063

Golden Research Thoughts Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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GRAND MASTER'S DEPLOYMENT OF IDEOLOGICAL, REPRESSIVE AND TECHNOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUSES IN *THE CITY AND THE RIVER*

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Abstract:- In *The City and the River* the Grand Master craves for power and deploys all the available state apparatuses to have the absolute power. Power gives meaning to his ego, and absolute power to him is above everything i.e. his councilors, the city and even God. Therefore, there are sweeping campaigns for power at the ideological level followed by repressive state measures. The Grand Master's efforts to gain an absolute control over the state and the minds of the people result in the destruction of State and collective loss of self among the citizens as the ideological, technological and repressive state apparatuses are employed to crush the people and any voice of individual dissent and democracy.

Keywords: *Power, Ideological, Repressive, Technological, Collective Unconscious, Great Mother Structure, Nature.*

INTRODUCTION

In *The City and the River* the Grand Master craves for power and deploys all the available state apparatuses to have the absolute power. Power gives meaning to his ego, and absolute power to him is above everything i.e. his councilors, the city and even God. Therefore, there are sweeping campaigns for power at the ideological level followed by repressive state measures. The state and his self are not two differentiated entities for him. His ego does not try to differentiate itself from its Great Mother structure/Unconscious or the cultural matrix in which it is born and lies buried in the pleasurable protected state of 'Uroboric incest':

"[T]he Grand Master is the son and grandson of Grand Masters. He has grown up in the palace where his family has lived for seventy years . . . the Grand Master believes he loves the city that he and his forefathers have ruled it as best it allows itself to be ruled". (Joshi, *The City and the River* 13)

The Grand Master's council is set up for the purpose of ideological imposition of his ego on the city and represents the objectified instrumentality of his ego. The Council is made up of the palace Astrologer, the Minister of Trade, the Education Advisor, the Police Commissioner and the Master of Rallies. The Grand Master has set up his council "to improve his rule further" from the idea of power which he has received from his "forefathers" (Joshi, *The City and the River* 13). This Council on the one hand works to impose the Grand Master's ego ideologically on the city, and on the other hand, serves to undermine the "authenticity of the self" of the inhabitants of the city against "the determining categories symbolized by power of the state, the military bureaucracy, and constricting social institutions." The Astrologer plays the Great Mother Elementary to the Grand Master by interpreting his dream in a way that it boosts the ideology of the Grand Master's search for absolute power:

"Grand Master, the time has come to let you know that there exists a prophecy that speaks of the coming of a king. Your dream is the herald that we have been waiting for" (Joshi, *The City and the River* 15).

He provides a pleasurable protection to the Grand Master's ego by twisting the prophecy and by shunning his doubts about the crowd of naked men by declaring that "the city has become an unruly place, a plaything of *asuras*" (Joshi, *The City and the River* 15). He has opened the ideological way for Grand Master's writing of psychotic script for his self by completely suppressing the objective reality. The Grand Master declares on the basis

of the report of the Police Commissioner—who represents the direct face of the repressive state apparatus—that “things are indeed in a bad way” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 15) and he is filled with a sadistic disgust at the independent nature of the boatmen who do not believe in personal possessions, “not a day passes when the streets are not filled with their vulgar din. Their ugliness fills me with disgust” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 16). The Grand Master finds them to be posing “danger” by their “numbers” not only to the city but also to the palace itself and in order to realize his dream, he starts by declaring “let their numbers be frozen by law” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 16). The instruments of state repression are to be pressed into service to implement his will “the force of arms if necessary. Nothing else will suffice” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 16), says the Grand Master. The Police Commissioner acts as his “dog” while the Astrologer as a Great Mother Elementary takes care of his spiritual problems and helps him by his sacred rhetoric for the masses. The Astrologer declares, in keeping with the populist ideology, the Grand Master to be a “servant” of the people: “Looking after this city is like a yajna for him, his life is the ahuti” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 17) while in truth power is the yajna for the Grand Master and the life of the city is the ahuti he offers to it. In order to gain unqualified support for the Grand Master, the Astrologer declares “the Triple Way or the Way of the Three Beatitudes” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 17) which means nothing except that “the Grand Master of the city is the father and mother of the city” and “there shall be” “only one” child to a mother and “two to a home” and anybody defying the Triple Way would be asura “to be received without mercy” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 18) and “be treated according to the Grand Master’s law of compassionate righteousness” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 18). This expansion and imposition of Grand Master’s ego receives non-acceptance from the boat people who are sure about their “allegiance” which is “only to the river and cannot be shared” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 19). Anything, existing outside the Grand Master’s ego and its regressive expansion to the objective reality, is a threat to the narcissistic incestuous state of The Grand Master’s ego. In the individual case of Som, any threat to the narcissistic ego invites more regression into the acts of individual narcissism. In the case of the Grand Master, who is a public figure, an increased intensity in narcissism results in the desperate attempts to transform, distort, suppress or destroy the objective reality according to his will or the Uroboric pleasure of his regressive ego by an aggressive deployment of ideological and repressive state apparatuses. B.D. Sharma sees this regressive suppression of the public life as “malpractices” which are “resorted to in order to gain and retain power and . . . eliminate dissent” but these malpractices are not merely political, they are psychotic in their origin and implementation. These malpractices are not random or unconnected but they are synchronized to transform the social reality both politically and emotionally according to the Grand Master’s Great Mother structure or the idea of power in which his regressive ego is reveling. Any threat or challenge to this pleasurable state of his ego increases the intensity of retaliation or “mal-practices” in order to subjugate or even eliminate the very source of threat. Therefore, the malpractices are not only synchronized but they also increase in their measures and intensity which is directly proportional to the regression of the Grand Master’s ego into its Great Mother structure. These malpractices are ironically practised through ideological state apparatuses, if “the Triple Way” fails to subdue people into submission then a New Era is suggested by the Astrologer to bring about “what the prophecy intends” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 22). This is a measure taken to brainwash people to inculcate in them a “New Era discipline” and “new food for their thoughts with fear being the key to success” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 22), “Let the fear of the palace – and its laws – be first drummed into them” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 22). The new decree or “the Era of the Ultimate Greatness” is announced to beware people of the enemy “within and without” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 23) reminding them of the importance of “the triple way.” This announcement of “New Era” starts with direct state oppression, it is “inaugurated” with the arrest of a boatman and a clown, “the boatman’s wife had borne an illegal child. The clown was arrested because he had been heard to laugh when the old boatman was being put in chains” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 23). The Commissioner, the Education Adviser and the Rallies Master act as verbal constructs of the Grand Master’s ego in transforming the objective reality according to his regressive idea of power through ideological and repressive state apparatuses. The Commissioner lets the state repression take hold of anybody slightly suspected to be defiant to the New Era. He wants people who are “crazy,” “tough” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 25) and blood thirsty to implement the new draconian laws. Black cards are issued for the dissenters and mid night arrests become a routine and if it is not the right person then it has to be his “neighbour” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 25) under the “New Era” regulations. Therefore in place of Bhumi Putra, ninety year old Patanjali is arrested. The arrested people are sent to the Gold Mines or the state prison as everyday routine. The Education Adviser with his “shock brigades” acts as a counter part to the Commissioner in terror tactics. He commands the constituency of teachers and students and his son trains, tortures and delights in killing people “with a smile” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 32). The Rallies Master, who is supposed to have risen from the masses, ends up in facilitating Grand Master’s plan to use “bulldozers” “overnight” to straighten out the ancient path way because the homes of the people on it blocked the view of the Grand Master’s wife to the river. In this synchronized state operation, all the mal-practices of state apparatuses are directed towards subduing people’s spontaneity and independence and to turn them into robots to fulfill Grand Master’s wishes. The Master of Rallies also acts as an instrument of the Grand Master’s repressive ego by trying to control the psyche of the masses ideologically through the media. In the Grand Master’s city, there are no independent newspapers or channels to make people aware of the real state of affairs or to register their protest. This is something very terrible which the Professor comes to know when he wants to expose the Grand Master’s designs

for gaining the absolute power. The Little Star tells him “There are two newspapers in this city. One of them is owned by a trust of which the Astrologer is the head, the other is owned by a girl. The girl is five years old and cannot manage a newspaper. It is managed for her by the Master of Rallies. The Master of Rallies also controls the satellite. The satellite controls the radio and the video. The Master of Rallies controls the satellite on the Grand Master’s behalf because the satellite is the private property of the Grand Master” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 88). The Master of Rallies has put his finger on the pulse of the poor” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 73) and he specializes in arranging rallies for the Grand Master, “Rallies needed men and only the Master of Rallies could provide them” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 73). He not only controls the media but also gathers “facts” from “all walks of life.” He has “informers everywhere” and keeps an eye on “magazine and newspaper editorials” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 73). He is utilized by the Grand Master as an ideological instrument of watch and control “on what the masses wanted” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 73). His instrumentality is very important for the Grand Master’s regressive ego in its march to the absolute power and control over the city. The Master of Rallies makes the festival of river crowded by teaching the masses to “look disciplined and neat” and “race in a single coordinated row like soldiers marching in a parade” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 89) and also “how to salute a Grand Master” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 89-90). If the Grand Master’s ego has its hold over the psyche of the masses through the Master of Rallies then the Minister of Trade Controls the economics of the city in league with a foreign mafia Pinstripe and the Grand Trader. The festival of river is not being organized merely for coronation of the Son but also for profiteering. Pinstripe tells Minister of Trade “in the light of the approaching Festival of the River cooking oil can bring excellent revenues” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 64). The city has become a playground for their artificial manipulation of prices, “other commodities considered attractive are armaments, medicines, bread, lottery tickets, sugar and rice, and boatmen great legumes” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 64). To this suggestion of hoarding and of pushing the prices very high by cornering the produce of the gold mines, the Minister of Trade, colludes and connives with the mafia, from the position of authority “I shall see what I can do” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 64). The Grand Minister utilizes and deploys the corrupt Minister of Trade and his mafia in controlling the day to day economics of the masses but also in creating a “shining image” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 92) for himself by ordering raids on the Grand Trader through the Astrologer who, in turn, directs the Commissioner. The regressive and egoistic event of coronation of his son is a naked perpetuation of his power in time and it cannot be brought about without changing the spiritual allegiance to the Grand Master and to no one else. The Astrologer acts as a perfect chartered spiritual accountant or a religious ideologue for the city on behalf of the Grand Master. He begins by creating a fear psychosis of unseen “deadly assassins” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 19) then by painting Grand Master to be “almost immortal” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 101) and sustaining this spiritual formation from the Gita of the Lord in human form, “when evil becomes unendurable. I take human form, seek and, even in your own city, you shall find me” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 98). He exhorts the masses to “convert this convention into a coronation” because for Dharm Rajya such a Grand Master must “give” his son as a “sacrifice” to the city and “this city needs his son” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 101). . . The “inadequate” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 102) response of the masses to the coronation results in the repressive state measures—midnight arrests of the Professor as well as hundreds of boatmen by the Captain of the Flying Patrol because “their lips during the oath taking ceremony, it had been observed, had not moved at all” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 102). The imposition of the Grand Master’s ego on the objective reality, a narcissistic incestuous attempt to transform it according to his idea of power, results in the deadening of the city. The rape of a woman, as D.H. Lawrence points out, by a lust ridden soldier in war destroys the woman because it treats her as a dead object for self-gratification thereby deadening her sensibilities about herself. In the case of Som Bhaskar in *The Last Labyrinth* also we have seen how he deadens or objectifies his self and as well as that of Anuradha through such an act of narcissistic incestuous regression. But in the case of the Grand Master, there is no deadening of his own self because he has identified his consciousness with his Great Mother structure and we see a conscious attempt on his part to retain his ego in the womb or in ‘the Uroboric’ state so who suffers in *The City and The River* is the state and consciousness of the city itself. Through the ideological and repressive misuse of the state machinery, the attempt by the Grand Master to find the meaning for his self through power and absolute control over the city it results in the city being raped, vandalized, and deadened, and its inhabitants being reduced to fractionated functions of their selves in a state of helplessness, powerlessness and normlessness. The Grand Master’s imposing structures of steel and glass have lawns which have “too much water and yet no grass or flowers” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 36). It is a description of a barren land where nothing grows “No trees, No flowers, Not a patch of green.” It is a state of ‘consummation of reduction’ by a regressive ego where green is replaced by “all brown and yellow” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 31). As the ego envelops the city through ideological and state repression, it is the entire city which gets consumed into reduction and thereby suffers barrenness at all levels from spiritual to Nature. Common people lose their authenticity and in this “New Era” of ultimate narcissism, they have developed the ‘As though’ attitude which means, according to the Astrologer’s orders, to “carry on living on the spots where they had their homes as though their homes were still there” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 37). Those who are still thought to offer “resistance” or who have “too high an idea of themselves” are being disposed of to gold mines where the administrator has “means” and men trained in the use of those means, “that ensure such resistances quickly overcome, the idea of the self is suitably dissolved” (Joshi, *The City and the River* 161). These dark labyrinthine,

underground repressive structures of torture have a kinship in structure and spirit with Dante's Inferno as Usha Bande has pointed out (Bande 263). It is a "domain of permanent night" for those "whose eyes had become too bold or tongue too free" (Joshi, *The City and the River* 161). In a classic case of the extreme of 'syndrome of decay,' as Erich Fromm points out (Fromm, *Heart of Man* 113), the incestuous narcissism also becomes necrophilic, that, is where it begins to take delight in taking the life out of living objects; and the Grand Master also develops and employs such an infrastructure where the modern technology, along with ideological propaganda and repressive measures, becomes an advanced state tool of the Grand Master's malpractices. In a 'necrophilic' narcissism if an object cannot be assimilated then it has to be eliminated i.e. if the Grand Master cannot ensure the allegiance of all, then he must dissolve some "very soon, one way or another," with mechanisms through which "the darkness comes to fill the newcomer's mind. His brain ceases to function and thoughts ricochet against his skull but fail to enter. He forgets his name, the name of his wife and children; or, if he at all has wife and children . . . Finally, as the days pass, the night enters the man's soul, blotting out the light behind his eyes. He forgets that he lives underground, that there is a city above him and a sky above the city, that there are things like the sun and the moon" (Joshi, *The City and the River* 162). Grand Master's efforts to gain an absolute control over the state and the minds of the people result in the destruction of State and collective loss of self among the citizens as the ideological, technological and repressive state apparatuses are employed to crush the people and their voice of dissent and democracy.

NOTES

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