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Editor
Dr. Sanjib Kumar Sarma

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Footsteps Towards the Literary World



Department of English
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Editorial

As the former editor of this journal, Dr. Manjari Sharma was superannuated as the HOD in English in 2020, the responsibility was assigned to us hurriedly in order to continue the publication of Mosaic. Considering that at the time we are going through during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is our pleasure to present the annual issue braving all odds.

A writer is assessed in different ages with a fresh outlook with varying critical norms. Such a piece of literature is assessed during a reader's own lifetime. During our transition period we come across a phase where we are unsure of the units of many novels and short stories we loved and admired earlier specially in our regional literature.

As students of English literature felt very much obliged to place them alongside literary masterpieces from the west and apply the critical paradigms they were taught in the class after few decades, we find scholars trying to locate post modernist features like historiography, metafiction etc. in the very same literary work, written and upheld in our regional literature from more than a century ago. It perhaps dawns on many amongst them that good literature is what stands the test of time and stays with its readers. While preparing this issue on literature and culture, our efforts are to present each paper with its own distinctive attributes, in all possible literary theories.

The journal not only publishes scholarly articles but also upholds the quality. Despite the unprecedented situation during the pandemic, it strives hard for survival and continued academic pursuit. I express my profound sense of gratitude to all the erudite readers, contributors, editorial board, and well wishers for their relentless support for the sustainable improvement of the journal.

Sanjib Kumar Sarma
Dr. Sanjib Kumar Sarma
Editor

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The Lyric of Excess: Baudelaire and the Poetry of Evil

-Arnav Gogoi

Abstract :

Baudelaire is often regarded as the primary architect of the modern space in literary thought. His attempt to reconceptualize the notion of representing modernity has allowed for renewed interest among writers which segues well into the twentieth century. But, a significant portion of this reconceptualization is contingent on the notion of Evil which runs throughout his poetry. It becomes important then to consider how Evil is imagined as an essential schematic structure for any age to appreciate the human condition in its present context. For, it also allows us to examine how literature responds to this demand of Evil in the process of developing a new aesthetic of the lyric of the time. This paper concerns itself with such consideration of the definition of the lyric in Baudelaire's project of modernity.

Keywords : lyric, excess, modernity, Evil, modern subject

I believe that man is necessarily put up against himself and that he cannot recognise himself and love himself to the end unless he is condemned.

Georges Bataille, Literature and Evil

In his essay Baudelaire, Paul Valery writes, "with Baudelaire, French poetry at length passes beyond our frontiers. It is read throughout the world; it takes its place as the characteristic poetry of modernity; it encourages imitation, it enriches countless minds." He further goes on to write: "Thus I can say that, though there may be French poets greater and more powerfully endowed than Baudelaire, there is none more important." The reason behind the selection of these lines is to make ourselves aware of the importance of a figure like Baudelaire in modern thought whose art shaped the way modern aesthetics cultivates itself in literature. Theorist and writers alike have all gone back to Baudelaire in their project on modernity, where the first seed of a modern subject was sown in literary thought. One needs only to remember the following lines by Benjamin : "For the first time, with Baudelaire, Paris

becomes the subject of lyric poetry." Benjamin sees in Baudelaire an architect, who brought to relief the conditions of modern life in his poetry. It was indeed this never ceasing engagement with the immediate world of a modern life, which Baudelaire concretised in the form of his book *The Flowers of Evil* (1857). However, apart from its representations of the quintessential features of a modern space, what consecrates the work in public imagination is its categorical redefinition of the notion of Evil. It brought about a sudden change in the whole dialogue between good and evil that became the ground from which the whole project of modernity would take off its wings. This would later trickle well into the earlier parts of the twentieth century where the question of what constitutes the moral fabric of the modern subject became the central thesis of most of the works. It is this notion of supposed reconfiguration of Evil in Baudelaire which this paper would like to interrogate. It would highlight instances of a critique of evil and sin in select poems from *Flowers of Evil* and provide a possible insight into a Baudelairean idea of the lyric in general. The premise involves the argument that the lyric in Baudelaire constitutes moments of, what I will call, excesses in the poems, which could not be codified into any structures of thought. For, the problem of the lyric is well connected with the problem of Evil and its ramifications in Baudelaire.

The introductory poem of the *Flowers of Evil* should be a good entry point for us in our quest for the lyric in Baudelaire. Titled 'To the Reader', the poem opens with the following lines :

Folly and error, stinginess and sin
Possess our spirits and fatigue our flesh.
And like a pet we feed our tame remorse
As beggars take to nourishing their lice.

Any reader of these lines would immediately realize that something has gone terribly wrong with his expectations. The text immediately prepares us for a direct insight into the inherent fallibility of man with no promises of redemption whatsoever. It rejects any attempt for attribution of a good conscientious will to the human subject, who is recognized in the poem as a passive object to the forces of corruption. The verb "possess" works as the connecting link between the human "spirits" and "flesh", which are objects rather than subjects of the forces of folly and sin. Such description of the human self is an immediate reminder of the incorrigible nature of the fallen man who is forever destined to sin. For, a few lines later Baudelaire writes:

Truly the Devil pulls on all our strings!

In most repugnant objects we find charms;
Each day we are one step further into Hell,
Content to move across the stinking pit.

The emphatic tone of the first line, "Truly the Devil pulls on all our strings!", strikes a note of finality as a universal truth which is immediately validated by a logical inference of human action in the next line which transforms the truth as a given-ness: "In most repugnant objects we find charms".

However, once we reach the final few lines of the poem, we are made aware of the reasoning behind such calculation of man's condemned state of existence, as the poem introduces the creature, who is "most foul and false" than man, called Ennui. This moment in the poem creates a hierarchy in the ranks of evil, in which man's sinful commitment to follies shines in comparison to the extreme of vices in the world: non-action. This aversion to inaction in the face of action would form the entire thematic fabric of the text of *Flowers of Evil*. It is this dialectic of action and inaction, between evil and nothingness in Baudelaire, which would inform the poetic investigation of the modern subject in his work. Evil becomes in it a driving force which guides man in all his actions in the world, enabling Baudelaire to look for newer ways of looking at it. As Eliot notes in his essay, "[s]o far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least, we exist." (236) What matters in Baudelaire is the necessity for action towards evil, lulled by its charms, for it is both the demand of modernity as well as existence as-we-know-it. His project is to observe the whole spectrum of existence in his poetry which, when understood in its totality, forms the index of modernity. It is for this reason that we find characters and figures from all walks of life, particularly the so-called dregs of society, who become the subject of most of his poems. The characters of the murderer, the rag-picker, and the Apache are all constituents of the broken hero in Baudelaire. The refuse of modernity, and the dregs of society, act as the potential site for the lyric. The heroism with which Baudelaire endows these characters brings into light a new tendency in modern aesthetics of the lyric which is premised on the ground of evil. This means that any idea of the modern lyric would first have to subscribe to the idea of looking at evil-for-evil itself. This would require a complete suspension of any ethical investigation into the problem of evil in relation to the good, which has sustained the whole framework of western

theology before Baudelaire. However, this act of suspension is not posited as a threat to the existing structure of any religious thought whatsoever; rather it is the act of allowing oneself to resign in the face of evil in order to be possessed by it.

So far, we have been talking about the notion of evil without actually providing a framework for its conceptualization. It is better to work our way through existing documents on the problem of Evil which would make the direction of this paper clear, one that it intends to take. For this, a classical example of evil in Christian theology would be Augustine's rigorous investigation of the problem of evil where he settles with a momentary critique of the idea of goodness and God, who is the origin of all things in the world. Augustine's logical inference of goodness associated with God enables him to hypothesise the possibility of immanent goodness in all objects of creation provides the gap for thought to comprehend the source of evil in the world. In one such illuminating passage, he writes :

Is not my God not only good, but the supreme Good? Why then have I the power to will evil and to reject good? . . . Who puts this power in me and implanted in me this seed of bitterness (Heb. 12: 15), when all of me was created by my very kind God? If the devil was responsible, where did the devil himself come from? And if even he began as a good angel and became devil by a perversion of the will, how does the evil will by which he became devil originate in him, when an angel is wholly made by a Creator who is pure goodness? (114)

However, Augustine's enquiry into the plausibility of God as the source of Evil falls short because of his unwavering faith in the "supreme Good" of God. The reason why this passage becomes central to our project is because it plants the seed for a possible enquiry into the paradoxical nature of both evil and goodness with relation to God in literature and philosophy-Milton's *Paradise Lost* could be seen as the highest achievement of this paradox-which sanctions a limit to the whole question of faith and sin in western thought. We see an exploitation of such tendency in Baudelaire in whose poetry there is an unwavering fascination for Evil, which does not give any satisfaction but rather provides a sense of destruction. However, this fascination is not willed in his poetry, which then allows the fascination to direct its own course for the evil-for-evil itself. As willing involves, if not always, an act of conscious participation, like the one we see in Augustine, whereby the subject always

desires for the Good, and transforms the object into the opposite of its other - Good as opposed to Evil. This way, the evil in Baudelaire would have become good by nature of his willing, which interestingly is absent from his poetry. A case in point is his well-known poem 'To a Woman Passing By':

Around me roared the nearly deafening street.
Tall, slim, in mourning, in majestic grief,
A woman passed me, with a splendid hand
Lifting and swinging her festoon and hem;
Nimble and stately, statuesque of leg.
I, shaking like an addict, from her eye,
Black sky, spawner of hurricanes, drank in
Sweetness that fascinates, pleasure that kills.
One lightning flash . . . then night! Sweet fugitive
Whose glance has made me suddenly reborn,
Will we not meet again this side of death?
Far from this place! Too late! Never perhaps!
Neither one knowing where the other goes,
O you I might have loved, as well you know!

A cursory glance of this poem would tell us that the subject here is not the speaking voice but rather the acting stranger who possesses the subject, now turned object, in a state of complete resignation. We are told right in the beginning that the woman is "in mourning, in majestic grief" who passes by the narrator of the poem. This air of a loss, of a secret pact with death, which the woman seems to have entered, becomes the very source of the charm which she cast on the passive narrator of the poem. It is interesting to note here that the narrator does not participate in any act of the will through which he negotiates with the experience in a rational way. Instead, he remains passive throughout allowing himself to be drunk in a state of "pleasure that kills" through which he is born again in death! However, a closer look at the poem would provide us with a crucial moment in which an excess of experience has been committed. This is evident in the line:

One lightning flash . . . then night!

Here the exclamation mark could not be overlooked at any cost as it expresses a moment of sudden outburst of emotion which comes as an

afterthought, a realisation in the poem. For, the actual moment of passing, evident in the ellipsis, points at a lack in which excess has been committed. This excess is the excess of experience which the poem itself builds from the first line. The charm of grief, of mourning, could be construed here as the pull of evil which Baudelaire witnesses in the modern age. It is no wonder then that the afterthought comes as a sudden realization in the poem which is the consequence of an excess that could not be contained in a moment. The ellipsis brilliantly bridges the past and the future in this line, and opens a gap which would forever thrive in the knowledge of a lack, in the poem. This lack directs us towards the possible site of a lyrical tendency in Baudelaire which thrives in its commitment to excess. This excess results in a tension between the subject and the object which is central to Baudelaire's aesthetics:

[t]he essence of Baudelaire's poetry is to affect, at the cost of an agonising tension, the fusion between the subject (immanence) and those objects which lose themselves both in order to cause anguish and to reflect it.

However, this sense of "anguish" in Baudelaire is his commitment to the excess, the overpowering effect of evil, which keeps him forever at the threshold in his search for the impossible: the desire for unity of the subject and the object in his poetry. The woman whom he "might have loved" is forever lost amidst the crowd of the modern space. The only thing that remains is a sense of renewal of life in death of which the origin is the site of the impossible-the excess. For, "the synthesis of the unchangeable and the perishable, of the being and existence, of the object and the subject, which poetry seeks, is an ultimate definition of poetry. It limits it and transposes it into the realm of the impossible and the unsatisfiable."

Another poem well within the structure of such irreconcilable subject of the self and the world is 'Correspondences':

Nature is a temple, where the living
Columns sometimes breathe confusing speech;
Man walks within these groves of symbols, each
Of which regards him as a kindred thing.
As the long echoes, shadowy, profound,
Heard from afar, blend in unity,
Vast as the night, as sunlight's clarity,

So perfumes, colours, sounds may correspond.
Odours there are, fresh as a baby's skin,
Mellow as oboes, green as meadow grass,
- Others corrupted, rich, triumphant, full,
Having dimensions infinitely vast,
Frankincence, musk, ambergris, Benjamin,
Singing the senses' rapture, and the soul's.

As an immediate response to it, one can sense a tension at the centre of the poem. Here "man walks within these grove of symbols" where the "living/columns sometimes breathe confusing speech". These lines immediately draw our attention to the rift, the gulf, which has opened up between man and nature in the poem. Although what requires saying is that the spatial coordinate of man is not outside nature; it is well within the confines of nature. The factor which comes as a rupture in this poem is that of Time:

As the long echoes, shadowy, profound,
Heard from afar, blend in a unity,
Vast as the night, as sunlight's clarity,
So perfumes, colours, sounds may correspond.

Here "heard from afar" is the temporal shift which the poem introduces to the reader. It opens up an immanent desire for a correspondence, a synthesis of "shadowy, profound" echoes which the poet imagines: "may correspond." The auxiliary verb "may" transposes the present of the poem through a past remembrance, as in may have corresponded, which is at the heart of the anguish in Baudelaire. What follows is anostalgia for a lost state in which innocence assumed great significance over experience. Yet, this nostalgia is tinged with the colour of prejudice as the past was also, at the same time, ignorant of its fallen stature - its separation from the object. In this nostalgia Man regains the vigour and the spirit of his past in which nature is once again transformed into a spiritual entity. Its qualities of "tonality, sonority, limpidity, vibrancy, takes on a sharper and deeper import." This leads to a moment of excess of an experience in which "all sensations seem multiplied: they become an infinite number, deployed and projected in musical space." This excess is what allows the subject to strive towards the correspondence by forever remaining in the threshold. For what could be felt is the possible sensation of this unison, and not the actual experience of it:

Having dimensions infinitely vast,
Frankincense, musk, ambergris, Benjamin,
Singing the senses' rapture, and the soul's.

This infinity opens up the possibility of a striving which, nevertheless, sustained by the impossibility of its realization. The "rapture" which is experienced in this striving is no less than a wilful resignation of the will through which man drinks in the overwhelming experience of the correspondence. This state of drunkenness is something very crucial to a Baudelairean experience of the excess as it allows the body to resign itself to the sudden flow of emotions rising from the self's contact with the world. The will has been subdued to the state of dormancy. The following lines from the poem 'Benediction' could provide us with an example of this experience:

Still, with an angel guarding secretly,
The misfit child grows drunk on sunny air;
In all he drinks or eats in ecstasy
He finds sweet nectar and ambrosia there.

The complete resignation of the will, "the misfit child grows drunk on sunny air", allows us to unearth a layer of experience which provides a possible glimpse into the nature of the lyric in Baudelaire. The search for the lyric in this case becomes the search for the impossible. It could only be felt but cannot be grasped. Baudelaire's notions of the present in reference to Guy's work could be understood in these lines: he "is the painter of the fleeting moment and of all that it suggests of the eternal." For Modernity is, as Baudelaire writes, "the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable." Under such consideration of the present moment, which is a window to the eternal for Baudelaire, what undergoes change is the aesthetics of modern art. It aspires to the impossible, the eternal through the present, which resist the striving because of its fleeting nature. Similarly, an aesthetic of the lyric becomes contingent on this fleeting nature in Baudelaire which provides man with an excess of experience - of evil-for-evil itself. Any attempts to capture this moment would only result in anguish. It is an excess that can never be contained. One can only submit to it by extinguishing the will. As De Man notes in his essay, "The lyric is not a genre, but one name among several to designate the defensive motion of

understanding, the possibility of a future hermeneutics . . . Generic terms such as "lyric". . . are always terms of resistance and nostalgia, at the furthest remove from the materiality of actual history." It is a far cry from the site of the eternal, the future, which could only be heard in its "shadowy, profound" manner. What remains is the moment of excess which overwhelms the sensations with a promise of a glimpse into the synthesis of the self and the world.

- 1 See Valery 'The Position of Baudelaire' in Peyre's *Baudelaire: A collection of critical essays*. 7
- 2 Ibid 8
- 3 The word modern here is used to refer to the nineteenth century and after - a period marked by rapid progress in the area of industrialisation and a capital economy - for one should be careful to avoid any generic usage of the term in a particular discourse. For, the binary between the Ancients and the Moderns in literature is nothing but a repeated attempt of each age to distinguish itself from its predecessors. For, even Baudelaire was aware of this problem. For a sustainable development of this idea in Baudelaire see 'The Painter of Modern Life'
- 4 Even Eliot didn't shy away from honouring Baudelaire's stature in literature with superlatives: "Baudelaire is indeed the greatest exemplar in modern poetry in any language, for his verse and language is the nearest thing to a complete renovation that we have experienced. See Eliot 'Baudelaire' 234
- 5 See Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern life* 40
- 6 All poems in this paper are taken from McGowan's translation of the text.
- 7 See *Flowers of Evil*. 5
- 8 ibid
- 9 Ibid 6. Ennui is usually translated as boredom in English, which is a soul deadening force that leads man towards an abyss of non-being; to a site of nothingness. See notes in *Flowers of Evil* 351
- 10 See Baudelaire 'The Painter of Modern Life'. In this essay on Guy, Baudelaire attempts to offer a possible definition of what constitutes the modern subject by highlighting the need for the whole range of man's existence to be taken into consideration, as it provides the distinguishing feature of each age in its quest for modernity.
- 11 See Benjamin, *A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* 76-80
- 12 "In actuality this resignation is already inherent in the concept of the modern hero. He is predestined for doom, and no tragedian need come forwards to set forth the necessary for this downfall. But once modernism has received its due,

- its time has run out." Ibid 81 Also, see Bataille, *Literature and Evil* in which he argues for an inherent relationship between evil and poetry in his discussion of Baudelaire, "Though poetry may trample verbally on the established order, it is no substitute for it." 29
- 13 See *Flowers of Evil* 189
- 14 For a different and yet an interesting reading of the poem see Culler *Theory of the Lyric*. 26-29. What Culler overlooks in his reading of the poem is the instant of lack, where an excess is committed in the poem.
- 15 One can only conjecture the cause of grief and mourning in the poem. Yet, given Baudelaire's long drawn fascination with the question of original sin and corruption of man, this idea could not be something far from the truth in this context.
- 16 See Bataille 33
- 17 Ibid 35
- 18 *Flowers of Evil* 19
- 19 Ibid
- 20 See Poulet, 'Baudelaire' in *Baudelaire: A Collection of Critical Essays* 134
- 21 Ibid
- 22 *Flowers of Evil* 19
- 23 It could be drunkenness stimulated by drugs, alcohol and other stimulants. See Baudelaire *The Poem of Hashish*.
- 24 *The Flowers of Evil* 11
- 25 See 'The Painter of Modern Life' 12
- 26 Ibid 22
- 27 See De Man 'Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric' 303

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Dance in England and Bengal- 15th to 17th Century

—Dr. Shatabdi Acharya Chakraborti

Abstract

Dance has always been with human beings even before the arrival of written language. Many historians believe that social, celebratory and ritual dances are one of the essential factors of the development of early human civilizations. Dance and music have special religious significance in India. These are considered to be both gifts of Gods as well as a way of worshipping Gods. In England, Renaissance had played a crucial role in the upliftment of existing dance forms. During 15th to 17th century, masters were invited from different nations to Elizabethan Court to enrich Britain's dance and music. From 13th century onwards the repeated foreign invasions ripped Bengal of its cultural richness, the rich classical dance and music ceased to exist due to the lack of patronage and temples- the seats of culture were demolished. Only the texts and the rich literature remained as tools to reconstruct and revise and also stand as evidence for its cultural richness.

With time, dance gradually, shifted from being a part of musical performance to an independent art form. Though, sometimes it was charged with licentiousness, true, patrons preserved its aesthetic aspects and that is the reason why, even today these dances survive but with a different name and incorporation of certain changes with time.

Key words : 1. Country dance, 2. Courtly dance, 3. Classical dance, 4. Elizabethan court, 5. Dancing masters, 6. Gaudiya Nritya.

The period of European history referred to as the Renaissance was a time of great social and cultural change in Europe. The period of time during which the European Renaissance fell was the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age.

Dance in this period was mainly concentrated in the courts of the princes who had to acquire a high level of personal cultural refinement, which would include not only music, drawing and poetry, but dance as well. In England, the court dances enjoyed by royalty, nobility and the upper classes were often imported from Italy, Spain or France. The Renaissance period in England, also

termed as Elizabethan era, had two distinct divisions of dances. The upper classes including the royalty enjoyed new types of music and dance at the court. The lower classes enjoyed the more traditional country dances.

The ballet first appeared in Italian courts in the 16th century and it became popular in France, especially during the reign of Louis XIV. Among the formal dances of the 17th century, were the Courante, Saraband, Pavan, Minuet, Gavotte etc. French dances made their way to England in the 17th century.

Popular dances of this period included the Mazurka and Polonaise from Poland, the Czardas from Hungary, the Fandango, Bofero, Seguidilla, and Flamenco from Spain, the Tarantella and Saltarello from Italy, the Waltz and Gallop from Germany, the Palka and Schottische from Bohemia, the Strathspey and Highland fling from Scotland, the Hornpipe from England, and the Jig from Ireland.

Most of what we know about the dance steps and choreographies of the mid 16th to mid 17th centuries, come from instruction manuals written by dancing masters across Europe. They provide step description, set choreographies, accompanying music, illustrations rules of ballroom etiquette etc. The most famous dancing masters during that period were Thoinot Arbeau (1520 - 1995 - French), Fabritio Caroso (1536 - 1605 - Italian) and Cesare Negri (1535 - 1604 - Italian). No discourse on this period is complete without the reference of these legendary dancing masters and their manuals.



Thoinot Arbeau

a) Orchesographie by Thoinot Arbeau - Published in Langres in 1588, Arbeau's Orchesographie represents dance practices in France from the 1550s to the 1580s. It is the only French source for this period and also provides a foundation of information for dance practices in other European countries. The text is based on an imaginary discussion between a teacher and his student eager about social dance style, steps and etiquette. The treatise provides helpful information on 'bows' (a gesture of showing respect) and other ballroom etiquettes. It also provides information about marching and drumming techniques and it is specially important for containing valuable discussion on Renaissance rhythms and meter.

Certain dance forms described in Orchesographie:-

- Branle - Orchesographie is the only source of this dance form. It is danced in circles by as many couples as desired.
Steps - always begin by turning sideways to left.
Meter - double, triple and mixed meters.
- Galliard - A showcase dance for male dancers, it was one of the most popular courtly dances often used by great dramatists, like Shakespeare, in their plays.
Steps - five jumped changes in six beats.
Meter - triple meter.
- Pavan - Also referred to as Pavane or Pavanne, it was basically a processional dance (a ballroom dance for a single couple)
Steps - two single steps and one double step indicating "walking with decorum and measured gravity."
Meter - single and double meter.



Fabritio Caroso

b) Nobilta di dame by FabritioCaroso - This Italian dancing master produced his first dance manual Ballarino in 1581 but his second dance manual Nobilta di dame was published in 1600. Here, Caroso redefines and in some cases, corrects information found in his first treatise. The dance manual gives rules for 68 steps and contains specific choreographies for 49 dances.



Cesare Negri

c) Le gratie d' a more by CesareNegri - This manual, though being similar in certain aspects to Caroso's works, contains steps far more difficult. This manual is divided into three sections.

- The first contains details about Negri's professional life as a teacher.
- The second explains 'galliard' and its variations.
- The third section contains definitions of steps and step patterns with forty three choreographies and their appropriate music.

Published in 1602, this treatise is the only late Renaissance source that provided choreographies for theatrical dances designed for amateurs. Apart from these three dance manuals, some other books also influenced the existing dance styles of that period. Francois de Lauze's Apologie de la danse published in France in 1623, marked changes in dance steps that included turnout from hip, five feet position, exercises to enhance bending etc.

All these manuals are aimed at elite audiences and describe court dances, with the exception of Arbeau's Orchesographie, which is addressed to a middling - status audience and contains a mix of courtly and rustic or country

dances. We don't get any technical manuals during the last half of the 17th century. "Social dancers in France and England witnessed a proliferation of manuals on English country dance (known also as anglaise or angloise), including works by John Playford (from 1651) and André Lorin (c.1685 and 1688)." John Playford's The English Dancing Master It is a collection of 105 country dances with accompanying tunes. The majority of these dances were sets of three, four or many couples facing each other.

List of lower class dances -

- Branle or Brawle (concluding dance for masques)
- Jig (involves leaps and jumps)
- Hornpipe (a lively dance associated with sailors)
- Roundel (any dance performed in a circle)
- Dump (dance accompanied by lute)
- Buffoons (performed by comic characters in court masques)
- Maypole (dance surrounding and using May pole - a symbol of fertility)
- Morris (often danced with handkerchief or sticks)

Apart from these above mentioned dances for the common people of the society, there were other country dances whose names were quite amusing as they reflect the types of dance and common country activities; e.g. - Gathering Peascods, chirping of the Nightingale, Hole in the Wall, Jenny Pluck Pears, Pefficoat Wag, Picking up sticks etc.

There are no surviving English dancing manuals for the period between Gresley manuscript (C.1500) and John Playford's The English Dancing Masters (1651). But two French dancing masters wrote dancing manuals each in the early 17th century dedicated to their English patrons, which contained a handful of choreographic descriptions of a group of English processional dances known as Measures or Old Measures. These manuals also provide conduct rules for dances known in England. Evidences prove that travelling dancing masters, ambassadors and households of royal brides spread courtly dances across Europe and at least the most privileged English readers had access to continental dancing manuals. e.g. - Sir Thomas Bodley's library contained such a copy of Italian dancing manual - Ballarino by FabritioCaroso.

Disorder in the state as a result of conflict in the affairs of those in authority is the basic action of many Shakespeare's plays, but even the tragedies, which deal with the extremes of human suffering, present a view of life which is optimistic; the idea that order is possible, that harmony can be restored. Closely related to this attitude is his use of dance both as a part

of the visually representation on stage and as the content of dialogue. An understanding of dance adds much to an appreciation of many of the plays and it is indispensable for the proper understanding of certain scenes and passages.

In the history plays of Shakespeare, dance provides imagery. The dance images are few and at first appear to be isolated but the imagery derived from dance helps to enhance the audience's perception of character, situation and theme. Court dancing is the main source for Shakespeare. At the end of Act III scene I of Henry II, Richard, the Duke of York, left above on the stage, ponders on the plotting of his rebellion, to be stirred, by John Cade, the 'headstrong Kentishman'. In Ireland, he says :

"Have I seen this stubborn Cade oppose himself against a troop of Kerns, And fought so long till that his thighs with ducts were about like a sharp-quill'd parpentine, And in the end being rescu'd, I have seen him Caper upright like a wild Morisco, Shaking the bloody darts as he his bells".

The name Morisco is more usually given to a dance than to a person but the word 'bells' in the next line makes clear that Shakespeare is referring to a Morris dance. A 'morisk' with dancers wearing bells is recorded as part of English Court entertainment in 1515, but it was in the country where morris dancing achieved great popularity in the 16th and 17th centuries, often being associated with May-games. The traditional six dancers wear elaborate clothing. These can include a fool, a hobby-horse, a dragon and a man-women. The Morris dancer's bells were and are, his most notable items of dress, this can be clearly seen in a contemporary illustration on the title page of Keps nine daies wonder.



Morris dancer

It was performed in a dance from London to Norwich (1600) which

shows Shakespeare's Clown wearing a pad of bells below each knee to jingle with him all the way on his famous exploit. Pipe and tabor were the usual accompaniment for the Morris at the time.

When at last he turns to dancing in comedy, with Love's Labour's Lost, Shakespeare approaches it cautiously, using just the idea of the dance and very carefully avoiding the dance itself.

Shakespeare's experiments with dance in comedy ended with A Midsummer Night's Dream. In A Midsummer Night's Dream he used it more abundantly than he was ever to do again. And he uses it deliberately to comment on the major pattern of order and disorder in the action and influence them.

Dancing was a natural part of summer festivals and while it would be an exaggeration to claim that the May-games of the English countryside were the main inspiration of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the spirit of the May-game, with its associations with love, licence and new life, is an essential part of the play's movement.

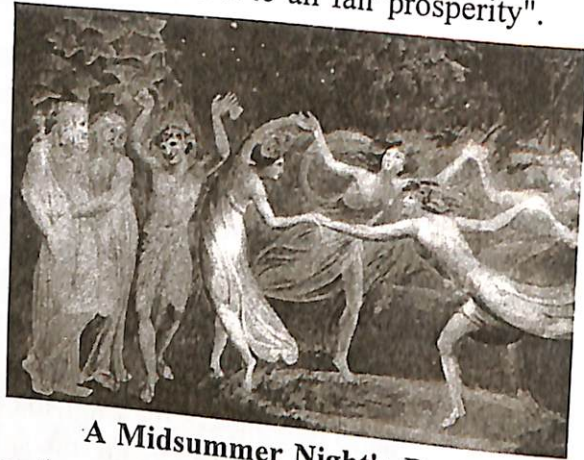
Different kinds of discord are confirmed and matched in the supernatural world in the scene, where Titania describes the foul disturbances of nature which have resulted from her quarrel with Oberon. She leaves no doubt that his rude interruption of her dancing with her fairies is a highly important aspect of their dispute:

"..... never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents".

Towards the end, Oberon calls for music and says:

"Come, my Queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity".



A Midsummer Night's Dream

The connections between dance and plot and dance and character relationships are developed with even greater sophistication in *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which disguise and deceit are used with more wicked purposes than in any of the plays so far discussed. Dancing occurs twice as part of the play's action, in the first scene of Act ii and at the end of Act v. On the first occasion the dancers are masked and under this false cover Don Pedro woos Hero for Claudio.

The four principal groups of plays Shakespeare wrote - histories, comedies, tragedies and 'last plays', are distinguished almost as much by the way in which dance and allusion to it are used as they are by their themes and characters.

In comedy, which would seem to be the most natural place for dance, Shakespeare seems to be experimenting to discover how it can be used in drama-in relation to dialogue, as an influence on plot, as a believable outcome of the action. One extreme is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with more dance than any other play. The other extreme is *Love's Labour's Lost*, with (probably) no actual dancing but containing more reference to it than any other play.

When the dance is used in tragedy its positive qualities of regularity and control and its associations with love and cosmic harmony, all are used to counter the evil with which it becomes linked. The result is irony. Almost always dance occurs or is referred to in the earlier part of a tragedy before the theme of disorder has gained momentum.

Shakespeare wrote at a level that was at once simpler and embraced a wider vision.

He was thus able to use the dance as a visual image of harmony and order in the world, and it is a movement towards that harmony, that resolution of disorder, which is the essential basis of his plays.

The dance forms practised in modern India are respected and valued all over the world. The roots of these dance forms are found buried in tradition of that particular place and the society but they have established and re-established themselves time and again in new forms. They were re-constructed and established as classical dances. Each dance form rapidly established themselves as classical forms and for a long time people believed that Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Kathakali and Manipuri were the only classical dances of India. Later, it was revealed that several other dance forms were in a queue waiting for their revival. Gradually, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Mohiniattam also gained the status of classical dances. GaudiyaNritya was recognised for the first time in the year 1993.

It was believed that Bengal had no dance form of its own. But the revival of GaudiyaNritya broke this belief. Bengal has an ancient dance form. It is believed to be as old as *Natyashastra* or older. "*Natyashastra* is an ancient form of Indian theatre with details on performing arts, encompassing theatre, dance and music. It was written during the period between 200 BC and 200 AD in classical India and is traditionally attributed to the Sage Bharata. It is elaborate of all treatises on dramatic criticism and acting ever written in any language and is regarded as the oldest surviving text on stagecraft in the world. Bharata, in his *Natyashastra*, demonstrates every facet of Indian drama while covering areas like music, stage-design, make up, dance and virtually every aspect of stagecraft. With its kaleidoscopic approach, with its wider scope *Natyashastra* has offered a remarkable dimension to growth and development of Indian classical music, Indian classical dances, drama and art". *Natyashastra* indeed laid the cornerstone of the fine arts in India. The technique of GaudiyaNritya is totally based on *Natyashastra*. One can observe several changes in it due to the passage of time, demand of the era and other historical, geographical and social factors.

In the 14th chapter of *Natyashastra* four types of 'Prabritti' or dance and abhinaya find mention. They are: Avanti, Panchali, Dakshinatya and Oudramagradhi. GaudiyaNritya comes under OudramagadhiPrabritti. The Oudramagadhi dance style was widespread. It covered a long region from Bhagalpur district of Bihar, whole of West Bengal, Rajshahi - Bagura and adjacent areas of North Bangladesh, Rajmahal hills of Jharkhand,

Birbhum district, Maldah district, Purulia, Nadia and the adjacent areas, Sikkim and Bhutan, Tamuk, South Midnapur and Bankura district. We understand that Oudramagadhi dance style was spread across ancient Bengal or Brihad Banga.

The 'Britti' or style of Oudramagadhi is Bharati and Kaishiki. 'Bharati' refers to Uchchanda or vigorous dance that incorporates dialogues and interactions, whereas, Kaishiki refers to soft and graceful movements. Different folk dance forms of Bengal like Chhau, Kirtan, Nachni etc. reflect these two styles through the polished classical version - Gaudiya Nritya. In Kaihan's, (6th century Kashmiri poet) Rajtarangini, we come to know about Bengal's Devdasi Kamala, a beautiful damsel who is portrayed as a classical dancer, dancing according to the rules and techniques of Natyashastra. As this dance was presented in temple, we can say that Bengal had the tradition of Devdasis dancing in temples. We can also say that since this dance form was temple oriented, it had to be soft and graceful dance describing and praising the greatness of the Almighty. Bengal had this rich tradition of Kirtan Nritya since time immemorial which still survives in rural Bengal now-a-days. Kirtan is a beautiful blend of 'Bharati' and 'Kaishiki' style which incorporates both graceful movements and vigorous movements with interactions. After Natyashastra we have the age of Matangamuni. In his text Brihaddeshi (5th to 7th century) we come to know about 'Seven Gitis' or divisions under classical music - Suddha, Bhinnaka, Gaudi or Gaudika, Sadharani, Bhasa, Bibhasa and Antarbhasika. Other than this, Brihaddeshi mentions ragas like - Gaud, Gaudkaishiki, Gaudpanchama and dance performances on these ragas. In Bengal, people were not contented just with the creation of good literary works like plays, they tried to enact and stage these great works of art. This was the reason that compelled great writers to construct different texts and scriptures to codify proper learning of dance and drama. Below is a table listing different scriptures, their authors and age of construction.

- Apart from Natyashastra and Brihaddeshi, there are several other important dance scriptures composed by eminent authors of Bengal.
- I. SangeetRatnakar: In this text we get to know about five types of sangeet or music that were practised in India in the 13th century. They were: Laat, Karnaat, Dravid, Andhra and Gauda. So, it is evident that Bengal's school of Music, i.e. Gauda was recognised and practised in India even in the 13th century A.D.
 - II. Geetagovindam: The great Sena ruler - Lakshman Sena of 12th century

A.D. had five famous court poets - Sharan, Dhoyi, Umapatidhar, Gobardhan Acharya and Jayadeva. They were popularly known as 'Pancharatna' or five gems but the most precious gem was Sri Jayadeva. His creation Geetagovindam stands as a strong base for all the classical dance forms of India.

In Bengal, Dasavatara sculptures dates back to 7th century and continues to be found till 18th century.



Bishnupatta

In this text, Dasavatara gained immense popularity and these sculptures gained motion in several dance forms, paintings etc. Geetagovindam has been translated into more than 50 languages all over the world. According to K. Basudev Shastri (editor of Geetagovindam in 1950 along with a preface on dance elements) "It is extremely probable that this work was composed by the direct disciples of Sri Jayadeva himself or those just after them. The gestures that are found in this work are simple, highly expressive and graceful and they follow the techniques laid down by Bharata in Natyashastra. The movements and gestures chiefly to be found in this work are included in the 24 asamyuktahastas (single hand), 13 samyuktahastas (double hands), the 4 hastakaranas (winding movements) and the 13 movements of the head."

Though, one might argue that Geetagovindam is a poetic literary work, the elements of dance scattered throughout the text makes it the most prized dance scripture in India.

- III. Srihastamuktabli and Sangeet Damodar: Between 13th to 15th century two most important scriptures of Gaudiya Nritya were penned down by the great author from North Bengal - Pandit Subhankar.
- Sangeet Damodar is also a very important text of Gaudiya Nritya where

we come across 13 Padavedas, several utplabanas (elevated movements that involve jumping), Bhramaris (circular movements) and movements of different body parts. Other than dance - music - instruments, description of Rasa is also present.

The other text by Pandit Subhankar, Srihastamuktabli is totally based on hasta mudras. Like all other texts on dance, this text also mentions different hasta mudras and their uses but what makes it different from other texts is the fact that it not only mentions the uses of the Hasta mudras but also describes how to portray them using that particular hasta.

- IV. Natakchandrika: In this text, the author, Srirup Goswami discusses one Rupak among the ten Rupaks of Drama.
- V. Ujjwal Nilamani and Bhaktirasamritasindhu: - These two are based on Vaishnav Rasa sashtra. Instead of eight Rasas, Vaishnav authors have recognised 5 mukhya (primary) bhakti rasa - Shanta (peace), Dasya (as a servant to Lord Krishna), Sakhya (as a friend to Lord Krishna), Batsalya (motherly affection towards little Krishna) and Madhura (as a beloved to Lord Krishna) and 7 gouna (secondary) bhakti rasa. Hasya (humourous), Karnua (grief), Raudra (anger), Veer (proud), Bhayanak (dangerous, scary), Bidhatsya (spiteful), Adbhut (strange, mysterious). Sringar Rasa has been described in details in these two texts - it has 32 Sambhogasringar and 32 Bipralambhasringar.
- VI. Radhakrishnaganodweshdipika: Here, the author, Srirup Goswami deals with 'Aharya' abhinaya of dance. He gives details about make-up, costume, jewellery etc. This book also tells us about characterisation of Drama.
- VII. Anandabrindabanchampuan and Alankarkaustav: these two were written in 15th century A.D. by Kavikarnapur. In Alankarkaustav - different aspects of ten kirans are discussed among which 'Rasabhabatbheda' is worth mentioning. In 20 chapters of Anandabrindabanchampu, there is the description of music - instruments - dance.
- VIII. Gopalchampu: It is a huge volume including 70 chapters. It is divided into two halves; first half consists of Lord Krishna's BrindabanLeela. This half also includes classical description of dance.
- IX. Naradpanchamsaarsanhitā: It is a text on classical music. Here, in the 19th sloka, the dancing masters of Rad area of Bengal are described

to be very talented. They are said to be multifaceted and versatile, adept in playing instruments, singing and dancing.

- X. Sangeet Damodar: The first chapter includes invocation of gods and goddesses. Second chapter starts with Dasabatara Shloka based on Gaudtala. The text ends with the description of Prabandha dance and Prabandha instruments.

Other than these above mentioned classical texts or scriptures there are several other texts that deal with classical dance, music, instruments and other attributes of these like dancer's make up and costumes, Nabarasas, several ragas and talas etc. It is also believed by eminent literary experts that there are many scriptures in Manipur composed by Bengali authors, about which we have little or no idea. It can be easily claimed that Bengal was very fertile culturally as it had such eminent authors who had composed these rich and unique classical texts. It is also clearly understood that ancient Bengal possessed a rich tradition of classical dance which was practised and popularised among masses.

The dance sculptures on the walls of temples of Bengal also establish this fact. Terracotta sculptures dating back to 1st century A.D. excavated at Tamluk district of West Bengal shows two dancers, male and female, dressed up for dance.



Terracotta dance sculptures

At Asutosh Museum (Kolkata) we come across another sculpture excavated at Chandraketugarh which belongs to 3rd - 4th century B.C. The sculpture is broken but depicts the lower part of a dancer wearing ghungroo, and an accompanying musician playing Veena.



Dance sculpture of Chandraketurgarh

We see that the journey of dance forms in both the countries has not been easy. There were several foreign influences that changed the status of dance as an art form in the society. Dance gradually, shifted from being a part of musical performance to an independent art form. Though, sometimes it was charged with licentiousness, true, patrons preserved its aesthetic aspects and that is the reason why, even today these dances survive but with a different name and incorporation of certain changes with time.

In Bengal one can still find the existence of folk dances like Kali Kanch, Gambhira, Dhamail, Bou Nach, Karma, Ojha, Bisahara, Chhou etc. though many of these are on the verge of extinction. Today, we can rarely find the war dances like Dhali, Paik, Ranpa etc. performed in rural Bengal. The temple oriented classical dance that faded away with the muslim invasions and demolition of temples and religious scriptures, has been revived and reshaped in the middle of the 20th century by the great dance scholar Prof. Mahua Mukherjee. In the year 1994, on 10th September the dance form was renamed as Gaudiya Nritya, derived from the ancient names of undivided Bengal - GaudaBanga. Today, Gaudiya, Nritya has taken its place as one of the classical dance forms of India and the only classical dance form of Bangladesh. Gaudiya Nritya performance brings back to life the dancing sculptures on the terracotta temples of Bengal dancing on earthen pot with flower pot and flying whisks in hands.



Gaudiya Nritya

In England, some of the famous folk dances like Morris, Sword dances Hornpipe etc still survive in the countryside. The rescue work of Cecil Sharp to preserve and reconstruct led to the survival of ancient English traditions in dance and song. Organisations such as English folk dance and song society conserve and patronize these folk art forms. Most fascinating folk dancing in the British Isles can be found in the Highlands of Scotland with its nimble footwork. The country dances were gradually codified not before the twentieth century. But in the nineteenth century "London became an important balletic centre during the hey day of the Romantic movement due to the effort of the ballet master Jules Perrot. But Perrot's departure for St. Petersburg and appearance of Jenny Lind won the London public over to Opera". Later, there came an attempt to supervise and improve the standards of dance teaching at all levels in Britain. World War I left little time for innovation in dance, but afterwards a revolution in dance began with the contribution of black Americans, Broadway and Ballroom began to merge and many new danceforms emerged like Rumba, Jitterbug, Samba, Cha Chacha, Twist, Salsa, Break Dancing etc. and many of them are still widely practised worldwide.



Salsa and Broadway

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Folk-Dance of Tripura : An Explorative Study

—Dr. Sipra Ray

Abstract :

Tripura is a hilly state, situated in the north-eastern region of India. Tripura have a rich cultural heritage. The region is a melting point of ethnic diversity. A total of nineteen tribes are living in Tripura. The Tribal of Tripura is very much affluent in the heritage and culture like dance, music, customs and other traditional beliefs. Dance is an integral part of tribal culture. Therefore in the tribal society dance and song become a way of life. Dances are associated with their daily activity, such as, agriculture activity, worship activity, various ritual activities, hunting activity, etc. Dance is an expression of joy and become a medium of enjoyment in their leisure time. This study is an attempt to discuss about different dances prevailing among the tribal people of Tripura.

Keywords : Tribal dance, Jhum, LebangBumani, Mamita, Garia, Hojagiri, MasukSumani, Cheraw, Wangala, Bijhu.

Tripura is a small hilly state; having an area of a 10,486 sq. Km. This state is situated in the northeastern region of India. It is bounded in the south, west, north west, south east by the international border with Bangladesh in the present district of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali, Sylhet and Comilla. The east is bounded with the portion of Mizoram and Assam. The region is a melting point of ethnic diversity. A total of nineteen tribes are living in Tripura. These are Tripuri, Reang, Chakma, Jamatia, Halam, Kuki, Uchai, Mog, Noatia, Garo, Munda, Oraong, Bhil, Santhal, Khasia, Lepcha, Bhutia, Chaimal, Lushai. These tribal people belonging to diverse ethnic and linguistic groups are to be found widely distributed over different parts of the state. Out numbering the tribal people the plain people from indeterminable times have been living side by side with tribal communities, resulting in cultural exchange.

The Tribal of Tripura is very much affluent in the heritage and culture like dance, music, customs and other traditional beliefs. Dance is an integral part of tribal culture. Actually the real life requirements gave birth to this art.

The art of dance and music is considered in the tribal community as power, which will fight natural and supernatural forces. To gratify deities dance and music are performed. In ancient societies the performance of dance was the foremost means to appease the deities, prevent spread of epidemic, invite rain, cure deceases and to add sensation to the hunting. Therefore in the tribal society dance and song become a way of life. Gayatri Chattopadhyay has commented that, "Dance was the ultimate outcome of self-expression. It was intricately associated with their life-style and livelihood. In ancient days dance was composed as an ancillary component of livelihood which was made smooth and rich in the process. In this way creation of different components for livelihood and mental recourse has acted as complementary forces. At that time as a medium of self-expression was spontaneous, strong and blooming."

Dance is older to the agri-based society. "Probably the artistic characteristic of aboriginal Dance came to the focus after the advent of agri-based society. Much later religion had influenced the dances. What was in practice earlier was ritualistic only. Earlier to the religious period dances was created in the context of production of various seasonal crops. That was a method of livelihood only."

Most of the tribes of Tripura live on agriculture. So their rites and rituals and culture have established on the work of agriculture. Agriculture-based dances have taken a significant role in the cultural life of Tribal of Tripura. These dances have taken at a later stage the form of religious and ritualistic dances. Almost all the tribes of the world have agriculture-based dances. This fact applies to the tribes of Bodo family too. Different tribes have much in common in agriculture-based dances but the form and presentation of dances vary tribe to tribe. Their agriculture-based dances have been based on Jhum system of cultivation. Various stages of cultivation i.e., slashing of jungle, burning of bushes, sowing, reaping etc. have been depicted through these dances.

1. Jhum Dance

Tribes of Tripura living in the hills for ages have been accustomed to Jhum system of cultivation. For sustenance of their life, they are dependent on Jhum cultivation. They are focused on Jhum-based life through Jhum Dance and Song. Most tribal people of Tripura practice Jhum Dance. Both boys and girls perform this dance. Tripuri, Noatia, Chakma, Halam, Molsom, Reang, Garo tribes perform Jhum Dance. But the style and rhythm of the dance vary from community from community.

Different parts of Jhum Dances performed by the Tripuris are:

1. Hugraimani (selection of land)
2. Hug tangmani (cleaning of jungle)
3. Harsangmani (burning of jungle)
4. Maainimani (sowing of seeds)
5. Maairamani (reaping)
6. Ag kirok jar (returning home)

It is said that in the Chakma society Jhum Dance is a new entrant. About this Ahmed Hanif has said, "...the educated artists of the Chakmas and Tanchangyas have created Jhum Dance and song as an indigenous item of dance and song." Their Jhum Dance is performed in a high tempo. It is a group dance. The team is led by an artist who starts the dance by inviting others to cultivate in the jhum land. Every stage of jhum cultivation is shown in the dance.

"Hoi hoijumatjebang
Jaumatjeineighochchesudotulibong
Ghochchesudotulineitengahamebang."

[Let us all go to the jhum. We will collect cotton and sesame there. Selling these produces we will earn lots of money.]

Noatias of Tripura are said to have come from Chittagong Hill tracts later. That is why they are known as Noatia or 'new comer'. Their jhum dance is slightly different from the Tripuris. In Noatia's dance influence of Reang can be noticed. Their jhum dance is divided into nine parts, namely-

1. Chalraghabouihuknijaganaaitaai da hulmani.
2. Ha khulumoni baling hakmani.
3. Choulabourouiraagsakhemaikaimani.
4. Maaitangmani.
5. Maairaaithummani.
6. Da kouchartunmani.
7. Choulabourouigalebangmani.
8. Baalingbaaimaichakmani.
9. Paithaaglangamaailaiharmani.

Jhum dance in the Reang society is presented before the Hojagiri Dance. When the new crop is taken home they celebrate the occasion. Their Jhum dance is called 'Musami'. At that time Jhum dance is performed. Kham (drum) and flute also accompany the dance. The Jhum dance of Reang is divided into:

1. Land selection (Huk Loim)

2. Felling of trees (Owataaimo/Ongfa Rotaiyo)
3. Setting fire (Hu chhaoyo)
4. Cleaning (Hu khaoyo)
5. Sowing of paddy seeds (Mlaklanoikaaiyo)
6. Hoeing (Hagrataayang-Maaiyagutangyay- Mai maaiyagukaram)
7. Reaping (Maairamo)
8. Grinding of paddy (Maaigumo)
9. Returning home (Dechuongsnaim)

2. Lebang Bumani Dance

Lebang Bumani Dance is an agriculture-based dance. This dance is performed by the Tripuri community. Their agriculture is mainly centered on jhum cultivation. In Kakborok language 'lebang' means one kind of 2.5 cm long insect that attacks jhum crops. 'Buma' means catching insect by some tricks. 'Maami' is a kind of red paddy of jhum crop, which attracts the insect. From the young paddy the lebang insect suck the white juice of the paddy. Consequently paddy got destroyed.

The Tripuris catch the insects to save the crop. It becomes a sort of competition to catch the insects. Catching more insects will save the paddy and will provide a good harvest. In this context, Dr. Padmini Chakraborty said, "The Lebang Bumani Dance is associated with Jhum based life. As the theme is catching of Lebang insects it can also be linked with harvest or good production." In the nights of bright fortnight Tripuri youth, in group, launch an insect catching expedition in the jhum field. Firstly they move two sticks in their hand differently, to produce the sound like that of the insects flying. Attracted by the sound insects come down to the field. Then the young girls catch them and put them into a basket, called 'Langa'. Imitating this process a dance has been composed by Tripuris, and this is called Lebang Bumani Dance.

This dance is performed with the song. The song is accompanied with kham (drum) and flute. The rhythm of this dance is very fast. From the very beginning it moves on a fast tempo. There is no interval between different forms of this dance. In the words of Priyabrata Bhattacharjee, "The purpose hidden in the Lebang Bumani Dance is catching of insects. Both male and female dancers take part in it. The boys dance with two sticks in two hands as though they are chasing insects while the girls show the gestures catching and entrapping insects. Along with this Tui-tareng and Labangti instruments are played. In the present age the Tripurians perform this dance in the month of Jaistha."

Lebang Bumani Dance can be divided into few parts like jhum dance. But today due to the difficulties to find a teacher for training in these dances creating a situation, where there is lack of practice. Originally this dance consists of nine parts:

1. Hug tangmani (going to the jhum)
2. Lebangrtukmani (watching Lebang)
3. Lebangpungkhani (producing sound of Lebang)
4. Lebangphunokmani (to show Lebang)
5. Lebangburemani (chasing Lebang)
6. Lebangrammani (catching Lebang)
7. Lebang rep mani (encircling Lebangs)
8. Lebangberramani (catching Lebang with a small net)
9. Lebang ramous tanhjak (going home in joy carrying the Lebangs along)

3. Mamita or Maimita Dance

Mamita is an important festival of tribes of Tripura, who are engaged in the jhum cultivation. After Garia it is the second popular festival among the tribes of Tripura. In the months of Ashwin-Kartik this festival is organized. Mailuma is the deity of crops. After bringing home jhum crop, the jhumias dedicate this newly reaped crop to the Mailuma. They can not have new rice without offering it to deity. This Mamita festival is celebrated through dances and songs. All these activities centered on Mamita festival had given birth to rhythm, lyrics in Kakborok language. The dance which is performed in this festival is called Mamita Dance. All participants together perform this dance maintaining lyric and rhythm.

The word Maami means one kind of red rice produced in the jhum. Various crops are produced in the jhum, e.g., Aaduma, Garo-Khasa, Maami, etc. Among them Maami is the best jhum product in respect of taste and quality are concerned. That is why Maami has been credited as an inspiration of a festival. Baatoug or Laangi, country liquor is the good one, which is produced from the Maami. During the worshipping two hens, Maamirice, and Laangi are offered to the deity of crops. At the end of the worship all participants (guest and house-owner) take wine and meat as prasada of pooja. To worship the deity the jhumias fix a date as per their convenience. But as per tradition, more than one family in the same village cannot perform the worship on the same day. So, the Mamita festival is celebrated in a village for a month or more than that.

Religion has always been playing a predominant role in the human

society. The basic truths of religion are existence of God, immortality of Soul, existence of Supernatural principle. These truths were revealed to the primitive men naturally. But later on, to please various deities, spirits of ancestor these gave birth to rites and rituals. God and Spirits need to be worshiped following particular rites and rituals. Despite of worshipping various Hindu God and Goddess, tribes of Tripura worship their prime deity as mother Goddess. The priests of tribal people are known as Ojha or Achai, who perform the worship. These performances of worship are accompanied with various songs and dances.

4. Garia Dance

Gariapooja is the biggest of all the poojas or festivals in the tribal society of Tripura. Ria or Richha is used in Gariapooja. To symbolize the deity Garia, a bamboo is planted on the ground. Ria is rapped up to the Garia idol. This worship of tribal begins on the last day of Bengali Chaitra month i.e. the last day of Bengali calendar year. It lasts through seven days of the New Year. It is believed that, for the welfare of the people Shiva and Ganesh are worshiped in this pooja. All the major tribes of Tripura perform the Gariapooja. But there is slight difference between the rights and rituals of worshipping Garia among different community.

The object of this pooja is to for rich harvest. The need of rich harvest and well-being of all people gave birth to Gariapooja. The rules of nature must be followed for agricultural convenience or rich harvest. For agricultural purpose there is need to act according to the seasonal requirements. This is the reason why all the people of North-East try to finish a phase of cultivation by the month of Chaitra.

Along with the worship dance and song are born to inject life into the Garia festival. This is an expression of devotion and feeling to the Garia. People go on dancing and singing through the village carrying the Garia symbol. Dance is performed moving from one house to another. Young dancers make their steps following the strict rhythm of Kham. In this Garia dance Kham and flute are played in strict disciplined manner. Gestures of different wild birds and animals are imitated throughout the dance, which last 10 to 15 minutes in front of each household of the village. In the Garia dance Achai or priest takes a major role. Among the Garia performers Tripuri, Noatia, Jamatia, Reang belong to Bodo group of tribes, but Rupini and Kolo dancers belong to Halam group.

5. Hojagiri Dance

Hojagiri Dance is performed by the Reang community of Tripura. They dance in a group in some social and religious ceremonies. Hojagiri Dance is performed wearing beautiful dress and ornaments. In the opinion of Suren Debbarman, Hojagiri has come from the Bengali word Kojagiri (this dance is performed on the occasion of Laxmi Puja (the worship of Goddess of wealth)).

This dance is performed standing on an earthen pitcher with the help of ankles and fingers of the feet with the bottle on the head along with a lighted oil lamp above it. Some may dance with bottle on their elbows, sometimes with a dala on the forefinger of the left hand rotating it by the right hand. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts this balance dance is known as 'bottle dance'. In this dance, there is movement of the body which is solely based on the waist and navel without the slightest movement in the upper part and by keeping two feet close.

The young women are selected to perform this dance. This is due to their slim and cane-like constitution of body. As this dance requires a marvelous expertise on balancing art, women can impressively present the poses and posture of balance. This Hojagiri dance is accompanied by kham and flute, with song of wild tune having wonderful rhythm. So every step is done rhythmically. This dance today earned the fame throughout the world. This dance is performed in the Republic Day Parade and other folk festival of India.

Different part of this dance is given below:

1. Pitcher full of water and biras will be brought to the stage by the Reang man.
2. The Reang belles will enter into the stage waving their plates and with bottle on their heads.
3. The pose of pranam and salutation will be shown with the plates in their hand.
4. Dance will be performed on the pitchers by moving round it.
5. Dalawill be moved by the right hand keeping it on the forefinger of the left hand.
6. Dalawill be moved by one hand and plate by another hand by turns.
7. Each dancer will have a bottle and oil lamp on her head.
8. Dance will be performed on the plates.
9. Dance with bottle and lamp on the elbows.
10. Performance of 'Chakrasan' on the pitchers.

11. Picking up of money and handkerchief from the stage.
12. Dance will be concluded with the pose of Pranam.

6. Bijhu Dance

Bijhuis a popular festival among the Chakma tribe of Tripura. This festival is started from the last two days of Chaitra and continues for 4 (four) days. Chakmas entertain in the festival by dancing and singing. The main festival is 'Mul Bijhu' which occurs on the last day of Chaitra. Bijhu Dance is performed by the young boys and girls with equal number of male and female dancers. By Bijhu dance Chakmas welcome the New Year. The dancers perform this dance in their traditional attire. In this dance Dhul (Drum), Baashi (Flute), Khengarang etc. traditional instruments are played with a tune of lovely song. Words of the song have the centre role in this dance.

In the beginning the dancers enter the stage in two rows. Later on as a part of this dance they make a circle. Sometime they face each other and dance back to back. Hands, shoulders and waist movements of female dancers in this dance are of great attraction to the onlookers. The dance and the music stop in between for a while. With the 'hei' sound, they resume the dance. This dance-style and the music of Chakmas have a great resemblance with the Bijhu Dance of Assamese people.

7. Wangala Dance

Garos communities organize a big festival when they take home all harvested crops in the month of Ashwin. This festival is known as Wangala. In this festival they perform dance. As this particular dance is performed in this festival, it is named as Wangala Dance. Most of the Garo people depend on jhum cultivation for livelihood. During the time of sowing, harvesting, yielding of new crops they celebrate various ceremonies. Out of these Wangalais celebrated with great enthusiasm and festivity mood. For Garos, Shiva is the God of crops. So, an idol made of bamboo as a symbol of Shiva God is worshiped in this festival.

The Wangala dance is divided into three parts- Grifa, Gurirunuya and Danidakhnia. The priest, after finishing the worship dances by holding a sword in one hand and a Sniti (made of bamboo and cane) in another. He imitates attacking of someone with the sword. In between musical instruments are played slowly. In the dance, through gesture it is shown that, he is rehearsing to fight a battle against an invisible enemy. The interpretation of this gesture is that, it is to protect an evil spirit to cast an unwanted act over the festival. We can classify this dance as a war dance of other tribal communities. This

part is called Grifa. In the Gurirunuya stage of Wangala dance, Garo boys and girls dance maintaining a pace with the music. They keep on dancing screaming 'hei-hei' sound. The last stage Danidakhnia is performed with such a gestures that, it seems the dancers have been taken by some spirit. Performers produce slow and loose movements in this stage.

8. Cheraw Dance

Cheraw Dance is the most popular dance among the Lusais of Tripura. It is also known as Cherolam Dance. Che means foot movements, Ro means bamboo and Lam means dance. So, it stands for Bamboo Dance. While the dance is performed by the female dancers, a rhythmic sound is produced by the clash of bamboos. The boys hit the ground and bamboos with one another to produce the rhythm. The girls dance with their foot-work with the rhythm of music.

In earlier times, it was a ritualistic dance. But with the tide of time this dance is being performed in different ceremonies. In the past Cheraw dance used to be performed by the female relatives of a pregnant woman towards the end of pregnancy or during the time of delivery. This dance is performed with a festive mood to grow confidence in the mind of pregnant woman.

9. Mog Dance

Mog people are very much festival-lover. Their daily lifestyle is associated with different types of festival. They celebrate those 'festival' performing different songs and dances. In Mog society dance have been classified into different types. Mainly there are five types of dance in Mog society.

- i) Kyanmui- This dance is the oldest one in the Mog society.
- ii) Saing- This dance is performed in the death ceremony of any renowned person or religious leader or the King of the community.
- iii) Yaing- The main characteristic of this dance is to show different style of body-gestures through performance.
- iv) Chhimuing- This dance is performed specially in the marriage ceremony to show respect to the parents of newly married couple.
- v) Baaing- It is considered as the modern dance in the Mog community, as this dance has been originated imitating modern style of dance. It is also known as Mask Dance.

10. Masuk Sumani Dance

In the primitive stage man first learnt hunting. The transformation from hunter to agriculturist took thousands of years. But many aboriginal

communities still try to give a light to their traditional culture through songs, dances and folk tales. Masuk Sumani is a hunting dance of Tripuri people. It is deer-hunting dance. From two to four dancers perform this dance. Scene of deer-hunting activities are enacted in it.

Conclusion

We find that, song and dance has become the way of daily lifestyle in the tribal community of Tripura. By dance they mean some movements done in imitation of something or some activity. These folk dances are created on the basis of traditional beliefs and later on these dances got merged to take the shape of recognized dance form. These dances are based on different factors of their daily life, such as, worshiping of different deities, propitiation of evil forces, for good sowing and harvest, facing high rain and drought, satisfaction of the deceased and soul, observance of different seasons or dates, welfare of the society or of a new-born baby, etc. Dances play an important role in inspiring the hard working tribes in their daily activities, relaxing their mind. Through dance and song they are preserving their traditional culture and unity in diversity.

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- 10 *Ria* is a piece of cloth woven on loin loom, used by tribal women to cover the upper part of the body. It is the chest-wear of the tribal women.
- 11 Debbbarman.Op. Cit.p. 54.
- 12 Chakraborty, Dr. Umasankar. Op. Cit. p. 113.
- 13 Debbbarman.Op. Cit. p. 134.
- 14 *Dala* is a high rimmed bamboo tray used by people for their daily works.
- 15 Hanif.Op. Cit. p. 45.
- 16 *Bira* is made of straws wrapped with the borders of Sarees,
- 17 Chakraborty, Dr. Umasankar. Op. Cit. p. 108.
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The Goddess Mahishashur Mardini : An Iconographic Study of Assam

-Dr. Indrani Choudhury

Abstract :

Saktism is the cult of worship a female goddess as the supreme deity. The deity is variously called Devi, Durga, kali, Uma, Tara, Chandi, Chamunda, sankhabhara and so on. The goddess has been conceived as the sakti or energy of Siva, the supreme godhead. The goddess is worshipped in various iconic representation or in the form of a yoni सिबलिनिग the creative principle. The procedure of worshipping the goddess is mainly recommended in the Tantras. Ancient Assam was very important seat of Saktism. Traditionally kamrup has been recognised as the principal centre of the sakti cult with the chief temple at kamakhya. Epigraphs also supported the prevalence of sakti cult in very early period of Assam. Kalika purana, which is said to have composed in early 10th century AD gives the iconographical details of several sakti deities in ancient Assam. Even in present, the Durga puja is most colourfully performed by the Hindus of Eastern India including Assam. Various types of sakti images have been found in Assam. These images are sculptured in various periods with distinctive features with grace and beauty. These splendid art of sculptures show the artistic handicraftship and beauty with the philosophy of Saktism.

Key words : Saktism, supreme, Godhead, Kamakhya, Kalika purana, handicraftship.

The cult of the universal Mother Gradually transformed itself into the cult of Sakti, identified with the energy of Siva. The worship of the female principle was prevalent during the Indus valley Civilization. In the early Vedic period, the male deities were given more importance, and in the epics and the puranas the Sakti cult got predominance.¹

According to the Devimahatmya, all the gods and goddesses are but manifestations of the one single supreme being, Mahalakshmi.²

The evolution of the various cosmic gods and Goddesses from the supreme Goddess, Mahalakshmi is given in the Devimahatmya of the Markandeya - purana.³

The Devimahatmya which now exists as an independent scripture

originally formed part of the Markandeyapurana, chapters 81-93. Devi is the Divine supreme power. She is the mother who creates the world and all creatures.⁴

Devi is worshipped independently as the supreme deity under the name of Sakti. She is also worshipped in association with Siva in Saivism and Vishnu in Vaisnavism. Saktism is often considered more akin to Saivism than to vaisnavism. Devi as the consort of Siva finds mention in the Uttarkamikagama.⁵

The goddess Durga may have four, eight or more hands, three eyes and of dark complexion. She should have a handsome look with a well - developed bust, stout thighs and big hip, and be clad in yellow garments. The head should be adorned with a Karandamakuta, and the body decked with all ornaments. The front right hand should be in the abhaya pose, and the back one should carry the sankha. The image of Durga should be made to stand erect upon a padmasana, or on the head of a buffalo, or be seated on the back of a lion. Her breasts should be bound with a snake, and a red bodice should cover the upper portion of her body. The Suprabhedagama calls her the sister of Visnu, and informs that she came out of the Adisakti. According to this work, she may have either eight or four hands, and when she has eight hands and when she has eight hands, they should carry the sankha cakra, sula, dhanu, vana, khadgaadga, khetaka and pasa.⁶

Nine different forms of Durga are mentioned in the Agamas, namely, Nilakanthi, Ksemankari, Harasidhi, Rudremsa - Durga, Vana Durga, Jaya Durga, Vindhya vasi - Durga and Ripumari Durga.⁷

The Goddess Durga as Mahisasura - mardini, should have ten hands, according to silpasastra, which describes her as having three eyes. She should wear on her head a Jata- mukuta and in it there should be the Chandra - kala or the light of the moon. The colour of her body should be like that of the atasi flower, and the eyes should resemble the nilotpala or the blue lily; she should have high breasts and a thin waist, and there should carry the trisula, khadga, saktayudha, cakra and stringed bow; and in the left hands pasa, ankusa, khetaka, parasu and a bell. At her feet should lie a buffalo with its head cut off and with blood gushing out from its neck, within this neck should be visible the half emerged real asura, bound down by the maga-pasa of the Devi. The Asura should be made to carry a sword and a shield, although the Devi has plunged her trisula into his neck and he is bleeding profusely. He should have a terrific look with knitted eye brows. The right leg of the Devi should be

placed on the back of her lion and she left should touch the buffalo -body of Mahisasura.⁸

The Vishnudharmottara, as quoted in the Vachaspathyam, describes Mahisa-mardini under the name of Candika thus : This Devi has the complexion of gold and is a very handsome youthful has twenty hands; the right ones carry, respectively, the sula, khadga, sankha, cakra, vana, sakti, vajra, abhaya, damaru and an umbrella, while the left ones are to hold the naga-pasa, khetaka, parasu, ankusa, dhanus, ghanta, dhyaja, goda, a mirror and the mudgara. The buffalo-neck. His eyes, hair and brows are red and vomit blood. The lion, the vehicle of the Devi, mauls him, and Devi herself thrust the trisula into his neck. The asura, who is bound down by the naga pasa, carries a sword and a shield.⁹

The Varahapurana gives another account of the destruction of Mahisasura. Vaisnavi, the sakti of Visnu, was doing tapas in the Mandara mountain. On one occasion, her mind lost connection and in consequence several handsome looking female were born out of her. They begun to attend upon the Devi : and thus, looked after by these damsels, she began to continue her austerities. Narada saw her resplendent beauty, and told Mahisasura of the existence of a real paragon of beauty on the Mandara mountain. Seized by the madness of possessing her, the asura prepared himself to capture and marry her. He sent a messenger to the Devi to relate to her his greatness and prowess and to ask her to accept him as her consort. This messenger narrated to her the origin and history of Mahisasura. Risi Sindhudipa, son of suparsya, was practicing penance in Mahismi. A girl named Mahismati, daughter of Viprachitti, came with her friends to the Mandaraparvata. They all were disguised as she -buffaloes and threatened to gore the risi, who was doing penance. The risi cursed them to be she buffaloes. They represented for their formidable nature and prayed to the risi. Risi promised them that their buffalo-nature would disappear from them when a buffalo son was born to Mahismati. The risi Sindhudipa met a celestial nymph named Indumati on the bank of the Narmada, and it was swallowed with the water of the river by Mahismati. This seed grew in the womb of Mahismati, and in time Mahisasura was born. After the departure of the messenger, Narada appeared before the Devi and informed her that Mahisasura was born. Narada appeared before the Devi and informed her that Mahisasura, having defeated all the gods, was going to carry her away by force. The asura came

with a large army to attack the Devi. She, with her female attendants, met him and his army in battle and completely destroyed all of them.¹⁰

A different version of the destruction of Mahisasura is given in the Vamanapurana.¹¹

Durga is often worshipped in the form of nine figures, one of them being set up in the middle and the remaining eight positions corresponding to the eight sides. That are all seated on Padmapitha. The image in the middle has eighteen hands, big breasts and thighs, and is adorned with various ornaments. This goddess has in eight of her left hands the tuft of hair of the asura, the khetaka, ghanta, mirror, dhanus, dhyaja, damaru, pasa, the remaining left hands being held in the tarjani pose. The right hands carry the sakti, tanka, sula, vajra, sankha, ankusa, cane. Vana and chakra. Each of the eight other figures of Durga has only sixteen hands. The names of these goddesses are Rudra Canda, Pracanda, Candogra, Canda-nayika, Candavati. Canda Candarrupa, Aticandika and Ugra - Candika. The colour of the central Durga is that of fire. The other Durgas were yellow of the gorocana, red, black, blue, white grey, turmeric-yellow and pink. The central Durga is in the alidhasana -posture riding stated, of the asura emerging from the cut - end of the neck of the buffalo - form of the asura .The other Durgas are seated upon rathas shaped like lotuses. Such is the description of Navadurga as given in the Shandaymala.¹²

The Mahabharata, the Harivansa and the Markandeyapurana - all tell us that she is very fond of wine, flesh and of mundapala (garland of heads) Vyahracma (tiger skin) and khatvanga (mace). Obviously, she was originally a non Aryan deity.¹³

When she was absorbed into the Aryan pantheon, she was assigned the function of destroying the demons like Mahisa, canda, Munda, Sumbha, Nisumbha etc.¹⁴. Mahisamardini, the Ugra form of Durga is the most important and earliest, according to literary texts. The Devi -Mahatmya gives the description of this aspect of Durga in great details. Image of Mahisamardini started gradually developed since the kushana period onwards and attain several detailed features by the mediaeval period. There are quite a number of images of Mahisamardini of the kushana period in the Mathura school of sculpture, all of which represent Mahisasura in the form of the buffalo animal being trampled by the goddess. But in none of them the throat of the demon being severed of his human form is shown coming out of the throat. This latter feature which the Devimahatmya refers to as Ardhaniskranta begins to appear only in the Gupta period from about the fourth century onward.¹⁵

Mahisamardini occupied an important place in the Hindu pantheon. She either appears alone or in company in temples. In the pancayantra (temples of five gods grouped together) her temple is built in the centre, while in other directions (south - east, south - west, north - west, North -east) similar temples are erected to Sankara, Ganesa, Surya and Visnu. The texts refer to her as Durga, Candi, Mahisardini, Katyayani, etc.¹⁶

This form of goddess Durga is most popular in India, particularly in Assam and Bengal. The images of Mahisamardini, rock-cut as well as carved on the stone slabs, are found in Assam.

According to the kalika purana, the genital organ of Sati fell down on the Nilachal hill, when sati (the mother goddess) died of shock due to the insult suffered by her husband, Siva from her father Daksa. Siva began to carry her corpse unable to bear her separations. Vishnu cut the body to pieces with his chakra from behind and these pieces fell on the earth and became auspicious Piths.¹⁷

Naraka, hailing from Mithila is credited to be the first ruler who introduced the worship of the Yoni goddess Kamakhya in the kingdom of Kamarupa. After Naraka, Kamakhya was no longer the primordial mother goddess and was treated as the amorous wife of Siva.

Epigraphic references of sakti worship are not found in Assam except for the valid references in the inscription of Vanamala and Indra pala to the temples of kamakhya, Mahagauri. The king of Indra Pala is mentioned as versed in Tantric lore. The Tezpur grant and Guwahati grant hint at the prevalence of the cult of Mahagauri.¹⁸

The Kalika purana, which is said to have composed in this region in circa 10th century A.D. gives the iconographical description of several Sakti deities and gives evidence of the popularity of the worship of Devi in ancient Assam. Several images of Mahisamardini have been discovered in Assam which conclusively proves that Sakti was prevalent in Assam in early and mediaeval period. Even at present, the Durga puja is most colorfully performed by the Hindus of eastern India including Assam. The Devi is worshipped in anionic form, especially in kamakhya temple, a sakta pith of Assam.

An image of Mahisamardini, carved on a stone slab (90x50cm) comes from Sirajuli, a village in the vicinity of Dhekiajuli town. Here the Goddess has ten arms, stands in tribhanga posture, with the right leg placed on the back of her vehicle, the lion, while the left leg is on the back of beheaded Mahisa. The ayudhas in her hands are placed, clock wise, from the front right hand,

trisula, cakra tanka, arrow, khadga, shield, bow, battle axe, ankusa and hair lock of the asura. She is decked with Karanda, mukuta, kundalas, haras, mala, valayas, kankana, and wears sari. The goddess is shown here, piercing the chest of the demon, Mahisasura with the trisula. The right leg of the asura is pounced upon by the lion, while the left leg is still inside the decapitated neck of Mahisa. The head of the buffalo is seen lying on the pith, in the space between the lion and the demon. The silapatta of the image is almost round and plain. The figure of kirttimukha is shown on the top of the silapatta. This image, which is in a perfect state of preservation. Stylistically, this image may be placed in 10th century.

The second image of Mahisamardini is seen at ulubari, Guwahati (Plate-1). Here also the deity has ten hands and stands in the usual way, placing the right foot on the vahana and the left one on the Mahisa. The goddess thrusts the trisula into the chest of the asura. Mahisasura, holding a khadga fights with the Devi in the usual pose. The lion, the vehicle of Devi, is seen pouncing upon the right leg of the Asura. Another simha (?) is shown pouncing upon the left knee of the asura. The decapitated head of Mahisa is seen lying behind the auras anthropomorphic form, whose one leg is still inside the severed neck of the Mahisa. On the top of the pointed silpatta, Kirtimukha flanked by Vidyadharas are depicted. Stylistically this may be assigned to 11 the century A.D.

Two badly mutilated stone figure of the deity are seen in Assam state Museum (plate-2-3) The right foot of the deity is placed on the back of the vahana, the lion, while the left foot is on the Mahisa; and the right leg of the asura is pounced upon by the vahana of the deity. The Simha and Mahisasura are depicted facing each other in each case. One miniature bronze image of Mahisamardini is seen in the house of Sri U.C Bora, Rangmahal in north Guwahati. Here the goddess has eight hands, and she is decked with usual dresses and ornaments. This belongs to 12 the century.

Another miniature bronze image collected from Kukurmuta, now preserved in the Assam state museum, Guwahati (Plate 3), is also eight handed. The upper right and left hands of the deity hold a khadga and a khetaka, respectively, in her conventional style. The sula held in the front right hand pieces the chest of the Asura and the front left hand holds its hair, here the vahana of the goddess is not shown. This is the only icon of Mahisamardini so far found in Assam belonging to the pre - Ahom period, where the vahana of the god is absent.

A good number of Mahisamardini images have been unearthed from Ambari excavation site in the heart of Guwahati city. Fifty eight Nos. of small (portable size) Mahisamardini (Plate4) images, ranging between 30×13 cm and 23×11.5 cm in size have been discovered. The goddess stand in the usual posture, placing the right foot on the bank of her vahana, the lion, and the right foot on the decapitated body of the Mahisa. In each case she has ten hands, and most of the ayudhas in the hands are common. The goddess strikes the chest of the asura with the sula held in her right front hand, while the left front one holds the Kesabandha of the asura. All the images may be placed in c 12th -13 the centuries A.D.

One beautiful Mahisamardini image of bronze has been found at Odalbakra, Guwahati, now preserved in Assam state museum Plate 5 .The image is of about 11th century A.D. A circular medallion showing the face of the Goddess is bold relief shows bow shaped eye brows, fully open shaped eyes, plump cheeks, prominent ridge, in chandrasakala on the forehead, circular tatankas (earrings) suspended from the lobs characterize the face. The neck rests on the head of Mahisa, the buffalo -demon. His dagger shaped horizontal horns, the somber eyes and small size of his head dress indicates his feature which brings out the ruthless but begin disposition of the goddess. The remarkable aspect of this figure is that the artist succeeded in portraying the feature of weapons.

Again another beautiful of Brass was found at Tinsukia district of Assam. It is about (41.5cm × 49'8 cm) plate-6, of 18th century. Here the goddess is depicted with three eye and ten hands without holding anything, she is in tribhanga pose on the demon. With whom she fights, but here the fighting is not terrific as the deity does not hold any ayudha, depicted buffalo demon is lying on the ground. The head of the deity is duped with a short which cover her lower parts, bear some designs. The lion which is attacking the demon seem to have Mongoloid features, but her eyes are big and eyebrows are prominent. Stylistically the images may be placed in 17th -18th century A.D. At present, Durga images are sculptured in clay. Usually the worship of Durga and Kali is performed every year according to the 'tithis' in the month of Ahin and Kati. Its shows the reflection of Sakti cult through the medium of clay.

The figure of Mahisamardini in Bronze plate found at Odalbakra shows the excellent piece of folk art. The Mahisamardini found

the Ahom style and technique of the image. The art of Assam in the history of the sculptural art is not inferior to any art in India.

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Pictures attached here:-





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Jhumpa Lahiri: An Introduction

–Dr. Pankaj Luchan Gogoi

Abstract

In contemporary world literature Jhumpa Lahiri is a well-known and widely read figure. Her importance lies in the fact that her works fit into many fields viz., diaspora, postcolonialism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, gender, children, subaltern, ideology and many others. Majority of the works that she has written so far is fictional. Her non fictional works are equally touching and engaging. Besides the thematic resonance, her literary world is known for its distinctive narrative style and profound sense of aesthetics. Her oeuvre possesses a range that is enlightening in many aspects to the readers. In recognition to her contributions to literature she is honored with many awards of distinction and repute. Besides, the rising number of readership and research on her works further add to her glory and recognition.

Key Words : *Diaspora, postcolonialism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, gender, children, subaltern, ideology*

The Indian American author Jhumpa Lahiri is a celebrated figure in contemporary world literature. She was born on July 11, 1967 in London. She is the daughter of Amar Lahiri and Tapati Lahiri. Her bhalonam (good name or official identification to the outside world) is Nilanjana Sudeshna. Jhumpa is her daknam (pet name) affectionately addressed to her by her parents, family, and relatives. She was brought up in Kingston, Rhode Island, United States after her father's relocation to the U.S after he joined as librarian at University of Rhode Island when she was barely two years old. She was enrolled in school at Kindergarten in Kingston. Her teachers called her by her pet name Jhumpa as it was comparatively easier to pronounce than her good name Nilanjana. Since then, she has been known to the world as Jhumpa Lahiri.

After graduating from South Kingston High School, Jhumpa Lahiri completed her B.A. in English Literature from Barnard College. She enrolled in Boston University for her M.A. and completed her M.F.A. in Creative Writing and M.A. in Comparative Literature. Later, she completed her Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies. These academic accomplishments in a way reflect her

brilliance as student and her quest for knowledge. So far as her professional life is concerned, she was initially on a fellowship for two years at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Centre. After that, she taught Creative Writing first at Boston University, her alma mater, and later at the Rhode Island School of Design. At present, Lahiri is a resident of Brooklyn, New York with her husband Alberto Vourvoulias and two children Octavio and Noor.

Jhumpa Lahiri began her literary career by writing short stories in many American journals, including the prestigious New Yorker. She published many of her prize-winning stories in these journals. Since that promising beginning, she has written five works of fiction, which includes *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), *Unaccustomed Earth* (2009), *The Lowland* (2013) and *Whereabouts* (2021). Of them, *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth* are collections of short stories, and *The Namesake*, *The Lowland* and *Whereabouts* (2021) are novels. Besides she has two works of non-fiction that includes *In Other Words* (2015) and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Clothing of Books* (2015). *Interpreter of Maladies* is her debut collection that brought her instant recognition worldwide. She was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000, the New Yorker Prize for Best First Book, the O. Henry Award for Best American Short Stories, the PEN/Hemingway Award for best fiction debut, The Transatlantic Review Award, The Louisiana Review Award, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Besides, she received nomination for the Los Angeles Times Award. Her second work *The Namesake* was made into a major motion picture by the noted film director Mira Nair. The movie adaptation brought fame and accolade for Lahiri. Her third work *Unaccustomed Earth*, a short story collection, won the 2008 Frank O' Connor International Short Story Award besides being the book of the year for New York Times, Time and Outlook. Her fourth work *The Lowland*, a novel also succeeded in earning plaudits from both critics and readers. The novel was shortlisted for both National Book Award and the prestigious Man Booker Prize. Besides, she was awarded with many awards of repute, and among them, a 2014 National Humanities Medal was awarded by the former U.S. President Barack Obama. She is also honoured with the Premio Internazionale Viareggio-Versilia for *In alter parole*.

Jhumpa Lahiri's works *Interpreter of Maladies*, *The Namesake*, *Unaccustomed Earth*, and *The Lowland* focus on the lives of the Indian Diaspora in America who find themselves located in a liminal space. These inter-generational subjectivities seem to be at the crossroads of cultural identity.

Their liminality stems from the attempt to negotiate between the claims of inheritance of tradition of the ancestral land and the demand of the new and changing time and space. These four texts can be from the purview of subjectivity located in a slippage. The rigorous analyses of Lahiri's works and their dominant themes would perhaps be able to unravel how diasporic subject positions attempt to come to terms with their in-between condition and define their identity in a liminal space while experiencing a strong connect towards their country of origin. In the process of depicting such problematic of identity, the texts seamlessly shuttle from personal life to social life and from the native country to the foreign country.

Jhumpa Lahiri's significance lies in her contribution to diaspora literature, particularly Asian American literary studies. It is a broad area characterized by heterogeneous experiences of people of different Asian countries as noted by Morris Young in his review article on Rajini Srikanth's *The World Next Door: South Asian American Literature and the Idea of America* (2006). The rich diversity of the field is collectively formed by elements of different cultures, religions, ethnicities, races, social classes, sexuality, and so forth from different parts of Asia. In Asian American literary studies, South-Asian American literature is an unmistakable subfield that forms an integral part of experiences of the people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka living mostly in North America. Writers like Indran Amirthanayagam, Amitav Ghosh, and Tahira Naqvi have contributed a lot to this field. In South-Asian American Literature Jhumpa Lahiri is a renowned figure, whose works deal with the problematic of Indian Americans in America. In this regard, her name is often cited along with other writers who have contributed to the field like Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Ketu H. Katrak in her "*The Aesthetics of Dislocations: Writing the Hybrid Lives of South Asian Americans*" (2002) finds Non-Residential Indians (NRIs) as constituting the Asian American or the South-Asian American subjectivity in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meena Alexander and Agha Shahid Ali.

Jhumpa Lahiri's success as a storyteller lies not only in her nuanced postulation of the Indian American subjectivity in her works but also in her remarkable craft of fiction. These works of fiction bear eloquent testimony to Lahiri's talent for storytelling and the thematic richness of her literary world. Her craft as a writer is aptly summed up by Amy Tan in the blurb from *Interpreter of Maladies*: "The kind of writer who makes you want to grab the

next person you see and say 'Read this!'" Khaled Hosseini in the blurb to *Unaccustomed Earth* comments, "Lahiri's enormous gifts as a storyteller are on full play." Her prose is simple, yet nuanced, and can arrest the attention of the readers in profound ways. She portrays her characters across age, gender, space, time and culture with understanding and compassion. Her art of storytelling is appreciated everywhere, as evident in the excerpts of reviews of leading newspapers and magazines. Sukhdev Sandhu's observation on Jhumpa Lahiri's prose in *The Namesake* in *Daily Telegraph* (that figures in the blurb of the novel) best sum up her art:

Eloquent ... Lahiri's prose is striking. Spurning the antsy, transcultural wordplay of many Asian-American authors, she writes with journalistic precision. Like a Victorian urban chronicler, she loves to amass inventories. Things matter to her and to her characters; they are bulwarks against drift and confusion. *The Namesake* is lucid, generous in its narrative scope, and an extremely accomplished first novel. (Sandhu)

The thematic richness and brilliance of prose of Jhumpa Lahiri is evident in all her works. She deals with the life of Indian American diaphora, and their formation of subjectivity in liminal space in *Interpreter of Maladies*, *The Namesake*, *Unaccustomed Earth*, and *The Lowland*. An understanding of subjectivity, liminality and diaphora will be enabled by reading Lahiri's works to a great extent.

On the other hand, her *In Other Words* (2015) is a work of non-fiction. It is an intensely personal work where she shares her love story with the Italian. Originally, she wrote the work in Italian as *In altre parole* and is translated into English by Ann Goldstein as *In Other Words*. The work, an autobiographical journey, is a testimony of her strong foray into another language as a versatile writer who seeks a new voice for self-reflection.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Clothing of Books* (2015) is also a work of non-fiction as well. The work is the reworking of her speech delivered in Italy at Festival degli Scrittori in 2015. The speech, after having undergone reworking, published both in English and Italian in 2015. The work shows her profound reflection on the art of the book jacket from the viewpoints of both the reader and the writer. It explores the complex relation between text and image, author and designer, and art and commerce.

Her latest work *Whereabouts* (2021) is a work of fiction. Through the unnamed narrator, a woman, Lahiri explores the urban solitude in great detail. While doing so, the narrator is found to waver between stasis and movement,

and the requirement of having a sense of belonging to something own and refusal to strike lasting ties with anyone. The work is certainly an exquisitely nuanced and poignant portrayal of a forlorn urbanite.

All these works of Jhumpa Lahiri undoubtedly prove her versatility as a writer. Her oeuvre constitutes a rich tapestry in contemporary world literature. Given the depth and the artistry of her works *The Hindu* has rightly summed up her genius in the blurb to *In other Words*: "One of the best writers of the 21st century."

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Cultural And Historical Linkage of NE India with the South East Asian Countries

—Madhusmita Goswami

Abstract

North-East serves to be the precious jewel of India's crown. It is said to be the "perfect blend of Eight Wonders" that signifies the Eight States where natural beauty is at its height and the rich cultural heritage of the state reflects unity in diversity.

Today, North-East India is considered to be the only exclusive gateway to South East Asian countries and therefore, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, has focused on the development of the region by being attentive towards the Look East Policy under New Delhi. It is obvious that with the passing of time, people have stopped perceiving North-East India as a barrier or an obstacle, rather now it is being perceived as a bridge between India and South-East Asia.

The cultural and traditional heritage of North-East India has immense share in the cultural history of South-East Asian countries as there had been many cross-border relations established by the people from both sides on various grounds. These historical and cultural linkages between the two regions are required to be explored in order to strengthen the bonding between them. The common physical features, similarities in art and dance forms, social structures, food habits, weaving styles, colour patterns, hunting practices and cultural practices makes North-East region as the second self of south-East Asian nations.

Thus, the diffusion of Indian culture through the medium of North-East India into the culture and tradition of South-East Asian countries is certainly the greatest development of indianized culture.

The influx of people in North-East India from different countries of South-East Asia, marks the base for cultural similarity amongst both the regions. There has been the advent of ancestral and traditional folks from India to Myanmar and vice-versa since ancient times. The Singhpos and the Tai groups such as the Ahoms, Khamtis, Phakes, Aitons, Turungs, and Khanyangs relocated themselves in North-East India from shan state of Yunan and Myanmar. Similarly, Nagas, Kukis, Mizos and the Lushais entered North-East India from Burma. Thus, there has been continuous arrival and departure of various tribes of people from and to both the regions. Therefore, the

cultural forms of both the regions are interrelated with each other due to which there has been a strong sense of cultural unity amongst them.

Key Words : Culture, Influx, Transparent Borders, Exchange, Population, Government.

Introduction

North-East, naturally given the advantage of its location, has become the hub of cultural globalization compared to other states in India. It has successfully established flourishing cross-border relationships with other South-East Asian countries, by showcasing the strength of unity. Collaboratively, all the eight states of North-East India has joined hands to prosper its glory throughout Asia.

Today, North-East India is considered to be the only exclusive gateway to South East Asian countries and therefore, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, has focused on the development of the region by being attentive towards the Look East Policy under New Delhi. It is obvious that with the passing of time, people have stopped perceiving North-East India as a barrier or an obstacle, rather now it is being perceived as a bridge between India and South-East Asia.

The cultural and traditional heritage of North-East India has immense share in the cultural history of South-East Asian countries as there had been many cross-border relations established by the people from both sides on various grounds. These historical and cultural linkages between the two regions are required to be explored in order to strengthen the bonding between them. The common physical features, similarities in art and dance forms, social structures, food habits, weaving styles, colour patterns, hunting practices and cultural practices makes North-East region as the second self of south-East Asian nations.

Thus, the diffusion of Indian culture through the medium of North-East India into the culture and tradition of South-East Asian countries is certainly the greatest development of indianized culture.

The influx of people in North-East India from different countries of South-East Asia, marks the base for cultural similarity amongst both the regions. There has been the advent of ancestral and traditional folks from India to Myanmar and vice-versa since ancient times. The Singhpos and the Tai groups such as the Ahoms, Khamtis, Phakes, Aitons, Turungs, and Khanyangs relocated themselves in North-East India from shan state of Yunan and

Myanmar. Similarly, Nagas, Kukis, Mizos and the Lushais entered North-East India from Burma. Thus, there has been continuous arrival and departure of various tribes of people from and to both the regions. Therefore, the cultural forms of both the regions are interrelated with each other due to which there has been a strong sense of cultural unity amongst them.

The history, culture and unrevealed mysteries of North-East India have made it a peculiar place full of varied ethnic tribes and their unity amidst the cultural and linguistic differences. From Tirap (a district in Arunachal Pradesh) to Terai (marshy jungle in the foothills of Himalayas and the plains) or from Brahmaputra to Himalayas, there is the unique mixture of mysteries and histories of this paradise on Earth. Under the North-Eastern Council that was formed in 1971, the eight states of the North-eastern Region were officially recognized. Initially, there were seven states that collectively formed the whole region, but later on, Sikkim joined as the eighth state of this region in 2002.

There have been many controversies regarding the looks of the people with that of the rest of Indians. The people of North-East find more cultural similarities and similar physical identities with the people of South East Asia than that of the other Indians in the northern, western, and southern India. Some North-Eastern communities share similar looks to Southern Han Chinese, Zhuang, Hmong, and Tibetans because their descendants mostly migrated from Yunnan/Tibet/Sichuan provinces of China thousands of years ago. Majority of North-Eastern people looks like Thai, Burmese or Khmers. Our languages, cultures and traditions are very close to our ASEAN brothers.

There has been abundance of influx of people in between the two magnificence: The North-East India and The South East Asia. The Ahoms (a popular tribe in Assam who ruled for many years in that place) entered Assam from Burma through the Pangchou Pass over the Patkai Range via the Nongyang Lake and the Tirap Frontier Division of NEFA and throughout the entire period of their reign in Assam they maintained their communications with their brothers in Burma through this Pass.

The main objective of this paper is to disclose the cultural and historical linkage between the two trending parties in the recent years. This paper tries to venture the cultural bond that existed in the ancient times and still continuing in the present between the people of North-East India and that of the South East Asia.

Geographical Link Of North-East India With South-East Asian Countries
North-East India is the only unique region that is surrounded by five

countries: Bhutan, Nepal and China borders this region in the north, Myanmar to its east, and Bangladesh serves as the western and southern border of this region. Approximately, 483 ethnic tribes dwell in this part of India with similar numbers of languages and dialects. These five countries that embrace the North-east India, is inter-linked with each other for their economy, trade, culture and religion. Kolkata port serves as the focal trading point for Nepal, while Bhutan and India's economy are interconnected through Assam and West Bengal. Myanmar (initially Burma) is the entrance for India to South East Asia through Bhutan, and Bangladesh is a prominent passage for India to reach its North-Eastern States. The people of mainland India reach South East Asian countries through North-East India with the help of a narrow Corridor, flanked by Nepal and Bangladesh, called the Siliguri Corridor.

The Indo-Bangladesh border is a transparent border that allows penetration of illegal immigration and anti-national activities from Bangladesh. To avoid this, the Government of India has sanctioned the construction of border roads and fencing in two phases.

Historical Linkage Between North-East India and South-East Asian Countries

South East Asian countries share a deep-rooted natural connection with India that dates back to centuries. South East Asia, unique in itself, consists of the following countries: Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaya (Malaysia), Indonesia and Philippines. The whole area has been under the influence of two ancient civilizations: India and China. The inward and outward migration of the population of these nations with India and China has been persisting since many centuries. South East Asia's relation with India can be seen in the excavations of the Pyu settlements in present day Myanmar, where one of the place is called 'Beikthano' that means 'the city of Vishnu.' The Pyu architecture displays the Indian influence.

Earlier, in the 19th century, the Ahom and Manipur kingdoms of the North-Eastern region were colonized by the Burmese invaders. This colonization led to the first Anglo-Burmese war that resulted in the full area of North-East falling under the British rule. During the British Rule (1826-1947), North-East India was made a part of Bengal province. Later, the North-Eastern region became a part of the whole Indian subcontinent after India's independence and was attached to the mainland only through the Siliguri Corridor.

In the books of History, one can find that the earliest settlers in North-

Eastern states of India might have been that of Austro-Asiatic speakers from South East Asia, followed by Tibeto-Burmese from China in around 500 BC. Through the writings of an ancient Chinese explorer, Zhang Qian, it has been brought into knowledge that there has been an early trade route via North Eastern India with the South East Asian countries since 100 BC. Many communities in North East India has their origin in the South of the Yarlung Zangbo, which is the source of the Brahmaputra river, comprising the Tai Ahoms or Ahoms, descendants of the Tai people who are named as Shan in Myanmar, Thai in Thailand, Lao in Laos, Dian ad Zhuang in China and Tay-Thai in Vietnam. These groups of people share similar customs and traditions. Above all, the Neolithic tools of the North-Eastern region have a strong connection with the tools of South East Asia. The use of shouldered axes and also cord-impressed pottery are two of the examples. These links can be dated between 2500-1500 BC.

Cultural Assimilations Between The Two Magnificence

The cultural and traditional history of North-East India dates back to the early centuries when there had been surplus exchange of population amidst China, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh and settling down in the North-Eastern region. This region became the centre of transformation for the people who migrated from the neighbouring countries and settled down here. The group of people that came to Assam marched towards Dhubri and another part moved southward and occupied the Garo Hills and the state of Hill Tippera (Tripura). Other members of the Tibeto-Burman origin captured the Naga Hills, whereas, some groups settled in Manipur. These people followed their original cultural festivals and religious rituals. This was the reason that even in the present times, the culture and tradition of the people of North East India varies greatly with the culture of the rest of Indians.

The history of language amongst the Chin, Kuki and Mizo communities has their base in Sinlung/ Chinlung or closed cave, in China. Thus, there have been similarities in the nouns between Chinese Languages and Speeches used among the communities in North East India. This region of India has approximately 220 languages that has been contributed by different Ethnic groups entering this region from the neighbouring areas. The Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, Austro-Asiatic language groups has similar structural features. Assamese language, originally formed in the Brahmaputra valley through the Indo-Aryan language, has now become the Lingua-Franca for many speech communities in the North-Eastern region of India. The Austro-

Asiatic family is represented by the Khasi, Jaintia and War languages of Meghalaya. Sino-Tibetan language is expressed through the languages that differs variably : Bodo, Rabha, Karbi, Mising, Tiwa, Deori (Assam), Garo, Biate (Meghalaya), Ao, Angami, etc (Nagaland), Hmar, Chakma (Mizoram), Apatani, Misimi, etc (Arunachal).

The Agricultural and Architectural similarities can also be seen between the two regions. Rice paddy agriculture famous in the states of North-East, has also found its base in South East Asia since thousands of years ranging across the sub regions. Even the Stilt houses can be found all over South East Asia, from Thailand and Vietnam to Borneo, to Luzon in the Philippines that is also popular amongst the habitants of the North-Eastern region in India.

The dance forms and art of South-East Asia has a strong connection with the arts of India, particularly the North-Easter region. The Cambodian Royal Ballet that is presented before the Khmer Empire has been highly influenced by Indian Hinduism and similar to this is the Apsara Dance, famous for its strong hand and feet movements, another Hindu Dance. The indigenous music of Assam incorporates Bihu melodies, Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tunes. These are altogether grouped and sung to the pentatonic scale like the conventional music of China displaying a strong influence of Chinese music on Assamese culture.

The traditional instruments of Mizos in the state of Mizoram- Drum and gong are used for the famous Bamboo Dance. This Bamboo Dance is also a popular dance form in many parts of South-Eastern Asia, including Southern China and can be seen being done in the same way in these regions. For example, The Tinkling of Leyte in the Visayas region is a popular bamboo dance in the Philippines. This dance form imitates the movement of the Tinkling bird as they walk between grass stems, run over tree branches, or lodge bamboo traps set by rice farmers. The Bandanese from Maluku, Moluccas have a similar version of this Bamboo Dance called Tari-Gaba, to celebrate friendship.

Along with these cultural similarities, the strong influence of two religions- Hinduism and Buddhism can be seen in the South East Asian countries that has its origin in India and China. The path of Buddha can be traced from Arunachal Pradesh to Myanmar and even beyond that. Hindu influences can be seen in the temples built in Cambodia like the Angkor Wat and the Ta Prohm. The kingdoms of Cham, the southern neighbours of

Vietnam, used to display a strong Hindu influence through the famous area it has constructed, of 'My Son' having a complex of temples dedicated to Shiva.

Even the Hindu texts like Ramayana became the root culture for the people across the South East Asia. The text has various versions that keep on changing from place to place. For example, in Thailand Ramayana is called as Ramakien, and the city of Ayotthaya is based on the name of Ayodhya. In Lao, the famous version of Ramayana is called Pha Lak Pha Lam. In Indonesia Ramayana is named as the Kakawin Ramayana, while the Malay version is named as Ramayana Hiyakat Seri Rama.

Government Efforts in Strengthening The Bond Between North-East India And South-East Asian Countries

ASEAN has been getting continuous support from India under the efforts for ASEAN integration, that includes projects on Training of English Language for Law Enforcement Officers in CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Vietnam) Countries and training of persons dealing with capital oriented markets in CLMV by National Institute of Securities Management Mumbai. Scholarships are provided for ASEAN students for their higher education in Nalanda University, Bihar.

The central government of India has opted various measures to strengthen the bond between the two magnificence which is evident through a meeting between the heads of Singapore and India. After the meeting ended, it was concluded that the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, sought Singaporean enterprise to set up a skill development centre in North-East India. It has been announced that "Government of India had made a provision of Rs. 53,000 crores for the development of the eight North-Eastern states". Tourism has been given more significance by the Government of India and therefore to boost the connectivity and network between the South East Asia and North-East India, the "Government has made an allocation of Rs. 28,000 crores for starting 14 new railway lines." Other than this, during PM Modi's visit to the North-East India he "envisioned an economic corridor that would be established using North-East India, Myanmar and the adjoining regions. Government of India has also signed an agreement with Japan to open an economic corridor with Myanmar."

India's Look East Policy that was implemented in 1990, has received tremendous significance in the recent years for India has realized the vital roles of the North-Eastern states in connecting her with the rest of the Asian world. After the suggestion made by US secretary of state, Hilary Clinton on India:

"not just to look East, but to engage East and act East", the Government of India gave more attention to its eastern sides.

Conclusion

India's political scenario has been changing at a rapid pace resulting in the establishment of bilateral and multilateral connections with its eastern neighbors. Various projects have been undertaken by the Government of India in order to strengthen the road and railway connectivity to easily reach the countries of South East Asia for India has now realized the benefits of such relations. Therefore, North-East India has been given the utmost attention by the Indian Government in order to establish a smooth relation with the eastern neighbors of India. An example of such an effort taken by the Government is the 1,360 km long road between Moreh-Mae Sot is to be constructed that will make its way through Mandalay and link North-East India and South East Asia. Thus cross-border relations are envisioned to get stronger in the near future as a result of various ways to sustain the linkages through various projects by the Indian Government.

Furthermore, the similarities in the culture and tradition of the people of both North-East India and South East Asia have added India in the good books of its Eastern neighbors. Since there had been extensive migration of population between the two magnificence, therefore, the exchange and practice of similar culture has been common in both the regions.

Thus, along with the easy communication provisions implemented by the Government of India, the cultural and ethnic similarities between South East Asia and India would serve the economic sphere of India, bringing prosperity and development to the region. This is evident from the importance that the Indian Government is giving on the 'Look East Policy' that will ultimately serve the development purpose of the North-Eastern region of India.

One can certainly conclude that North Eastern part of India has now become a bridge for India instead of becoming a barrier for its neighboring countries.

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Lending Voice to the Subaltern in North-east Indian Literature: A Reading

—Bondita Baruah

Abstract :

In some places in the north-east, people dwelling in the lap of nature live in their secluded world and have the least connection with the so called civilized world. However they are civilised in and within their own ambit. The thin link between these people and the mainstream shows the disregard and lack of concern on the part of the government and its agencies. The paper is an attempt to portray the neglect and marginalisation through the works of such writers as Mamang Dai, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Robin Ngangom. The paper will basically focus on their poetry which illustrates and bear witness to the violence and political laxity because of which the region has acquired a subaltern status.

Key Words : *subaltern, northeast, marginality, differential treatment, suffering.*

The term 'subaltern' owes its origin to the writings of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who used the term to describe history which was told 'from below', aiming to give voice to those sections of individuals that were excluded from the political structures of the society and were devoid of representation. Over time, the area of 'subaltern studies' has undergone changes. The Subaltern Studies Group¹, which consisted of a group of scholars from South Asia, initiated the growth of the terms 'subaltern', 'subaltern studies' in South Asia whereby the term entered the field of postcolonial studies. In their attempt to study 'history from below'² they focussed their energies to give voice to those sections of the society which till then had no voice of their own or were bereft of representation. They emphasised on highlighting the mass population of common men and women, rather than elites. "Subaltern Studies became a new site for a new kind of history from below, a people's history free from national constraints, a post-nationalist re-imagining of the Indian nation on the underside, at the margins, outside nationalism." (Ludden 8) Ranajit Guha in India tried to form a new mode of narrative where the term subaltern was used to depict the conditions of the colonized people from their own

perspectives, rather than from the view points of the colonizers. As a mode of discourse, the term 'subaltern' is now applied to a variety of disciplines such as history, sociology, human geography, anthropology and literary criticism.

In today's time, there are many layers of subalternity that have emerged. Sometimes it is not just a matter of representation but also a matter of exploitation. The Indians were subalterns under the colonial rule, devoid of their own voice. After independence, the country was divided into various states; however, within the country there are regions, places and communities of people that are subjugated and have come to acquire a subaltern status. The north-eastern region of India with its eight states faces such neglect in the social, political and economic dimensions. Political reluctance is one of the chief reasons for underdevelopment and backwardness. The literature of the region written in a variety of languages bears instances of this neglect. As a result, a crisis of identity has also been noticed among people.

In some places in the north-east, people dwelling in the lap of nature live in their secluded world and have the least connection with the so called civilized world. However they are civilised in and within their own ambit. The thin link between these people and the mainstream shows the disregard and lack of concern on the part of the government and its agencies. The paper is an attempt to portray the neglect and marginalisation through the works of such writers as Mamang Dai, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Robin Ngangom. The paper will basically focus on their poetry which illustrates and bear witness to the violence and political laxity because of which the region has acquired a subaltern status. The study will be based on secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, the internet and materials derived from those sources.

The post-independence era has been a period of confusion in the North-East. Because of negligence people have been and are confused about their future and their identity which resulted in so many Peoples' movements and struggles. Continuous marginalisation has brought about more distrust and apathy. Initially, the only response or answer they got for their demands from the Central government was the Indian army. But we can see clear evidence of this failure to bring about normalcy in the region after 56 years of trials and experiments with the armed forces since India's independence. ("Revealing the Marginalization of Northeast India")

Even after more than fifty years of independence, the region as a whole seems to receive differential treatment. The armed forces have instead of lessening, further deepened the gorges of suffering of the people; the intensity

of the sense of insecurity rather than security increased to manifold levels. In moulding the notion of the region as a land of forests and uncivilised people, mainstream media has also played its part by providing a description from outside rather than from the inside.

The media has shaped the mainstream India's perception of the Northeast. Insurgency, weird cultural practices and dirty politics have been the favourite topics of the mainstream reporters. They just report with (the) intention to capture the imagination of the mainstream people. Lack of cultural understanding coupled by superimposition of their own constructed ideas about the Northeast people result in suppression and distortion of truth or ground realities. Hardly, there is any visible effort either to change the undesirable situation in the region or methods in depicting the identity of the Northeast people. These images soon become ingrained in the consciousness of the mainstream Indian citizens. Occasionally, stories about cultural activities appear on some newspaper but these are usually given only in passing. Insurgency, ethnic conflicts and crises get reported, genuine people stories rarely. ("Revealing the Marginalization of Northeast India")

The literature of the Northeast reflects the various aspects of marginalisation which people have suffered through the decades by means of the individual and collective works of various writers written in their respective vernacular languages as well as in their adopted languages. Edward Said in his work *Orientalism*, introduced the term 'othering', which implicates to "the act of emphasising the perceived weaknesses of marginalised groups as a way of stressing the alleged strength of those in positions of power." (Gahatraj 1) It is this sense of the 'other' that people from the Northeast have experienced from the rest of the country; a sense of not-belonging. However, many writers have utilised this very sentiment of other-ing as an instrumental tool to depict their predicaments. Temsula Ao, an ethnographer and writer articulates that "the 'otherness' has helped them to overcome their isolation once their thoughts and feelings are textualized; yet the uniqueness of their cultural difference has not disappeared." (Gahatraj 6) Despite such an assertion, it is a fact to be acknowledged that literature from the Northeast still has a subaltern status for the way it is received by the mainstream readers as well as critics.

Mark Bender in "Ethnographic Poetry in North-East India and Southwest China" writes that the ethnographic poetry of the northeastern region, Express a range of feelings over what are perceived to be negative or ambivalent aspects of cultural change or loss. The poems are composed within

the waves of dynamic change variously influencing a vast array of cultures in North-East India... Individual poets draw on strategies of expression that often seem extension of feelings or concerns of their respective groups. Themes and imagery utilizing "local knowledge", folk traditions, nature and contemporary social issues are characteristic of many poems produced in the respective regions. Attention to such lore and experience is an important element in developing approaches to these literature born of both change and tradition... (Bender 106)

There is a common bond that unites the poets of the region who belong to culturally diverse backgrounds, having their own geographical setting. "The Indian English writer from the North-East... write from the inside, have their own stories to tell and the means to tell them." ("Indian English Writing from the North-East" 2) The love for the land to which they belong is one of the most significant factors of unison. Mamang Dai is a poet and novelist from Arunachal Pradesh whose work reveals the folklore and tradition of the land. Her collection *River Poems* consists of poems which reveal facets of her homeland, Arunachal Pradesh.

Dai's poetic world is one of river, forest and mountain, a limpid and lyrical reflection of the terrain of her home state. Nature here is mysterious, verdant with myth, dense with sacred memory. There is magic to be found everywhere... ("Mamang Dai")

However, a deeper analysis of her poems reveals that the land is not just elated with beauty and magic, but it is also infested with guns, ammunition, neglect and subjugation. In the poem "Small Towns and the River", there is a growing sense of anxiety about life, which lingers in the poem.

Small towns always remind me of death.
My hometown lies calmly amidst the tress,
it is always the same,
in summer or winter,
with the dust flying,
or the wind howling down the gorge.

Just the other day someone died.
In the dreadful silence we wept
looking at the sad wreath of tuberose
Life and death, life and death,

only the rituals are permanent.

...

A shrine of happy pictures
marks the days of childhood.
Small towns grow with anxiety
for the future.
The dead are placed pointing west.
When the soul rises
it will walk into the golden east
into the house of the sun.

In the cool bamboo,
restored in sunlight,
life matters, like this... (Dai)

The death of someone leads to mourn, but in 'silence.' Even the mountains bear witness to such atrocities, but in silence. "The mountain is shrouded in mystery and as it is covered in mist it gets a uniqueness of distance and enigma. Much like the invisibility of the northeastern states from the national radar, even the lofty mountains of Arunachal remain hidden in mystery, from the so called mainland. The mountain as a metaphor for the mysterious, the unknown and the mighty can also be seen as representative of the resilient, the steadfast..." (Vohra 51)

The poets of the region portray the face of sufferings in the region through their verses. Nirjhar Dey states that the people are "double troubled". The land is disturbed first, by the insurgencies that erupt from time to time and second, by the 'protectors' of the people-the soldiers of the Indian army who were employed by a special act to protect the people. "On one side the innocent people are becoming victims of the political conflicts and on the other they are tortured and molested by the soldiers." (Dey) Certain characteristics are common to almost all the poets: "the gun's shadow, suspicion of the paramilitary and of immigrants, loathing for politicians and treatment of women" (Daruwalla)

Born in Manipur, Robin S. Ngangom is a poet who writes in both the languages-English and Manipuri. His poetry depicts the subaltern status of the land. In his own words Ngangom states that he writes with the anticipation "of enthusing my readers with my communal or carnal life-the life of a politically-discriminated-against, historically-overlooked individual from the

nook of a third world country." ("Robin Ngangom") His poetry besides providing images of the landscape, is also a critique of the internalized politics as well as social scenario of the region.

First came the scream of the dying
In a bad dream, then the radio report,
And a newspaper: six shot-dead, twenty-five
Houses razed, sixteen beheaded with hands tied
Behind their backs inside a church.
As the days crumbled, and the victors
And their victims grew in number,
I hardened inside my thickening hide,
Until I lost my tenuous humanity. ("Native Land" 154)

Devoid of ornamentation, Ngangom provides straightforward picture of subalternization of the people in their own native land, churned in brutality. In his essay "Poetry in a Time of Terror", Ngangom gives voice to what it feels while living amidst a chaotic environment.

The writer from Northeast India, consequently, differs from his counterpart in the mainland in a significant way. While it may not, make him a better writer, living with the menace of the gun does not permit him to indulge in verbal wizardry or woolly aesthetics, but is a constant reminder that he must perforce master the art of witness. Forces working under slogans that have been twisted, slogans such as self-determination, rive my society. We have witnessed growing ethnic aggressiveness, secessionist ventures, cultural and religious bigotry, the marginalisation of minorities and the poor, profit and power struggles in government, and as a natural aftermath to these, the banality of corruption and the banality of terror. Further, the uneasy coexistence of paradoxical worlds such as the folk and the Westernised, virgin forests and car-choked streets, ethnic cleansers and the parasites of democracy, ancestral values and flagrant materialism, resurgent nativism and the sensitive outsiders predicament, make the picturesque Northeast especially vulnerable to tragedy. (Ngangom 425-426)

Ngangom feels that in these tragic times, the poet has a responsible role to play, "that is, to change the world into a better place through his efforts" (Ngangom 427)

Another writer who is of influence is Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih who gives voice to how the Northeast has come to acquire a subaltern status because of neglect and negligence. Without following the rules that govern

language, both Ngangom and Nongkynrih, write about their environment which has acquired a subaltern status because political neglect and marginalisation of the north-eastern region for various reasons. "They write about the ever present sense of menace, of mutilated bodies, of soldiers and insurgents, about tribal identities and conflicts, using their indigenous languages and English ambidextrously..." (Prasad 150) The English language is used as a strong tool to depict their predicament; "their continuing sense of outrage, their sense of colonization." (Prasad 150)

Nongkynrik's poem "When the Prime Minister Visits Shillong the Bamboos Watch in Silence" is a satire on the state of affairs between the region and the centre:

When Prime Minister Gujral
planned a visit to the city
bamboos sprang up from the pavements
like a welcoming committee.

But when he came, he was
only the strident sounds
like warnings in war-time bombings

....
some say he dropped
like a falling star
and was sighted by a few
disgruntled leaders

....
they wondered
what he could have seen
of the land
what of the people

...
only the bamboos watched in silence
too used to the antics of men. (159)

The poet adopts the weapon of satire to depict the subalternization of the land-what happens when a dignitary such as the Prime Minister visits his region. He is all along accompanied by the sound of sirens; the common people hardly get the opportunity to have a glimpse. Only the sounds are symbolic of the Prime Minister's coming. He comes and goes in a flash and is only visible to the bamboos and some leaders. The poet critiques this in the poem by saying

that if his coming is like a 'falling star', when did he have the occasion to see the land or meet the people to discuss or listen to their dilemmas. Even the bamboos are passive to the sight of the so-called rituals of the dignitaries.

In his essay, "The Poet as Chronicler: An Overview of Contemporary Poetry in Northeast India" Nongkynrih states that the poets of the region react to the corruption and marginalization with utter condemnation "as they denounce, with anger and disgust, those who are turning the place into a habitation of headless and bodiless monsters. Their irony is double-edged as they rail others and themselves in the same breath. But the hallmark of their satire is the sardonic humour as they ridicule their self-serving servants of the people." (Nongkynrih)

The Northeastern region possesses a rich tapestry of cultural heritage. Every state of the region has its own festivals, rituals, customs and way of life. People with different faiths inhabit the region, speak varied languages and possess their distinctive dietary habits depending on climatic conditions and availability of resources. The unsettled conditions witnessed in the region in the form of insurgencies, bandhs or other despotic activities is not something peculiar to only the Northeast. Some or the other form of unrest is to be witnessed and found in almost every Indian state. Despite this fact, the region has come to acquire a subaltern status in comparison to the rest of the country; as if people from the region belong to some primitive Palaeolithic age. This sense of subjugation has led the poets inscribe in words the raw emotions through varied modes. The verses of Robin Ngangom and Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih are loud and straightaway express their angst. Mamang Dai's poetry though not strictly political, portrays those sufferings significantly. They have used the poetic canon as a tool to depict the ills that people have gone through. They present a stark reflection of their society to depict their marginalisation with the help of imageries which are vivid. They also express a crisis of identity being faced by themselves and the common masses for various reasons. A sense of being excluded from the rest of the country, some kind of foster treatment being shown by the rest of the motherland is tinged at.

Notes :

- 1 The Subaltern Studies Group is a group of South Asian scholars which was formed in the 1980s. The group consisted of eminent scholars who were interested in post-colonial/ imperial studies. These scholars, including Ranajit Guha wanted to study

and formulate new, emergent and untold narratives of the South Asian region and also other regions which share similar situations.

- 2 History from below is a type of narrative of history which is described from the perspective of the common people rather than from the view point of the elites or politicians. The narratives of those people who are often forgotten, such as the poor and the downtrodden, are brought to the limelight.

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Critical Analysis of the Postmodern Strategies of John Fowles' Novel and Karel Reisz's Film The French Lieutenant's Woman

—Susismita Sharma

Abstract :

Postmodern fiction is an influential literary trend that flourished around 1950s and 1960s in Britain and the United States. There is no such fix definition of the same but it could be understood that it was born out of the western turbulent social life and witnessing the aftermath of Second World War. They are far too diverse in style and are often written in obscure tongue, challenging and disintegrating the form of fiction itself. They deconstructed and reconstructed the past tradition of novel writing under the influence of the new time. For instance, instead of using interior monologue and stream of consciousness unlike modern fiction, postmodern fiction plays with the language itself and includes narrative techniques like irony, pastiche, collage, fragmentation, plurality, intertextuality etc. John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) is one such difficult and challenging postmodern text which was later adopted into a screenplay by Harold Pinter in 1981. This paper will discuss the postmodern narrative strategies of the novel adopted by the director Karel Reisz who attempted to reproduce the postmodern irony of the same. It will study the film in relation to its literary source.

Keywords : postmodern, metafiction, intertextuality, parody, irony.

Postmodern fiction is of a particular aesthetic- "a sensibility, a set of principles, or a value-system which unites specific currents in the writing of the latter half of the twentieth century." (Nicol;XVI) that presents its readers a challenge unlike any other fictions of previous times. It requires the reader to be constantly active during the reading session. It also challenges its readers to interrogate the commonsense and commonplace assumptions about literature which prevail in our culture." (Nicol;XIV). Brian Nicol discusses the important features found in postmodern texts in his book. First, it acknowledges its own status as constructed; an aesthetic artefact (metafiction). Second, it is an

implicit (or sometimes explicit) critique of realist approaches both to narrative and to representing a fictional 'world'; and third it has the tendency to draw the reader's attention to process his or hers own interpretation as s/he reads the text. The French Lieutenant's Woman is one such postmodern text. It includes some of the major postmodern narrative themes and strategies such as parody, pastiche, fragmentation, metafiction, historical metafiction, experimentation and multiple endings. It is considered to be a landmark between the old literary tradition and new experimental movement as it attempts to bridge the gap between the Victorian tradition and convention of world. It is a conscious work written within the tradition and convention of Victorian novels but not a mere recreation of Victorian novel. Fowles uses history but only to serve the style of postmodern fiction. The novel is an engaging love story set in the beautiful sea side town of Lyme Regis in 1867; full with historical details and traces of morals and codes of Victorian society. Charles Smithson, a Victorian gentleman, heir to a title is betrothed to a daughter of a well to do emergent middle -class family, Ernestina Freeman. But Charles becomes zealously attracted towards mysterious Sarah Woodruff who is the 'French lieutenant's woman' or the 'whore' or the 'fallen woman'. The common understanding of Sarah by the other characters in the novel echoes the patriarchal prejudices of the time. All the characters of the novel some or the other way reflect the Victorian attitudes and conventions be it about love, sex, duty, old belief systems, class differences and social role and position of women. But it is to be noted that although the novel is beautifully constructed based on the nineteenth century Victorian society's speech and details, it is written from a twentieth century perspective; in fact, the narrator himself intervenes and constantly keeps on reminding the readers about it. Historiographic Metafiction is one of the narrative strategies typically associated with postmodernism. In Linda Hutcheon's term it is a self-conscious work of fiction concerning with facts and details from the history. Metafiction draws the attention of the readers to its own status as constructed or an artefact and raises the question about the relationship between fiction and reality. Fowles uses these techniques to make the reader aware of his presence and fictionality. Till chapter twelve, the reader immerse himself into the world of fiction amidst the Victorian society until the narrator himself suddenly appears out of nowhere in the beginning of chapter thirteen -an example of perfect metafictional and frame breaking narrative. "I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I created never

existed outside my own mind" (Fowles; 95). Similar digression continues in many other chapters of the novel raising questions about the agency of an author over his own fiction. These authorial assertions diminish the distinctions between fact and fiction. In Fowles' novel, the reader shuffles from a realist narrative set in Victorian society to the present time narrative voice disrupting the novel's historical realism. Critic Nicol argues that Historiographic metafiction presents its readers with history as a concept so that the fiction comes to function as a kind of theory, indirectly, and often directly, asking us to consider our relation to history (Nicol;104). With this, author changes the prototypes of Victorian novel and revives it in a new context. This ensures the breakthrough from the tradition but Fowles also employs the pastiche and parody to revisit the social and literary history. It recreates the ambience of mid - nineteenth century tradition but under the influence of modern narrative devices and techniques. Post modern parody inscribes the past and subverts it by ironizing them. It cherishes them and also questions them at the same time. It enables the reader to recognize the textual traces of the past and makes them aware of those traces through irony (Brarvad;5).

It is often argued that one of the ways to comprehend a novel is to watch the film version. The screenplay and acting becomes a vehicle through which the story of novel reaches out the audience and also the readers. The screen adaptation of The French Lieutenant's Woman in 1981 was a brilliant direction of Karel Reisz and the acting of Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons. It has achieved a meaningful cinematic equivalent by adopting the narrative strategies of the same into the language of the same by reflecting the novel's comparison of Victorian and mid twentieth century modes of conduct. It is a well- regarded film version. Even though it has evaded some challenges present in the novel, it exhibits Fowles' postmodernist play through its own cinematographic language.

The film makes two different eras reflect each other with a double-edged parodic treatment of tightly interwoven Victorian and modern love stories. Visual art becomes the chief subject of parody in the film. The very opening of the Victorian love story is presented in a hackneyed fashion. As Charles encounters Sarah for the first time at the end of the breakwater, the clichés of love at first sight abound: nature in a tempestuous mood, the protagonists gazing at each other, mist drifting across Sarah's face, a formulaic series of close ups alternated in a stale shot/ reverse shot montage (Martin;

153). These kinds of cinematic techniques make the film a parody of old cinemas.

The narrator who is also the character in the novel is eliminated from the film. The position of the digressing author is not possible to adopt on to the screen, for there is no narrative voice in the cinema just like no place for a director in the novel. Still, the novel retains Fowles' modern perspective in its own language of cinema. The film presents a love affair between the modern actor and the actress who are playing the Victorian lovers in their reel life. The cinematic device of using a film within a film is an added story to the Fowles' story that makes it possible for a cinematic solution to the problem of double endings of the novel. Fowles provides a distinctively modern ambivalence with the multiple ending of his book which offers the readers numerous possible outcome of the plot. In the first ending of the novel, Charles does not go to Exeter to find Sarah, instead comes back to Ernestina. But the narrator dismisses this ending as a mere imagination of Charles. The second ending reunites Sarah and Charles in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's house (a Victorian painter and poet who becomes a character in Fowles' historiographic metafiction) after a long period of trials and separations. This ending fulfills the romantic convention but Fowles then again enters as a character and he executes the freedom of being an author and turns back time and present the third ending of the novel, which ends in final separation of Charles and Sarah. The film transforms this postmodern literary device into its filmic device by providing a happy ending to the Victorian lovers and unhappy to the moderns. The screenplay has adopted the device of parodic intertextuality by incorporating a Victorian film within a modern film. The director has used the narrative strategies of the novel and generated a metafictional irony in his direction. The modern actor Mike falls in love with Anna, his co-actor who is playing the role of Sarah in reel life. The ending of the film dramatizes the novel's metafiction. Like the novel attempts to blur the line between fiction and reality, the screenplay does the same in the end. At the cast party, Mike tries to comfort Anna but she avoids him and goes to the dressing room. She contemplates the wig with which she played the role of Sarah. After that we see Mike rushing to her room and Anna driving off in the night. Mike hears the car engine, hurries to the window and calls not for Anna but Sarah. The film ends here. It is only when the viewers come to know that he has not actually fallen in love with her but the fictional

Victorian character of Sarah in Anna's form. This is similar to the narrative frame of the novel where the fictional world is made accessible to the real world with the narrator/author as a medium through which the reader can enter the fictional world. The character Sarah of the film becomes a discourse for the Mike by which he creates his own version of reality. The film's juxtaposed stories ironized the mores and conducts of the two ages. For instance, the sexual constraints of the Victorians and the sexual casualness of the moderns and the liberty of modern women and dependence of the Victorians. These ironies are effective in the film but they do not result from the kind of self-conscious narrative techniques of the novel where the readers are expected to respond and examine of what is happening in the course of the novel.

Fowles shows general concern for human freedom; a freedom of the individuals from the constraints of society and other individuals in his novel. He deals with different kind of freedoms like social, existential and narrative freedom. In Fowles's thinking, existentialism is primarily a response to social and political pressures on the individual to conform (Lynch; 51). He gives his fictional characters "freedom" from their authors. Sarah is an example of narrative freedom in this novel. She is a genuine rebel against the societal norms and conforms. Charles too can be judged on his reactions to the social conventions of the Victorian society. They have given an agency over their "choice" to avoid the existential dilemmas. But in the movie, Sarah's freedom of choice over the conventions of society has been altered. Although Fowles' character is well adapted as an unconventional and mysterious woman but her quest for the freedom has been transformed into her quest for fulfilling of her artistic talent. She is shown drawing when she first appears in the film sitting on the stairs and also the time when in the novel she is about to commit suicide from the window. At the end, the employer with whom she is living allows her to do her own art works. In the film she is provided with an artistic talent that could lead Sarah to be existentially free and modern woman supporting herself using her talent. Charles in the film is humorous, ironic, easy-going bachelor status of a privileged Victorian man is erased. His status of a scientist and an admirer of Darwin are not given much importance in the movie. But his freedom to choose Sarah over Ernestina is well portrayed in terms of the plot; for one has to keep in mind that film adaptation is a complex process of re-writing. It has to conform to the cinematographic techniques and language. In the process some of the scenes are to be deleted and some extras

are added in the film to make it more comprehensible for the viewers. But as discussed, Reisz has used the postmodern narrative techniques of Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, such as parody, discourse on authorship, metafiction techniques etc., and has reproduced the postmodern irony of the same in his film.

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A Postcolonial Reading of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Rajpathe Ringiyay*

—Papori Haloi

Abstract :

'Post-colonialism' is the study of the effects of colonialization on native cultures and societies. Though different writers from different nations write on their own respective culture and histories but they share the common condition of cultural domination. In postcolonial texts, the writer attempts to revitalize their traditions. They try to produce a literature which helps to reconstitute the hybrid identity of the colonized people. In a postcolonial approach four aspects of the novel becomes imperative to look at: language & art, issues of marginalized communities, women and critique of nationalistic ideology. Here in this paper focuses on all the major issues of post-colonialism. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya through his novel *Rajpathe Ringiyay* has shown a vivid picture of Assam during the crucial time of independence. It shows the effects of independence in the different strata of the society which gives us a wide area to look at the condition of post colonial Assam.

Key words : language & art, marginalized communities, women, critique on nationalistic ideology

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's novel, *Rajpathe Ringiyay* (1955) recounts the events on the day of India's independence in the life of the protagonist, Mohan. Like Joyce's Bloom, through Mohan's interaction with other characters, the novel highlights various issues that an immediate post independent nation faces. Through this novel Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya presents a critique of the nationalistic rhetoric that the dominant power group propagates. In a sense, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's critique of nationalism matched Fanon's idea regarding the Pitfalls of nationalism. According to Fanon, the transfer of power from the colonizers to the indigenous people does not generally mean the attainment of a true independence. Generally, the power transfers from one dominant group to the other. It means that the dominant social groups specifically the upper and the middle class captures power in the government, but the marginalized communities in the nation are usually

left untouched by this transfer of power. The nationalistic rhetoric of the newly liberated country usually glosses over such problems and the issue of representation of the working class and rural proletariat is usually neglected. The character Mohan illustrates this sentiment in the novel,

"Bogar thait kebol kola holey nohoi, bidekhi xakhon podhotio jabo lagibo."

Natives replacing the whites is not enough, the colonizer's ruling system must go too.

In postcolonial studies, the voice of the subaltern has of late become a crucial discourse. The term subaltern describes the lower social classes and the other social groups that were forced to the margins of a society and in theory it responds to the question of subjugation and silencing of the oppressed and marginalized people in post-colonial societies. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya thoroughly addresses the issues of the marginalized people in this novel. He focuses on the fact that the independence of the nation, which is a glorious moment in its history, has little to do in the lives of the people belonging to the lowest strata of the hierarchy of class division. The working class has been oppressed since the beginning of capitalism. The shift of power from the hands of the colonizers to the hands of the upper strata of indigenous power groups would not uplift them. The novel describes how instead of celebrating independence those people were carrying on with their normal lives for nothing much had changed for them. Budhu, the rickshaw walla went for his daily rounds early in the morning, the workers of the mill and the tea estate were still protesting and Lachman was tangled in his own family problems.

"Amar gaat ki xadhinota lagibo? Khabole bhat nai, pindhiboley kapur nai, penpenkoi axupa lora xuwali. Mur babe dhon ghotay ekmatro utxhob."

How can independence matter for us? We have no rice to eat, no clothes to wear, and many crying young mouths to feed. Earning, for me is the only cause worthy of celebration.

While expressing the sentiments of the marginalized classes in the immediate post-independence Assam, Bhattacharya does not forget to voice the domestic and public anxieties of the women of this period. It is worth mentioning here that, at this time the liberation of women and their issues struggled to find adequate representation in Indian literature. However, Bhattacharya is very progressive in his endorsement of the empowerment and the self-expression of women. This consciousness can be seen as an offshoot of the post-colonial concern of certain individuals who fought for the

attainment of 'complete freedom', i.e, a radical transformation of the collective consciousness towards progressive ideas beyond narrow nationalism, envisioned for example in the works of Tagore. Since, the nation's newfound freedom had affected the lives of its women very little hence the women issue becomes central for this new brand of radical progressives who wanted Independence to bring about complete emancipation.

Here we refer to two letters in the novel, written by Aaikon and Aparajita on the 14th of August. While the whole nation was overwhelmed by the country's new destiny, they were caught up with the uncertainty of their own fates. Aparajita's husband was having an affair with her own sister but she could do nothing as she believed, "*Nari jen purukhor xaa, nijor buliboley eku nai. Hridayot byortho premor humoniyah xunu. Bibah-bixedhor kotha tetyay bhabu. Kintu humor pobitro bondhon xingibo babe dekhon aaino je durbol.*"

Woman is like man's shadow, with nothing to call their own. In my heart I hear the troubled beating of unrequited love. Yet even law is not strong enough to break the bonds forged in the holy fires of matrimony.

The character of Aaikon on the other hand is more assertive in her individual aspirations. She is determined to fix her marriage with Mohan, the next day, on the day of independence. But the situation itself renders her dreams incomplete as Mohan is jailed due to his protest against the government. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya not only gives voice for the middle class women but also those of the lower class.

The women of the lower class are shown to be more independent than the women of the middle class. It seems Bhattacharya hoped that the revolution of change would come from the working class women. Nurbibi, is uneducated and has a baby yet she works as a tailor to earn her living. She is financially independent. On the other hand, though Aparajita is educated but she is completely dependent on her husband. Again Mohan's thoughts on the prostitute Mina, who is compelled by her economic conditions to take up this 'unsocial' profession, displays the author's own concerns that independence should extent to all strata of the society. Independence without the inclusion of woman is incomplete.

Language is another major concern in postcolonial literature. Language becomes an integral part in the novel's postcolonial concerns. In the novel the anxiety regarding the loss of one's own language becomes a dominant concern. The characters in the novel talk about the need to protect the Assamese language from the outside influences. They discuss the need for the government

to implement a certain kind of protectionist policy to safeguard not just the interest of the Assamese people but also the language. Mohan's idea of dividing the states on the basis of language anticipates the division of larger Assam into fragments state. The language anxiety that the characters display in the novel also anticipates the 'Bhakha Andulan' which would be a major cause of political turmoil in 1961.

With the thought of protecting the regional language, we can also note the influence of English language in the lives of the characters. The character of the doctor uses English language as a power. It shows the domination or power relation that is brought in by the language of the colonizers. Also it shows the hybrid nature of language in postcolonial Assam. The term hybridity is a notion forwarded by Homi K Bhabha which means a combination of two or more identities within one person "without an assumed or imposed hierarchy". In the novel, the characters use English in between their own regional language. It further depicts the influence of the colonizers in the lives of the country.

Related with the issue of language the novel also presents the issue of art and literature both as a means of protest and the preserver of indigenous culture. The influence of Keat's poetry, the thoughts of great man such as Dr Alexis Carrel, the European food habits such as soup and pudding etc are highlighted in the novel. The novelist constantly mourns the dilapidated condition of Assamese art and artist which greatly endangered the Assamese culture. The novelist believed that literature could help the colonized people to voice their protest by uniting the people.

"Xobdor jogedi xamagra xokhit janaxadharan antarak bhaxa xi axomiya prokash karibor xankalp loisey. Ajir majot bhobhisotor riniki riniki monibo pora xonket jilikisey."

He decided to give voice to the interior lives of all the oppressed people in the Assamese language through his words. A bright future can be glimpsed today.

During colonial era it inspired people to struggle against their oppressor and after independence it helped preserve the culture of the land. The independence period in India was not a smooth episode. People had to organize rallies, protests, fights and so on with their oppressors. Mohan also reflects on this issue that the kind of violence that India had undergone during the partition can only be cured by the healing touch of art, poetry, songs, drama, cinema etc; all these forms of art can make people more humane and

inspire them to dissuade them from violence. He feels a need for change in the artistic forum. As he says-

"Tar babey sangathan'or logey logey jonmo dibo lagibo notun noitikota, notun kola, notun darshan."

Along with groups and organizations; new moral values, new art form and a new vision must bloom.

As the entire story of the novel revolves around the scenario of independence, so the role of freedom fighters cannot be ignored. The author reflects on the contribution of the freedom fighters who sacrifice their lives to attain the independence. However even after this immense sacrifice the nation had to undergo the pain caused by the violence of partition. Mohan accuses the leaders of the country who instead of preserving the unity of the country indulged in their own selfish desire to become the rulers of the new nation. He also sees in the mainland India, how the father of the nation is saddened by the massacres that were caused by the violence of partition. Gandhi had to run door to door to convince the people of Bengal to leave the path of violence. He also sees the pitfalls in the bureaucracy of the country. During the colonial era the bureaucracy worked to preserve the colonial apparatus and after independence, instead of becoming the agent of class mobility it helped preserve the oppressive government apparatus, keeping the marginalized in their peripheral position.

In conclusion, in this novel Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya reflects on the problems of colonialism which become a legacy of post-independence India. Usually people assume that independence brings an end to all the issues of the oppressed, but in reality a simple power transfer from the colonizers to the indigenous is not a solution to all the problems of the newly independent nation. India's independence did not give true liberty to its marginalized communities and the women. The marginalized communities did not even understand the significance of the event of independence. They were not affected by independence and continued the daily routine like on any other ordinary day. They were not concerned about mainland India. In the same vein, the lives of women were limited to their own personal concerns. Like the marginalized community, women too did not have any powerful role to play in the society and hence they did not care about the change that was happening to India and its people. Moreover, the physical decolonization of the nation did not bring total independence. The years of foreign rule posed a threat to the country's own art and culture. People used the English language and foreign

tradition as power. The language and culture became hybrid and lost its true nature. Interestingly, what is worth noting here is that the problems of the immediate post independent India that Bhattacharya highlights in Rajpathe Ringiay are still pertinent here even after more than 70 years of independence. The problem of the working class, of the women and the anxiety of language and identity still continues to linger in Independent India. In this sense, the novel can be seen as prophetic in dealing with issues way ahead of its times.

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Amy as Femme Fatale and patriarchy : A study of the novel *Gone Girl*

-Manmita Sarma

Abstract :

Literature has witnessed a series of flawed heroes or characters having negative connotations. *Femme fatale* can be classified as one such character. Many *fatale* has been a remarkable figure throughout history, literature, and art. Many painters have depicted her as a sexually appealing woman. In some movies, she has been described as a beautiful but lethal woman. This character type often commits acts that challenge the regulations of society. Hence, this paper will seek whether Amy's role as a *femme fatale* questions the patriarchal society. Unconsciously, she refuses to bow down to patriarchy by being the figure of *femme fatale*. She is aware of the fact that in a patriarchal society, the role of women is stereotypical and her evolution as a *femme fatale* is a blow to such stereotypes. She follows the stereotype of women, nonetheless she loathes it. The figure of stereotypes to trick the other characters into their own destruction. The figure of *femme fatale* could be considered as woman's freedom, breaking the patriarchal rules of an ideal woman.

Keywords : *femme fatale, patriarchy, feminism, anti-hero*

The aim of this paper is to analyze whether the figure of Amy Elliott Dunne, the protagonist of the novel *Gone Girl* (2012) by Gillian Flynn, as *femme fatale* questions the patriarchal order of the society. Literally, 'femme fatale' means 'fatale woman' or to simply say, a dangerous woman who can cause fatality. Hence, a *femme fatale* is someone who is indeed a total opposition to what is regarded as 'normality'. Amy, in the novel, *Gone Girl*, shifts through a lot of identities (Cool Girl, Amazing Amy, Avenging Amy) and in her identity as a *femme fatale*, she not only uses her sexuality as a weapon, but her mind and tactics as well, which makes her a multi-dimensional figure. She is the most evolved manifestation of the *femme fatale* figure. *Femme fatale* figures can be considered as a breakthrough for women. The current

femme fatale is more of an anti-heroine, than the traditional femme fatale. Her prey is no longer limited to men, but also includes other women. The idea that women are always expected to be delicate, gentle, nurturing--traits which faithfully adopt stereotypes and traditional gender roles are coined by none but patriarchy. Hence, when a woman acts or behave otherwise, she is regarded as 'anti'- which also happens to be a by-product of patriarchy. Patriarchy, on the other hand, is a social system in which males hold primary power, predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property.

In the essay entitled, "From Enchantress to Murderess: The Portrayal of Amy Dunne as

'Femme Fatale' in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*", the authors, Sandra WidyaResti and TitienDiahSoelistyarini write about the history of femme fatale and how Amy Dunne revives the character of femme fatale in contemporary literature. In this essay, the authors have also utilized Simon de Beauvoir's concept of 'Other'. This essay focuses on the essential link between femme fatale and feminism and how femme fatale does not necessarily reinforce the spirit of feminism. Amy is a woman who refuses to succumb to the pressure to morph into the male's ideal. She exists beyond the veils and yet beyond her appearance. According to De Beauvoir, women's role is quite indefinable. She refuses to be categorized into two main categories of women as constructed by the patriarchal society. There is no question that Amy is a monster when she slashes Desi's (her ex-boyfriend) throat or when she fakes her death in order to trap Nick (her husband). But she does these things to rebel against the boxes others have tried to put her in, for example, "Amazing Amy" by her parents, "Cool Girl Amy" by Nick, "beautiful and doting Amy" by Desi. It is an extreme form of rebellion, but an interesting meditation on society's expectations of women nonetheless.

In *Gone Girl*, Amy, displays assertiveness, confidence and aggression--actions society often label as male-dominated traits. Amy is portrayed as a charming woman with a seemingly amiable nature, but once the reader gets to know that there is more beyond the 'Diary Amy', her real and complete characterization is exhibited. In the novel, Nick and Amy's narration is used in order to reveal all the pieces of Amy's personality. For instance, Amy's ex-boyfriend, Tommy, explains to Nick:

But I know you must know this: Amy likes to play God when she's not happy. Old Testament God... But we start dating, and we date a few months,

two, three months, and then I found out the catch: She is not the girl I thought I was dating... The next thing I know, two cops are at my door, and they've done a rape kit on Amy, and she has 'wounds consistent with forcible rape'... Couple of weeks later, I got a note, anonymous, typed, says: Maybe next time you'll think twice. (Flynn, 311-312)

Here, Flynn has portrayed Amy with strong, forceful personality traits that contribute to her meanness, assertiveness, and ability to frame an innocent person for an awful crime he did not commit. In Amy, Flynn has created a very strong and shocking character with multiple layers and motivation in order to provide the readers with a new less conventional type of a protagonist. Amy has been portrayed as having certain unconventional qualities, which are often labeled as masculine, to pursue her goals of punishing others who have wronged her. Thus, in order for these female characters to appear strong, they must act with more masculinity. It would be apt to quote American gender theorist, Judith Butler, who is of the view that, "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender... identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results". In her most influential book entitled *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler argues that the identity of a person is free-floating, as it is not based on an essence but on a performance.

Amy's rejection to motherhood is a common trait for a femme fatale. This establishes her as 'other', an unnatural, and strengthens her position as 'bad', because she denies societal expectations. She is not motherly or homely but frigid and unfeeling. However, by the end of the novel, Amy does adopt the role of mother in order to use pregnancy as her insurance after Nick has threatened to expose her. Kirsten Smith, in her analysis of the contemporary femmefatale, explains that a femme fatale "is identified by the power she has over men and how she uses this for her own benefit" (37). According to Betty Friedan, a second-wave feminist, "The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own." Friedan calls the glorification of the wifely and maternal role as the 'feminine mystique'. It thrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth century as the limits set for them and those who went beyond these set limits were considered to be rebellious and erratic.

Amy, in the novel, uses the tropes of 'female victimhood' as the framework of her plan, which has worked as a liberating alternative for her.

She is the most evolved manifestation of the femme fatales, who uses sexuality as her weapon against the patriarchal society but at the same time resists the game of male expectations and male gaze. In *Gone Girl*, when the narrative switches to Amy's perspective in the second part of the book, the character offers a witty commentary on the type of femininity she had been performing and with which her husband, Nick, had fallen in love-in the first half of the book:

Men always say that as the defining compliment, don't they? She's a cool girl... Cool girl never gets angry; they only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want... Men actually think this girl exists. Maybe they are fooled because so many women are willing to pretend to be this girl... And the cool girls are even more pathetic: they're not even pretending to be the woman they want to be, they're pretending to be the woman a man wants them to be... (250-251)

The main targets of Amy's critique are men who think of women as extensions of themselves, as creatures who are meant to fulfill their own desires and not to have independent wants or needs that might occasionally come into conflict with them. That said, the speech is not just a critique of men. Quite a bit of it, in fact, is a critique of women-specifically, the women who contribute to this myth; who change themselves for men's approval. However, Amy liked playing the Cool Girl, for she says, "I was probably happier for those few years-pretending to be someone else... But then it had to stop, because it wasn't real, it wasn't me...". But very soon she realized Cool Girl is not someone she could be for a very long time as it came with the price of being having a fake personality. When Amy decides to be herself and not the 'Cool Girl', Nick finds it difficult to cope with her. He declares that Amy is not fun anymore, that she is too uptight, too challenging and difficult and eventually abandons her in order to have an affair with a younger 'Cool Girl' who will validate him, feed his male fantasy and will not question him. Here, Flynn tries to portray modern sexism, one in which the most savvy, arduous, incredible, and complex women are compelled to mold themselves into male fantasies in order to matter. But Amy, being an anti-hero does not bend to these restrictions, she does what she pleases regardless of the consequences.

What 'Other' has to do with the transformation of a lovely woman to femme fatale is that, in this novel, Amy as the femme fatale has been the victim of being used and treated unequally by her husband. She opposes her 'Other' position which always places her beneath her husband, thus she turns into

someone who fights to liberate herself from being 'Other'. Amy proves that she does not kneel before the power of patriarchy because a femme fatale's ambition is to stop the practice of masculine power (Hanson and O'Rawe 160). Other than that, a femme fatale is regarded as something associated with outside normality, order, and light (Stott 31). Here we may quote from Beauvoir's observation:

She is treated like a live doll and is refused liberty. Thus a vicious circle is formed; for the less she exercises her freedom to understand, to grasp and discover the world about her, the less resources will she find within herself, the less will she dare to affirm herself as subject. (285)

This study attempts to conclude that Amy Elliot Dunne is a representational figure of femme fatale in the novel *Gone Girl* as she has rejected the traditional gender roles and abandoned the patriarchal values and norms. The observations made through her character have sought to analyze the growth of such female stereotypes and why such stereotypes should be challenged and dispelled. By imposition of such stereotypes, the patriarchal society tries to mask the real self of an individual. The unfair system of how men see women had made women question the patriarchal society. Due to this matter, the femme fatale character is created to show the readers how a woman can be powerful, yet, mean, especially towards the male characters. Hence, by probing into such characters and the reason behind their labeling, this study attempts at displaying the oppression and provides a space for the unconventional female heroes to become the "agents of change" in a patriarchal society.

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European Renaissance and the Nobility's new desire for University education in Shakespeare's HAMLET

-Diptiman Gautam

Abstract :

This article is an attempt to gauge the weightage that his Wittenberg University education carries in the decision making processes of Hamlet in the famous and heavily scrutinised tragedy by William Shakespeare of the same name. It is a new historical exploration of the history of education in early modern Europe and England which progresses by noting popular perceptions towards this new pursuit of knowledge brought about by the Renaissance. In the article I also delve into the aristocracy of this period's recent interest in attaining formal education and inquire how this anxious desire is reflected in the character of Hamlet as a scholar. I conclude by trying to understand Shakespeare's rationale for using education in the characterisation of one of his most beloved protagonists.

Keywords : Education, Renaissance, Aristocracy

Shakespeare in Hamlet establishes Hamlet's credentials as a scholar early in the play although his designs for doing so remains a topic open to discussion. Saxo Grammaticus's *Historia Danica*, written in the 12th century, is considered to be one of the primary sources of Hamlet and makes no mention of the Danish prince being a student at the University of Wittenberg. The periodical setting of the play has always been hotly debated and its chronology remains imprecise till this day but what has been confirmed is that it was in the German adaptation of Hamlet, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark* (1710), where the first references to Wittenberg can be found. This article attempts to inquire how Hamlet's education impacted his action (or inaction) in the play. I argue here that it was his university education that made (or unmade) Hamlet unsuitable to play the role required of him by his society, i.e., of a feudal lord.

Thomas Nash in *Pier's Penniless* provides some humorous insight into

the common 16th century English perception of Danish education. He writes "For fashion's sake some Danes will put their children to school, but they set them not to it till they are fourteen years old, so you can see a great boy with a beard learn his A, B, C and sit weeping under the rod when he is thirty years old".

It can be no coincidence then, that Shakespeare's Hamlet is also about thirty years old (his age too is a subject of academic dispute) when his studies in Wittenberg are interrupted by the events happening back in Denmark. This point of view informs us about the widely popular views held by the English, of education and the educated in Europe. England at that time only had the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which was exclusively devoted to the work of the Church; while in Europe, even though the University tradition had begun under the influence of Roman Catholicism, there existed a vibrant discourse on science and philosophy.

"The seven liberal arts studied in medieval and Renaissance universities were grouped into two disciplines: the "trivium" (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the "quadrivium" (astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, and music)."

The University of Wittenberg (with which we are primarily concerned here) was founded in 1502 by Ferdinand III of the Holy Roman Empire. It was meant to propagate the humanistic ideals of the Renaissance, a great cultural phenomenon which the European continent witnessed in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Renaissance was a reawakening of the classical ideas of Greco-Roman antiquity in-between 1450 and 1650 in the medieval states of Christendom. When the Crusades ended with a decisive Ottoman victory in Constantinople, the remnants of the Byzantine Empire escaped to Italy, bringing with them a great store of ancient knowledge which was translated into Latin. This was the spark that lit the furnace of progress which pushed European Christendom out of the Dark Ages.

The Renaissance pumped new and direly needed life blood into the Arts and Sciences of Europe. The poetry of Dante and Petrarch fueled the imagination of the people and helped them envision a New Golden Age. Great painters and sculptors such as Da Vinci and Michelangelo used their art to represent the human race and discover its true potential. Copernicus and Galileo contributed to completely revising Medieval notions of astronomy

(erstwhile dominated by the Church) which in turn led to new navigational knowledge, bringing about the Age of Exploration. These developments contributed to the revision of the old, medieval picture of the world. They went together with an entire societal process embracing a re-evaluation of how to live everyday life and a critical change in the public and private perception of manners, morality, science, and religion.

By the 15th century, the Roman Catholic Church had established itself as the most wealthy, powerful, and influential institution in Europe. Its interference in affairs of the material world had led to the Church becoming very corrupt and its primary weapon: the illusion of faith, slowly lost its power as the common man begrudgingly suffered under its harsh and unfair laws. The Renaissance enabled the disgruntled to directly challenge Church authority as they now followed humanistic principles that emphasised the importance of enquiry over faith. For centuries, the Church had controlled all art and learning in Europe. But with the explosion of new ideas and inventions (like printing) during the Renaissance, the Roman Catholic Church's monopoly over knowledge faced criticism and competition from hitherto forcibly silenced corners.

Wittenberg was the eye of the storm of change that hit Roman Catholicism and shook its very foundations. Martin Luther was a professor of moral theology there in 1517, when he penned his revolutionary Ninety-Five Theses, which would lead to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation resulting in the splitting of the Church. Wittenberg was at the forefront of the collective consciousness of European citizens as the ideas originating there were not restricted to academic circles alone but had the potential to disrupt the stable socio-political order and manifest destiny of individuals and nations.

The Renaissance came to England much later when compared to the rest of Europe. England did not have a tradition of the royal family attending university in the medieval period. They were home-schooled in family lineages and polite manners by private tutors and the need for them to attain education in a formal setting was perhaps never felt before in the history of feudalism. In fact, the first heir to the throne to attain a university degree was Prince Charles. Only clergymen and those who wanted to become courtiers had formal schooling and education. Hamlet has several characters belonging to the latter

social strata who attended University including Horatio, Claudius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. This shows that University education was seen as the domain of those who did not have the fortune of being born blue-blooded and yet had high aspirations of joining the court or church.

These facts make it even more interesting to ponder as to why Shakespeare, an Englishman, decided to make Hamlet, who is an heir to the throne, a melancholy student of an infamous University. Maybe the seer peculiarity of this situation is the reason why Claudius and Gertrude consider Hamlet's return to Wittenberg as "retrograde" for the future they had envisioned for him- as the King of Denmark.

The first universities merely consisted of groups of teachers and students without any infrastructure, where exams were conducted as open discussions on matters of spirituality and religion. In the beginning, they were funded as charitable institutions by the Church and attended only by the poor. Over time the nature of the University changed as the Church's death grip loosened and more and more students from well do to families started attending classes in order to improve their chances of moving up the social ladder.

It is not a coincidence then, that Hamlet was first performed at Oxford and Cambridge which are both primarily university towns. A traveler's handbook published in 1600 London named *A Discourse Not Altogether Unprofitable, Nor Unpleasant for Such as are Desirous to Know the Situation and Customes of Forraigne Cities Without Travelling to See Them, Containing a Discourse of All Those Citties Wherein Doe Flourish at this Day Priviledged Universities* written by a certain Samuel Lewkenor contains a guide to the most

"privileged Universities of Shakespeare's day - including the German city of Wittenberg where Hamlet and Doctor Faustus study".

According to Lewkenor the city was notorious in the 16th century for its connection with "controversies and disputations of religion". It must be also be more than a coincidence that two of the most famous and controversial characters of Renaissance tragic drama both shared the common educational background of a "notorious" German university. Taking this as a starting point one can consider Shakespeare's Hamlet and Marlowe's Dr Faustus as typecasts

of the much exalted "Renaissance man" who were fundamentally shaped by the progressive nature of the education they received. This may have led to both characters' eventual alienation from the rest of society which still struggled to come out of its medieval worldview. Both these characters chief torment is intellectual and ethical, leading them to engage in self-exploration and introspection. They are solitary figures with modern, Renaissance humanistic subversive views, in a society that seems to be stuck celebrating medieval heroic ideals.

Hamlet and Dr. Faustus are counted amongst the first characters in Western literary canon who choose their destiny by themselves and question Christian notions of pre-destination and free-will. According to Agnes Heller they exemplify "the cult of the 'self-made' man" meaning that for them, destiny was no longer decided by God alone, but became more a question of their own subjective interpretation. They walk the thin line between existentialism and nihilism. All this is a consequence of their unique educational background, which was aware of its own potential as well as limitation. It made them capable of understanding the new impossibility of ascertaining truth in an ambiguous world, leading them to doubt the established knowledge of the world around them and deliberate profoundly on the fallout of their actions.

Historian Mark Curtis believes that Hamlet attending University is actually the literary manifestation of a phenomenon which started in force in the 16th century when the nobility actively started to attend universities as feudalism entered a new phase of capitalism and it was no longer enough for the aristocracy to be just militarily superior over the classes below them. The new generation of aristocracy realised that they had to evolve with the changes in culture brought about by the early modern period. People of the medieval age had unquestioningly accepted the authority of the Papal Church and the Divine Right of the royal class to rule over them. This submissive attitude was replaced by an inquisitive and enterprising generation. As the Renaissance brought about a crisis in Christianity and sowed the seeds of skepticism, faith alone could no longer uphold the crown. The Divine Right to Rule would not be enough to secure the Monarchy's monopoly to rule. A new spirit of enquiry was now inspiring the people to question old values and the status quo.

In keeping with these developments in human thought, the aristocracy

realised that in order for them to maintain and propagate their hegemony, they had to adapt and conquer culture. The study of theology, which was considered to be only subject of importance in the Medieval Ages, was slowly overtaken by the study of humanism and the sciences. The aristocracy had to legitimise their superiority over their social inferiors by claiming to imbibe a sense of progressive culture and knowledge which was accessible only to their class. They had to become scholars and assert their dominance in matters of philosophy and bureaucracy too, if they wanted to remain relevant and rule in the new age. This role was earlier played by the clergyman, but since the Church retained only a fraction of the power it once commanded, the nobility took this role upon themselves. The seeming success of this project can be seen in the idolizing eyes of Ophelia, a common member of the nobility, in the way she describes prince Hamlet's qualities: "The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword". This signals the transformation of the European aristocracy from a marital class to a highly literate, governing class in the early modern period.

But this is where a certain incongruity emerges. One can easily argue that despite his accomplishments as a soldier and a scholar, Hamlet is not shown as an ideal potential ruler in the play by Shakespeare. Rather, these heroic ideals are upheld by Fortinbras who is set up as his foil: an orthodox archetype of a feudal aristocratic lord who is motivated by traditional ideas of blood-feuds and territorial expansion. In-fact, the indecisiveness which we have come to associate with his University education, can be considered as the hamartia of Hamlet's tragedy. Here we can conclude that by making the character of Hamlet an educated heir to the throne, Shakespeare is hoping that educated aristocrat might perhaps have served a subversive function as a critical insiders who problematises long accepted practices of his own class?

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Matthew Arnold- The Caged Modernist

—Gunjan Das

Abstract :

Matthew Arnold is often called the link between the Romantics and the Modernists, often, criticized as being vague and unable to meet his own standards. This paper will attempt to analyze and argue that these opinions of Arnold are the standards of a Modernist before time and influenced or rather 'caged' by the norms of his own age from an analysis of his famous essay "A Study of Poetry".

This paper shall deal briefly with the tenets of Modernism, the norms of the Victorian era. Along with Matthew Arnold's life and views from some of his other works on society and religion, there will be a few references in grasping of concepts, but the crux of the argument shall be an in-depth analysis of "A Study of Poetry", based on own observations to situate how an innate modernist conforms to the influences of his age and how this unique amalgamation leads to opinions, inconsistencies and ambiguity in his method of criticism of poetry.

Key words- Modernism, High Seriousness, Poetic Truth, Poetic Beauty, Touchstone Method

Introduction

Matthew Arnold (1822-88) had the Renaissance humanistic faith in good letters as teachers of wisdom, more than religion. He emphasized a lot on the importance of tradition, which influenced a lot of modernists like Leavis, Eliot etc. He truly believed in a distinction between the cheap literature for the masses and the truly well written works for people with true taste. He explicitly speaks about this utility of poetry in replacing obsolete religion in his "On Translating Homer" as well as exchanges with his friend Arthur Hugh Clough. He was known as a 'critic's critic'. He believed that the purpose of poetry was to know the best that is known and thought in the world and by in its turn, making this known to create a current of true and fresh ideas. His evaluation, especially of the Romantic poets can be called objective, a quality of his praised by Eliot, who seemed to connect to this modern side of Arnold. Arnold felt that it was a critic's role to be a social benefactor and an educator. This

however was not in the modernist spirit, but rather an idea arising from Victorian times. He thought indifference to morality in a writer is indifference to life. This was ironical to many as Arnold was known to have flouted morality in real life. Perhaps his sense of morality was altogether different as a result of a blend of his innate Modern tendency and the Victorian ideals that stopped him from being fully so. He believed in a need of the knowledge of the past to carry on the tradition. He believed the Modern themes of poetry or Epics. He *emphasized on a return to objectivity*, or a complete disregard of the Romantic view of criticism.

In his preface to Poems of 1853, he talks of the importance of architectonics, where he shuns subjectivity and emphasizes the importance of the whole. He urges writers to copy Shakespeare's excellences only, and not his quibbles, conceits, circumlocution etc. This explains how his objectivity could be a result of the Victorian society, as here he is literally urging the writer to 'make it new' as was told by Ezra Pound, except a Victorian bind that is holding him back. He even commends Shakespeare's use of plots, removing the external and exposing the 'inward man'. Something which again contrasts the Modernists, yet juxtaposed with his architectonic quality, much similar to Eliot's objective correlative. In his "Function of Criticism in the Present Time", he again spreads the Modernist vibe of the sociological and historical background of the text being irrelevant. In his Culture and Anarchy, this Victorian moral influence was further seen in his distinction of the English society into Philistines, Barbarians and Populace. His utopian social view wanted to use sweetness of poetry to change the Philistines and let the nation be the collective 'best self'. He offered similar views in its sequel, Friendship's Garland (1871). In his religious writings like Literature and Dogma, God and the Bible, Last Essays on Church and Religion etc. he criticizes many Christian beliefs. He wanted a change, which he classified as "constructive and conservative". What backs our argument greatly is his own agreement that religion is absolutely important, but not in its current state. The depth of his Victorian influenced spirituality can be seen in his works like Note Book.

The Victorian Era
Queen Victoria's reign generally marks the Victorian era, from 1837 to 1901. There was a spirit of intense change, as seen in Reform Acts of 1832. Non-Conformist churches such as Methodist and Evangelical churches gained popularity. The Pax Britannica was another concept of international policing

reinforcing the vibes of moral didacticism that gave the British a sense of nationalism and superiority. One of the interesting responses was the one against Georgian rationalism and the mystical attitude towards religion. Political and Industrial system also had similar kinds of reforms. Bentham and Mill had similar goals as the ones Arnold tried to seek through poetry when they tried to found 'philosophic radicalism' in order to use rationalism to find solution to social problems. On the other end of the spectrum, Evangelicals also had a similar middle class ethic of responsibility.

An important feature of this age could be seen in the rise in popularity of Agnosticism, as seen in Darwin and the arguments of T.H Hume. Women still avoided the public sphere and politics, which is not addressed in detail in this paper, but should be kept in mind as a sign of Victorian influence in Arnold's "A Study of Poetry" and many other works of the time which neglect women's writing in general. This stereotyping attitude could be further seen in "Angel in the House" by Coventry Patmore as a characteristic of this age. Another reason for this influence could be Arnold's father who was a model Victorian gentleman, also having a knack for reforms as seen during his tenure as headmaster at Rugby School. As expected, this attitude led to a rise of dissenters which only faded later in 1920. Harold Perkin notes that between 1780 and 1850, the society changed from rowdy and aggressive to polite and hypocritical- again highlighting what we see clearly in Arnold's writing- this has also been interpreted by many as a reaction against the French Revolution and a result of pressure from Evangelicals. Ironically, this age also saw a rise in prostitution and 'immorality' by Victorian standards.

Modernism

Modernism has its roots in the reactions to the horrors of the World War I. It rejects the certainty of enlightenment and can be called out with the signature line of Ezra Pound that says "Make it new". It is characterized by self consciousness and irony concerning literary and social traditions which rejects the idea of realism. It was a movement that believed in the power of human beings to create, to reshape their environment, this belief was largely and innately echoed by Arnold, except from Victorian fetters that held him back from appreciating a lot of such poetry. It was anti-technological and Nihilistic in nature, also it was sceptical of religion which was again partly echoed by Arnold. However the later part of modernism or 'high modernism' had an unflinching confidence in science and technology and also distinguished

between elite art and mass culture in the same way that Arnold had done years ago.

New Criticism was a formalist movement that had a close reading of a work done as a self referential, self contained aesthetic object, this was again much similar to the Arnoldian criticism that we deal with. It was recognized much later with John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* in 1941, as the early canon was already set up by I.A Richards and T.S Eliot. Again, it too believed in the special aesthetic experience of a poem that is lost in excessive ornamentation, sans the moral didactic tone of Arnold. Also for it, the structure and meaning of a text are intimately connected. It also excluded the reader, author, history and culture for an estimate of the text like Arnold. This could be seen in texts like Ransom's "Criticism Inc.", Allen Tate's "Miss Emily and the Bibliographers" or "Intentional Fallacy" and "Affective Fallacy" by Wimsatt and Beardsley. There was no official New Critical manifesto, but these collective works defined this most popular branch of criticism in Modern times akin to Arnold.

Much like Arnold, critics would judge a text based on its rhyme, meter, setting, plot and characterization completely divorced from the historical context. Thus Arnold evidently had this proto-modernist in himself, held back in a cage of Victorian values.

A Study of Poetry

This essay is one of the most seminal works of Arnold, first published in T.H. Ward's anthology as a general introduction. It was also published as the first essay in his collection of 1888. There are more than a few instances of where we can find the caged modern spirit of Arnold behind the mesh of Victorian fetters. At the very onset, we see that Arnold talks of high destinies, which echoes the Victorian spirit of high culture. This can be seen also as a influence of early Modern critics such as Leavis, Eliot or Richards. In a modernist vibe, Arnold does accept that all tradition dissolves, he also agrees that idea is everything for poetry (with examples from his *The Hundred Greatest Men*). Arnold equates the higher destinies to the higher uses of poetry- this is a clear indicator of Victorian morality. He takes up the cudgels on the modernist side again as he calls fields like science, religion and philosophy incomplete without poetry.

Further along this vibe, he calls out the modernist epistemological and nihilistic enquiry of Wordsworth's statement about poetry being the "breath and finer spirit of all knowledge". Furthermore, he talks he talks about false

shows and hollowness of knowledge. Again we find the Victorian Cage as he talks of a high standard and strict judgment based on moralistic terms. This blend is clearly seen as he denies the subjectivity in poetry with the reply of Saint-Beuve to Napoleon with a blend of morality and the nature of knowledge. He clarifies this Victorian ideal in his clear distinction between poetry that is half sound, true, untrue or only half true. We can most distinctly see this difference in the combination which brings about the term poetic beauty and poetic truth juxtaposing Modernist and Victorian ideals. Further in the Victorian vibe, Arnold advocates the usage of poetry for our own benefit, but just as this ideal gains prominence, he again talks about Historical and Personal estimate, much like the Modern critical concept of Intentional Fallacy. With the examples of Pellisson and M. Charles d'Hericault, he exemplifies reading and disillusionment regarding French classical poetry due to a historical estimate. He further does a satire on the status of such poets with a comparison to gods, which seems influenced by the religious debate going on in Victorian England. He further adds to this as he talks of the reality of a poet's classic character.

Arnold hints at the blindness that the superstition causes, which can be called a direct reference to the debate about religion in Victorian society. Again the blend of textuality and morals is seen in his application of words like "clear sense and deeper enjoyment". The historical estimate is ridiculed with the example of schoolboys learning Greek and Latin, like a true Modernist. Another example of a victim of historical estimate is given by M. Vitet, a French critic, in his opinion of *Chanson de Roland*. Furthermore, there is a wide array of in-text examples and comparative analyses shown in the vibe of a modern critical analysis. Arnold, mostly misinterpreted to be a Puritan classicist, however, mentions clearly that the texts can be very dissimilar but just need to have that special character, which can be identified by a proper critic with "tact". This quality can be acquired only by a thorough reading of the classics. With this he could be said to be referring to the innate sense which comes with understanding of the alternate morality and seriousness that poetry provides- what religion failed to do so in the Victorian age.

Arnold states that poetry must have penetrative power to the reader like religion in the Victorian spirit, but he also adds that it should have accent, diction and movement which are in the tone of New Critics. We can see Modern critical concepts resembling heteroglossia and structuralism when he talks of *Langue d'oïl* and *Langue d'oc* as well as differences of language in

terms of achieving this grand seriousness. This lack of morality in Chaucer prevents Arnold from truly appreciating his poetry. He also mentions the 'liquid diction' in Chaucer as being achievable in English, like Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton and Keats did. In this similar vibe Arnold talks of the advantages in diction of the dialects of Chaucer and Burns in terms of syllables. He adds further how Chaucer and Burns gain advantage in this respect, but still lack the high seriousness of the greats, which according to him is due to the purpose of poetry, which is needed for the Modern ages, as there is a dearth of values. He gives an example of this in Villon, who has shots of greatness but fails to sustain it. This hankering for values in poetry is a direct outcome of the Victorian debate on religion and the changing storm of Industrial Revolution.

Arnold himself mentions the accent of the greats as being laden with high seriousness, as mentioned by Aristotle, that greats do not have any accent. It is the virtue of Shakespeare and Milton that appears in their diction. Even in the later ages when the 18th century was coming to vogue again, and in this similar basis like a true Modernist, he denies the greatness of Dryden and Pope as poets, but gives them the stature of classics in prose. Arnold felt that just like religious dogma silenced the rational individual, the rules of prose silenced poetry, juxtaposing Victorian fetters to his innately Modern ideas. This is why he called Dryden the inaugurator and Pope the high priest of the age of prose and Reason. Arnold found the Victorian morality that he was looking for in Gray, just because of his knowledge of the classics, hence called him the frailest of the classics. Arnold even went so far as to call the Victorian age itself as "Our age of prose and reason", in his attempt to vouch for the failure of religion to enforce morality in light of its claims for the truth.

Arnold talks of Burns's language and how the Scottish dialect helped him produce beautiful poetry but, the lack of Victorian need of morality did not quite bring him the stature that was needed for a classic in Arnold's eyes. He refers to this as a lack of Bacchanalian sincerity, i.e. the virtue of manner and matter. He also explains the failure of Chaucer in his eyes using this principle- "Large, free, shrewd, benignant". He also points out the notion that his morality is not in complete accordance to Christian morality by showing the poetic success of Burns in "The Jolly Beggars" despite the bestiality, in a Modernist vibe. There were no virtues of classics in this respect because of the Victorian fetters in Arnold's judgment. He talks of overcoming the common personal estimates of Romantic poets like Keats, Byron, Shelley and

Wordsworth by using a similar 'touchstone' method of comparison, again showing, his Modernist tendencies acting up. This is followed in a similar strain in his dealing with good literature being good enough to be enjoyed alone even if it is unpopular- an apt precursor to the Modern notion of "Affective Fallacy". He finally sums it up by talking about a very rational center point to his notion of good poetry- and instinct of self-preservation of mankind, again touching off the Victorian need for ideals.

This trend can be seen in his own poems like "Dover Beach" although he did not consider some of them to be worthy in his own eyes. With a detailed look into 'Dover Beach', we can see Victorian influences in his word painting of the night, as a melancholy image with picturesque ideals. But this also highlights the Modernistic pessimism, something Arnold could never shun. He further strengthens his Victorian influences by citing classical characters and locations like Sophocles and Aegean. Again, perhaps unknowingly, he delves into the modernist Nihilistic realm of the senses and the human mind as he mentions 'sound and thought'. This is followed by popular Victorian image of the 'sea' to represent the state of the mind, also associated with loss of faith. We again see a familiar theme of love, as was followed by his contemporaries like Browning. At the end he reminds us of a pessimistic world and the vanity of war, which would be an almost exact precursor to the modernist sentiment.

Conclusion

Thus, we can easily see how Arnold was a 'caged Modernist' held back by a metaphorical *Victorian cage*. During his first lecture in Oxford, he had called himself a 'modern', although the current existing concept of Modernism wasn't popular then. Even the title of the speech was "On the Modern Element in Literature" where he had himself stated the need for 'intellectual deliverance' to the society, and a need to 'observe facts with a critical spirit' which is a modernist method used for Victorian ends. Truth is, Arnold had a utopian view of the perfect society of Athenians to be the norm in England, where even the commoners and labourers had intellectual capacities. Hence, he can be rightly called the 'caged Modernist' of the Victorian times.

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Perpetuation of Gender Stereotypes Since Ancient Times

-Tanisha Taskin

Abstract :

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing, is termed as stereotype. So a question of thought arises; if these predetermined set of ideologies are rational or following them with blindfolds made any sense? In a society of Homo sapiens, the most civilized creatures, the most common sets of stereotypes can be seen to be implemented on the basis of "gender", "religion", etc.

In this thesis, we shall discuss about gender stereotypes right from ancient times and its perpetuation to the present generation as well. Literature is a gateway to knowledge; a time travelling tool to study the past, question it, examine it by comparing with the current situations to understand the present better and to evaluate an efficient solution.

The predetermined roles of Men and Women has reached to the point whereby; it can be seen at certain points people are abstained from taking parts in their basic rights. How far is this justifiable?

Key words :- stereotype, ideologies, society, gender, literature.

The writing culture had started in the west, which was originated in the southern Mesopotamia region of Sumer (c. 3200) in the city of Uruk. It was flourished in Egypt, later in Greece and from there imported to Rome.

Literary works with their depiction of gender stereotypes :-

EUROPEAN LITERATURE:-

As we tend to speak about the European literature the crucial and evident names that dominates our minds are HOMERIC EPICS, SOPHOCLES, EUPHRIDES, OVID'S METAMORPHOSES, etc. The vast concept of gender stereotypes and the ancient worlds are abundantly present in the literary epic poetries and dramas that have been read since the long past centuries.

***) Homer's epics (The Illiad and Odyssey)**

Cases of PENELOPE and HELEN

The Homeric epics are believed to be biblical and true with no denial. There exists a vast societal norms and differentiations which speaks volumes and answers abundance of questions relevant with the current generation as well. Scholars creating research papers are mostly backed by these literary stuffs; these are much evidently proved to be true. Homer had his style of depicting the positive and negative roles through Helen and Penelope. It can be seen that Helen is portrayed in a manner that creates a feeling of disgust in the minds of readers and viewers. With the sight of the characteristics of Penelope the audiences' minds are uplifted with a feeling of perfection and idealness. This can be proved as the first evidence of gender stereotype where women are supposedly to be soft, loyal, suppressed and most importantly have no say in their courses of lives. Penelope did treat her suitors well with cordial hospitality and couldn't raise her voice as that would violate the societal norms and she is not allowed to do so. Hence she is portrayed as a positive character. Whereas on the other hand Helen of Troy chose to lead a life on her own, a partner of her choice and that made her lose her chastity. She was shown as a reason to begin a fight which killed thousands of innocent people. Thus she is a negative portrayal of women. It is also seen that Odysseus even after spending twenty long years in exile, nobody questions over his chastity and purity; who so? Because he is man. A man is often seen as pure regardless wherever they come from.

Portrayals of males and female bodies through literature can be seen contrastively; where males are heroic and muscular and are not prone to severe troubles. Females often succumb to male domination and gets trapped over marriages disregarding their wishes and desires. Females get raped to quench the thirsts of pervert males, falling prey to their physical strength. Women are not only given passive roles but also depicted as physically weak and yet they are demanded to prove their chastity. Women are defamed after rape of some wrongs against them but the wrong doers often seen as moving about with no guilt and shame. Gender differentiation can be seen in the works of Ovid who added mythological metamorphoses at the end whereby humans gets transferred into some other beings. Thus this depicts the society of modern Rome and early modern England. Women are considered to be modest and ideal only if men can construct their superiority over them and they again not raise their voices against such injustices. Gallathea play of 1588 by John Lyly

is one more evidence of gender stereotype of ancient European society. In ancient Roman culture, virginity, decided positions in society. The Greek and Roman societies have been precisely and explicitly depicted by Ovid on his literary works. The immense thirst of sex and male dominations where males at certain points tends to crossbow their boundaries and materializing women as per their needs. The stereotypes are often seen as women bounded to be the passive members of the society even after doing great deal of respectful deeds. Even goddesses are submissive to male gods. This can be seen when Athena wished to help Telemachus but could not come down as soon as her heart desired for that. She had to gain permission and consent of Zeus. Gender based stereotypes spares nobody. This was all from European continent; in certain ways or other these stuffs can be seen in Indian society through Indian literary works as well.

*) Ovid's Metamorphoses:-

In Ovid's Metamorphoses, Philomela who was a princess of Athens was brutally raped by her brother in law. Her only fault was she was amazingly gorgeous and trusted him. Her tongue was cut into pieces because she tended to raise her voice against her criminal. The portrayal of women here is done as someone weak. Ancient society did not appreciate women for herself; the way she was or by her identity. Since then women of the current times are also known by her male members.

Indian Literature:-

One of the most prominent and gorgeous literary works belongs to Indian literature. They are often referred as 'aesthetics'. They depict diverse arenas, with rich cultures. Delightful natural relations with human lives. They act as a guidance to human lives and society. There exists beautiful ancient dramas and plays like MRICHCHHAKATIKA OF SUDRAKA, CHILAPATTIKARAM BY ILLANGO ADIGAL, ABHIJNANAM SHAKUNTALAM BY KALIDASA, THE GREAT MAHABHARATA, RAMAYANA etc. When we prospect Indian culture we get to see diversified world and a very heartwarming scene as females are worshipped here as goddesses. They are given separate temples and are adored and celebrated. But do females really enjoy equal and higher statuses in the society? Or do they get suppressed in some way or the other? To understand it better let us discuss in minute detail from Indian literary perspective:-

*) Sita from Ramayana:-

The great Indian epic drama Ramayana, which is believed to be

composed sometime in the 5th century BCE by sage Valmiki. The great tale tells about the exile and the return of the prince of Ayodhya; our most beloved and respected lord Rama. Sita was lord Rama's wife and is still considered as epitome of women in the society. Wives, daughters are often taught about the great virtues of Sita and her chastity. She is considered as an epitome or ideal as throughout the Ramayana, she had worshipped her husband and treated him as God. She never raised her opinion and stayed submissive to her husband. After her rescue from Ravan she had to prove her chastity by throwing herself onto burning fire. In Indian society a woman is showered with appreciation only when she sacrifices her wishes and desires for the sake of her family; mostly for male members. Since Sita too remained voiceless and even after being proved pure yet abandoned, she is thought to be the most gracious.

Since ancient times, the roles of both the genders are predetermined and its perpetuation is still can be seen until the present day.

***) KANNAKI OF CHILAPATTIKARAM:-**

Kannaki, who was married to Kolavan, a merchant is portrayed as an ideal wife. She maintained her chastity and grace even after being abandoned by her husband who fell in love with a courtesan Matavi. Her husband returned to her after living some time with Matavi yet she highly adored and respected him. She remained submissive to him and at the end gave up her life to seek justice to her husband's death. We can see here a woman is always expected to maintain her chastity and is often remembered as the wife of someone. They are mostly denied to have their own identity.

This example again makes us sneak through the set of custom roles of human lives, where one gender decides life regulations of the other gender and then are generalized and accepted by all in a society without being any questions raised. Though nobody owns anybody yet a section of the society is always expected to be submissive and make all the sacrifices for the well-being of the family; which is obviously the responsibility of even the male members as well. These epic stories tell us about the pre-civilized age. But did civilization make any change?

To seek the answer of this, we need to sneak-peak through the present generation based literary works. For the sake of example, let us take Mahesh Dattani's play Tara, written in 1995; where two conjoined twins Tara the girl child and Chandan the male child were separated by surgical methods. The surgery was made in favor of the male child. However, Tara did survive but grow with lots of difficulties and then succumbed to death during her early

years. Tara had to sacrifice for her brother right from her birth and had no knowledge of it. This proves the child preference in our societies even in the current generation. A male child is always preferred over a female child.

With the passage of time, the methodology of depiction evolved and from literature it went into cinemas yet the meaning remained the same. The heroines are always materialized and for more attraction of audiences they are made to wear revealing clothes regardless the climatic situation of the set. Men are again portrayed as savior and more powerful. Along with time the pattern of choices also changed but the stereotypes remained the same. Males whoever liked feminine accessories are often humiliated, because they are expected to be masculine and loathe using feminine stuffs. As such the transgender community suffer denial of many day to day rights, privileges and respect. Thus gender stereotype is a venom rooted back from distant past ancient centuries. A deep rooted evil that needs to be removed in no time.

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The Concept of Nature in the Poetry of William Wordsworth and Robert Frost: A Comparative Study

Abstract :

-Madhusmita Bora

Nature in literature is a metaphor for life. This paper aims to investigate different meanings of the term "nature". Moreover, this research seeks to identify the comparative study in the use of nature in the poetry of "William Wordsworth", forerunner of the Romantic Movement in England, and "Robert Frost", national bard of America. Between the two poets, they both appear similar and dissimilar with regard to their philosophy and writing style. Though both the poets see nature in their own ways but there are some aspects of the subject which is clearly the same. The points of divergence between the two nature poets who belong to two different countries and of course they have treated nature in a different manner. The research concludes that the term "nature" has not always had the same meaning or carries the same level of significance. The main purpose of this study was to examine and articulate in philosophical terms the concept of nature and to inherent differences in the poetics of William Wordsworth and Robert Frost.

Keywords : Wordsworth, Robert Frost, Nature, Romanticism, Style

Introduction :

William Wordsworth was born on 7 April, an English Romantic poet who, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped to launch the Romantic Age in English literature with their joint publication Lyrical Ballads. William Wordsworth is the quintessential figure of Romanticism in England. For his treatment towards Romantic elements, Wordsworth stands supreme as a Romantic poet. The Romantic Movement of the early Nineteenth century is a revolt against the classical tradition of the eighteenth century; Wordsworth is, of course, a pioneer of the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century. As a poet of Nature, Wordsworth stands supreme. He is a worshipper of Nature, Nature's devotee or high-priest. His love of Nature was probably truer, and more tender, than that of any other English poet, before or since. Nature comes to occupy

in his poem a separate or independent status and is not treated in a casual or passing manner as by poets before him. Wordsworth had a full-fledged philosophy, a new and original view of Nature.

Robert Lee Frost, on the other hand, was born on March 26, an American poet. His work was initially published in England before it was published in the United States. Known for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. Robert Frost has been called the interpreter of New England, but he might also be called the interpreter of nature and humanity as a whole, for his poetry shows that he is a close observer of both nature and people, and that he portrays their fundamental elements. Nature is first and most important characteristic of Frost's poem. Frost places a great deal of importance on Nature in all of his collections.

Purpose :

The main purpose of this study was to examine and articulate in philosophical terms the concept of nature and to inherent differences in the poetics of William Wordsworth and Robert Frost.

Research Questions :

- This research will attempt to answer the following questions:
1. What are the different definitions of the term? nature? throughout history?
 2. What is nature according to Wordsworth and how it is different from other English romantic poets?
 3. What is nature according to Frost and how it is different from other English romantic poets?
 4. How Wordsworth's nature is different from Frost ?

Scope and Justification :

The present research has its uniqueness in its origin though the comparison between the two different poets i.e., "Nature in Wordsworth" and "Nature in Frost" have been considered by various critics and researchers of literature. There are many papers which are available on Nature in Wordsworth and in Frost, but a comparative study in the treatment of the same subject in highlighting different thematic values towards life has been the focus of the present study. The study has encircled few selective extracts by the two poets, making an attempt to show their different concepts and ideas towards "Nature". The paper has its own scope and justification in setting an example of the study

of comparative literature in handling various thematic issues with the same subject matter.

Nature In Romanticism :

The Romantic association of nature and spirit expressed itself in one of two ways. On the one hand, in their writings dominate the image of landscape, which reflects their search for beauty, for picturesque images. On the other, they pay more attention to the state of the human soul and his feelings, and so the image of nature is a projection of the state of the soul, and the poet turns from the descriptions of nature to description of feelings, mixing them and showing relationship between them. Thus, the declaration of the relationship of nature with the inner world of man is an important practice in works of romantic poets.

Nature in William Wordsworth :

The following section attempts to answer the second question mentioned in the research questions section that what is nature according to Wordsworth and how it is different from other English romantic poets?

Wordsworth sees Nature as, in some sense, a projection of the mind of man. This is typical of Romanticism, with its focus on the inner self, its perception of man as a kind of godlike being, and its concept of the literal outer world as in some way an illusion, a cover of the ultimate reality that lies beneath it. Wordsworth doesn't explicitly or directly express this Kantian philosophical idea that was "in the air" at the time, but it is implied by much of his poetry. William Wordsworth, who is considered to be one of the most magnificent and influential "poets of nature" (Clark 2011: 15), published numerous works which are strongly characterized by his respectful perception of nature. William Wordsworth was one of the founders of English Romanticism and one of its most central figures and important intellects. He is remembered as a poet of spiritual and epistemological speculation, a poet concerned with the human relationship to nature and a fierce advocate of using the vocabulary and speech patterns of common people in poetry.

Wordsworth is best known for Lyrical Ballads, co-written with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and The Prelude, a Romantic epic poem chronicling the "growth of a poet's mind."

The "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" not a systematic poetics, but a partly r, partly pedantic, and still problematic statement of Wordsworth's beliefs about poetry and poetic language. The preface in all its versions is highly discursive,

the poet "thinking aloud" in an attempt to formulate ideas about poetry based on poems he has already written. It is important to remember when reading the preface that it both chronologically and logically follows the composition of most of the poems. The two central ideas of the preface are the need for reforming poetic diction-which, according to Wordsworth, had become far too artificial-and the role of the poet in society, which Wordsworth saw as having become too marginal. He had also come to the conclusion that the troubles of society were specifically urban in nature. This view finds eloquent expression in Wordsworth's most powerful early poem, "Tintern Abbey." Thinking of the way in which his memories of the Wye River valley had sustained him, Wordsworth wrote :

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet

The poem concludes with a meditation on the power of nature to prevail against the false and superficial "dreary intercourse of daily life" that Wordsworth associated with city life, especially literary life in London. In the preface, Wordsworth characterized those forces as acting against the elevation of mind in which the poet specializes, and he identified them with urban life.

Wordsworth was often dismayed by what he saw and he sought solace in the grandeur and beauty of nature. Wordsworth offered not just a beautiful picture of nature but also illustrated the healing power of nature on the spirit of man.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

In this poem My Heart Leaps Up, Wordsworth also uses another concept

that becomes a theme throughout his poetry; the importance of childhood. For many of the Romantics, the memories or visions of an idyllic childhood become a powerful emotive force as they aspired for life of greater harmony and simplicity.

In his another poem, well known as Immortality Ode, he tells us that a boy his love for nature was a thoughtless passion but when he grew up the objects of nature took a sober colouring from his eyes and gave rise to profound thoughts in his mind because he had witnessed the sufferings of humanity :

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

The Ode begins by discussing nature as a metaphor for purity and ability to dream. "There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,/ The Earth and every common sight,/ To me did seem apparel in celestial light," (1-4) these lines are a prime example of the use of nature to symbolise purity as an image.

Nature in Robert Frost :

In this section attempts to answer the third question mentioned in the research questions section that what is nature according to Frost and how it is different from other English romantic poets?

Robert Frost has been called the interpreter of New England, but he might also be called the interpreter of nature and humanity as a whole, for his poetry shows that he is a close observer of both nature and people, and that he portrays their fundamental elements. Nature is employed as a metaphor in Frost's poems. He describes the natural object and leads the reader to a comparison. Wordsworth is a pantheist who believes that God exists everywhere in nature. According to him, nature is in harmony with mankind, nature and man are in the spiritual union. Frost concentrates on the dramatic conflict happened in the natural world, such as the confusion and dilemma in life (as in "Mending Wall"), and the danger of nature (as in "Exposed Nest"). According to Frost, nature is not only the source of pleasure, but also an inspiration for human wisdom. People will get the enlightenment from observation (as in the "Birches"). Nature becomes a central character in his poetry rather than merely a background.

In Frost's poetry, there exist bright side of nature. His nature is filled with beauty and benevolence. We can fully feel the poet's affection to nature's beauty and grace.

"A Winter Eden" can serve as a good example of nature's beauty. Look at the following stanzas:

A winter garden in an alder swamp,
Where conies now come out to sun and romp,
As near a paradise as it can be
And not melt snow or start a dormant tree.

It lifts existence on a plane of snow
One level higher than the earth below,
One level nearer heaven overhead,
And last year's berries shining scarlet red.

It lifts a gaunt luxuriating beast
Where he can stretch and hold his highest feat
On some wild apple tree's young tender bark,
What well may prove the year's high girdle mark.

So near to paradise all pairing ends:
Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends,
Content with bud-inspecting. They presume
To say which buds are leaf and which are bloom.

A feather-hammer gives a double knock.
This Eden day is done at two o'clock.
An hour of winter day might seem too short
To make it worth life's while to wake and sport

This poem is about the place of winter in the cycle of the seasons, and how winter symbolizes the point in the cycle of life that marks the transition to rebirth. We may find beauty in the snowy woods or have your mood lifted by the song of a bird. Contrary to popular belief in winter as cold, death and bleakness, in this poem Frost shows us a beautiful, delight and lively scene. The winter garden, although "on a plane of snow", is attractive with "last year's berries shining scarlet red". The animals in the garden are active with their respective tricks. The birds flock as friends. This is really a lovely and cheerful scene, a Winter Eden, as Frost suggests by the title.

In his another poem "Fire and Ice" Robert Frost compares two elements of nature fire and ice. "Fire and Ice" is straightforward in its message that emotions become destructive when they are too extreme, destructive enough

even to end the world (Explanation of: "Fire and Ice" by Robert Frost). In the first two lines "Some say the world will end in fire/Some say in ice" (Lines 1-2) the poem he presents the option to end of the world by fire or ice. He then talks about fire in the next two lines and compares fire to desire "From what I've tasted of desire/ I hold with those who favour fire" (3-4). The comparison states that Frost sees desire as something that takes over and brings devastation. In the next stanza Frost then compares ice to hate. This comparison relates to the reader a view of hate as something that causes people to be unyielding, lifeless and cold. Ice also has the tendency to take in things and cause them to crack and break. The final line of the poem asserts that these two vicious forces are evenly great. Fire consumes and destroys quickly, leaving ashes. In The overview Explanation of: "Fire and Ice" by Robert Frost it talk about how two opposites like fire and ice or passion and hatred can easily be linked together. While ice or hatred, destroys much slower. It causes objects to become so lifeless that they crack from the pressure created. Frost imagines that the end of the world could be caused by people becoming too strict, lifeless, and set in their way of life and beliefs that the world breaks apart into pieces.

A Comparative Study :

This is the last section of the research questions which attempts to make a comparative study between Wordsworth and Frost in terms of their attitudes towards nature and how the concept of nature was employed by each attempting to answer the final question - How Wordsworth's nature is different from Frost?

It has been well said that Nature is the Bible in which man may read all things. Nature serves man for commodity for beauty for language and for discipline. To the receptive man, Nature speaks at all times and in all places. The same love, attraction and delight are with these two nature poets- William Wordsworth and Robert Lee Frost.

The points of divergence between the two nature poets who belong to two different countries and of course they have treated nature in a different manner.

When we compare both poets purpose, it is completely differ from each other. Because Robert Frost concentrates on the dramatic conflict happened in the natural world. His poems usually begin with an observation in nature and proceed to situation. According to Frost is not only the source of pleasure,

but also inspiration for human wisdom. While Wordsworth believed people lose the humanity, purity and nobility of their souls because they are corrupted by the artificial society in the cities and become immortal when they distance themselves from nature by living in cities. That why both poet theme are also something differ and some of is same.

According to Frost, man's physical existence itself is a barrier which divides man from the soul or spirit of nature. While Wordsworth denied the very existence of barriers between man and nature. Wordsworth seeks to establish a harmony between man and nature through his nature poems. It would be clear with Mary Moorman comments on the opening lines of 'Tintern Abbey'.

As regards Frost's attitude or philosophy of nature, it is quite different from that of Wordsworth and other English romantic poets. Nature for him is not a kindly mother, watching benevolently over man, neither hi she have any 'holy plan' of her own for the good of mankind as it is for Wordsworth. Nature, for Wordsworth, is a great teacher. We learn from Nature more than we learn from the sages.

As regards Frost's and Wordsworth's attitude towards nature, we may say that Robert Lee Frost and William Wordsworth were no doubt two hearts but as far as their creativity goes; only one soul seemed to function between them. Obviously we find differences between the thoughts of these two poets. But it is remarkable that each one's characteristic faculty was strengthened by assimilation of the particular qualities of their own.

Conclusion :

In short It sets out, first, to show William Wordsworth and Robert Lee Frost as nature poet with all its ramifications of meaning. No doubt, both the poets are best in their own view points, opinions, qualities and styles. Wordsworth's attitude to Nature can be clearly differentiated from that of the other great poets of Nature. He did not prefer the wild and stormy aspects of Nature like Byron, or the shifting and changeful aspects of Nature like Keats. It was his special characteristic to concern himself, not with the strange scenery of the sea and sky like Shelley, or the purely sensuous in Nature like Keats. It was his special characteristic to concern himself, not with the strange and remote aspects of the earth, and sky, but Nature in her ordinary, familiar, everyday moods. He did not recognize the ugly side of Nature 'red in tooth and claw' as Tennyson did. Wordsworth stressed upon the moral influence of Nature and the need of man's spiritual discourse with her. As a matter of fact,

Frost's view on nature is an important part of his heritage to us. It helps with our understanding of Frost's poetry. In Frost's familiarity with his views about nature, plays a more crucial role than information about his life, readers should appreciate the role of nature in his work.

Frost's nature poetry is so excellent and characteristic of his poetry it must be given a prominent place in any account of his art. Nature is a source of human wisdom. There is a wealth in nature, and nature is, as Frost says, "always hinting at us". Frost believes that there is close relationship between man and nature. Thus, it can be concluded that nature has acquired numerous meanings throughout history. This concept has traditionally been used in creative writing in many different ways and to achieve a number of various literary effects. This use of nature is not by any means limited to English literature, but certainly exceeded that to include the literature of other languages and cultures.

This implies that there are universal meanings and effects associated with the concept of nature throughout the world and over the centuries.

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Sirens : The Greek Myth

—Gracy Devi

Abstract :

In Greek mythology, the Sirens were beautiful but deadly creatures they lured sailors with their enchanting music and Angelic voice. The Sirens are a myth, but it's fascinating to learn about some supernatural creatures that were believed to be half bird, beautiful women who lured sailors nearby.

In this paper we shall learn about this mythical creature, gathering all the informations about this mythical creatures from books another varified internet sources. The story of the Sirens has inspired writers, poets, and artists for millennia. But somewhere along the way their form was confused. This study will focus on this mythical creature and what we can learn from this mythical creature. Even if it is just a myth and there's more possibility that it never existed and it was just a made up creature we still have something to learn from this creature.

Key word : *Mythology, supernatural, half bird, music, sailors, enchanting, beautiful*

Now imagine sirens really do exist and comes with the badluck pack that we received since the very beginning of 2020.

The sudden urge to die to end your life is exactly how the sailors or the people under the spell of the enchanting voice of the sirens feel. The Sirens symbolize temptation and desire, which can lead to destruction and risk. As such, the Sirens can also be said to represent sin. Some have suggested that the Sirens represent the primal power that females have over men, which can both fascinate and frighten men. The flower-filled meadows, home to the sirens, in ancient times, were referred to as Anthemoessa or Anthemusa, the flowery islands, said by the Roman poets, Virgil and Ovid, to be the Sirenum Scopuli, three small, rocky islands, (South of Capri) or Pelorus, today known as Punto del Faro, Sicily. In the epic poem 'Argonautica', written by Apollonius of Rhodes in the early third century B.C., Jason is warned by Chiron (A centaur), that Orpheus (Musician, poet and prophet), would be needed on his

journey, to play his lyre, in order to drown out the song of the sirens, which is exactly what Orpheus did.

One member of the crew, Butes, heard the song though, and jumped into the sea, but, luckily for him, was caught and brought to safety by Aphrodite, Goddess of love, pleasure and procreation.

According to Homer, there were two Sirens on an island in the western sea between Aeaea and the rocks of Scylla. In Homer's book *Odyssey* XII, we get to read about how sirens almost lured Odysseus. He and his crew's ears were blocked up with wax to avoid the enchanting music of sirens. As the hero wanted to hear the sirens singing, he ordered his men to tie him tightly to the mast of the ship. Sirens are often misunderstood with the mermaids. We all are familiar with what mermaids are, mermaids are believed to be half fish and half human whereas sirens are believed to be half bird with a woman head. They are believed to be beautiful but evil they are alluring sea nymphs. According to a source they are the daughters of sea God, Phorcys, or of the river god, Achelous. (Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*). A lot of theories talks about how the silence where made or created they were basically believes to be goddesses. According to one of the theories they were the handmaidens of the Goddess Persephone. PERSEPHONE was the goddess queen of the underworld, wife of the god Hades (Hades). She was also the goddess of spring growth, who was worshipped alongside her mother Demeter in the Eleusinian Mysteries. The theory says that Sirens were given the body of a bird by Demeter when she was abducted by Hades to assist her in the search. Now it is curious that how and why they remained like that and we turned evil. Another theory says that they were turned evil and remained like that because Demeter kind of cursed them as a punishment for not protecting her from the Hades.

The great ancient myth was forgotten in the modern world Emily Wilson, a university of Pennsylvania classicist excavated whose historic new English translation of Homer's *Odyssey* has won her accolades for its modern language and style. The story of Greek warrior-king Odysseus's journey from home to the war in Troy first translated in English in 1615 Emily Wilson was the first woman to publish a full English translated story of the warrior king Odysseus journey.

"They inhabit the water, the air, and the earth," Wilson said. "They're also associated with song; they have voices that are not human voices, and kinds of movement that are not the same as human kinds of movement."

According to some myths sirens were also believed to guide the souls to the underworld, they were also referred as the sea witch.

Conclusion :

The sirens have a very interesting history and many different theories of how they got their forms what they were and what actually made them evil. Their role in *The Odyssey* is their biggest role and may have even led to their demise.

Now the thing that we can learn from this mythical creature is that, the story of the sirens goes on to prove one of the most valuable lessons which one should always remember, all that glitters isn't gold. They are believed to be this beautiful nymphs with enchanting voices who seduces man but the closer you get the uglier it gets and turns out to be this evil creature.

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Re-Visionist Mythmaking- A Study of Shurpanakha Re-Visited In Kavita Kane's Lanka's Princess

-Sukanya Das

Abstract :

Shurpanakha, Soorpanakha or Chandranakha as the name goes throughout different cultures and dialects; the one thing that constructs her character is her grotesque form, a pot-bellied woman, a demoness, the sister of Ravana, the King of the Asuras. She is considered to be the woman who is way out of the figure of the 'ideal' woman, a woman driven by lust and an unquenchable thirst for revenge. Appearing only in the Aranyakanda episode of the Ramayana, with a few dialogues, she plays a vital role in structuring this book of moral codes. She is modelled as the antithesis of both the 'ideal' hero and the heroine, Ram and Sita, who is negated as an answer to create these elite models of human form in the elitist patriarchal ideology that formed the backbone of this religious text. Though she played an important role in churning of the fates of the major characters of this epic, she had been completely negated from both in language and body, making her the 'other' woman. All of these binaries in gender and the gendered narratives of patriarchy is what the feminists question through their writings. Feminist critics and writers had almost always pointed out the importance of seizing the past, re-looking as re-living, in order to attain the self and the body that had been negated into passivity. L'écriture Feminine provides a medium of 'writing the body' into subjectivity, something that has been brought forth by Kavita Kane in Lanka's Princess, where the subjugation of Shurpanakha is replaced by her subjectivity.

Keywords : *Feminism, myth, revisionist mythmaking, ideal/other, L'écriture feminine*

What is a normative human being? What politics does the interplay of norms and ideologies have on construction an identity? What does one become if not the normative identity? The answer to all the above mentioned questions is the fact that the normative is the cultural construction that ideology 'historicizes, naturalises and eternalises'. Ideology is a term developed in the Marxist tradition to discuss how societies and cultures are structured such a

way that enable group holding power to have maximum control and minimum conflict. This idea of holding power is what came to be questioned by the Feminist critics. They tend to question the dominant form that patriarchy holds over their freedom, voice and their bodies. Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres. In this way, feminists use the term 'patriarchy' to describe the power relationship between men and women as well as to find out the root cause of women's subordination. Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or masculine, roles and women always have the subordinate or feminine ones. This ideology is so powerful that "men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress". (Singh, 2014) They do this "through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men". (Singh, 2014) These institutions validated the construction of the feminine identities of a pious, docile, submissive woman who would be epitomised as good woman. The one who transgressed such norms came to be categorised as the bad, fallen women, demonised and vilified for transgressing her space.

Narrowing down the vision to that of the Indian culture and the roots of such gendered narratives, one can start with the most sacred text, Ramayana, the legend of the seventh avatar of Vishnu, Ram. The Valmiki Ramayana is considered to be oldest version of all the Ramayanas, composed around the 5th century BCE by Valmiki, where he narrates the story of the hero, Lord Rama and his heroic journey towards the annihilation of vice. This epic sings of the valour and virtue of Rama, his morality, his physical prowess as well as the virtue and chastity in Sita and all the women alike. This text creates a clear cut division between its 'ideal' forms and those who are different and this becomes explicit in the way he introduces the character of Shurpanakha:

Rama was graced with a beauteous countenance; that Rakshasi had a hideous face; Rama had a slender waist, she had a huge abdomen; he had expansive eyes, she had terrible eyes; he was gifted with an elegant head of hair, she had coppery hair; Rama was dear presence, she was of unsightly presence; Rama had a sonorous voice, she had a hideous voice; Rama was youthful, the Rakshasi was an old hag; Rama had mellifluous accent, she had harsh accents; Rama was ever abiding by justice, she was unruly; Rama was handsome, she was ugly. (Manmatha Nath Dutt, 545)

The Ramayana is often treated by the Indian culture as the holy book

of ethics about human nature. Examples from this book are drawn into daily life to construct the individual identities. So what of those who surpass the oppressive norms patched on their bodies? Those are demonized, portrayed as the evil, antithesis of the 'good', 'virtuous' hero and most often forgotten in history. Surpanakha has been blamed throughout history for her 'outrageous' behaviour as a woman, for being 'unruly'. Moreover she is known to be the character with a mutilated nose, ears and even breasts. She represents the symbol of lust, exemplifying the lusty nature that the Asuras had always been attached with. Also, Valmiki's Ramayana did not play much with her character as he did with the others. She occupies only a very small part of the story, mostly coming out in the Aranyakanda, the episode in the forest Pancavati. Yet, she played a very important role as an example for the 'other' woman who churns the event that follows. She became the one who perpetrated the war. Yet what was never discussed was the immense power she held as a woman. Thereby, the epic, Ramayana, can be considered as story, biased in its narration.

One can see that the legends in literary history almost always refers back to the same story, of "man to his torment, his desire to be at the origin", to be the 'one'. Patriarchal ideologies created a structure for women considered to be the 'ideal' structure- docile, obedient, submissive women and such gender specific connotations led to the domination of women both in body and space. This led to the negation of any specific identity for women as all were taught and strived to become the 'ideal', perfect woman. Women who were powerful to question and challenge such parameters were looked on as the 'other' woman, the demoness like Shurpanakha. Myths as a product of patriarchal narratives have helped in strengthening its hierarchy and also the continuation of its effect throughout cultures in time. It became a way of mobilising the lives of individuals in a culture, a guidebook of moral codes of every human life. And a history was created out of such cultures that valorised the heroism in man in its idealised behaviour while patronising those who transgressed such conformation. These myths conformed women into various boxes of meanings and narratives on a desirable behaviour. The female body became the slate for such inscriptions of patriarchy.

The Feminist movement marked the "renewal of old tradition of thought and action already possessing its classic books which diagnosed the problem of women's inequality in society and in proposed solutions" (Barry). Feminist assertion of the factual past written down in history by the 'great' historians

has led to its re-visioning of the past that history asserts to be the truth. History has celebrated the glories of chivalrous men more often than women. This history that passed itself as natural basically subsumed the position of women. The position of women as the 'other' has been eternalized and internalized by the natural flow of history. It is to be noticed that history had been a man's sentence and language as well which had been centred on the phallus. The male writer never takes into consideration the female experience or female criticism. It establishes certain ways or norms for each of the bodies, thereby naturalising each aspects of an individual sexual identity. This rigidity of identities that has been the norm of each and every aspect of a society is relooked at when feminists take to re-visioning of the cultural history. The epics that pass as natural tradition of the history of the nation encompassing the heroism and legendary stories of the great men are another area that the feminists try to reinterpret. In the essay, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision", Adrienne Rich writes on the idea of rewriting myth that:

this drive to self-knowledge, for woman, is more than a search for identity: it is part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. A radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse, would take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us; and how we can begin to see-and therefore-live afresh. (1972, p. 18)

Rewriting of myths came as a challenge to this oppressive structure that binds the female body into one single form - the ideal. It acts towards breaking all such stereotypes or the dichotomies that construct and constrict the female body. It acts towards presenting women with a female space, where they can realise and claim their bodies, something that was completely unattainable for a woman throughout history. This journey of revisiting the myth of the 'other' woman, Shurpanakha and rewriting the prejudices was taken by Kavita Kane in her work, Lanka's Princess. Kavita Kane is the best-selling author of Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen, Sita's Sister and Menaka's Choice. Born in 5th August, 1966, in Mumbai, the author began her career as journalist and went on to become a full-time novelist and most of her work is based on Indian mythology. In a sense, she has become a revolutionary figure amongst many, as she brings in feminism into her retellings. She speaks of the misogynistic treatment of women in mythologies and shows how patriarchy left its mark in it. The text, Lanka's Princess, questions the brutal and brazen portrait of

Shurpanakha drawn by history/mythology and how she stands as one of the most misunderstood characters in it.

Born as Meenakshi, she had to bear the hateful name Shurpanakha "a witch with long sharp nails" at a tender age of five. (Kane, 8) It was with these long, sharp nails that she countered Ravan and also, Kuber, when he tried to abduct her. Called 'monster' by her mother, this text shows how Shurpanakha posed as a disappointment to her mother from her very birth. Hated by her mother, Kaikesi, she had always been close to her father, Rishi Vishravas. Dark, skinny, with a slight, short figure and a lack of charm, Meenakshi was to remain an outcast from the family that looked everything she could never be and this oddity in her always reminded of her monstrosity. After the Asuras win back their gold adorned land, Lanka, we see the frowning little Meenakshi grow up into an attractive woman, "dark yet beautiful", "with huge hazel eyes dominating an ordinary face." (Kane, 87) In spite of her family being against her love for Vidyujiva, also known as Dusta Buddhi, she succeeds in winning her choice of marriage with him. Tragedy strikes after the death of Vidyujiva in the hands of Raavan, her own brother. With anger and revenge churning inside her, Meenakshi leaves to be in forest of Dandak with her son, Shambhu Kumar. And it is in this Dandak that Surpanakha becomes the most powerful, where she is reborn from Meenakshi to Surpanakha. In all its applications, nature is present in its unprecedented form of power, without any control, free, wild and fierce. Such attributes are what characterizes the identity of Surpanakha. She could never be controlled and from the very beginning and is seen to be defiant of compromising her choices. She, like the wilderness is wild and untameable. "In the wilderness called a jungle, Man could not rule here through his power: he had to survive with the animals. It was a war for all: battling everyday for personal survival" (p. 182). She believed that "animals free and untamed were more true to nature" than man who has turned against his own kind. Pleasure in men lied in his power over other, its control over nature or the mankind in particular. But the wilderness remains in its most unrestrained form. In the chapter 'Dishonour', Kane has intricately described the episode of the mutilation of Shurpanakha by Lakshman. The men, too misogynistic to hear a woman's desire (for them) cruelly disgraces her by chopping off her nose and ears. They do not kill her, but Ram orders Lakshman to maim her instead, to punish her for what they considered to be shameful behaviour for a woman. The story ends with the destruction of the land and the clan of the great Asuras as Shurpanakha gives

way to her revenge by starting the war between Ravan and Ram. The invincible Ravan who abducts Sita is killed by Ram. The end exposes the false ideals practiced by the patriarchal tradition to condemn the female body when Sita was made to prove her piousness and purity through the 'Agnipariksha' or the fire ordeal. Freedom for women always came with a price. But this trial only shadowed the idea of freedom for women. Apart from bringing Shurpanakha's perspective and exposing her humanity, the novel also talks about other female characters Vedavati, Mandodari, Kaikesi, Rambha, etc.

Reinterpreting of myth provide feminists with a way to unmask the male centred view of language and history. Roland Barthes, explains that the work of the mythology is to prove that "what appears to be natural is actually artificial" and that it constructed by those in power who decides our place in the society. The debunking of myth by feminists crumbles this space and provides for those dead figures, annihilated by this very power structure a way to live again. It reveals how women had been victimized by this male dominated texts and the language. The female archetypes become a way to naturalise the voiceless, subordinate woman. Women are fixed into the category of the 'angel' or the 'demon'. So we have the perfect 'ideal' woman, the angels as Virgin Mary, Venus, Cinderella and many more. While on the other hand, we have Eve, sinner, condemned for disobeying God, said to bring about the fall of the humans, and the monstrous Medusa, Medea, and so on. While the myth of monstrous woman happens to be dangerous, the myth of the 'token woman' should be smashed as well, for this idea of the special woman only leads to the creation of a falsity, a 'false woman' suppressed from being what she wanted of herself to be. The women writers, feminists in particular, must know the stories of the past so that they can break away from the hold that myths have over the identity of women.

Women have been alienated both in their bodies and in their writings. And if they did take up that space, it was only to follow the phallogocentric tradition or by obscuring their names under a male pseudonym. . It is only through writing that one's body can be heard. And the fact that the difference not only existed in the sex, but the realm of language as well came to be asserted by what the French feminists called l'écriture feminine. L'écriture feminine is "kind of writing which is different from the kind of writing which is usually valued in the Western culture, and which is specifically gendered" (Warhol & Herndl, p.332). These writings founded by Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray along with many women writers in France refused

the separation of the mind and the body. In the mind/body dualism, it was women who took up the space of the body. Male/female, mind/body naturalised the male space for the intellect. . Cixous suggests, in her essay, "The Laugh Of Medusa" that this symbolic death of the female author/subject can only be possible when women start claiming their bodies. Women had been taught to be shameful of their bodies for too long and the 'superegoized structure' of patriarchy has occupied "her the place reserved for the guilty(guilty for everything at every turn: for having desires, for not having any, for being frigid, for being "too hot"....)" (1996,p. 338). It is through the phallogocentric writing that men have suppressed and objectified women and sought every woman to question herself at least once for the monstrosity that was attached to her for going out of the line. Women were cast into moulds of angel/monster, a dream/terror. And sometimes, these images had been so ubiquitously used by men that it seeped into the writings of female authors as well. Women must write her 'self': must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they had been driven away so violently as from their bodies" (Cixous,p. 334).

Re-writing the story of Surpanakha, Kane has liberated her character and have provided us with the lucid story of Surpanakha which had not been heard before. She is an 'outcast', an unruly woman, who had always been treated as an aberrant by all including her family. But she is a woman who is powerful enough to claim her voice and her body. The overt nature of Surpanakha surpasses every such barriers and can be pictured as the 'new woman', not ideal, but the new woman who does not let her sexuality be possessed by patriarchy. She sheds light on the misogynistic nature of men who cannot stand the idea of power in women. Her body might have been mutilated stripping off her honor, but the inherent power in her could never wither. Her nails, this is where her name roots from, Surpanakha, nails sharp as claws and immensely powerful. Though driven into a wretched fate because of her game of revenge, this exposes the flaws in all the great characters of Ramayana, which had often been valorised as the path to salvation.

Kavita Kane, justifies the character of Surpanakha by presenting the story which had been controversial for long. She shows how she transforms from the beautiful, sultry Meenakshi, to her 'shadow', the grotesque Surpanakha and brings to light the pretexts to her mutilation. She even provides a glimpse into

the character of Trivikra or Kubja, believed to be the reincarnation of Shurpanakha, a woman "disjointed at three places", and the metempsychosis of Surpanakha.

There has been articles and magazines that has touched on her subject but only a few pieces of fiction 'solely' to her name. Though, the theatres and its performances has extensively produced pieces on Shurpanakha. Her character is revisited best in the Kuttiyatam plays of Kerala where she becomes the anti hero and is set as the centrepiece in many of its plays. Another example that is important to mention is the dance drama Surpanakha, an alternative kathak performance by Ashawari Majumdar where she looks at her through the feminist lens. Also Poile Sengupta had revisited both the epic 'villains' of the Ramayana and Mahabharata in her play, "Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni". Looking back and rewriting for a woman is a way towards self identification, of going back in the past and bringing the dead to life. It is a way to disrupt this futile game of male domination and subordination and write about the stories of the othered characters. This 'false woman' who is being prevented from breathing, must seize the occasion to speak, and this will be "her shattering entrance into history which has always been based on her suppression." (Cixous,338).

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An Eco critical reading of Robert Frost's Mending Wall

—Simpee Hazarika

Abstract :

Ecocriticism is a theory of analyzing art or literature. It is the study connecting environment and literature through different perspectives which is used by literary critics to evaluate the texts. As we entered the 3rd decade of the 21st century environmental issues have become crucial for the survival of humans itself. The use of eco critical theory to analyze literature has become an important tool for critics in order to highlight environmental affairs.

In this paper we shall use eco critical theory to study the distinctive voice of poetry i.e. Robert Frost. He is considered to be one of the most successful poets of the 20th century who dealt with natural themes. Frost's poetry emerges out of his immense love for nature. This present study focuses on his poem Mending Wall to highlight Frost's concept of nature, how it's presented in the text and the relation between nature and Frost's poetry. Even though he wrote using simple and direct language his poems contain symbolism, hidden meaning and the flavors of rural settings. This study also explores the concept of conflicts in the mending wall, both between nature vs man and man vs man.

Key words- *nature, rural settings, pastoral, self and the other, human vs nature, human vs human, barriers.*

Robert Frost is a prominent American poet of the 20th century. Recently there has been a growing interest in using eco critical theory to study his poetry. Many of his poems present his rural experience, which shaped his conception and ideology of nature. The setting of his nature poem is inspired by his time in New England, where Frost lived with his family and practiced farming when he was perhaps twenty-five years old. He lived this rural and agrarian lifestyle for several years. He studied the real scenario of New England's village pastoral culture and rural environment and in his poems he wrote about his personal life experience. Even though Frost's poetry was inspired by the local pastoral flavor of village elements yet there was an universal aspect in his writing.

Frost's poetry is characterized by its simple language, graceful conception and deep ecological concern. He was a lover of nature. In his poetry just as in real life, man and nature co-exist amidst conflicts. Man amidst nature is the very feature in Frost's corpus of poetry.

Ecocriticism is a modern theory that describes the interdisciplinary relationship between physical environment and literature. It describes the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. Some ideas that Ecocriticism is interested in are human characteristics like feelings, emotions, etc and non-human phenomena such as weather, seasons etc. It also studies our consciousness towards nature and her elements like the impact of science and technology on modern society and medieval society. Here we shall try to understand how Frost concept of nature is presented in his poem mending wall-

Mending wall by Robert Frost was published in 1914. It was written in blank verse meaning it had no rhyme and lines were not divided into stanzas. The poem's setting was rural New England. It talks about the barriers people put up between themselves and others. Here in we have the conflict between 'the self and the other'. The poem highlights the different perspectives of the self i.e the speaker and the other i.e the neighbour. The poem "Mending Wall" deals with the contrary attitudes of two villagers. The wall in the poem metaphorically refers to the walls in human society as well as a wall in the natural world that make things fragmented. The neighbor is in favor of mending the wall. He says: "Good fences make good neighbors." The speaker, on the other hand, finds no reason for keeping a wall between their properties because they have different orchards in their lands. "He is all pine and I am apple orchard." Also, "something there is that doesn't love a wall" which means that nature does not like a wall. The "fence" or "wall" are also to be interpreted as the blocks, barrages, dams etc that prevent a natural flow and damage biodiversity. Thus, the spirit of the poem expresses the poet's ecological consciousness.

The poet builds up the central theme of nature in his poems using imagery and symbols. Imagery is the use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. In Mending Wall, there are many examples of such 'nature' imagery. The poem discusses the separation between the self and the other which is symbolize by the wall between the two neighbors in the poem. another use of imagery is :

"We wear our fingers rough with handling them."

The speaker is referring to building the wall with his hands and he is saying how tired and beat up his hands are going to be from working so hard. Imagery is used to paint the reader a picture and tell a story. What stands out is when Frost writes:

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall."

This stands out because it is repeated in the poem, and it is also the first line. When a line, word, or phrase is repeated, it needs to be looked at carefully because there is most likely going to be some importance. By reading those lines we get the glimpse, that nature does not love the wall because every spring the speaker and his neighbor have to rebuild the wall because it has crumbled to the ground. If nature wanted it there, they would not have to constantly keep rebuilding it every year. It would just stay standing. The use of imagery in this poem is really important because it makes the reader see exactly what is happening as they are reading the poem.

Robert Frost in his poem "Mending Wall" represents nature as a source of power which breaks the barriers between people. Being a pastoral poet, he always portrayed nature as a powerful element. His poems create a memorable impression by the overwhelming presence of nature. Nature is the main theme in many of his poems such as - "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "The Road not taken", "After Apple picking", "The Mountain", "A Winter Eden", "Evening in a sugar orchard", "Dust of snow".

Now we shall look at some of the conflicts present in mending wall. We shall begin with the man vs nature conflict.

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast."

The above quoted lines from the poem "Mending Wall" show the contradiction between human versus nature, as nature tries to break the boundaries between human but human themselves creating the barriers. The poet explores the way people isolate themselves physically and emotionally by building barriers between them. In the very first line of the poem, the poet says that there is something which doesn't love the wall (here, something refers to nature).

This poem is about human nature. People have a natural tendency to build up walls. They push people out and shut them off. However, at the same time we want to not have to build these walls. We want to have a life without

walls and let everyone into our lives. Frost feels a little of both when he speaks of mending the walls.

"And on a day we meet to walk the line, And set the wall between us once again".

The two neighbors meet and come together, yet they push each other away once again. This shows us both tendencies to come together and also to keep apart.

Now we shall take a look at human vs human conflict on the mending wall. The poem is about two neighbors, who meet to repair the stone wall every year which divides their property. The narrator is skeptical and questioning this tradition of barriers. The speaker of the poem starts to question the need of such wall. The neighbor beyond the hill is a traditionalist and never accepted the opinion of the narrator. He says man makes walls but they all get damaged and destroyed either by nature or by the hunters who search for rabbits for their hungry dogs. Hence, as soon as the spring season starts, the narrator with his neighbor sets out to repair the wall that keeps their property separated. Though, narrator comes together with his neighbor to repair the wall, he considers it as an act of stupidity. The poet questions himself if they really need the wall because they do not have cows that will cross the boundaries neither they have same orchards. But his neighbor however keep insisting that - "good fences makes good neighbors" means that people will get along better if they establish boundaries. According to his neighbor, they have never come into conflict over property because they have clear boundary between them.

Nature conveys to us a moral lesson either directly or indirectly. The notion of nature stays clear and rigid unlike human whose moral values change with time. As the speaker of "Mending Wall" and the narrator debate the political and practical purpose of the wall they're repairing, the poem raises an implicit question about the possibility of change. The speaker argues that the neighbor's belief-that fences are necessary to keep people from getting out of control-is out of date: the speaker compares him to an "old-stone savage." Though the debate remains unresolved, the question arises whether it is possible for the society to change itself. The poem suggests that it is not: whatever the speaker's objections to the activity, the speaker still rebuilds the wall.

Conclusion

Robert Frost is one of the most outstanding poet not only American

literature but also world literature in the 20th century. Most of his poems use nature as the theme, mainly describing rural New England pastoral scenery and wildlife. His poetry is full of local flavors and the pastoral sentiment. Nature is the basic element of Frost's creation. The aspects of his nature poems are easy language, wonderful artistic conception, and profound meanings. In his poems, a critical reader will easily find the features of rural environment and culture. Eco consciousness is the common feature of his poetry. Frost criticizes the exploitation of nature and inspires a great love for nature.

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Resistance to Racism With Special Reference to Langston Hughes' 'I, Too'

—Swastika Kakati

Abstract :

Racism describes the state of being racist, i.e. subscribing the belief that the human population should be classified into races with differential abilities and temperaments. It can be said to describe a condition in society in which a dominant racial group benefits from the oppression of others, whether that group wants such benefits or not. It includes prejudice, discrimination, or hatred at someone because of their color, ethnicity or origin and is also reflected in systems and institutions. Racism is often associated with abuse and harassment.

Here a lot of research has been done to explore about the racism that emerged in America and how this culture had evolved over the time. In this paper, we are going to look at Langston Hughes's poem 'I, too' in the context of racism in America that evaluates how oppression and ill treatment directed towards the African Americans operate and how they were treated as low-status race through the practice of slavery since the colonial era. The paper also articulates about the denial of basic human rights, disadvantages in every aspect and how they were pressured to suffer the inconvenience of being African Americans.

Key words : Racism, Racist, slavery, oppression, segregation.

In the United States (US), the exploitation and victimization of minority groups has been a reality ever since the inception of the nation itself. African Americans in specific have historically been treated as a low-status race through the practice of slavery since the colonial era. By the end of the nineteenth century, this racism had transformed into segregation which came under rising attack during the civil rights movement of 1950s and 1960s. Black Americans still continue to face restrictions in their political, social and economic freedoms.

Their story of oppression begins with the discovery of the new world in the fifteenth century, when Europeans colonized America. The white colonizer invariably inquired about the useful resources that they could exploit

from these newly discovered lands, but the problem was that these resources needed someone to physically extract them. The main idea or motive of Europeans was profit and to attain that they had to reduce the cost price of extracting these resources. At this time machines had not been invented yet, so their main cost was 'labour'. Hence, they wanted laborers who could work throughout the day with minimum to no wages. This was the time when the 'Indentured Servitude System' came into existence. This system is a form of labour in which a person agrees or is forced to work without salary for a specific number of years for eventual compensation. But this system didn't work because the native Americans were very organized, and they knew about their local geography. They used these strengths to resist and revolt against this system of organized exploitation.

After the failure of the Indentured Servitude System, the white colonizer decided that importing laborers from other colonized territories like Africa, would be much cheaper and profitable. To meet this demand, the Portuguese started the Slave Trade from the midst of 1400s. After Columbus discovered America, other European powers also joined this trade. Africans were brought in large ships by force to America through the Atlantic Slave Trade. Ten to twelve million Africans were brought to America as slaves. Each African was provided minimal space to survive and many of them suffered from diseases like smallpox, influenza, measles etc and around fifteen percent of them died in the voyage itself.

The white colonizer justified this exploitative system by claiming that the African people's bone structure and their primitive culture suggested that they were less evolved and very inferior in comparison to the Europeans. They treated the slaves as animals who were supposed to be obsequious to them. The Whites believed that they belonged at the top of all other races and it was their self-proclaimed responsibility to "civilize" the non-whites. In their civilizing mission, they conquered other lands to make colonies there and rule over the natives because they were born to bear the burden of civilizing the non-whites. This was called the 'White man's burden'. But in return for becoming "civilized" and modern, the nonwhites were made to work as slaves from morning to night in the white man's plantations and other exploitative industries. They were not allowed to study and were denied basic human rights, so they were unable to form any kind of organized groups or achieve upwards social mobility. Although, the US finally abolished the Atlantic Slave Trade but racism was still legal in America as segregation and even a slave's status

was inherited. Even after the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s with leaders like Martin Luther King speaking up for human rights, the 21st century non-white American are still humiliated and have to face racial violence every day.

The poem 'I, too' was written by the African American poet Langston Hughes where he describes the predominant racial oppression that degraded African Americans at that time. It is a short verse poem written in the year 1925 and published by the year 1926 in a special issue of the magazine *Survey Graphic*, title *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro*. Langston Hughes was involved in the Harlem Renaissance, which happened in Harlem was a cultural movement among the African Americans of the time that produced all kinds of great works in literature, poetry, painting, musical, sculpture and other areas. He was primarily known as a poet but was deeply involved in the movement itself.

Langston Hughes wrote the poem from the perspective of a black man and exposed a common experience for many African Americans during his time. The main theme of the poem is Race. Through the poem he describes about his race being pressured into submission by the whites. The tone of the poem is realistic but also hopeful and optimistic too. The speaker also suggests that the white and black communities are quite close with each other. The speaker is "the darker brother", in other words he is a part of the same family-American family- as the white people who force him to eat in the kitchen. Despite this intimacy, the white members of this metaphorical family force him to move out when other people are around, which is represented by use of the word "company". The extended metaphor highlights the hypocrisy of the white members, even though white and black people are part of the same American family.

The speaker begins the poem by declaring that he too can "sing America", meaning that he feels the right to be patriotic towards his nation and because his voice should be heard by everyone as it has been denied since centuries, even though he is the darker brother, who is not allowed to sit in the same table and must eat in the kitchen. This implies the common practice of racial segregation of African Americans during the early 20th century. They were forced to eat, live, travel separately from their white counterparts. They had few legal rights and were often victims of racial violence. He proclaims that, one day which he declared as "tomorrow" he will be sitting in the table and no one will dare to send him back to the kitchen. Eventually, they will see how "beautiful" the speaker is and feel ashamed and welcome him into

American family. The speaker demonstrates a heightened sense of self and claims to be an American citizen. Here, the idea of Double consciousness is also important as it exhibits the experiences of black people living in post slavery America and it sets a structure to understand the position of oppressed people in an oppressive world. The poem also has a historical connection with Walt Whitman's poem 'I hear America Sing' as both the poems show equal recognition of separate treatment and double consciousness.

Although in today's era the Slave system in America has been abolished but racism towards black men still prevails. In the year 2020, amidst the pandemic, George Floyd, a forty-six-year-old black man was killed by the white police officers by kneeling on his neck for several minutes. Though Floyd complained about not being able to breathe, he was not paid attention to and was declared dead later. This instance proves that America is still a nation where Blacks have to fight for their right to live. There is still discrimination in how they are treated, and the stigma is how they are perceived. The disadvantages that African Americans and other non-white minorities face in every aspect that limits their rewards for skills and talents is at the core of contemporary US politics.

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Understanding the Concept of Drag Queen

-Bijoya Laxmi Singh

Abstract :

The term drag is quite unfamiliar in our society, even though its existence is very evident. Living in twenty-first century, having all the needs and requirements just in hand, it is important to know the one going topic, so this paper will mainly focus on the term drag queen and its history. It will also try to comprehend the differences between a drag queen and other LGBTQI communities.

Key words : Drag queens, Sexuality, Gender identity, LGBTQI.

The concept of Drag Queen defined in English Oxford Dictionary (1999) as a man who ostentatiously dresses up in women's clothes. Though the origin of the term drag queen isn't evidently clear and recorded with accurate date in any historical account but it has been discussed and debated variously in books, tales and among others that the term occurred in Polari (it is a complex language and a mixture of slangs) where the term drag queen is used as slang word that was used by the gay community during the first half of the twentieth century. Earlier drag queens were jobless, young, gay people who dressed up like women to get a status in the society and to feel like celebrities. Since then the term came into being, hence we can define drag queens as men who love to dress up as women in a very eye catchy manner.

By dividing the terminology Drag Queens, Drag generally means the action of pulling something or someone forcefully. Here the widespread of drag came around during the 1800s, referring Drags with wide skirts worn by the gay community that precisely drags to the ground thereby it is drag. The second half of the term Queens generally means a female ruler who inherits the position by right of birth, but people used queen in the term drag queen instead as an insult for the homosexuals. So, the paragraph says a brief definition of both the term of the concept of drag queen.

While conceptualizing drag queen critics and scholars came up with distinct definition of drag queens. Defining drag queens varied from persons

to person, ideas to ideas. Yet they have concluded in distinct definitions. The underlined definitions and examples will support the line that definitions varied from scholars to scholars; they are as follows :

Ramey Moore in his article "Everything Else is Drag: Linguistic Drag Gender Parody on RuPaul's Drag Race" (2013) said in his abstract that, "the drag queens featured on the show use ways of speaking and performing gender and identity to create hybrid spaces where naturalized boundaries between male and female bodies can be bridged." (1)

In the book known as Codes and Consequences: Choosing Linguistic Varieties (1998) edited by Carol Myers Scotton, Rusty Barrett in chapter number eight 'Markedness and Styleswitching inperformances by African American Drag Queens distinguishes Drag Queen'. He says that "it is important to clarify the meaning of drag queen. Basically, the social category of drag queens are gay men who dress as women, especially those who perform in gay bars. As a social group drag queens are often confused with other groups; transsexuals, transvestites, cross-dressers and female impersonators." (139)

In a video RuPaul's Drag Queens explain that "the term drag was primarily used as a theater term to describe a man or a woman who is dressed in clothing typically worn by the opposite sex. Before women were allowed to perform in the theater men played female parts cross dressing in women's clothes. It's thought that drag was chosen because it describes the action of long skirts dragging on the stage floor." (Allure. "RuPaul's Drag Race" Cast Explains The History of Drag Culture, YouTube, published on February 8, 2018)

In another video Vedi Roy who is an Asian drag queen describes "a drag queen as very confident and very intriguing because every queen is different." He explains that drag queen put on a different face to become a whole new different person; they have completely different persona on and off stage. Putting on makeup and glittery dresses he has to relook into his masculinity which is with him all the time. He also added that he does feels like a woman when he is all dressed up in fabulous turquoise wigs and 70's style poncho things. According to Vedi Roy most of the drag queens are gay but he has noticed that a lot of straight men do enjoy being a drag queen a lot. (Canvas, Self Expression Through Drag / Asian Drag Queens. YouTube. Published on May 31, 2017)

As the society has very minimal idea and knowledge about drag queens some of them come up and speaks about them in a video. Miz Cracker says

that about completely transforming himself into a drag queen with the help of makeup, after that he takes a duct tape and straps his genitals to his back; he leaves at 22:00 and gets home at 03:00 or 04:00, within this time period he can't use washroom. Another drag queen Sir Honey Davenport speaks that they are stereotyped, they are called mean and bitchy which is completely untrue when it comes to each other. They support each other, they are very sisterly. Drag queens tell that before taking their photographs one should take their permission. Being in drag makes the drag queens feel confident and powerful. When they are drag queens, they know who they are. (Iris. What Drag Queens Want You to Know. YouTube. Published on October 18. 2017)

To perceive the intended meaning of the concept of drag queens' various theories have come up. These theories could be divided into three different concerned categories; they are social, psychological and sexual. Recently the concept of drag queens has become the subject of theorization by many sociologists. Newton in his first drag ethnography the Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America (1972) puts up his argument that drag queens used gendered camp (a sensibility that revels in artifice, stylization, theatricalization, irony, playfulness, and exaggeration rather than content as Susan Sontag famously defined the term in her short essay, "Notes on 'Camp.'") to resist homosexual stigma. Drag performance is a gendered process; their performance transforms the gender identity. Foucault in his The History of Sexuality (1976) puts forward the most compelling issue that sexuality is a taboo, a thing which cannot be spoken of.

In contrast of that Foucault says that in Victorian time sexuality was talked about. The center of his research is the rise of homosexual. The term was popularized in judicial and psychiatric fields of knowledge. Therefore, it can be said that the idea of drag queens is contributed to the social norms and functions in the form of consciousness raising and seeking attention for the identity crisis by performing or being a drag queen.

The concept of drag queens brings along with them the issue of gender identity and heteronormativity. To create the persona, performance and their self-identity they take gender characteristics from LGBTQI communities. Researchers like Moncrieff and Lienard used the framework of evolutionary psychology to understand the psychology of drag performers. They found that they seek attention from the audiences. These behaviors develop in 'protected social world' to gain their desired status within that particular world. The theorist found out that they are less attractive to potential mates. In one article,

a full time drag performer says that they face much discrimination against public and also within the gay community. The general public assumes these communities as woman if they find they dress up or sounds like woman; they assume them as man if they dress up and sounds like man so to diminish this confusion from the public drag stands out; they created this persona for them beyond the gender binaries. The psychological process of a general man while referring to these communities always been limited to the two genders, i.e. man and woman, to differentiate LGBTQI communities drag queens have initiated their idea to bring a psychological change to rest of the world that they belong to a different gender. This has been demanded by drag queens to bring an identity in the mindset of the public by performing this art form.

In the mid-19th century psychiatrists and physicians showed interest in sexuality, according to them the same sex practitioners were inborn deformations, so the same sex practitioners rejected that argument which was imposed to them and coined new names for them. Drag queens are generally gay men, who cross dresses gender impersonation. Some scholars found out that transgenderism, same sex identity, and their performance are core identities of the drag queens. They forge two genders in one and create their own identity. Their body becomes the weapon to dominate heterosexual gender codes. Judith Butler, a queer theorist said that gender is performative; this theory is relevant in the case of drag queens; they perform gender. Most drag queens have same sex desires though there are few heterosexuals also. But mostly drag queens are neither feminine nor masculine they portray their own gender.

Earlier there were not many theories on the female impersonators but in mid-1960's Esther Newton tried to understand the concept of drag. According to Sandeep Bakshi and Esther Newton find out in their study of drag queens that their gendered transformation is temporary, most drag even approve their presence of penis during their performance. Sandeep Bakshi in his ethnology compared drag queens to Hijras; they are the transsexual woman found all over India. They offer blessings at birth and marriage. They are said as neither male nor female and looked down upon them because they cannot procreate. Drag queens and hijras go beyond the gender binaries. Both of these categories may look similar but they differ in many ways. Hijras, though they dress up as a woman same as the drag queens but they perform ritual ceremonies in the society. The drag queens perform in a very private setting. Newton analyzed that drag queens have their own unique culture which they

carry out on and off stage; they break the law of heteronormativity and gender binaries both symbolically and socially by their performance.

Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1990) says that gender is performative. According to Butler drag performances confuses the relationship between gender and sex and gender and performance. Therefore, these theories states that hijras/ transsexuals are different from each other even if they might look somewhere similar and Drag queens perform gender and have created a unique gender of their own breaking them gender binaries.

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