

Drishti: the Sight

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**A REFEREED (PEER-REVIEWED) BI-ANNUAL NATIONAL RESEARCH
JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LITERATURE/ASSAMESE LITERATURE/FOLKLORE /CULTURE**

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EDITORIAL

A CASE FOR A NEW AESTHETIC OF LITERATURE IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT 'CULTURAL SHIFT'

The fast stride of globalization has spurred the process of homogenization of cultures and tastes, which is of utmost significance for it forebodes an imminent loss to the semblances of the rawness or the fundamental sweetness retained by the indigenous communities in their cultural life. More particularly, there is anxiety over the underlying *Europeanness* of the globalization, which has now been spreading its cobweb like never before. This anxiety has made some scholars to term the process (of globalization) as neo-imperialism (imperialism, which is the product of the financialization of the globe).

The cultural life of the aboriginals evolves in terms with the communities' ecological existence. But the fact remains that the fast stride of modernity has been threatening to rob them off of the very primitiveness or rawness of their life. The restiveness among the members of the tribes therefore is accelerating more than before.

Literary criticism and creative literature –both must rise to this moment of transition (crisis?) being witnessed all around us. There is a social critic covertly present in any text of the creative kind and he now must be concerned with the aspects of the contradictions he perceives within a community due to globalization. A feeling of dislocation by the aboriginals in terms of the emergence of the new contradictions due to the stride of neo-imperialism has also come to produce apprehensions about some new possibilities in the field of literature (of the present time). We need to wake up therefore to this new vista of the humanity. There is need of establishing a strong foundation for a new aesthetic of literature in view of this 'cultural shift'. The new human condition demands release and expression through some more effective narratives. This in turn may infuse a fresh flow of blood in the life of fiction, which could go a long way in affirming that the novel is definitely not a dying art and we need not be unduly pessimistic about its future. #

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Langston Hughes : A Major Voice of the Voiceless Afro-Americans

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Abstract

Langston Hughes, one of the most important Black writers was the leader of the Harlem Group, who created the Black Literary Renaissance of the 1920's. The Blacks in America who had been suffering racial discrimination for more than four hundred years were legally free from the middle of the nineteenth century. One has to see it as legal fiction. The Blacks in America have been exploited and oppressed racially, culturally, socially, economically and politically. Their culture has been ruined, their languages have been extinguished and they have been ruthlessly confined to subhuman conditions of life for about four centuries. They were completely stripped off their heritage and history, all on account of racial difference. Hughes tried to defend their race, protest against racial discrimination and glorify their culture and tradition.

Key words: Jimcrow, identity, Afro-Americans, emergence and heritage

Langston Hughes, one of the most important Black writers was the leader of the Harlem Group, who created the Black Literary Renaissance of the 1920's. The Blacks in America who had been suffering racial discrimination for more than four hundred years were legally free from the middle of the nineteenth century. One has to see it as legal fiction. The Blacks in America have been exploited and oppressed racially, culturally, socially, economically and politically. Their culture has been ruined, their languages have been extinguished and they have been ruthlessly confined to

subhuman conditions of life for about four centuries. They were completely stripped off their heritage and history, all on account of racial difference

Langston Hughes was born in 1902 in Joplin Missouri as a member of an abolitionist family. His father James Hughes abandoned his family and left for Cuba first, and then for Mexico due to enduring racism in the United States. After the separation of his parents young Langston was left to be raised mainly by his grandmother, Mary Langston. Through the Black American tradition of story telling, she instilled in young Hughes a sense of indelible racial pride. His childhood was not a happy one due to an unstable early life, but it was one that heavily influenced the poet and novelist he would become. Later, he lived again with his mother in Lincoln, who had remarried when he was still an adolescent and eventually in Cleaveland where he attended high school.

While in grammar school, he was a designated class poet. During high school in Cleaveland he wrote for the school paper and edited the year book and began to write his first short stories, poetry and plays. After the completion of high school studies in 1920 he went to Mexico to live with his father, hoping to convince him to provide money to attend Columbia University. James Hughes never supported his son's desire to be a writer. He wanted him to become an engineer and promised to meet the expenses so long as he attended Columbia University. But Hughes left Columbia in 1922 because of racial prejudice within the institution and his interests revolved more round the neighbourhood of Harlem than his studies, though he continued writing.

In the forty years between his first book in 1926 and his death in 1967, Hughes devoted his life to writing and lecturing. He wrote sixteen books of poems, two novels, three collections of short stories, four volumes of “editorial” and “Documentary” fiction, twenty plays, children’s poetry, musicals and operas, three autobiographies, a dozen radio and television scripts and dozens of magazine articles.

Hughes was a highly distinguished Negro writer. At a time when the Negroes in America were facing identity crisis, he tried to define the cultural identity of the Negroes in America. In one of his earlier essays entitled “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”, he spoke of Black writers and poets, “who would surrender racial pride in the name of false integration”. (1970) Hughes knew that a talented Black writer who would prefer to be considered a writer, not a Black writer subconsciously wanted to write like a White writer. Hughes argues:

We younger Negro artists now intend to express our individual dark skinned selves without fear or shame. If White people are pleased we are glad. If they aren’t, it doesn’t matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too.... If coloured people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn’t matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, as strong as we know how and we stand on the top of the mountain free within ourselves. (1970)

Hughes who was proud of his Black identity was optimistic and dreamt that segregation would come to an end and that he would be able “to be at table” with the Whites “when company comes”.

I am the darker brother
 They send me to eat in the kitchen
 When company comes

 Tomorrow
 I’ll be at table
 When company comes
 Nobody’ll dare
 Say to me
 “Eat in the Kitchen”,

Then. (2006)

Later, he realizes that growing up for the Black man is a painful process, in the course of which, he is made to shed all his dreams. As he comes of age he discovers that he is only a shadow destined to live in darkness in social sphere. He expresses this idea in the poem “As I Grew Older”.

It was a long time ago
 I have almost forgotten my dream
 But it was there then
 In front of me
 Bright like a sun—
 My dream
 And then the wall rose
 Rose slowly,
 Slowly
 Between me and my dream
 Rose slowly, slowly
 Dimming
 Hiding
 The light of my dream (2006)

Hughes, the great spokesman of the Blacks was able to keep the issue of racial segregation alive through his writings. He identified himself with the suffering Blacks of America. He was blunt and outspoken. He did not care to please the white sensibility by being mild, moderate and covert. He stated that he knew only the people he had grown with, and they weren’t people whose shoes always shone, who had gone to Harvard, or who had heard Bach. He earned critical attention for his portrayal of realistic black characters and he became one of the dominant voices speaking out on issues concerning Black culture. Langston Hughes in his “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” says:

But to my mind, it is the duty of the younger Negro artist, if he accepts any duties at all from outsiders, to change through the force of his art that old whispering ‘I want to be white’ hidden in the aspiration of his people, to ‘Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro... and beautiful’ ... An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must

also never be afraid to do what he might choose. (1970:262)

The Black writer in America very rarely feels this freedom to be his self because the dominant white culture is not ready to accept his separate individual identity. But Hughes wrote with singlemindedness for his people. He wanted to record and interpret the lives of the common Black folk, their thoughts, habits and dreams, their struggle for political freedom and economic well being. He wanted to do this using their own forms of expression, their language, humour, music and folk verse. During the career of four decades he faced opposition not only from the white world which constituted the majority of his audience but from an important portion of his black audience who objected to his matter and manner. Hughes admitted that he was not a trained sociologist but simply a writer.

I live among my people. I love them and the way they are treated hurts me deeply. So I sing their blues and I translate their sorrows, I make their troubles go away. And I do this like my people, do with their same ease... I write what comes from within. I sing it the same way old people: I don't study the black man 'feel' him. (Hispanic world 29)

Hughes always opted the black dialect. He did not write for aesthetic pleasure. To him writing was functional and it had to serve some purpose. He was cautious not to make the mistake of addressing the white audience, then he was expressing what often bore little relation, sometimes no relation at all, to actual Negro life that he was really expressing, only certain conceptions about Negro life that his audience was willing to accept and ready to enjoy, that, in fact, he wrote mainly for the delectation of an audience that was an outside group. (Rampersad 51)

Hughes was born in a family which was extremely conscious of its responsibilities to the race. From his grandmother he inherited pride in the history of the race and the race itself. Hughes could ape the Euro American tradition only at the expense of authenticity, which he was not willing to do. He was also not happy with the African American literary

tradition of choosing artificial distortions and mere mutilation of words and phrases to sound like pickaninnies or assuming the racial exoticism which had by then crystallized into a demanding cramping tradition:

In his first talk to the "Negro Writers", Hughes admits that he could not have chosen to write about some aspects of nature which would have won him the reputation of a universalist. He is concerned with certain practical things that the African American "could do" and "must do".

Something has got to change in America and change soon. We must help that change to come. The moon is still shining as poetically as ever, but all the stars on the flags are dull. And the stripes too. We want a new and better America where there won't be any poor, where there won't be any more Jimcrow, where there won't be any lynching, where there won't be any munition makers, where we won't need philanthropy, nor charity nor the New Deal, nor Home relief. We want an America that will be ours, a world that will be ours. We Negro workers and White workers! Black writers and White! We will make that world. (1973:126)

His bold assertion during the third American Writers Congress once again reaffirms his unflinching decision to be a social writer in spite of confronting lots of obstacles. Hughes' talk entitled "Democracy and Me" expresses his keenness to be a 'Negro' and a writer and then an American because Negroes are secondary Americans. He proudly proclaims:

I shall speak of the colour line as it affects writers, as it affects me – and when I say me, I do not mean, me myself alone. By me I mean all those Negro writers who are seeking to put on papers today in the form of verse or prose or drama life in America as we know it. (127)

Hughes was not blind to the fact that the more truthfully they write about themselves, the more limited their market would be. Even if it meant profit Hughes was not prepared to make ghettos appear happy places, nor would he have transformed the plantations

of the deep South, into places of pastoral loveliness. This had to be done only if a writer was pandering to the craving of the Whites for exoticism. But Hughes always remained firm and never swerved from his determination to serve his people and be their spokesman.

It was impossible for him to hide in any ivory tower, try as he might, and he could not float off into the clouds either, for the Jim Crow reality caught him by the heels and brought him right back on earth. His adventures as a writer have been none too pleasant. His writings about poverty, oppression and segregation only led to his own segregation. But none of the unpleasantness he would have tasted, had he been a writer of the moon and roses. Hughes felt that being coloured could make some aspects of beauty in nature inaccessible. His own words bear testimony to this.

But unfortunately I was born poor – and coloured – and almost all the prettiest roses, I have seen in rich white people’s yards – not in mine. That is why I cannot write exclusively about roses and moonlight – for sometimes in the moonlight my brothers see a fiery cross and a circle of Klansmen’s hoods. Sometimes in the moonlight a dark body sways from a lynching tree – but for his funeral there are no roses. (“My Adventures as a Social Poet”143)

But Hughes succeeded in turning the seeds of misfortune into beautiful flowers of various colours through his literary works which lasted for about four decades. His commitment to his race and identification of his problems with that of his race drew him to their tradition and speech and enabled him to project his vision of their lives. What is special about Langston Hughes is that his subject matter and his commitment to black folk expression remained undiluted. This enabled him to rebuild the African home land that provided the infrastructure of the nationalist revival that was the Harlem Renaissance.

It is to be noted that many writers including Blacks considered it impertinent to insist on racial differences. Countee Cullen and William Stanley Braithwaite were among them. Cullen repeatedly said that he wanted others to see him as a poet not a Negro

poet. But to his dismay he found that racial theme would not leave him, that his strongest words tended to be those rooted in his experience as Blackman, those that defined him as a distinctly Black writer. Braithwaite, another Black writer of the period went a step further to avoid racial themes and styles. His poetry is almost colourless and lifeless and is a study in assiduous racial self effacement.

It was suicidal for a Black writer to turn his back on his identity, to cast aspersions on his heritage, to wish to be the other, to wish he were White. For Hughes, it is one of the writers’ challenges to translate into literature this ethnic distinctness, with its “heritage of rhythm and warmth and incongruous humour that so often as in the Blues, becomes ironic laughter mixed with tears” (Racial Mountain 9). The Black does not have to abandon his self on account of the long-lasting white prejudice against things black. Prejudice has bred self hate which may be considered as an urge within the race toward whiteness. The mission of an artist is to counter self hate not to pander to it.

The writer who accepts this mission will find a sturdy ally and positive example in the Black masses, the common folk with their confident humanity, their indifference to white opinion and their joviality among depressing situations. They are the uncontaminated reservoir of the strength of the race, the body and vehicle of its tradition. In their lives and their relations with the White, the writer will find unused material for his art, an inexhaustible supply of themes.

But he faces the temptation which tries to swallow him. One is the temptation to present the Blacks as stereo types, so beloved by much of the Whites who comprise the majority of his readers. The other is the temptation to present the Blacks as idealized and compensatory portraits as demanded by vigorous defenders of the race. The duty of a writer is to steer a straight course between the two. With the transforming energy of his art the writer has to radiate from accurate representations of Black people in all their human splendour – and human deformity. Hughes is realistic and takes a balanced stand. He does not view Blacks as monsters or saints but as richly and

complexly human.

Hughes' theme is Black people and their concerns and for his treatment, he adopts the technical resources of the culture: black idiom and dialect, black folk humour, including blues and jazz. His insistence on the use of black themes and styles is an affirmation of black existence, a resignation of the fact that the Blacks are a distinct people within America.

Hughes' people are the lower classes, the urban folk: porters, bell boys, elevator boys, shoe shine boys, cooks, waiters, nurse maids, gamblers, drunks, piano players, cabaret singers, chores girls, prostitutes, pimps and ordinary decent hard working men and women. His world is the inner city, especially Harlem. The coloured middle class or 'Black bourgeoisie' rarely appear in his works. The 'Black bourgeoisie' and their spokesmen denounced Hughes' work strongly. Hughes' answer to those who criticised him was that he kept a literary grazing pasture with food to suit all breeds of cattle. Hughes was also a socially committed writer who saw the overwhelming social realities of black life in America and made them subject matter of his writing.

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A Postcolonial Discourse of Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's 'Chemmeen'

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Abstract

Chemmeen (1956), set against the vast expanses of the sea, narrates the tales of the legends and beliefs of the fishing community. The sea, almost as a character with its various moods, turbulences, ebbs and tides, and also its bounties, becomes a part of human stories in this novel. It deals with the most elemental side of individuals along with their love and loss, hope and despair, pleasure and pain. It unfolds the life of some indigenous people who have become a major part of Nature since thousand years. The Sea has become their life and livelihood. The tussle between human instinctual attraction and the customs of a community is a major theme of this classic. The present paper aims to analyze Chemmeen as a postcolonial text. The paper would first attempt to discuss the basic concepts of postcolonial literature and then try to examine the postcolonial features in Chemmeen.

Keywords : *Chemmeen, Postcolonial, Sea.*

Postcolonial theory takes on the politics of the study of English literature and culture from the perspective of those who were colonized by it. It questions whether the English department reinforces the hegemony of western cultural practices or not. It further questions if it supports the political and economic forces which have subordinated the third world. Postcoloniality, more or less, begins during the mid to late 20th century when many British colonies fought for their independence and got it. During this time the postcolonial theory begins to form its own knowledge, discourse to counter colonialism. The thinkers of this theory prioritized to express the experience of the

'colonized' mass what otherwise called as the subalterns. These people are the non-British and non-western. The theory tries to analyze how the western culture and colonizers formed a colonial subject and also how subaltern cultures tried to resist them by using various means. Patricia Waugh opines that*the postcolonial is that which questions, overturns, and/or critically refracts colonial authority –its epistemologies and forms of violence, its claims to superiority. Postcolonialism therefore refers to those theories, texts, political strategies, and modes of activism that engage in such questioning, that aim to challenge structural inequalities and bring about social changes.* (341-342) This mainly examined the different mechanism that colonizing powers adopted to force the colonized people to accept the foreign culture as superior as or better than their own. For example the colonial forces created racial differences by calling people black, yellow, red and brown. It deals with the 'subalterns' who are often outside the hegemonic power structure of a colonized area. Leela Gandhi says ... '*subaltern studies*' defined itself as an attempt to allow the 'people' finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and, in so doing, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of, the truly oppressed. (2) Postcolonialism can be defined as a school of critical thought that deals with people who have been colonized, presently or in the past, and they face an identity crisis. It becomes very important to mention the names of some important literary theorists like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhaba while discussing the postcolonial literary theory and its application in a literary text.

A postcolonial concern of literature aims at the lost identity of the indigenous people and their importance in the society. It tries to connect them with their land, people and customs through narration and dramatization of everyday life of individuals. The colonized people, who are often described as laborers, manual workers, slaves etc. by the colonizers, get a prominence and their social and political concern forms the major theme of the literature in the postcolonial texts. In the postcolonial approach the richness, vitality and validity of tradition and customs of indigenous people gets a prominence in the description. The integrity of their society and various systems controlling this society forms the basis of the narration. A postcolonial approach reasserts the value of those people who were suppressed, sidelined and denigrated to elevate the interests of the colonizers. This approach of literature looks at the colonized people's history as something very important and this history is highlighted in the postcolonial texts. The culture and society of indigenous people was not considered as a part of history by the colonizers who often dismissed these people as useless, unchanging and uncultured. But a major thrust of postcolonial writing is to revise the history of the society and culture of indigenous people and tell the world the richness, beauty and value of this. The people, places and practices of these people gets a detailed narration in the postcolonial discourse. The postcolonial literature borrows many terms and structure from the language of the indigenous people. For example, many Indian English writers use local words to give exact expression of the situation. The postcolonial narrative techniques employ indigenous art forms and cultural expression as some of these texts use the style of these people rejecting the colonial art forms.

From the period of post colonialism to the current times of globalization, Indian fiction has seen many changes. Its reception outside India through translation has multiplied. Many Indian novelists who originally wrote in their regional language got a good platform and the readership of their novels grew. It is a general understanding that a writer is undeniably a product of the contemporary socio-intellectual milieu.

It is unthinkable to study the works of a writer to the exclusion of the society and its attendant realities. A writer always writes with the readers at the back of his mind. The theme and vision should, therefore, be contemporary in nature. A work of literature does not strictly carry one theme but it normally presents various themes depending on the author's world view. It is possible that new themes may come out serendipitously as the writer works his way through.

Thakazi Sivasankara Pillai (1912-1999) was a famous Malayali novelist and short story writer who highlighted the plight of the oppressed class in his works. He originally wrote in Malayalam, his native language. His two famous novels are *Chemmeen* (1956) and *Kayar* (1978). *Chemmeen* was translated into English by Narayan Menon with a title *Anger of the Sea-Goddess* in 1962. Anita Nair, and the novelist himself, translated this into English with *Chemmeen* as a title. It was translated into English, Russian, German, Italian, Arabic and many Indian languages. This was a major modern Malayalam novel that was translated into many languages and it attracted the attention of a large section of readers. It was accepted as a part of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works - Indian Series due to its wide popularity. The novel is set in a small fishing village on the coast of Kerala. It presents a deeply affecting story of love and loss set in a fishing community. As a typical postcolonial text it represents the aspirations, struggle and grief of those people who are often called as the Nature's children. The fight of traditional belief and the modern outlook of a community is vividly presented by the novelist. Chembakunju, an ordinary fisherman, always aspires to own his own boat and fishing net. His ambition of becoming rich and leading a happy life reveals the dream of an individual. If we look this dream of Chembakunju from the postcolonial literary perspective, it is a common aspiration of every individual whose story is often not narrated with great significance by many writers during the colonial period. Thakazi Sivasankara Pillai wishes to tell this dream of the ordinary fisherman and their life in *Chemmeen*. Chembakunju is often considered as a greedy man as he tries to exploit an innocent Preeckutty, a Muslim boy, who is in love with his

daughter Karuthamma. But this is the wish of many fishermen who have to toil hard to earn their living. And so they always dream to have something that saves them from the struggle of life. One of the main thrust of post-colonial literature is the narration of the story of colonized people. *Chemmeen* depicts the customs, taboos, beliefs and daily life of the fishing community. *The sprawling beaches, sunrises, sunsets, waves and wind, the whole range of routine activities that fisherfolk are engaged in, their banter and mirth, their thrill during chaakara and despair during lean seasons, the everyday risk of life and death that looms over them are sensitively woven into the narrative.* (The Hindu) The long tradition of sea lore is narrated where the chastity of fisherwoman is utmost importance. The love relation of Karuthamma, a young hindu fisherwoman and Pareekutty, a young Muslim boy, challenges this traditional belief. Karuthamma's parents, Chembakunju her father and Chakki her mother, are the great inheritors of this tradition who never want that their daughter should violate this and face the wrath of the sea goddess *Kadamma*. This is a confrontation between an age old tradition and the youthful love of two individuals. This conflict is a definite feature of many colonial literature where the old and new face each other. Here Chakki, as the protector of this tradition, reminds Karuthamma the long tradition :

In the vast sea, there is much to fear my daughters, my magale. All of which determines whether a man who goes to sea return. And the only thing we can do as women is keep them safe with true minds and bodies. Otherwise, they and their boats will be swallowed up by the undertow. The life of the man who goes out to sea rests in the hands of his woman on the shore.(8)

In spite of this 'cautionary admonition' from Chakki, the relation of Karuthamma and Pareekutty continues and this is a kind of challenge to the established norms of the fishing community. This age old belief and the sea mother are akin to some colonial authorities

and the violation of these by Karuthammama and Pareekutty is an attack on those powers. No doubt they die at the end but they die locked in each other's embrace. This death of the two lovers questions the authority of traditional society which prohibits many to silently suffer in the name of observing some unknown beliefs and end their life. This issues raised by the author encourages a great social change in our society and questions many blind beliefs that are still prevalent. The ambitious Chemban is a character who always dreamed to lead a good life. His dream of a boat and fishing net is treated by the fishing community as a violation of some unsighted supremacy of the sea goddess Katalamma. The belief that a person from Chemban's community is not supposed to have their own boat. Chemban, a Mukurran caste, owns a boat and thus face the fury of Sea goddess. He is a dynamic force of changes. It is considered a violation of the rules of the community as Valakkaran caste people can only own these and the lower caste fishermen can seek employment in this. To own a boat and nets have become a great debate on the shore before Chemban buys them. T.S Pillai has raised a pertinent question of ownership of the sea by presenting this issue of a fishing community. Who has the right on the Sea? Are the fisherman and woman the children of the sea? Then, why is this discrimination? The division of fishing community is mentioned here in the novel.

The children of sea are of five kinds: Arayan, Valakkaran, Kukkavan, Marakkan, and a fifth caste of no particular name. And then in the east there are some subsets of men who man the boats. Only the Valakkaran is allowed to own boats and nets. In fact, in the east the protector of the shore, the Shore Master, would permit only the Valakkaran to buy the boat and nets. And that too based on his judgment.' (31)

Chemban Kunju is a changed person after becoming the owner of a boat and fishing net. He behaves like a master and comes to the shore with much grandeur like a triumphant fisherman with loads

of fish on his boat. He graceful jump onto the shore is full of pride. He forgets his fellowmen and declares that he will sell all his fish only for ready cash. He does not look at Pareekutty who has helped him to buy the boat. He even does not spare his own daughter Panchami and pushes her to the ground. His arrogance is quite visible because of the sudden change of fortune. This focus of the writer on the changed nature of an ordinary fisherman and his ensuing dream of leading a comfortable life is the common story of a working class in the post-independent India. Everyone like Chemban on different shores wanted to be the owner of their own boats and nets. Some like Chemban even chooses some dishonest means to be rich. It is not only the fishermen but also the other workers who work hard for their master dream to become a master one day. This is the common dream of millions of people after the British left India. But it is not easy as the new masters like Chemban, who himself was a worker, behaves in a callous manner towards his own community people.

Another aspect of Chemban as an exploiter of sea is marked from the novel. Ignoring the age old practice and led by the desire of getting more and more profit, Chemban wants to fish during the offseason. It is a tradition for thousand years for the fisherman not to venture into the sea during this time. But Chemban has become blind to get more and more in a shortest period which is the common dream of the colonized people as they have been suppressed for years and they want to get all the pleasures of life in one attempt. This materialistic approach to life is another feature of post-colonial literature. Chemban, though initially a poor fisherman, becomes a symbol of imperial power after becoming rich. Pareekutty, though represents a trading and exploitive class, has become a victim to this power. Pareekutty gives all his money to Chemban for his love of Karuthamma. With the changed fortune, Chemban sells his catch for cash to traders like Khadar Boss forgetting the help of Pareekutty. The changed life of Chemban and Pareekutty is narrated by the writer here.

Chemban had put together all his accessories required for a boat. He could go to sea any time now. He was

all set. Pareekutty's shack seemed to have shut down. Nothing seemed to be happening there. He had no money either. His Vaapa chastised him a great deal. (61)

The offseason is the difficult time for the fishing community.

The starvation continued. And continued. The little money people had were all spent. A few tried going out to sea. But they couldn't find even a fish scale.

This was the time when hunger troubled everyone. The workers and the boat owners. The boat owners too had little to spare.

The neighborhood was sunk in penury. Everywhere everyone starved. (64-65)

The story of hunger is very common during this off season. Chakki and Chembakunju take advantage of this. Many come to get help from them and they give money in exchange of many valuables like bronze vessels, gold ornaments etc. Chemban becomes so proud that he said : *'Let them suffer...when they have money in their hands they caper around. Then they need to go to Alapuzha to fill their bellies with shop-bought food. And if the fisherwoman doesn't have clothes, they buy the most expensive kasavu sari. They behave as if they don't walk on the ground. So let them count the stars now...'* (66-67) This change of Chemban is not different from the rich money lenders like Ouseph and traders who exploit the helplessness of poor fishing community people. Like the money lenders, Chemban takes the valuables and household goods at an outrageous low price at the times of distress. Chemban's attempt to be rich also represents the powerful attraction of money due to the free enterprise which is a strong feature of globalization. The influence of globalization on the local business, cultural practices and life style is one of the important aspects of postcolonial theory. Chemban's selling of all the catch to the traders directly compels the fisherwoman to buy fish from the traders and this

reduces their profit margin. Thus, Chemban collaborating with the exploiter traders makes his own community people poor and victim of the changing business pattern. This can be an indirect effect of globalization. His greed for money increased day by day.

Chembankunju came up with new ploy. He said he would hire new workers. And they would be his permanent employees. 'I have put all my money into the boat and accessories. Do you expect me to sit around nothing? It breaks my heart. (69)

Thus we see his greed doubled and he wants to violate the rule of the fishing community. Hiring permanent workers is a new thing in that shore. Working in the off season, when the sea is wild, is something a deviation from the age old rules of fishing community. The novelist marks vividly this in the novel. The writer depicts the nervous wives and children waiting for the men. Elders predict big whirlpools in the sea. But Chemban's team of fishermen get a good catch - a shark, and it is a big feast in every home on that day. Even though many feel it wrong they can not say anything as they get their food because of Chemban. Now Chemban gets a lot but he does not return Pareekutty's debt. When the sea shore is full of activities, Pareekutty is bankrupt as he has given everything to Chemban to buy a boat and net. Everybody prepare themselves before the 'Chakara' season. *Ousep and Govindan arrived on the seashore with laden money bags.....Shack owners sucked up to the managers of big shrimps exporters in Alapuzha, Kollam and Kochi.....Several small traders called on various homes offering loans to the women...(71)* Everybody on the shore is full of expectation to get profit during this big catch. The description of the wishes of fisherman, woman, and children is thoroughly presented by the writer. Everyone gets good profit during the first few days but suddenly things change and there is big loss due to the fall of the price. Many suffer big loss including Chemban. This ruined many and the downfall of Chemban begins. He

remains a defeated man for the rest of his life. While realizing his dream of possessing a boat and net, he loses everything in his life – his dedicated wife, daughters, second wife and finally his own sanity. His second marriage after Chakki's death doesn't change his luck but brings more and more trouble. His greed and big dream ruins many like Pareekutty, Karuthamma, Palani, Chakki and Panchami. Pareekutty and Karuthamma die as two lovers and their bodies are found on the shore. Palani dies in a whirlpool. Chakki too die without much in her life. Panchami, along with Karuthamma's child, leads a life without the protection of anyone.

Chemmeen can be categorized as another postcolonial novel as it represents the disparity of our social order. It depicts how the exploitative social system compels the innocent people to follow its rules. A violation of this leads to their destruction which happens in the case of Karuthamma, Pareekutty, Chembankunju and many others in the fishing community. The narration of a community, its customs, tradition and taboos makes *Chemmeen* a good example of postcolonial novel. The history of the indigenous people is well marked in this. The society with its numerous features comes clear in the narration.

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The Juxtaposition of Eastern and Western Attitudes in Kamala Markandaya's Novel : *The Coffey Dams*

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Abstract:

The works of the Indo-Anglian novelist Kamala Markandaya encompass a wide range of themes that are set against the socio-political conditions of the India before and after independence. She is a prolific expatriate- novelist whose works authentically deal with human predicaments in different situations. It is seen that most of her novels embody conflict between two disparate viewpoints representing different socio-cultural situations, values and ideologies. The Coffey Dams (1969) is a brilliant exposition of East-West confrontation and of modern industrialization that portrays an authentic picture of an Indian village inhabited by tribal people with its own cultural values and the subsequent changes wrought by modern western industrial culture. Here the contrasting mode of thoughts and behaviors of the masses coming from two opposite poles of life namely Eastern and Western seem to be the main focus of the novelist. - This paper is an attempt to study how Kamala Markandaya has dragged the two dissimilar worlds (East and West) into her fictional world to give a different taste to the readers. This paper also endeavors to explore how the novelist shows her interest in traditional and cultural values of the East in the face of growing unrest and material progress done by the West.

Key words: *Expatriate, culture, tradition, modernism, values, materialism.*

The works of the Indo-Anglian novelist Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) encompass a wide range of themes. The Indo-Anglian novelist is “gifted with a fine

faculty of artistic perception” (Bhatnagar i) having also “the unique distinction of seeing the East and West intimately” (120). Her novels basically seem to portray a dynamic condition of modern Indian societies dealing mainly with suffering, poverty of the rural people, pain, hunger and malnourishment, disintegration of families, cultural ambivalence, political disturbances, rise of capitalism, Industrialization, clash of opposite values and cultural differences. Among all these the most dominating subject that seems to be dealt with utmost care is the problem of East-West confrontation and the complex socio-cultural situations evolved as a result of changes in both the sides. The novel *The Coffey Dams* seems to be the perfect embodiment of changes of rural India in the post-colonial era at the arrival of modern scientific Industrial culture of the West and the subsequent confrontation of values and attitudes represented by the each side. Here “the impersonality of the Western technology is set against the innocence and warmth of aborigines” (Misra 66) and throughout the novel it seems that Markandaya has excelled in delineating the inner workings of the character's heart as well of the mind. According to Anil K Bhatnagar the key intention of depicting East-West confrontation in *The Coffey Dams* is that Markandaya “wanted to make the English society aware of the exploitation of the Indian by the cruel British rulers and also the brave struggle of the Indians to liberate the country” (Bhatnagar14).

The whole novel is essentially about a dam to be built over a hilly river in India by a group of technocrats both from England and India and the eventual racial conflict that led to an interrogation of

different attitudes and responses shown by various characters from two opposing cultural platforms. Here East-West encounter seems to be apparent as the hatred by the Europeans as well as the Indian officers got increased towards the tribesmen settled in that hilly region.

The juxtaposition of East and West in *The Coffey Dams* can be perceived in two levels i.e. technological level and human level. In this regard Vinay Bharat remarks,

On the technological level the conflict is between the technology power and forces of nature represented by the turbulent South Indian river on which the dam is being built and also the heavy rains which try to hinder the task of construction work. On the human level the conflict is between the arrogant British officers under their leader Clinton and the poor hill tribesmen working as labourers.

(see Bharat)

One of the noticeable aspects in Markandaya's novels is that "she does not idealise or glorify but paints a realistic picture of life" (Sharma 108) who seems to write fictions with a "crusading spirit" (108) for the benefits of mankind. She places her characters in a complex arena where the tensions between orthodox traditional beliefs and modern liberal attitudes always play a vital role bringing changes to them. In the novel *The Coffey Dams* the character Bashiam, a crane operator and "a mixture of tribal and technician" (Singh 166) represents the condition of Indian modern youth born and brought up in Indian soil with Western attitude that rejects traditional ways of life. Baisham "a buffer zone of two cultural spaces" (see Bharat) is identified in the novel as a backward man "to be content with natural things, like hills and woods and a water pump or two" (Markandaya 42).

Being a firsthand eyewitness to the sharp clash between the Eastern and Western values Kamala Markandaya seems to systematically analyze each and every aspect of it in her fictions. R. M. Verma in this regard correctly mentions,

"It would be seen that Kamala Markandaya in portraying the conflict between the East

and the West is all comprehensive and all-embracing and ranks atop amongst Indian novelists writing in English".

(qtd in Bhatnagar 119)

She has an acute critical eye for all of them and her attitudes seem to be balanced as she neither completely eulogizes nor does she condemn the two opposite sides of life. She always stands apart from her intrusion in novels and "the East-West encounter as recurrent theme in her novels is directly related to her experience as an expatriate who inherited Indian values by birth and acquired Western values by choosing to live in England" (Kumar 84).

In this regard Anil K Bhatnagar says,

"Markandaya plays the role of a neutral observer in her novels. She does not take sides. She highlights the drawbacks and the qualities of both East and the West. Through her novels she conveys the message that people should rise above the petty man-made barriers of Caste, religion and culture and should imbibe the spirit of love and fraternity".

(Bhatnagar i)

Kamala Markandaya's expertise in portraying human characters is revealed when she points out in her fictions the hidden weakness as well as the strength of each of the two poles. She is cautious about the nuances of life both in Indian and in England that enables her to realize and deal with opposite socio-cultural values from different perspectives and her handling of the "theme of East-West confrontation in novel after novel in great seriousness reveals her genuine concern with the contemporary global civilization" (Joseph 129).

Unlike some of her novels where Markandaya has tried only to endorse Indian spiritual, moral and cultural values through Indian characters shading negative lights on characters from the West as immoral and deceitful, *The Coffey Dams* seems to be somewhat different in character portrayal as here the two vibrant characters—Clinton and Helen—are shown "springing from the same cultural background" but of different

attitudes towards India. Against the unsympathetic Europeans her novel also possesses compassionate and sensitive European character like Helen who is concerned about the problems and sorrows of the native Indians.

Clinton an engineer from the West taking the responsibility of building dams on Indian soil is “obsessed with his construction works to achieve personal glory at the cost of innocent hard working tribal people”(Misra 55) while his wife Helen has devoted her life for the betterment of the simple and uneducated tribal workers. Though Helen thinks about the Indians as equal to the Europeans another female European character Millie, wife of an English officer Rawling has a strong hatred for the local tribesmen and comments arrogantly, “Never trust the blacks. That’s my motto, and I stick to it” (Markandaya 37). Millie’s attitude towards the Indian aboriginal people seems to reflect the common outlook of the colonizers during the time of British colonial rule in India.

Kamala Markandaya in the novel exhibits that all people are not same in their attitudes. Unlike Millie, Helen appears to understand the real beauty of Indian lifestyle. She has tremendous reverence for Indian customs and values as represented by the indigenous tribesmen of the village. She believes that “these people aren’t different clay, they’re like me, like people. What is for me, is for them, there is no other kind of yardstick that is worth anything” (Markandaya 45). She seems to be in the pursuit of complete harmony in the unfamiliar terrain of that hilly place. She is annoyed at the behavior of the Englishmen who have mercilessly “driven away the Indians from indigenous places, and have destroyed their huts and in their places have built for themselves comfortable bungalows” (Arora 60). Helen has easily familiarized herself with the natives as “she finds in them the ‘natural springs of intercourse’ which she cannot in Clinton and other Englishmen” (Singh 14). Here Markandaya eulogizes the kind-heartedness of Indian people who are always ready to embrace other unlike the hypocritical and suspicious Englishman Clinton who regard the tribal workers as mere slaves. India at all times seems to be an “all-embracing country” (Dodiya 361) and “in India, love,

and not comforts, is all that matters” (361).

The most striking aspect in Markandaya’s writings that makes her different from other Indian Writers in English is that having lived in England for fifty five years and married to an Englishman, her India is as reliable and authentic as the writing of any native Indian who has never left the border of his/her own village. Being an expatriate it may be argued that she is “an-insider-outsider” (Garg 1) who is aware of the tendencies of both the cultures as her writings are the clear evidence of it. Her main duty as a novelist is to present all the follies and foibles irrespective of social or cultural boundaries. She “fictionalises the sociology of India” (qtd in Sharma 102) who values Indian traditional norms and customs but not as a blind follower of it.

Kamala Markandaya, who is a “documentary novelist” (Rao 102), seems to have a critical eye for both Indian spiritual cultural values and modern Western material values. She places herself in a safer zone who has not completely taken any side of it. In *The Coffey Dams* she has drawn a picture of “bicultural world...without any partiality or favor either for the East or for the West’ (qtd in Bharat). She responds towards all the pros and cons of the two sides of the societies. While eulogizing the spiritual and cultural beliefs of the tribal people in the novel she is not uncritical of the irrational superstitious beliefs, financial backwardness, their dismal poverty, and illiteracy nor does she undervalue the contribution of the West in the form of scientific or technological advancement and the missionary zeal revealed in Clinton during construction of dams. Though the author is triumphant in presenting the negative effects of dams on human lives she has not altogether rejected the inevitability of it for the entire development of the backward tribal people of the village.

Markandaya in her fictional world appears to display her double conscious attitude when on the one hand she exhibits aversion for the changes wrought by Western materialism in the native tribal culture by overthrowing the spiritual values of the local people, on the other hand she feels the need of presence of Western industrial culture which is unavoidable as no

culture appears to isolate itself from the other in the era of modern globalization. In the same way, in *The Coffey Dams* also the character Helen is also caught between these two aspects as “her fears about the industrial civilization’s onslaught on the traditional values run parallel to her recognition of the inevitability of change” (Kumar 87). Even the chief of the tribal people in the village also recognizes the good as well evil effects of constructing dams. Though aware of the harmful results of dams on river he has not altogether denied the benefits of it that can also be helpful in generating electricity. The mixed feelings of both Helen and the headman of the village regarding this issue symbolize immediately Markandaya’s double consciousness of it as she has witnessed as an expatriate both the corrosion of her indigenous culture as well as evolution done by industrial progress.

The relationship between English colonizers and the Indian colonized is a major subject in many of the novels of Kamala Markandaya. According to Famous American cultural historian Beatrice Pitney Lamb “England’s acquisition of an Empire in India is one of the most profoundly disturbing cultural confrontations in the history of India” (qtd in Atkins 90) that have shattered the relationship among people of both the sides for good. Though the days of colonial rules have gone the legacy of colonialism has created a wide chasm among all classes of people thereby dividing their attitudes and behaviors towards each other. In *The Coffey Dams* the division based on classes and social status is clearly visible when the novelist says “The officers and their wives. The technicians. The subordinate cadre. The men. Each cluster kept to itself, neither seeking nor wishing to enlarge its ambit...” (Markandaya 32).

The Europeans engaged in construction of dams—Howard Clinton, Mackendrick and Rawlings—are termed by Markandaya as “new colonists” (Markandaya 32) who seem to be cold, indifferent and unsympathetic towards the local tribes. The main purpose of Howard Clinton is to finish the constructions of coffer dams within a scheduled time period. Unlike his wife, Helen he appears to be obsessed with his work and is determined to build it without any concern

for the consequences of it. In the novel he is an embodiment of Western material progress and missionary zeal who does not seem to be affected by the utter impoverishment of the tribal people of the village. But Helen is enthralled by the generosity love, and care of the native people.

The relationship between the vibrant Western educated Indians and their British counterparts also forms an important part of *The Coffey Dams* as their ideas and attitudes clash and take a different contour in the construction sites. The bitter relationship between imperial power of the Britishers and the Indians seems to be reflected in Jawahar Lal Nehru’s *Discovery of India* (1943) as,

“The idea of a master race is inherent in imperialism... More powerful than words was the practice that accompanied them and generation after generation, and year after year, India as a nation and Indians as Individuals were subjected to insult humiliation and contemptuous treatment”.

(qtd in Grenville 391)

-These words of Nehru appear to be echoed in *The Coffey Dams* that marks the inheritance of colonialism with deep and strong abhorrence for the Indians in all aspects of life. The affiliation between Eastern and Western people as marked by the novelist seems to have “sour origins in past and present, from the noxious emotional cauldron that Britain the ruler and Indian the ruled had kept on the boil throughout the term of an imposed overlordship to the humiliations of being an underdeveloped and pauper nation” (Markandaya 40).

In spite of her awareness of “how the age of technology turns people into soulless mechanisms and kills human feelings in them” (Arora 60) Markandaya has tried to balance it by depicting a ideal relationship between Helen and Bashiam which is the symbol of perfection that can be viewed as “union of minds rather than bodies, of cross cultural human affinities rather than wanton sexuality” (61). Unlike the other British officers who call Bashiam a ‘Jungliwallah’ the same breed Helen finds in Baisham “a peace that was to do with her mind as consummation had been for her body, the fusion making her whole in a way that she could

not recall having achieved before” (qtd in Kumar 87). Her genuine concern for Bashiam is reflected as she says, “Look at me, I’ve never been a memsahib. You are not some kind of freak to me. We’re alike; we’re freaks only to the caste. We come from not to each other.” (qtd in Maheshwari 155). For Helen the jungles of India seem to be so fascinating that she is drawn automatically towards its alluring beauty that she fails to find in concrete Western material life. She has been embraced by the splendor of jungles and its “rampant furious growth affected her in a way that the ordered charm of restrained civilization would never do” (Markandaya 25). Mr. Clinton whose life is totally administered by machines has never understood the hearts of the native people. He is insensitive and indifferent towards them. His feeling of “mythical superiority supported by colonial past” (Surendran 35) results racial inequity and decay of human values. In contrast, his wife Helen perceives a world “where instincts and emotions are still dominant and when human beings get priority before over the machine (Jain 39).

There are two sets of values in *The Coffey Dams* represented by Indian and British characters that exists in parallel and are bound to interact with one another in one plan. Markandaya’s fictional characters are not isolated; they are dynamic and they illuminate the cultural ideals, wisdom and way of life of the whole people. Helen seems to be the most enthusiastic character in the novel that eagerly goes across her own Western world drifting away from her husband to be merged with the Eastern one by establishing communication with the natives. Though the merge does not seem to be completed she links the crack between East and West that again symbolizes the bridging of the gap between human values and modern industrial progress. She has not been isolated by the forces of racial and Western material life “either because [her] nature requires to be fulfilled in more elemental ways” (Jain 36) or because she is “resilient enough to reject the forces of modernity as incomplete or emasculating” (36). A V Krishna Rao truly opines that Helen stands for “the new generation of young men and women of the West for whom India is not contemptible colony of Machaulays and Mirtos and

Montagues but a cultural commonwealth of Huxleys and Fosters and Haldanes” (qtd in Prasad 17).

One of the interesting facts of Markandaya’s fictional works is that she has never shown the total unification of East and West as she herself seems to be skeptical of the assimilation of the two contradictory poles. In *The Coffey Dams* the love between British lady Helen and Indian tribal man Bashiam has never attained maturity in spite of having mutual attraction for each other both in the spiritual and the physical level. This fact may be understood with the help of the lines from Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The Ballad of East and West (1889)”:

“Oh East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at the God’s great judgement seat;”

(qtd in Davies 231)

In the novels of Kamala Markandaya the characters from both East and West never seem to have congenial relationships as both of them not only possess racial differences they have also different priorities and concerns of life altogether. There are some big gaps among them created by a variety of socio-political and racial factors. Regarding impossibility of total assimilation of two opposite cultures in Kamala Markandaya’s novels like *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Possession* and *The Coffey Dams*, O P Saxena has rightly comments, “In each of these novels there are two cultural worlds belong to two distinct races of Indian and Europeans, they cannot merge” (see Bharat). In the character Helen the inquisitiveness of the West to know the East is clearly revealed who seems to be an ‘East moving Westerner’ trying desperately to become familiar with Indian values and customs.

Markandaya neither asserts the prospect of total intermingling of the two cultural worlds nor does she reject the same. In *The Coffey Dams* the respective communities don’t recognize the union of the two lovers and finally alienated them. In this way Markandaya enters into an “another sphere of race and cultural contact and lends weight to her skeptical attitude towards inter-racial and cross-cultural understanding

by bringing to bear new experience upon the subject of her study (Aithal 56).

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অসমীয়া সমাজত প্ৰচলিত মাঘবিহু কেন্দ্ৰিক লোকাচাৰ

দীপামণি দেৱী

অধিবক্তা, গুৱাহাটী উচ্চন্যায়ালয়

০.০০ অৱতৰণিকা :-

বিহু থাকে মানে অসমীয়া জাতি থাকিব, অসমীয়া জাতি থাকে মানে বিহু থাকিব ; এই আপ্ত বাক্যাশাৰীতেই লুকাই আছে প্ৰকৃত সত্য কথাটো যে বিহু অসমীয়া জাতিৰ স্পন্দন। বিহু উৎসৱ অসমত বাস কৰা সকলো জাতি-জনজাতি, ধৰ্ম-বৰ্ণ নিৰ্বিশেষে দিন-বাৰ-নামৰ অতি সামান্য মিল-অমিল থাকিলেও পালন কৰে। বিহু উৎসৱে সকলো লোককে বৎ, আনন্দ হাঁহি-স্বফূৰ্তি বিলায়। বিহু কেন্দ্ৰিক বৎ-ধেমালি, গীত-পদ, নৃত্য, বিবিধ ব্যঞ্জন আচাৰ অনুষ্ঠানে সকলো লোককে মনত আনন্দ, হাঁহি-স্বফূৰ্তি, জুতিৰ সোঁৱাদ দিয়াৰ উপৰিও সকলো লোকে উৎসৱত ভাগ ল'ব পাৰে আৰু লৈ আহিছে।

আৱহমান কালৰেপৰা অসম আৰু অসমীয়া জাতিৰ লগত বিহু উৎসৱ ওতঃপ্ৰোতভাৱে জড়িত হৈ আহিছে। পৰিবৰ্তিত সময়ত বিহু অসমীয়াৰ জাতীয় উৎসৱ বুলি স্বীকৃত হৈছে। বিহু তিনিটা ব'হাগ বিহু বা বঙালী বিহু, কাতি বিহু বা কঙালী বিহু, মাঘ বিহু বা ভোগালী বিহু। এই আলোচনাত মাঘ বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰ সম্পৰ্কতে আলোচনা সীমিত ৰাখিম।

০.১ অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ, লক্ষ্য আৰু পদ্ধতি :

ভিন্ন জাতি-জনজাতি সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ মহামিলনেৰে বৃহৎ অসমীয়া সমাজ গঢ় লৈ উঠিছে। এওঁলোকৰ প্ৰত্যেকৰে কিছুমান লোকাচাৰ আছে। একেদৰে ঠাই ভেদে একেটা জাতি-জনজাতিৰ লোকাচাৰৰ পাৰ্থক্যত দেখা যায় তথাপিও সচাৰচৰ অসমীয়া সমাজত প্ৰচলিত মাঘ বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰসমূহ সামৰি বিষয় বস্তুৰ পৰিসৰ নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰা হৈছে।

অসমীয়া সমাজ জীৱনত লোকাচাৰ সমূহ গভীৰভাৱে বিয়পি আছে। অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰতীক ভোগালী বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰসমূহে কিদৰে অসমীয়া সমাজ আৰু

লোকজীৱনত প্ৰভাৱ বিস্তাৰ কৰিছে সেই বিষয়ে আলোকপাত কৰাই হ'ব আমাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ মূল লক্ষ্য।

বিষয়বস্তু অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন পদ্ধতি গ্ৰহণ কৰা হ'ব।

১.০০ বিষয় প্ৰৱেশ :

কোনো, কেনেকৈ কেতিয়া অসমত কিহৰ প্ৰৱৰ্ত্তন কৰালে তাৰ সৰ্ব্বসন্মত ব্যাখ্যা নাই যদিও বৰ্তমান সময়ত বিভিন্ন জাতি-জনজাতি, পাহাৰ, সমতলৰ লগত সংস্কৃতি সমন্বয়ৰ সাঁকো হিচাপে বিহু উৎসৱ পৰিগণিত হৈছে।

বিহু-বিশেষকৈ মাঘ বিহু মূলতঃ কৃষি উৎসৱ। মাঘ বিহু উদ্‌যাপন কৰা হয় পুহ মাহৰ সংক্ৰান্তিৰ দিনা আৰু মাঘ মাহৰ প্ৰথম দুদিন। উৰুকাৰ ভোজভাত বা লগভাত (নামনি অসমৰ শব্দ)ৰে মাঘবিহু আৰম্ভ হোৱা, মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰ সাজি অগ্নিসংযোগ কৰি অগ্নিপূজাৰ, সু-স্বাদু জা-জলপান প্ৰস্তুত আৰু পৰিৱেশনৰে শেষ হোৱা মাঘবিহুৰ লগত জড়িত হৈ আছে লোকাচাৰ। জাতি এটাৰ সভ্যতা-সংস্কৃতি মূল্যায়ণ কৰে সেই জাতিটোৰ লোকসংস্কৃতিয়ে। লোকসংস্কৃতিয়ে সামৰি থোৱা বিভিন্ন বিষয়সমূহৰ ভিতৰত লোকাচাৰ অন্যতম।

R.M. Dorson য়ে লোকসংস্কৃতিক চাৰিটা ভাগত ভগাইছে। সেইকেইটা হ'ল—

- (১) মৌখিক সাহিত্য
- (২) ভৌতিক সংস্কৃতি।
- (৩) সামাজিক লোকপ্ৰথা বা লোকাচাৰ।
- (৪) লোকপৰিৱেশ্যকলা-ৰীতি।

গতিকে দেখা যায় লোকাচাৰৰ জৰিয়তে জাতি এটাৰ সংস্কৃতি স্বৰূপ প্ৰকাশ পায়।

ৰাজহুৱা উদ্‌যাপন আৰু আমোদ প্ৰমোদ সমাজৰ অধিকাংশ মানুহে যোগ দিয়াৰ পৰিণতিত সামাজিক লোকাচাৰৰ

জন্ম হয়। উৎসৱ আৰু অনুষ্ঠান এই পদ দুটি সামাজিক লোকাচাৰক সুচিত কৰিবৰ বাবে সাধাৰণতে প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হয়।

গতিকে মাঘবিহু উৎসৱত পালন কৰা লোকাচাৰ সমূহক সামাজিক লোকাচাৰৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত বিষয়।

ড° নবীন চন্দ্ৰ শৰ্মাই “অসমীয়া লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ আভাস” নামৰ গ্ৰন্থত লোকবিশ্বাসসমূহ এইকেইটা ভাগত ভগাইছে— গছ-গছনি সম্পৰ্কীয়, জন্তু সম্পৰ্কীয়, খাদ্য সম্পৰ্কীয়, লতা-লতিকা, ফুল-ফল কেন্দ্ৰিক, মাহ-বাৰ-তিথি-দিশ সম্পৰ্কীয়, ধৰ্মীয়, চৰাই-চিৰিকতি বিষয়ক, আলৌকিক বা স্বৰ্গীয় বস্তু সম্পৰ্কীয়, মানৱ শৰীৰ আৰু আচৰণ সম্পৰ্কীয়, বিবিধ বিষয়ক।

এই লোকবিশ্বাস সমূহক ভেটি কৰিয়ে অসমীয়া মানুহৰ সামাজিক লোকাচাৰসমূহ গঢ় লৈ উঠিছে আৰু মাঘ বিহুৰ সৈতে জড়িত এনে সামাজিক লোকাচাৰসমূহ আমাৰ আলোচনালৈ অনা হ'ব।

(ক) গছ-গছনি সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :-

গছত কোবালে ফল লাগিবৰ সময় হোৱা গছত সোনকালে ফল লাগে আৰু লাগনীয়া গছবোৰত অধিক ফল লাগে বুলি লোকবিশ্বাস আছে। এই লোকবিশ্বাসক ভেটি কৰি গঢ়ি উঠা লোকাচাৰ অনুসৰি মাঘ বিহুৰ দিনা ৰাতিপুৱাতে কাকো মাত-বোল নিদিয়াকৈ হাতত এডাল লাঠি লৈ গছবোৰত কোবাই-কোবাই ‘লাগ-লাগ’ বুলি ফল লাগিবলৈ কৈ যায়। কিছুমানে লাগনিয়া গছত ধানখেৰ বান্ধি দিয়ে। নলগা নাৰিকল গছত এজনে কুঠাৰেৰে ঘাপ দিয়াতে যদি ‘লাগিব দে নাকাটিবি’ বুলি কৈ কাটিবলৈ বাধা দিলে সেইজোপা গছত নাৰিকল লাগে।

দোকমোকালিতে প্ৰতিঘৰ মানুহে জুই জ্বলাবলৈ তাৰ ওপৰত অপেঁতা বাঁহ দি বাঁহৰ হিলৈ বেছিকৈ মৰাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। বাঁহৰ হিলৈ বেছিকৈ মাৰিলে বেছিকৈ ফল লাগে বুলি লোকবিশ্বাস আছে। পানী হিলৈ খুউৰ জোৰেৰে শব্দ কৰি যোৱাৰ পিছত সেই চোচটো নাৰিকল গছত ওলোমাই দিলে নাৰিকল বেছিকৈ লাগে বুলি লোকবিশ্বাস আছে।

মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰৰ আধাপোৰা বাঁহ, কাঠ নি বেঙেনা, জলকীয়া আদিৰ মাজত পুতি দিয়ে এনেদৰে কৰিলে মানুহৰ কু-দৃষ্টি নপৰে বুলি বিশ্বাস আছে।

বৰ দোমাহীৰ দিনা ব্ৰহ্মপুৱাতে বাঁহৰ গুৰিত নতুন মাটি দিয়াৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে এনে কৰিলে বাঁহৰ গজালি বৃদ্ধি হয়

বুলি লোকবিশ্বাস আছে।

(খ) জন্তু সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :-

মাঘ বিহুত মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰ পুৱাই উঠি ব'হাগ বিহুলৈকে গৰুক উদং পথাৰত চৰিবলৈ দিয়ে, গৰখীয়া সকলে দিনত গৰু নৰখাৰ লোকাচাৰ প্ৰচলন আছে।

মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰ ছাঁইৰ সৈতে মিঠাতেল সানি গোহালিৰ প্ৰত্যেকটি গৰুক ফোট দিয়া আৰু পিঠা-লাডু খুউওৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(গ) খাদ্য সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :-

মাঘ বিহুৰ দিনাখন ৰাতিপুৱা অহিন বস্তু খোৱাৰ আগতে মৌ-খোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘ বিহুৰ দোমাহীৰ পিছদিনাখন পইতা ভাত আৰু কাঠ আলু খোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। খালে বাঘৰ সমান বল পোৱা যায় বুলি বিশ্বাস আছে।

‘পুহৰ পইতা মাঘত খায়

বাঘৰ সমান বল পায়।’

মাঘ বিহুৰ পৰা মাহটোলৈকে মূলা নোখোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘৰ বিহুত ঘৰলৈ অহা আলহী-অতিথিক তিলৰে প্ৰস্তুত কৰা লাডু-পিঠা বিবিধ ব্যঞ্জন খুউওৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। লোকবিশ্বাস আছে যে মাঘৰ বিহুত তিল খুউৱাৰ পাৰিলে পুণ্য অৰ্জন কৰিব পাৰি। সাধ্য অনুসৰি মাঘৰ বিহুত সকলোৰে ঘৰত ভোগৰ আয়োজন চলে। পিঠা-ৰাডু, দৈ-ক্ৰীম, চিৰা-মুড়ি, সান্দহ গুৰা ইত্যাদি বিবিধ জলপান প্ৰস্তুত আৰু পৰিবেশনৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। প্ৰথম পিঠাখন জুইক দিয়াৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘ বিহুৰ সংক্ৰান্তিত মাটিৰ চৰু পেলাই দিয়া হয়, চৌকাৰ ছাইও পেলোৱা হয় আৰু কেৰাহী পুৰি ছাই গুচাই পাকঘৰ মচি-কাচি শুদ্ধ কৰাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘ মাহত মাহ কড়াই খোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। অলপ মাঘ বিহুৰ মাহ কড়াই বহাগ বিহুলৈকে সাঁচি ৰাখি তাৰে অলপ খাই বাকীখিনি পেলাই দিয়াৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

উৰুকাৰ দিনা সামূহিকভাৱে ৰাজহুৱা পুখুৰীত বা বিলত মাছ ধৰাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘৰ দোমাহীৰ দিনা গৰখীয়া ল'ৰাহঁতক মাটি আনি জুজলপান খুউৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। এনেকুৱা কৰিলে গৃহস্থৰ

মঙ্গল হয় বুলি লোক বিশ্বাস আছে।

পুহ মাহ নোযোৱাকৈ ভড়ালৰ ধান নুলিয়াই মাঘৰ বিহু যোৱাৰ পিছতহে ভড়ালৰ জুৱাৰ মুখত সেন্দুৰৰ ফোট দিহে ধান উলিওৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(ঘ) লতা-লতিকা, ফুল-ফলকেম্ৰিক লোকাচাৰ :

উৰুকাৰ দিনা গধূলি আওহতীয়া ঠাইত সজা কলা কচুৰ নতুন পাত চাৰিটা ক্ৰমে আহাৰ, শাওঁন, ভাদ আৰু আহিন — এই মাহৰ নামত সৰকি পৰিব নোৱাৰাকৈ কোমল তমাল বা বেটৰ বকুতাৰে বান্ধে আৰু ভেলাঘৰ পুৱাৰ পিছতে কচুপাত বন্ধা মানুহজনে কচুপাত খিলা খোলাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। এনে লোকাচাৰৰ আঁৰৰ লোকবিশ্বাস আছে যে— যিটো পাতত অধিক পানী জমা হয়। সেই মাহতেই ডাঙৰ বানপানী হ'ব আৰু যিটো পাতত পানী কম জমা হ'ব সেইটো মাহত বানপানী নহয়।

দোমাহীৰ দিনা ধুমুহা বজ্ৰ, বৃষ্টি নিবাৰণৰ বাবে নাহৰৰ পাতত মন্ত্ৰ লিখি ঘৰৰ চালত খুহি থোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

“দেৱ দেৱ মহাদেৱ নীলগ্ৰীৰ জটাধৰ ।

বাত বৃষ্টি হৰদেৱ মহাদেৱ নমোহস্ততে ॥”

মাহৰৰ পাতত উক্ত মন্ত্ৰ লিখি জৰাজীৰ্ণ ঘৰত থলেও ঘৰটো ঠিকে-থাকেই থাকে বুলি লোকবিশ্বাস আছে।

(ঙ) মাহ-বাৰ-তিথি-দিন সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :

মাঘ বিহুৰ ভিতৰত মঙ্গলবাৰ, শনিবাৰ পৰিলেও চিৰা-সান্দহ-আঁখৈৰ খোলা ঢেকীশালত নাপাতে। ঠিক সেইদৰে ভৰদুপৰীয়া, সন্ধিয়া সময়ত ঢেকী নকোবোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(চ) ধৰ্মীয় লোকাচাৰ :

মাঘ বিহুত পুহৰ সংক্ৰান্তিৰ ৰাতিপুৱা সূৰ্য উদয় হোৱাৰ আগতে মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰত অগ্নিসংযোগ কৰা হয়। গা-পা ধুই শুচি কাপোৰ বিন্ধি বিধিপূৰ্বক প্ৰদক্ষিণ কৰি অগ্নিসংযোগ কৰে। প্ৰজ্বলিত অগ্নিত ফুল, চাউল, তিল আদি উচৰ্গা কৰে। পিছত মেজিৰ চাৰিওকাষে সেৱা জনাই হৰিধ্বনি দিয়ে, মাহ-প্ৰসাদ আদি আগবঢ়াই নাম কীৰ্ত্তন গোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(ছ) চৰাই চিৰিকতি বিষয়ক লোকাচাৰ :

ৰাতিপুৱা কাউৰীয়ে কা-কা নকৰাৰ আগতে মেজি বা

ভেলাঘৰ জুলোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(জ) অলৌকিক বস্তু সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :

মাঙৰ বিহুৰ ভিতৰত দেও-ভূত-প্ৰেত-পিশাচ-অখিষ্ট আদিয়ে যাতে অনিষ্ট কৰিব নোৱাৰে তাৰ বাবে প্ৰতিষেধক হিচাপে মাহলি, জাপ আদি পিন্ধা আৰু পিন্ধোৱাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(ঝ) মানৱ শৰীৰ আৰু আচৰণ সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :

মাঘৰ দোমাহীত নদী, জলাশয় আদিত স্নান কৰি পুণ্য অৰ্জাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে। ঠিক সেইদৰে হালধি-সৰ্বোষধিৰে স্নান কৰাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঙ বিহুত কণী যুঁজ, বুলবুল চৰাইৰ যুঁজ, কলহ ভঙা, দৌৰ প্ৰতিযোগিতা আদি বিভিন্ন খেল-ধেমালি পতাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(ঞ) যাত্ৰা সম্পৰ্কীয় লোকাচাৰ :

মাঘ বিহুৰ সময়ত মঠ-মন্দিৰ দৰ্শন কৰিবলৈ যাত্ৰা কৰে। চাকৰ-নাকৰ, মাটি-বাৰী, ধান-মাহৰ হিচাপ মাঘৰ বিহুৰ ভিতৰতে কৰাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

(ট) বিবিধ বা মিশ্ৰিত লোকাচাৰ :

উৰুকাৰ নিশা বাঁহ-কাঠ-খেৰ-খৰি চুৰ কৰা লোকাচাৰ আছে। এই কাম চুৰ কৰা নুবুজায় ইয়াৰ সৈতে জড়িত লোকবিশ্বাস আছে যে দোমাহীৰ দিনা গৃহস্থই গালি-শপনি পাৰিলে প্ৰতিৰোধমূলক যাদুৰাম কৰে আৰু বছৰটোলৈ চুৰ হোৱাৰ ভয় নাথাকে।

মাঘ বিহুত মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰৰ জৰিয়তে অগ্নিপূজা কৰাৰ পিছত জুইত ভৰি-হাত নেসেকাৰ আৰু সেকিলেও জুইক সেৱা কৰাৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘ বিহুৰ সংক্ৰান্তিত ঢেকীশালত, ভড়ালঘৰ মচি-কাচি চাকি, নৈবদ্য দিয়াৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে।

মাঘ বিহুত মেজি বা ভেলাঘৰ সাজিবৰ বাবে বাঁহ, কাঠ, নৰা আদি গাঁওৰ ডেকাসকলে ঘৰৰ গৃহস্থক খুজিলেই দিয়াৰ লোকাচাৰ আছে, লোকবিশ্বাস আছে যে ভেলাঘৰ বা মেজি সাজিবৰ বাবে কিবা দিব পাৰিলেও পুণ্য আৰ্জিব পাৰি।

সামৰণি :

সমাজ গতিশীল। সময়ৰ পাকঘূৰণিত বহুতো লোকাচাৰ হেৰাই গৈছে আৰু সেই একেই পাকঘূৰণিত জন্ম হৈছে নতুন লোকাচাৰৰ। ইয়াৰ ব্যতিক্রম অসমীয়া সমাজ নহয়।

গোলকীকৰণ সংজ্ঞাক আজি প্ৰায় পৃথিৱীৰ প্ৰতিখন দেশেই গ্ৰহণ কৰিছে। অৰ্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক, ৰাজনৈতিক, ভাষিক সীমাবোৰ বিলুপ্ত কৰি গোটেই পৃথিৱীখন এখন গাওঁলৈ ৰূপান্তৰিত হ'বলৈ লৈছে। বিজ্ঞান আৰু প্ৰযুক্তিবিদ্যাৰ দ্ৰুত উন্নতিয়ে এই সংজ্ঞাক অতি ক্ষীপ্ৰতাৰে বিভিন্ন দেশ সমূহৰ মাজলৈ বোঁৱাই লৈ হৈছে। বিশেষকৈ অৰ্থনৈতিক দিশৰ পৰা এয়া নিশ্চয়কৈ আদৰ্শীয় কথা।

মাঘ বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰ পালনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গোলকীকৰণ সংজ্ঞাৰ সুতাডালৰ পৰা মুক্ত কৰা হৈ উচিত হ'ব

কিয়নো বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰসমূহৰ দ্বাৰা বিহুৰ স্বতন্ত্ৰতা আৰু মৌলিকতা প্ৰকাশ পায়। অসমীয়া জাতিৰ জাতীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য আৰু পৰিচয়ৰ ৰক্ষাকৰণ হ'ল বিহু।

মাঘ বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰ পালনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত জাতীয় আবেগ আৰু যুক্তিৰ ভৰ বেছি বাবে আমাৰ সমাজত লোকাচাৰসমূহ জীয়াই আছে আৰু সেই একেই জাতীয় আবেগ, যুক্তিয়েই মাঘবিহুৰ লগত জড়িত লোকাচাৰসমূহ পালন আৰু অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে অনাগত দিনসমূহতো জীয়াই থাকিব।

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

শৰ্মা, নবীন চন্দ্ৰ ; ২০০৫ : অসমীয়া লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ আভাস। বাণী প্ৰকাশ, পাণবজাৰ, গুৱাহাটী-১, তৃতীয় প্ৰকাশ।

ভট্টাচাৰ্য, প্ৰমোদ চন্দ্ৰ ; ২০১৩ : লোক উৎসৱ।, জাৰ্মাল এম্প'ৰিয়াম, তৃতীয় সংস্কৰণ।



শদিয়াৰ কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী শাল : অতীত আৰু বৰ্তমান

ঋতুপৰ্ণা বুঢ়াগোহাঞিঃ

গৱেষক, অসমীয়া বিভাগ,

গুৱাহাটী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

অসমৰ পূব প্ৰান্তৰ শদিয়া শক্তিপূজাৰ কেন্দ্ৰস্থল হিচাপে প্ৰাগৈতিহাসিক কালৰে পৰা বিখ্যাত। এসময়ত শদিয়া হালালী ৰাজ্য, বিদৰ্ভ ৰাজ্য তথা ভীষ্মক ৰাজ্য নামেৰে জনাজাত আছিল। সেইদৰে এই ঠাইক কুণ্ডিল বা কুণ্ডিল্য নামেৰেও জনা গৈছিল। ইয়াৰ প্ৰমাণ হিচাপে কুণ্ডিল নামৰ এখন নদী আৰু একে নামৰ এখন ঠাই শদিয়াত এতিয়াও থকাটো মন কৰিবলগীয়া।

শক্তি পূজাৰ অন্যতম স্থলৰূপে পৰিচিত শদিয়াৰ মানুহৰ মাজত চাৰিখন শালৰ প্ৰভাৱ বৰ্তমানো অক্ষয় অব্যয় ৰূপত আছে। শদিয়াত প্ৰচলিত বিহু গীতেও এই উমান দিয়ে—

‘সূৰ্যলৈয়ে সেৱা কৰোঁ সমনীয়া

চন্দ্ৰ লৈয়ে সেৱা কৰোঁ,

শদিয়া ৰাজ্যতে চাৰিশাল গোসানী

তেওঁলৈয়ো নমস্কাৰ কৰোঁ।’

শদিয়াত থকা এই চাৰিখন শাল হ’ল ক্ৰমে কেঁচাইখাতী শাল, বুঢ়াবুঢ়ী শাল, বলিয়া বাবাৰ শাল আৰু পাটৰ শাল।

শদিয়াৰ এই শালকেইখনৰ উৎপত্তি সম্পৰ্কত এক কিংবদন্তি শুনা যায়। সেইমতে, শিৱই দক্ষযজ্ঞত অপমানিতা হৈ দেহত্যাগ কৰা সতীৰ মৃতশৰীৰ কঢ়িয়াই লৈ ফুৰোঁতে ঘোৰ প্ৰলয়ৰ আশংকাত শেষৰ পিনে ব্ৰহ্মা আৰু বিষ্ণুও শিৱৰ পিছ লৈছিল। শিৱই কঢ়িয়াই ফুৰা সতীৰ মৃত শৰীৰৰ একো একোটা অংশ ভিন ভিন ঠাইত পৰি আহিছিল আৰু অৱশিষ্ট শিৱ অংশ মহামায়াৰ নিৰ্দেশত শিৱই এই ঠাইতে পেলাইছিল। এনেদৰে এই ঠাইতে ব্ৰহ্মা, বিষ্ণু, মহেশ্বৰ আৰু মহামায়া- এই চাৰিশক্তিৰ মিলন হেতু পিছলৈ ইয়াত চাৰিখন শাল সৃষ্টি হোৱা বুলি কিংবদন্তিয়ে কৈ আহিছে।

শদিয়াৰ চাৰিওখন শালৰ ভিতৰত প্ৰধান শাল হ’ল

কেঁচাইখাতী বা তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী শাল। সূৰ্য দাসে এই প্ৰসংগত উল্লেখ কৰিছে— ‘পুৰণি অসমৰ নৰবিল হোৱা থান-মন্দিৰসমূহৰ ভিতৰত শদিয়াৰ তামৰ আই, তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মাই, কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী বা তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰৰ স্থান সবাতেকৈ ওপৰত। এই দেৱীয়েই এসময়ত দিক্ৰবাসিনী দেৱী ৰূপেও বিখ্যাত হৈ পৰিছিল।’ উল্লেখযোগ্য যে, কালিকাপুৰাণত উল্লিখিত দিক্ৰব বাসিনী নদীয়েই প্ৰাচীন কামৰূপৰ শেষ সীমা আছিল আৰু এই নদীৰ কাষত তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মাইৰ মন্দিৰ আছিল বাবে তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মাইক দিক্ৰবাসিনী দেৱী ৰূপেও জনা গৈছিল। ‘অসমত শক্তি-সাধনা আৰু শান্ত-সাহিত্য’ গ্ৰন্থত হৰিনাথ শৰ্মা দলেয়ে এই প্ৰসঙ্গত কৈছে : ‘ঐতিহাসিক যুগৰ তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰৰ অলপ আঁতৰত দিগাৰু নামৰ যি নদী আছে, প্ৰাচীন কালত সম্ভৱতঃ তাৰ সংস্কৃতীয়া নাম আছিল দিক্ৰব আৰু ই হয়তো প্ৰবাহিতা আছিল তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰৰ কাষেদি। গতিকে, “বিন্ধ্যবাসিনী” নামৰ নিচিনা দিক্ৰব নদীৰ পাৰত থকা দেৱীৰ (ঐতিহাসিক যুগৰ দেৱী তাম্ৰেশ্বৰীৰ) নামো হয়তো হৈছিল দিক্ৰববাসিনী।’ উল্লেখযোগ্য যে বৰ্তমানো শদিয়াৰ চূণপোৰাৰ কাষেৰে বৈ যোৱা ডিগাৰু নদীখনকে প্ৰাচীন দিক্ৰববাসিনী নদী বুলি ঠাৱৰ কৰা হৈছে।

কেঁচাইখাতী দেৱীক তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী দেৱী তথা কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰক তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰ নামেৰেও জনা যায়। এই সম্পৰ্কত ‘শদিয়াৰ পৰা ধুবুৰীলৈ’ গ্ৰন্থত প্ৰদীপ শৰ্মাই উল্লেখ কৰিছে— ‘কেঁচাইখাতীক তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী নামেৰেও জনা যায়। জনশ্ৰুতি অনুসৰি ইয়াৰ চালখন তামৰ পাতেৰে গঢ়াৰ বাবে এই নাম হয়। অৱশ্যে তাম্ৰেশ্বৰ নামৰ কোনো নিৰ্মাতাৰ নামেৰেও এই নাম হ’ব পাৰে। ইতিহাসত মন্দিৰ নিৰ্মাতাৰ নামেৰে মন্দিৰৰ নাম প্ৰখ্যাত হোৱাৰ উদাহৰণ আছে। এতেকে কোনো তাম্ৰেশ্বৰ বা

তাম্ৰেশ্বৰ ৰজাৰ পৃষ্ঠপোষকতাৰে এই মন্দিৰ নিৰ্মাণ হোৱাৰ ফলত এনে নাম হোৱাটো একো আচৰিত নহয় যিহেতু 'চাংৰঙ্গ ফুকনৰ বুৰঞ্জী'ত এই মন্দিৰৰ চাল তামেৰে গঢ়া বুলি কৈ সৰ্বিশেষ বৰ্ণনা দিছে, এতেকে চালখনৰ পৰাই ইয়াৰ নাম তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী হোৱাটো বেছি যুক্তিযুক্ত।'

মূলতঃ কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানীৰ শালত প্ৰৱৰ্তিত নৰবলি প্ৰথাৰ বাবে এই মন্দিৰ জনাজাত হৈ পৰিছিল। খ্ৰীষ্টীয় তেৰ শতাব্দীমানৰে পৰা চুতীয়া ৰজাসকলৰ আমোলত এই শালত নৰবলি প্ৰথা প্ৰৱৰ্তন হৈছিল। ১৫১৩ খ্ৰীষ্টাব্দৰ পৰা ১৫২৩ খ্ৰীষ্টাব্দ লৈ আহোম আৰু চুতীয়াসকলৰ মাজত হোৱা প্ৰায় এঘাৰবছৰীয়া এক যুঁজৰ অন্তত চুতীয়া ৰাজ্য আহোম স্বৰ্গদেউ চুহুংমুং দিহিঙ্গীয়া ৰজাৰ দিনত আহোমসকলে অধিকাৰ কৰে আৰু আহোম ৰজাৰ দিনতো ইয়াত ৰাজকীয় পৃষ্ঠপোষকতাত নৰবলি হৈছিল।

১৭৯৪ চনত গৌৰীনাথ সিংহৰ দিনত শদিয়া খামতিসকলৰ দখললৈ যায়। বৌদ্ধধৰ্মী খামতিসকলৰ দখললৈ যোৱাৰ বাবে এই মন্দিৰত নৰবলি প্ৰথা সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে বন্ধ হৈ যায় আৰু নৰবলি ব্যৱস্থাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে অন্য পশু-পক্ষী বলি দি পূজা-অৰ্চনা কৰাৰ নিয়ম প্ৰচলিত হয়। 'শদিয়াৰ বুৰঞ্জী' গ্ৰন্থৰ লেখক ভৱানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঞিয়ে উল্লেখ কৰিছে যে ১৭৯৩ চনত (সময়ৰ পাৰ্থক্য মন কৰিবলগীয়া) খামতি ৰণুৱাই চাওঙ ইলুং কিংখামৰ নেতৃত্বত তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰত প্ৰৱেশ কৰি বৰদেউৰী কেন্দুকুলাইক গোসানী দেখুৱাবলৈ দাবী কৰিছিল আৰু বৰদেউৰীয়ে দেখুৱাব নোৱাৰাত কাটি দুছোৱা কৰিছিল। বাকীসকল দেউৰী তেতিয়া ভয়ত পৰ্বতৰ ফালে পলাই যায়।^{১৩} তেনেদৰেই ক্ৰমে ক্ৰমে প্ৰাচীন কেঁচাইখাতী বা তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰ পৰিত্যক্ত মন্দিৰত পৰিণত হয়।

বৰ্তমান এই পুৰণি মন্দিৰটোৰ কোনো চিন-মোকাম নাই। 'মিছিমি পাহাৰৰ ৰংশিঙা' গ্ৰন্থত ১৯৪৮ চনৰ পৰা ১৯৬১ চনলৈ 'শদিয়া ফ্ৰণ্টিয়াৰ জিলা'ৰ ৰাজনৈতিক প্ৰাধিকাৰী লক্ষেশ্বৰ শৰ্মাই ১৯৫০ চনৰ ১০ মে'ত এই পুৰণি মন্দিৰৰ ধ্বংসাৱশেষ ঘন অৰণ্যৰ মাজৰ এক সুঁতিৰ সমীপত দেখি অহাৰ কথা উল্লেখ কৰিছে^{১৪} যদিও এই সময়লৈ মন্দিৰটো প্ৰায় ধ্বংসৰ গ্ৰাসত পৰিছিল বুলি অনুমান কৰিব পাৰি যিহেতু তেখেতে এই ভগ্নাৱশেষ সম্পৰ্কত অধিক বৰ্ণনা দিব পৰা নাই। অৱশ্যে আদি বৃটিছ যুগত অসমলৈ অহা বিদেশী ভ্ৰমণকাৰী, লেখক আৰু প্ৰত্নতাত্ত্বিকে এই মন্দিৰৰ স্থাপত্য-ভাস্কৰ্যৰ বিৱৰণ তেওঁলোকৰ গ্ৰন্থত দি গৈছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে 'Deuri Chutia Gram-

mar' নামৰ দেউৰী ব্যাকৰণ প্ৰণেতা W.B.Brown-য়ে ১৮৩৭ চনত এই অঞ্চললৈ আহিছিল আৰু তেওঁ Vetch চাহাবৰ সূত্ৰ ধৰি এই মন্দিৰৰ বিৱৰণ এনেদৰে দিছে— 'It is described as a small stone building nearly square built with cement, the stone being joined by iron pins not clamped. The roof was copper, but it has fallen in and now lies there. The interior is 8' square. The whole is enclosed within a brick wall 130 feet long by 200 feet. Near the grand entrance in the western wall is a small stone tripod'.

১৯০৫ চনত T. Bloch এ এই মন্দিৰ চাবলৈ যাওঁতে মন্দিৰৰ এখন বেৰৰ এটা অংশ থিয় হৈ থকাৰ বাহিৰে মন্দিৰৰ সকলোবোৰ অংশ শিলাখণ্ডত পৰিণত হোৱা দেখিবলৈ পাইছিল। তেওঁ ইয়াত সূৰ্য, শিৱৰ ওপৰত উঠি নাচি থকা কালী আৰু অস্পষ্টভাৱে অনুমানিত সৰস্বতীৰ তিনিটা মূৰ্তি উদ্ধাৰ কৰিছিল। ব্লকৰ মতে এই মন্দিৰৰ ১৬ চটা ইটাত খুদিত চিত্ৰবোৰ এনেধৰণৰ^{১৫} —(১) নৃত্য কৰি থকা দাড়িয়ুক্ত পুৰুষৰ চিত্ৰ, সোহাতত দণ্ড আৰু বাওঁহাতত অজ্ঞাত পদাৰ্থ, (২) দ্ৰুতগতিৰ পুৰুষ, মূৰত টুপী, সোঁহাতত যাঠি আৰু পশ্চিম ফালে কঁকালত তৰোৱাল, (৩) দুজনী নৰ্তকী, (৪) দুটি ময়ূৰ, (৫) বাঘ বা আনুমানিক সিংহ, (৬) গাদী আৰু লেকামযুক্ত ঘোঁৰা, (৭) বৃত্তাকাৰ চিহ্ন, (৮) গছ আৰু পাত, (৯) দুটি বৰ্গ ক্ষেত্ৰ, (১০) চাৰিটি ফুল, (১১) পদুমফুলৰ আকৃতিৰ অলঙ্কাৰ, (১২) চিলনীয়ে হৰি নিয়া চৰাই, (১৩) নৃত্যৰত ব্যক্তি, (১৪) এবিধ চৰাই, (১৫) জোঙা কিৰীটিযুক্ত চৰাই বিশেষ আৰু (১৬) পদুমফুলৰ আকৃতিৰ অলঙ্কাৰ।

দীনেশচন্দ্ৰ সৰকাৰে তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰক আৱৰি থকা প্ৰাচীৰৰ গাত লাগি থকা অৱস্থাত পোৱা এখন শিলালিপিৰ পাঠোদ্ধাৰ কৰিছিল। এই শিলালিপিখিন ১৩৬৪ শকত বৃহধ্বজ ৰজাৰ পুত্ৰ ৰজা ধৰ্মনাৰায়ণে দান কৰিছিল। মহেশ্বৰ নেওগে এই ধৰ্মনাৰায়ণ ৰজাই ১৩৬৪ শকত তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী দেৱীৰ মন্দিৰৰ এই প্ৰাচীৰ নিৰ্মাণ কৰাইছিল বুলি মত প্ৰকাশ কৰে।

এসময়ৰ নৰবলি প্ৰথাৰ বাবে জনাজাত এই মন্দিৰ ধ্বংসপ্ৰাপ্তিৰ পিছত শদিয়াৰ পুৰণি লক্ষীমপুৰীয়া গাঁৱত কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী শাল নতুনকৈ স্থাপন কৰা হয়। আকৌ, ৩৭ নং ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় ঘাইপথ তিনিচুকীয়াৰ যি অংশত শেষ হৈছে তাতো আন এখন কেঁচাইখাতী বা তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী শাল স্থাপন কৰা হয়। মহেশ্বৰ নেওগে 'পবিত্ৰ অসম' গ্ৰন্থত কেঁচাইখাতী বা

তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰৰ প্ৰসঙ্গত কৈছে : ‘সদিয়াৰ পৰা ওঠৰ মাইল উত্তৰ-পূবে ঢলা নদীৰ পাৰত তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰ অৱস্থিত। দেউৰীসকলে অতীজৰ পৰা এই মন্দিৰত পূজা কৰি আহিছে।’

৩৭ নং ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় ঘাইপথৰ শেষ অংশৰ বাওঁদিশত থকা কেঁচাইখাতী বা তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰটোৰ কথায়ে ইয়াত তেওঁ উল্লেখ কৰিছে। ইতিমধ্যে উল্লেখ কৰা হৈছে যে শদিয়াৰ পুৰণি লখিমপুৰীয়া গাঁৱত কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰটো নতুনকৈ স্থাপন কৰা হয় আৰু শদিয়াৰ কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানীশাল বুলিলে এই মন্দিৰটোকহে বুজোৱা হয়। ইয়াত পুৰণি মন্দিৰৰ বলিকটা দা তথা আন কিছুমান স্থাৱৰ সম্পত্তি আছে বুলি জনা যায়।

কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী শালত পূৰ্ব প্ৰচলিত নৰবলি প্ৰথা :

দশম-একাদশ শতিকামানত ৰচিত ‘কালিকাপুৰাণ’ আৰু ইয়াৰ পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ৰ ৰচনা ‘যোগিনীতন্ত্ৰ’ত দেৱী পূজাত অন্য জীৱ-জন্তুৰ তুলনাত নৰবলি পূজাকে শ্ৰেষ্ঠ বুলি কৰা ঘোষণাৰে নৰবলি প্ৰথাক দিয়া স্বীকৃতিৰ পাছতেই কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰ নৰবলিৰ বাবে বেছি বিশ্বাসযোগ্য আৰু জনপ্ৰিয় হৈ পৰিছিল। কালিকাপুৰাণৰ মতে কেঁচাইখাতী দেৱীৰ পূজাত আগবঢ়াবলগীয়া দেৱীৰ আটাইতকৈ প্ৰিয় বস্তু হ’ল পানীয়ৰ ভিতৰত মদিৰা আৰু বলিৰ ভিতৰত নৰবলি — ‘পানোমু মদিৰা শস্তা নৰো বলিষু পাৰ্থিব’। (কালিকা পুৰাণম্, অশীতিতমোহধ্যায়ে : পৃষ্ঠা ৮২২, ৮২৩)

কিন্তু চুতীয়া ৰাজ্য আৰু তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰ আহোম ৰজাৰ অধীনলৈ অহাৰ আগৰ কালছোৱাৰ এই মন্দিৰৰ ইতিহাস, পূজা-সেৱা আৰু নৰবলি প্ৰথা সম্পৰ্কে জানিব পৰা নাযায়। অৱশ্যে আহোমসকলৰ ৰাজত্বকালত ইয়াত কেনেদৰে নৰবলিদান কাৰ্য সম্পাদনা হৈছিল সেই কথা বুৰঞ্জীৰ পাতত পোৱা যায়। আহোম ৰজাই চুতীয়া ৰাজ্য দখল কৰাৰ পাছতো এই মন্দিৰত নৰবলি চলাই যাবলৈ অনুমতি দিয়ে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে সূৰ্য্যকুমাৰ ভূঞা সম্পাদিত তুংখুঙ্গীয়া বুৰঞ্জীত এই মন্দিৰৰ বৰদেওধায়ে গোসানীৰ আগত নৰবলি নিদিলে ৰাজ্যৰ দুখ নুগুচে বুলি ৰজাক সোঁৱৰাই দিয়াৰ কথা পোৱা যায়। আহোম ৰজাই বিশেষকৈ মৃত্যুদণ্ডেৰে দণ্ডিত ব্যক্তিকহে বলিৰ বাবে ব্যৱস্থা কৰিছিল। বছৰেকত এবাৰকৈ হোৱা এই নৰবলি ৰাজ আদেশত শদিয়াখোৱা গোহায়ে সম্পাদনা কৰিছিল।

সাধাৰণতে মৃত্যুদণ্ডেৰে দণ্ডিত ব্যক্তিকহে গোসানীৰ আগত বলি দিয়া হৈছিল; কিন্তু যিবছৰ তেনে অপৰাধী পোৱা নাযায় সেইবছৰ চুতীয়াসকলৰ বৰুৱালী বা যাড়ৰ খেলৰ পৰা একোটা মানুহৰ বলি দিবলৈ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হৈছিল। এই খেলৰ

পূৰ্ণ যৌৱনপ্ৰাপ্ত ডেকা, ৰুগীয়া, জাৰজ, পয়াঁলগা, সাপে কামোৰা, কুকুৰ-শিয়াল আদিয়ে কামোৰা, বসন্তৰ দাগ থকা, কাউৰী-শুণ্ণে বিষ্ঠা ত্যাগ কৰা, অঙ্গ ক্ষত থকা, কাণ বিন্ধোৱা, উচ্ছিষ্ট আৰু অখাদ্য ভোজন কৰা, চুলি কটোৱা ডেকা বলিৰ বাবে বাছনি কৰা নহৈছিল। সাধাৰণতে কমবয়সীয়া সৰ্বাঙ্গসুন্দৰ ডেকা একোজনহে বলিৰ বাবে নিৰ্বাচিত হৈছিল।

আনহাতে, গোসানীৰ আগত বছেৰেকীয়া নৰবলি আগবঢ়োৱা একোটা পৰিয়ালে নিষ্কৰ মাটি পোৱাৰ উপৰিও সকলো কৰ-কাটল, ৰজাঘৰীয়া গা খাটনিৰ পৰা বেহাই পাইছিল আৰু গুৰুতৰ অপৰাধ কৰিলেও পৰিয়ালৰ মানুহে কোনো দণ্ড নাপাইছিল। এনে পৰিয়ালৰ ডেকাই নিজা পছন্দৰ যুৱতীক বিয়া কৰাব পাৰিছিল। এওঁলোকৰ বিবাহৰ পিছত ল’ৰা জন্ম হ’লে ভৱিষ্যতলৈ বলিৰ বাবে যোগ্য কৰিবলৈ মা-হালধিৰে নুৰাই-ধুৱাই শুচি কৰি থোৱা হৈছিল।

‘A History of Assam’ গ্ৰন্থৰ প্ৰণেতা এডৱাৰ্ড গেইট চাহাবে কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰৰ নৰবলি দান সম্পৰ্কে বিস্তৃত বিৱৰণ এনেদৰে দিছে— ‘বলিদানৰ বাবে কিছুদিন আগৰে পৰা বলি দিবলৈ ঠিক হোৱা মানুহজনক ধৰি আনি মন্দিৰৰ ভিতৰত বন্দী কৰি ৰখা হয়। মানুহজনক ইয়াত খুব ভালকৈ খুৱাই-বুৱাই শকত-আৱত কৰি লোৱা হয়; তেনে কৰিলে বলিজন গোসানীৰ বাবে সোৱাদ লগা হয় বুলি বিশ্বাস কৰা হৈছিল। বলিৰ দিনা বলিক প্ৰথমতে ধুনীয়া সাজ-পোছাক আৰু সোণ-ৰূপৰ অলংকাৰ আদি পিন্ধাই সেইদিনা তাত গোটখোৱা ৰাইজক দেখুওৱা হয়; তাৰ পিছত বলিজনক এটা গোপন পথেৰে এটি অন্ধকাৰ আৰু গভীৰ কুণ্ডৰ পাৰলৈ লৈ যোৱা হয়। এই পথটোৰে কেৱল পূজাৰীসকলেহে অহা যোৱা কৰিব পাৰিছিল। কুণ্ডটোৰ ওচৰলৈ বলিজনক লৈ গৈ বলিৰ গাৰ পৰা সকলোবোৰ মূল্যবান অলংকাৰ আৰু মূল্যবান কাপোৰকানি খুলি বলিদান কাৰ্য সমাধা কৰিছিল। তাৰ পাছত শৰীৰটো কুণ্ডত পৰেগৈ আৰু মূৰটো গোসানীৰ ওচৰত দম হৈ থকা বাকীবোৰ লাওখোলাৰ লগত থোৱা হয়।’

বলিৰ বাবে অনা ডেকাজনক জহা চাউল, মগুমাছ, ঘিউ আদি খাদ্য দিয়া হৈছিল আৰু পূজাৰ দিনা মাহ-হালধি ঘাঁহি গা ধুৱাই শুচি কৰি লোৱা হৈছিল। বলিদানৰ মুহূৰ্তত বৰটোপ আৰু হিলৈৰ শব্দও কৰা হৈছিল।

মুঠৰ ওপৰত কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰৰ নৰবলি প্ৰথা ৰাজস্বীকৃত এক আড়ম্বৰপূৰ্ণ প্ৰথাত পৰিণত হৈছিল।

উল্লেখযোগ্য যে নৰ বলিদান কাৰ্য বৰদেউৰীয়েহে

সম্পাদন কৰিছিল। নৰবলি সম্পাদন কৰা বৰদেউৰীৰ এই ফৈদটোক বুশাৰু বা বলিমৰা বুলি কোৱা হয়। চুতীয়াসকলৰ মাজত দেউৰীসকলে প্ৰাচীন কালৰে পৰা শদিয়াৰ চাৰিখন শালৰ পুৰোহিত হিচাপে স্বীকৃতি তথা গুৰুত্ব পাই আহিছে যি পৰম্পৰা অদ্যপি প্ৰচলিত।

বৰ্তমানৰ কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী শাল আৰু ইয়াৰ পূজা ব্যৱস্থা :

শদিয়াৰ নৰবলি দিয়া প্ৰাচীন কেঁচাইখাতী বা তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী গোসানীৰ মন্দিৰটো কালৰ গৰ্ভত লয় পালেও শদিয়াৰ লোকসকলে এই মন্দিৰটো ন-শদিয়াৰ পুৰণি লক্ষীমপুৰীয়া গাঁৱত কুণ্ডিল নৈৰ দাঁতিত নিৰ্মাণ কৰি গোসানীলৈ পূজা-সেৱা আগবঢ়াই আহিছে। পুৰণি লক্ষীমপুৰীয়া গাঁৱত অৱস্থিত তাম্ৰেশ্বৰী মন্দিৰটো এতিয়াও যথেষ্ট হাবিতলীয়া ঠাইত অৱস্থিত। ইয়াৰ কাষৰে বৈ যোৱা কুণ্ডিল নৈৰ বানপানী আৰু গৰাখহনীয়াই ইয়াৰ কাষৰীয়া অঞ্চলৰ ৰূপ সলনি কৰি দিলেও মন্দিৰৰ কাষৰ ভূমিত কোনো ক্ষতিসাধন হোৱা নাই।

এই শালত বছৰ তিনিটা বিহুত (প্ৰতিবছৰে ব'হাগৰ প্ৰথম বুধবাৰৰ পাছত আৰু কাতি আৰু মাঘৰ সংক্ৰান্তিত) তিনিবাৰ হাঁহ, পাৰ, ছাগলীৰ বলিৰে পূজা দিয়া হয় আৰু প্ৰতি তিনিবছৰৰ মূৰে মূৰে এবাৰকৈ ম'হবলিৰে পূজা দিয়া হয়। উল্লেখযোগ্য যে কেঁচাইখাতী শালৰ লগতে শদিয়াৰ বুঢ়া-বুঢ়ী শাল, বলিয়াবাবাৰ শাল আৰু পাটৰ শালতো তিনিবছৰৰ মূৰে মূৰে আহাৰ মাহত দুই এদিন অগাপিছাকৈ ম'হ বলিৰে বৰবলি পূজা সম্পন্ন কৰা হয়। এই প্ৰতিখন শালতে শালৰ কাষৰীয়া নিৰ্দিষ্ট কেইখনমান গাঁৱৰ পৰা ৰাজহুৱা ভাৱে বলি বা ভেটি আগবঢ়োৱাৰ নিয়ম প্ৰচলিত হৈ আহিছে। অৱশ্যে ব্যক্তিগত মনোবাঞ্ছা পূৰণৰ বাবে আন ঠাইৰ ব্যক্তি বিশেষেও ম'হ-ছাগলী, হাঁহ-পাৰ আদি ইয়াত বলি দিব পাৰে। কেঁচাইখাতী শালকে ধৰি আটাইকেইখন শালত পূজা আগবঢ়োৱাৰ আগতে গোসানী সমাগমৰ স্থান হিচাপে বিশ্বাস কৰি অহা পাটৰ শালত পূজাৰ 'জাননী (বতৰা) পূজা' এভাগ দিয়া হয়। ইয়াৰ পিছতহে সকলো শালত বলিপূজা সমাপন কৰা হয়। তদুপৰি প্ৰতিখন শালত বলিপূজা দিয়াৰ আগদিনাও শালত পূজা কৰিবলগীয়া কথাটোৰ জাননীৰে পূজা এভাগেৰে গোসাই বা গোসানীক পূজা গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ আহ্বান জনোৱা হয়।

কেঁচাইখাতী শাললৈ বহাগগাঁও, পদুমফুলা, হলৌগাঁও, তেলীকলা, আঠমাইল, তিনিমাইল, পাঁচমাইল, পুৰণি লক্ষীমপুৰীয়া— এই আঠখন গাঁৱৰ পৰা ৰাজহুৱা ভাৱে বলি বা ভেটি আগবঢ়োৱা হয়।

অইন শালসমূহৰ দৰেই কেঁচাইখাতী শালতো এটা ছাগলী, এটা হাঁহ আৰু এযোৰ পাৰ লৈ পূজা এভাগ কৰি বলিপূজাৰ আগদিনা গোসানীক পূজা গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ আহ্বান জনোৱা হয়। কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰৰ পূজাৰ দিনা শালৰ পূজাৰী দেউৰীজন তথা অন্যান্য বলিৰ মূৰধৰা বা আগধৰা আৰু বলিৰ পিছধৰা লোককেইজনৰ লগতে বলি কাৰ্য্যত সহায়কাৰী সকলো লোক শালত উপস্থিত হয়। কেঁচাইখাতী শালৰ তিনিবছৰৰ মূৰত পতা বৰবলি পূজাত পূৰ্বোল্লিখিত আঠখন গাওঁৰপৰা আলোচনা মৰ্মে পালপাতি ৮ টা ম'হ, ৮ টা ছাগলী, ৮ টা হাঁহ, ৮ যোৰ পাৰ আৰু ৮ টা পানী কোমোৰা দেশ তথা ৰাইজৰ মঙ্গলার্থে গোসানীৰ আগত বলি দিবলৈ আগবঢ়োৱা হয়। ৰাজহুৱা বলিপূজাৰ পাছতে ব্যক্তিগতভাৱে আগবঢ়োৱা ম'হ, হাঁহ-পাৰ, ছাগলী আদিৰ বলি দিয়া হয়।

বলিৰ দিনা আগতে দেউৰী পুৰোহিত জনে টংলতিৰ পাতেৰে মন্ত্ৰপূত পানী বলিকটা দা আৰু বলিৰ গাত ছটিয়াই 'শুদ্ধ' কৰি লৈহে বলিদান কাৰ্য সম্পন্ন কৰে। উল্লেখযোগ্য যে এই টংলতিপাত শদিয়াৰ প্ৰায় সকলোবোৰ পূজা-সেৱাতে অপৰিহাৰ্য্য আৰু এই পাতকে 'শতফুল' বুলি শদিয়াৰ বেছিভাগ লোকে বিশ্বাস কৰে।

এনেদৰে শুদ্ধিকৰণৰ পাছতে বলি দিবলৈ অনা ম'হৰ গাত এখন বগা কাপোৰ পাৰি দিয়া হয়। অৱশ্যে অন্য জীৱ-জন্তুৰ গাত এনে বগা কাপোৰ পাৰি দিয়া নহয়। ম'হ বলিৰ সময়ত প্ৰায় চাৰি-পাঁচজন মানুহে বান্ধি থোৱা ম'হটো বলি দিয়া নিৰ্দিষ্ট ঠাইলৈ নি বহুৱাই দিয়াৰ চেষ্টা কৰে আৰু তেনে সময়তে বন্দুক, হিলৈ আদি ফুটোৱা হয়। তাৰ পাছতে মন্দিৰৰ পূজাৰীয়ে পূজাৰ সাজ পৰিধান কৰি বলিকটা দাৰে এঘাপ বা দুই-তিনি ঘাপত বলিৰ ডিঙিটো ছিন্ন কৰে। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত একেঘাপত ছিন্ন কৰাটো এক শুভ লক্ষণ বুলি বিবেচনা কৰা হয়।

বলিদান কাৰ্য সমাপনৰ পাছত বলিৰ মূৰ ধৰোঁতাজনে বলিৰ মূৰটো মন্দিৰৰ ভিতৰলৈ নি মাটিৰ মলা চৰুত ডিঙিৰ পৰা নিগৰি অহা তেজ গোসানীলৈ উছৰ্গা কৰে আৰু তাৰ পাছত মূৰটো মন্দিৰৰ এচকুত ৰাখি থয়। বলিৰ গাছোৱাও নিৰ্দিষ্ট ঠাইত ৰাখি থোৱা হয়। এনেদৰেই সকলো বলিৰ তেজ মাটিৰ চৰুত ঢালি গোসানীলৈ আগবঢ়োৱা হয়। হাঁহ-পাৰ আদি অধিক হ'লে দুটা হাঁহ বা এযোৰ পাৰৰ মূৰ একে ঘাপতে ছিন্ন কৰা দৃশ্যও পৰিলক্ষিত হয়।

কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানীলৈ আগবঢ়াবলগীয়া সকলো

বলি উচৰ্গাৰ অন্তত কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী আৰু ককায়েক বলিয়াবাবাৰ জাৰজ সন্তান হিচাপে বিশ্বাস কৰা চামন দেৱতাৰ (কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানীৰ মন্দিৰৰ অলপ আঁতৰত থকা হাবিতলীয়া ঠাইৰ সৰু মন্দিৰত) উদ্দেশ্যে এটা ছাগলী, এটা হাঁহ আৰু এযোৰ পাৰ বলি দিয়া হয়।

চামন দেৱতাৰ পূজাৰ অন্তত পূজাৰীয়ে এই পূজাত পৰিধান কৰা সাজ সলাই গা ধুই শান্তিপানী খাই শুদ্ধ হৈ লৈহে কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰত পুনৰ প্ৰৱেশ কৰে। চামন দেৱতা কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানীৰ জাৰজ পুত্ৰ বুলি বিবেচিত হোৱা বাবেই এই মন্দিৰৰ পৰা ঘূৰি অহা পূজাৰীয়ে 'অশুদ্ধ' অৱস্থাত কেঁচাইখাতী মন্দিৰত প্ৰৱেশ কৰিব নোৱাৰে।

বলিপূজা সমাপ্তিৰ পাছত বলিৰ মাংসৰ একোটা অংশ উপস্থিত ৰাইজৰ প্ৰীতিভোজত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। বলি আগবঢ়োৱা প্ৰতিখন গাওঁ আৰু বলি আগবঢ়োৱা ব্যক্তিৰ পৰিয়াললৈয়ো বলিৰ মাংস একোভাগ আগবঢ়োৱাটো নিয়ম।

কেঁচাইখাতী বা তাম্বেশ্বৰী শালৰ পূজা-সেৱাৰ দিনকেইটাৰ বাহিৰে আন সময়ত কোনো মানুহ শাললৈ নাযায় বুলি ক'ব পাৰি যাৰ বাবে সেই সময়ত হাবি-জংঘলেৰে শালৰ চাৰিওকাষ ভৰি থাকে। পূজাৰ সময়তহে এই হাবি পৰিষ্কাৰ কৰা হয়। বৰ্তমানৰ আঠকোণীয়া মূল মন্দিৰটোৰ সমুখত নামঘৰৰ আকৃতিৰ বেৰ নথকা এটা মুকলি ঘৰ সংলগ্ন হৈ আছে আৰু ইয়াতে বলিদান কাৰ্য্য সমাপন কৰি মূল মন্দিৰৰ বেদীৰ সমুখৰ মলা চৰুত গোসানীলৈ বলিৰ তেজ উচৰ্গা কৰা হয়।

কেঁচাইখাতী শালৰ বলিৰ দিনা কোনো কোনো ব্যক্তিৰ গাত দেও লগুতা দেখা যায় যি গোসানীৰ হৈ দেশ-প্ৰজাৰ ভূত ভৱিষ্যতৰ কথা হয়। সেই সময়ত দেওধনী উঠা নাৰী গৰাকীয়ে মূল মন্দিৰৰ ভিতৰত প্ৰৱেশ কৰি বলিৰ কেঁচা তেজ পান কৰাটো লক্ষ্যণীয়। গোসানী সন্তুষ্ট হ'লে সেই নাৰীৰ দেহৰ পৰা আঁতৰি যায়। গোসানী যোৱা সময়ত নাৰী গৰাকী কিছুপৰ অজ্ঞান হৈ পৰাৰ পিছতহে চেতন আহে। এনেদৰে দেওঁ লগুতা আন আন

শালৰ পূজাৰ সময়তো দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়।

সামৰণি :

এসময়ত নৰবলি নামৰ ভীষণ প্ৰথাৰ বাবে সকলোৰ মাজত জনাজাত হোৱা কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানীৰ পুৰণি মন্দিৰটো থকা ঠাই ডোখৰ এতিয়া নিৰ্দিষ্টকৈ দেখুৱাই দিবলৈ টান। নতুনকৈ স্থাপন কৰা পুৰণি লক্ষীমপুৰীয়া গাঁৱৰ কেঁচাইখাতী গোসানী শালতে এনেদৰে দেউৰী-জনজাতিৰ লোকে বলিপূজাৰ পৌৰোহিত্য কৰি তথা ম'হ, ছাগলী, হাঁহ-পাৰ আদিৰে বছৰি তিনিটা বিহুত তিনিবাৰ আৰু তিনিবছৰৰ মূৰত এবাৰ বৰবলিৰে গোসানীলৈ পূজা আগবঢ়াই পূৰ্ব পৰম্পৰা অক্ষুণ্ণ ৰাখিছে। লগতে, অসম ভূমিৰ লোকসকলৰ মাজত তন্ত্ৰ সাধনাৰ ঐতিহ্য তথা পৰম্পৰা এই তাম্বেশ্বৰী গোসানীৰ শালেও প্ৰমাণ কৰি আহিছে।

পাদটীকা :

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Carnivalisation in Marquez's Short-story : A Study of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

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Abstract:

Carnivalisation is the concept expounded by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe the shaping effect of carnival on literary genres. Carnival is an important part of folk culture significant during Middle ages and Renaissance; a popular counter-culture as it was opposed to the official tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal structure. Gabriel Garcia Marquez's, a Latin American writer, use of magic realism brings his short-story closer to the concept of carnival. Although Bakhtin doesn't make any overt connection between carnival and magic realism but links can be established. Therefore this paper tries to analyze how the various features of carnival figure in Marquez's magic-realist story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings". It tries to study how a medieval popular counter-culture gains relevance even in modern short-story writing. It is also a study of human nature: the reaction of human beings to something new and unknown. It thus peeps into the mechanistic world and recognizes its complexities with a carnival spirit.

Keywords: *Carnivalisation, magic realism, fragmented, hierarchy, play and temporal suspension.*

Unlike writers of mainstream United States, Latin American writers from the Caribbean accept Afro-American culture as a vital part of their cultural identity. As such we find use of Afro-American myth and history in Marquez's writings. In "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" also, as Kutzinski points out, Marquez uses the Afro-American myth of 'flying'

(135). The logic of wings grew out of this myth and the doctor in the story gets struck by it. As such the supernatural element became day-to-day matter for Caribbeans. Talking of the features of Marquez's short-stories, Ruben Pelayo says that the plots are usually ambiguous, settings are far removed places to constitute an isolated world, omniscient narrator and; narrative structure having at least two forces in opposite. This also reminds of Marquez's use of magic realism to describe unique Latin American narratives that mix magic and myth with reality. It demonstrates Marquez's ability to tell a fairy tale or folk tale in a realistic manner while incorporating the magic of the angel. Magic realism blurs the line between contrasting elements like the serious and the trivial etc. such elements are also part of Bakhtin's idea of the 'carnival' which also brings together opposite elements. Although Bakhtin didn't relate carnival with magic realism but resonance can be felt. Therefore the argument of my paper is to show how the various features of carnival figure in Marquez's magic-realist story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings".

The idea of carnival was expounded by Bakhtin in his book *Rabelais and His World* where he locates the various features of the carnivalesque in Rabelais' novels. And the term he uses to describe the shaping effect of carnival on literary genres is 'carnivalisation'. Carnival is an important part of folk culture significant during Middle Ages and Renaissance. It later developed into a popular counter-culture as it was opposed to the official tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal structure. The festivities associated with carnival are collective and popular. Some of its features include-

hierarchies are turned on their heads; sacred is made profane; identity is made complex and so on. However, an important aspect is that it is a temporary suspension of hierarchical rank which means that it lasts for a limited time only, after which the old social order is restored. That is why contemporary literary and cultural theorists use carnival to explain texts where the world is 'temporarily turned upside down'. Thus this paper shows how a medieval popular counter-culture gains relevance even in modern short-story writing.

During carnival, opposites are mingled and in Marquez's story there is mingling of fact with fantasy. It lends a different dimension to depiction of everyday life:

"It belongs to the borderline between art and life. In reality, it is life itself but shaped according to a certain pattern of play" (Bakhtin : 7)

This sense of play is infused in the figure of the old man who is neither a man nor an angel but has the quality of both. As such the gap between real and ideal is also blurred and the people experience both. This necessitates the temporal condition of carnival as it results in turning the world upside down.

Therefore, we observe hierarchies, otherwise found in official feasts, being broken in carnival time. The hierarchical relation between angel, Church (or priest) and man are hardly to be seen here. The so called angel is stripped off his dignity and presented in a cage like a circus animal. The people who came to see the angel have no sense of reverence for him, rather they mock at him. It is a topsy-turvy world, that is why it's possible for an angel to be old, unattractive, sick and yet have wings and fly. Again, the Church which was the dominant form of power during medieval period and even when Marquez wrote this story, plays a role less than the spiritual one. As an institution it appears to be a bureaucratic rather than a religious one. Father Gonzaga's knowledge seems to be as limited as a woodcutter's (his early profession). As argued by Ruben Pelayo in his book *Gabriel Garcia Marquez: A Critical Companion*, Marquez's fiction presents clergies who are not men equipped with theological training or answering a vocation but men

simply doing their job. Infact, the chain of authorities on whom Father Gonzaga relies for the final verdict proves to be inefficient. They are too casual with no sense of urgency and later even people become disinterested in the verdict. This is an important aspect of carnival where everything authoritative, rigid or serious is subverted and mocked and it's due to the carnival spirit:

"The influence of the carnival spirit was irresistible: it made a man renounce his official state as monk, cleric, scholar and perceive the world in its laughing aspect." (Bakhtin : 13)

Although, carnival celebrates equality and freedom, it is also temporary. The word Bakhtin uses is "temporal suspension" (10). This temporal sense is evident in the text where the coming of the old man and his being caged in Pelayo's house marks the beginning of the carnival time. But the intervention of an actual carnival, of the travelling show of a spider woman, shifts the focus off the old man and the carnival spirit eventually ends in that place (though it continues elsewhere) with the old man being left alone with Elisenda and Pelayo. During carnival the old man gains attention (though exploited) and Elisenda and Pelayo gain money but when it ends they are left to do their mundane everyday activity. It suggests that carnival offers a second life or alternative to do things that they couldn't do in their day-to-day life. It marks a break from the monotonous everyday life. And Marquez, as a post-modern writer, may suggest that in an individualistic and busy modern life such breaks are necessary for people to come together and live a carefree life for some time.

This coming together of people brings in the social aspect of carnival where people socialize without any hierarchies; they join together regardless of their social roles. And in this story also we see various people coming from far away and experiencing the atmosphere without discrimination. For instance, the invalids, pilgrims or the carnival troop with flying acrobats who come there. As such they behave both as actors and spectators. As Bakhtin says:

"Carnival is not a spectacle seen by

people; they live in it and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all people.”

(Bakhtin : 7)

This is a marketplace experience which created a new marketplace speech and gesture which is free and frank according to Bakhtin. During carnival everyone spoke in this new language and behaved as equals. In this story “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” we see everyone as equal except for the old man who is not treated as an equal. One of the possible reasons can be his inability to talk in the language that the community spoke at that time. On the other hand, the spider-woman could speak in their language which brought her on equal terms with the people. So inspite of having more human appearance than the spider-woman, the old man is rejected for his inability to speak in the carnival speech. This is perhaps what Holquist means by ‘othering’ when he says:

“Carnival is a means for displaying otherness: carnival makes familiar relation strange.”

(Dialogism 89)

This otherness brings into focus the question of identity and in carnival the individual identity is made problematic. As such the old man suffers from identity crisis for different people give him different identities but none succeeds in knowing the calamity that brought him to that place. While the neighbour woman (who knew everything about life and death) declared him to be an angel, the doctor found him completely human and, Elisenda and Pelayo had declared him as a lonely castaway. Even the people who come to see him give him different identities:

“The simplest among them thought that he should be named Mayor of the world...Some visionaries hoped that he could be put to stud in order to implant on earth a race of winged wise men who could take charge of the universe.”

(Marquez 188)

Everyone gives his/her own view but no one tries to understand the man or see his human side and have pity on him. In fact they abuse him and ‘abuse’ is also a part of carnival when people speak in abusive terms

with intimacy. Perhaps that is why the old man doesn’t react to the abuses he faces and remains indifferent to the visitors. However, he does react out of pain when the visitors try to burn his side with iron for branding steers. But this reaction is obvious because abuse shouldn’t be to such extent.

Such behaviour on the part of the visitors suggests the ‘eccentricity’ that comes out during carnival:

“The eccentricity legitimized by carnival permits the latent sides of human nature to reveal and express themselves.”

(Hawthorn 37)

Some other eccentricities are represented by the neighbour woman, the woman counting her heartbeat since childhood and a Portuguese man who couldn’t sleep because the noise of stars disturbed him. Such eccentricity invokes laughter which is again another important element in carnival. However, this laughter is ambivalent because it is ‘gay’ on one hand and ‘mocking’ on the other. For instance, the consolation miracles that were attributed to the old man were considered to be ‘mocking fun’.

Along with laughter, Bakhtin also talked of the ‘grotesque body’ as a crucial part of carnival. As pointed out by Holquist:

“That vision, what he calls the ‘grotesque body’, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed: it is continually built, created and builds and creates another body.”

(Dialogism 89)

The body of the spider-woman is highly suggestive of such a body because it’s neither the complete body of a spider nor that of a human. The story says that the spider-woman was initially a girl who was turned into a spider due to her disobedience to her parents. This can mean that she is in the ‘act of becoming’ a complete spider and by the time she had come to the village she had not transformed completely. And grotesque body demands incompleteness as it is always in the process of becoming. This grotesque body is, therefore, not a ‘whole’ and modern life is also not a ‘whole’. Modern

life is fragmented, there is no absolute view of reality and post-modern writers celebrate this element of modern life. So metaphorically, the grotesque body can also act as a representation of that life.

As mentioned in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, Bakhtin emphasizes that carnival breaks the idea of a text as an organic unity and promotes the idea that major literary works may be multi-leveled. Similarly, in a post-modern text the story is open-ended and multi-layered. This story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" remains open-ended because even till the end the true identity of the old man remains a mystery as he flies off. It is also multi-leveled because it's not only about the religious issue, identity, community festival, money making or human nature but all at the same time.

To conclude, characteristics attributed to 'carnival' by Bakhtin figures out in the post-modern short story of Marquez "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings". While Bakhtin recognized it as a Medieval and Renaissance folk culture, for Marquez it can be a device to make social critique and study human nature. Thus it won't be wrong to say that medieval consciousness can also gain relevance in contemporary time but with some new meanings attached to the older notion.

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Exploring the Existential Outsider in Albert Camus' *The Outsider*

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Abstract:

The Outsider, first published in French as L'Etranger in 1942 by Albert Camus has been widely popular throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. On the surface it appears to be a sort of confessional novel, on another level, the novel asserts the philosophy of existentialism and a notion of absurd. Various interpretations have enriched the understanding of the novel in the context of the modern age. A postmodern interpretation is also explored in the novel. This paper questions the existentialist aspect of the protagonist who is marginalized as the outsider.

Key words: *Existentialism, Postmodernism, absurd, 'situation', transcendence, ambiguity, solipsism.*

Albert Camus' major work *The Outsider* emphasizes the theme of segregation and alienation inherent in much of his writing that brought him into prominence as a leading exponent of the dilemmas of the contemporary era. His views on the apparent meaninglessness of life contribute to the purpose of his work, to work out an acceptable set of standards in the absence of religious faith.

Later, Camus insistently dissociated himself from the existentialist school led by Jean Paul Sartre. His works reflect his attempts to grapple with intellectual and spiritual problems to which he found no permanent solutions, except in the assertion of human solidarity. His integrity, his feeling for human suffering, his condemnation of violence, his challenge to various forms of cruelty, tyranny of oppression – all these qualities give him a position of outstanding influence.

Although, Camus claimed that he was not an existentialist, yet, *The Outsider* can be seen to share existentialist concerns. Existentialism is a philosophy that questions, among other things, the meaning of life in a universe that appears to be indifferent to, or even hostile to humans. *The Outsider* has parallels with texts by Jean Paul Sartre and Simon de Beauvoir – the French existentialists, particularly in its preoccupation with the role that death has in existence.

The origins of existentialism can be traced far back into the history of philosophy in its rejection of essentialism or the notion that human beings have an inner nature or essence. However, French atheistic existentialism, as it is represented in Simon de Beauvoir's thought, is the result of a complex and partial synthesis of several philosophers' ideas, the first of these being Hegel. The modern existentialism originated in the nineteenth century as a reaction initiated by Kierkegaard, to the abstract rationalism of Hegel's philosophy.

The term is sometimes used narrowly in connection with the work of Jean Paul Sartre. It refers more generally to the works of several nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers, such as Søren Kierkegaard (1813- 1855), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Gabriel Marcel (1889- 1973), Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and Simon de Beauvoir (1908-1986). Most of these thinkers rejected the 'existentialist' label and preferred to describe their work as 'existential philosophy' or as 'a philosophy of existence.' If existentialism could be summarised in three words, they

might be 'freedom', 'responsibility' and 'authenticity'. Existentialists claim that human beings have no predetermined purpose or essence laid down by God or nature. They are responsible for creating their lives according to their own values – and not by following the 'herd' by reflecting clearly on their situation and relationships and by acting authentically.

'Situation' is a key concept in existentialist philosophy. It refers to how a human being as an individual consciousness is engaged in the world with regard to other people, to time, to space and to other products of his/her facticity. My 'situation' is not something outside or around me, but the glue which binds my freedom and my facticity together. Facticity refers to the necessary connection between consciousness and the world of inert matter and the past. Aspects of my facticity are aspects of my situation which I have not chosen – for example, the facts of my birth, my body, the existence of other people, my death – and that I cannot choose not to accept as part of my situation.

Another key concept in existential phenomenology is 'transcendence'. Man is a creature of distances; he is always somewhere else, always engaged in transcending the given state of affairs. One is always oriented towards things beyond themselves and compelled to transcend the given. Despite the best efforts of concentration, one can never be fully there in that moment because one's capacity to transcend the given is hard-wired into one's consciousness. Transcendence is simply a part of the human condition. One is thus an alien, or other, to oneself and perpetually engaged in transcending the given situation as one constructs oneself.

Self-sacrifice is a way of existing for 'other' and it is explored in the context of gender in Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. One has freedom, but this freedom can be exercised only in one relative capacity to act in a given context. Self-other relations constitute reciprocally the facticity of my situation or the given features of my existence in the world which I have not chosen. I did not choose these features of my existence and cannot choose to exist without them, although I can choose how to live them. We cannot alienate ourselves in the other or retreat being part of a collective identity to avoid the burden of individual

responsibility for our existence. Existentially, the other cannot be avoided! She/he represents a given feature of the individual's situation. Individual freedom is always enmeshed with another's freedom, so that the limit of my freedom is the beginning of another's freedom. Freedom is therefore a collective responsibility.

'Ambiguity' is another major concept of existential philosophy. It constitutes a fundamental characteristic of human existence. As, human existence is ambiguous because human beings are both free and unfree, separate and connected to each other, a subject for ourselves and an object for others, consciousness and body, alive yet born to die.

'Solipsism' is a philosophical doctrine that advocates that only oneself exists. It includes two positions, first that one is the only self or centre of consciousness and second that nothing at all exists apart from one's mind and mental states or at least cannot be known or held to be true.

'Existence precedes essence' – that the child does not contain the future adult. But, it is always on the basis of the past that an individual makes choices regarding future behaviour. Although, the 'original choice' – or synthesising thread of a range of life choices – made by an individual can be reversed or remade, it is not without significance because the world reflects back to us our earlier choices.

Meursault, the central figure of *The Outsider*, is characterised by his complete indifference to everything except immediate physical sensations. He receives the news of his mother's death merely with faint annoyance at having to ask for two days' leave of absence from office where he works. At her funeral he has no sadness or regret and feels only the physical inconveniences of matching over her body and following the hearse to the cemetery under the burning sun. The day after the funeral he goes swimming, meets a girl whom he knows vaguely, takes her to see a film and goes to bed with her that night. He shows no more affection or feeling for her than he had shown for his mother. When she asks him to marry her, he accepts with the calm remark that it is all the same to him. He becomes involved in a rather sordid affair with his next – door neighbour, in which he shows himself as indifferent to friendship and to the purely social

convention of truthfulness as he was to love. And, as a result of a series of accidents he finds himself one day with a revolver in his hand, facing an Arab who is threatening him with a knife. Almost unconscious, under the blind sun, of what he is doing, he shoots the Arab and then fires four more shots in to his inert body. 'And it was as if I had rapped sharply, four times, on the fatal door of destiny.' 1

Meursault is a disbeliever of the whole philosophy of existence when he is indifferent towards even the most important events in his life. He does not even show his conformity with the legal system when he is taken for trial. The institution of marriage does not hold any authenticity in the view of Meursault. The story of a man who murders 'because of the sun' has melted in to the fabric of the twentieth century. It is the permanent feature of our cultural landscape. Meursault's failure to feel has also inspired a song, The Cure's 'Killing an Arab.'

From the melting roads of the funeral procession to the apocalyptic beach scene, the relentless presence of the sun provides the novel's most vivid images. The figures of the sun and the sand, of too much heat for one man to stand, resonate uncomfortably with every reader. The darkest moments can happen in the brightest sunlight.

The absurd nature of the human condition arises from the incompatibility between, on the one hand, the incomprehensible circumstances of existence, the problem of suffering and the indifferent natural universe; and on the other, human beings' desire for a happy and coherent life. Meursault describes his life as 'absurd' (*The Outsider* 109).

In one way, it is absurd that Meursault is judged for his behaviour at his mother's funeral when, in fact, he committed a murder. In another way, Meursault's life is absurd, in the sense, in which everyone else's life is: we are all destined to die sooner or later. If there is no after life, if one does not believe in God – it would appear that life is potentially insignificant and meaningless. Meursault's life is absurd both in his specific case, and in the fact that death is part of the human condition.

Meursault's death sentence throws the absurd nature of human life in to relief: it focuses his thoughts on both his impending fate and on the life that he has

lived. But, there is tension resulting from the paradox that life seems meaningless since it is finite and is not followed by an afterlife, yet, at the same time it is infinitely precious because it is finite, unique and lived only once.

The novel shows us a man, Meursault, whose behaviour is a revolt against the absurd condition of life, even though for the most part of the novel he is not consciously aware of this absurd condition, nor that he is revolting against it. Meursault's apathy or indifference is his reaction against a society that expects people to behave in a certain way, to conform to behavioural norms. These expectations include feeling, and showing grief, falling in love and desiring marital commitment with one's sexual partner, and wanting to progress in a career, for example, the Paris promotion offered to Meursault. Meursault's rebellion is a passive one, yet it is still a rebellion.

In the novel, the themes of decrepitude and death exist alongside those of pleasure from physical sensation. Camus found it hard to reconcile these two elements of existence, as did existentialist who called death a 'scandal'. And, in a life that we enjoy and which provides pleasure, death comes as a scandalous event with which it is difficult to come to terms.

The incompatibility between the indifferent natural universe and human beings' desire for stable, coherent existence is the major aspect of Camus' concept of the absurd, which is strongly visible in the novel. For Camus, the incompatibilities noted above are producing a tension in people's lives. There are two possible types of response to this tension: authentic and inauthentic. In an authentic response to the absurdity of human condition, individuals must maintain the tension between their needs and aspirations and the world's refusal to satisfy them; that is, they remain aware of the incompatible. An inauthentic response involves deluding oneself about the true nature of the human condition and living in a state of unthinking automatic behaviour. This is described as alienation.

Meursault lives in a state of alienation throughout the story, only moving beyond it at the very end of the text when he becomes self-aware, in the last paragraph of the text (*The Outsider* 108-111), he is as alienated-as guilty-as those who live in their lives in automatic and unconscious accord with society's

dominant rules. Becoming self-aware means that Meursault recognises the irreconcilable aspects of his, and all human life-the world's 'tender indifference' (*The Outsider* 111) will not favour him in any particular way.

At the finale, Meursault comprehends the painful paradox of the human condition-that is, he sees that life is meaningful in it but serves no purpose beyond that – he is no longer alienated. He accepts his lot in life, and thereby comes to know more about life than other people. The ending of the novel is open to complex readings; but, one is that his perspective execution resonates with Christ's death (*The Outsider* 111). Meursault's realisation sets him apart and makes him an outsider. He has not resolved the problem or dissolved the tension, but, he understands and accepts it. He also realises that for a long time he has been unconsciously or subconsciously aware of the tensions of human life, and has been passively rejecting them through his indifference.

The twentieth century was an age of despair, uncertainty and fragmentation which caused man to feel estranged from the world around him and to lead a lonely existence. He became an outsider, who lived an uncommitted life, rejected his anterior connections, renounced all cultural norms and had an indifferent attitude towards other people. Man's outsidership was the result of his alienation, which is related to "an extraordinary variety of psycho-social disorders, including loss of self, anxiety states, anomie, despair, depersonalization, rootlessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism, and the loss of beliefs or values."²

The first factor that brought about the individual's alienation was industrialization. It was a process which altered the social structure of society. It paved the way for urbanization and a life in underdeveloped and unpleasant industrial slums. This transit separated man from nature. Industrial epoch imposed rigid controls over human life and forced him to lead a robot like existence. Loss of self-importance and the sense of powerlessness destroyed man's belief in his own humanity and aroused the feelings of resentment and anger.

The outburst against the established beliefs exemplifies Meursault's outsidership and his revolt.

Meursault emphasizes that he is superior to the priest because he knows himself to be the master of his day, but the priest is a living-dead as he does not have any control over what he believes in. According to Meursault the priest by surrendering to a higher being avoided the responsibility of choosing what kind of self he would become. He, on the other hand, knows that it is his own responsibility to guide his life and justifies himself. Meursault whole heartedly advocates his indifferent outlook on life and he continues to remain an outsider by believing in the inevitability of death, which obliterate all the significance of other things. His outbursts relieve him and express his relief. Meursault has come to terms with the absurdity of life and the nothingness of death and is ready to welcome both of them unquestioningly.

Meursault does not play the game in the sense that he refuses to lie. Lying is not only saying what is not true. It is also saying more than what is true; saying more than one feels. To make life simple, we do it every day. Meursault does not want to make life simpler. He is a unique creation, flat but very natural, beautiful but not sentimental or emotional or feelingful. He says what he is, he refuses to hide his feelings, and the society immediately feels threatened. For example, he is asked to say that he regrets his crime, in time-honoured fashion. He replies that he feels more annoyance about it than true regret. And, it is this nuance that condemns him. So, it can be said that Meursault is a poor and naked man, in love with a sun which leaves no shadows. Far from lacking all sensibility, he is driven out by a tenacious and therefore, profound passion, the passion for an absolute and for truth. This truth is as yet a negative one, a truth born of living and feeling, but without which no triumph over the self or over the world will ever be possible.

Meursault can be defined as uprooted since he does not have any close relations, friends and has loose ties with them. This uprootedness is self-imposed. He consciously and willingly chooses to break away from others and rejects any contact with them. Meursault rarely mingles with people. He does not have any close friends or confidants with whom he can share his thoughts. When he speaks with anybody it is generally for the sake of convenience. He spends most of his time as detached observer.

Besides, he is committed towards achieving any goal since for the absurd mind; life does not have any value or meaning. Therefore, concepts such as advancement, progression, and ambition seem to be trivial for him. Consequently, he is a free man who chooses to lead a life that is consistent with his own interests and desires. This uncommittedness makes the outsider easily guided by chance. He lives life as it comes. Thus, unlike the ordinary man, who believes in casual connections between events and whose actions are purposive; the outsider allows himself to be drawn in to a sequence of events.

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus describes three men – the actor, the seducer, and the conqueror – who by nature of their lives illustrates the passion to exhaust everything which is given – or, expressed in more vulgar terms, to get the most out of his life – he creates in Meursault a character remarkable for his apparent lack of passion. Yet, Meursault has his own morale which is equal to that of the most versatile actor or the most energetic conqueror. It was partly because

Meursault already existed as an autonomous character in his mind, and essentially because of a certain taste for irony and mystification, that Camus made his outsider not a conqueror, but a clerk in an office. He wished to show that the three types of men he described were not the only ones to which a philosophy of the absurd could give rise; Camus found that the absurdity of the world was, paradoxically, an invitation to happiness. Camus, through Meursault, confirmed his own instinctive rejection of any value that would deprive his life of its full tragic intensity. He did not seek after immortal life, but wanted to exhaust the fullness of the present. And, that is exactly what defines an existentialist and a postmodernist.

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A Study of Metatheatrical Elements in Girish Karnad's *Nagamandala* and Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

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Drama is a most significant instrument for understanding the conceptions of the nature of man in each age and each period of our civilization from the ancient Greeks to the present day. While drama is an experimental process, theatre is the enactment of that experience and incorporates the factors of abhinaya, nayaka and nayika. The elements- abhinaya, nayaka and nayika lead the play towards the audience through angika or action, vachika or speech, and acharya or the stage props.

The critical notion of metatheatre was suggested firstly by Lionel Abel in 1963. Since then, it has been used in two opposite ways. It is a concept which is applicable to all sorts of gaps in the hermeneutics of different texts. On the other hand, it is a perfect example of post-modern tendency to privilege the blurring of boundaries. There is no one single universal definition of metatheatre. Different critics and writers have given different versions regarding the concept of it. Abel defined metatheatrical plays as

“ theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalised....(whose characters) themselves knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them. These characters are aware of their own theatricality and the playwright has the oblivion to acknowledge in the very structure of his play that it was his imagination which controlled the event from the beginning to the end”¹.

For James Calderwood who is the author of *Shakespearean Metadrama*, metatheatre is a kind of anti form in which boundaries between the play as a

work of self contained art and life are dissolved. In his *Drama Metadrama and Perception*, Richard Hornby argues that metadrama provides the most direct way to illuminate the place of drama in the design of our lives. Rather than defining metadrama as a genre, Hornby identifies five metadramatic strategies that produce moments of estrangement from the dramatic fiction- the play within a play, the ceremony within the play, role playing within the role, literary and real-life reference within the play and theatrical self reference. According to Hornby, the play within the play explores “existential concerns”, the ceremony within the play addresses “social concerns” and role playing within the role is a “device for exploring the concerns of the individual”.

The dualism between art and life, fiction and reality, and so forth is established in a metatheatre. It challenges the binary assumptions of art versus life, fiction versus reality, actors versus characters. Metatheatre exploits their ambivalence and invites closer

¹Abel 1963 , pp.60-61.

engagement with them. In a metatheatre, the boundaries between the binary assumptions are shifted and negotiated in the open field of interaction between audience and spectacle. Metatheatrical effect is achieved with the complex exchange between audience and spectacle. The ancient dramas are not free from metatheatrical elements. In Old comedy, the references to the audience are expected as an integral part of the three dimensional performative experience. Moreover, choral self-referentiality is recurrent in the corpus of

tragedies. The play-in-the-play device was a favourite in European drama. For instance, 'the Murder of Gonzago' is staged by the prince in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1580) is organised around reduplications of events. Writers like Tony Kushner, Martin Crimp and Suzan-Lori Parks have made 'the play within the play' a key component of their dramaturgy. Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is considered to be the first modern metatheatre. Some of the crucial figures in the field of metatheatre are Pirandello, Beckett and Chekhov.

Frame narrative is an aspect of metadrama. Before going to discuss frame narratives, it is necessary to understand the concept of frames put forward by Goffman. According to Goffman, human experience is organised along a rather more complex combination of levels, including dreams, games and performances of various kinds. All these imply different levels of framing. He argues that a number of sub worlds are their within us. These sub worlds have their own special and separate style of existence. The theatrical performances are examples of sub worlds, with varying degrees. Frame narratives are one of the oldest literary techniques used by writers. They put an interesting spin on the traditional plot structure and serve to grab the spectator's attention by pulling them into the story. Karnad has used folkloric material as the backdrop for his dramatic analyses of contemporary life. The Prologue of *Nagamandala* introduces the audience with the Man, the Flames and the Story. The Man must keep awake the whole night to escape from death. The Flames from the village homes assemble in the temple and share stories. The Prologue provides the main frame of the theatrical performances. It provides the structure for the story. The second frame is placed inside the main frame. The main frame consists of a square. The four points of a square are-the Flames, the Story, the Man and the audience. The second frame consists of a triangle and the three points of a triangle refer to Rani, Naga and Appanna. Rani is a newly married wife of Appanna. She is neglected by her husband. Kurudavva, a blind woman feels pity for her and provides her with the roots of magical power to win her husband. But, the terrified Rani pours the love potion into an ant hill occupied by cobra. It visits her in the night in the shape of Appanna and makes

love to her. Rani fails to find out the true identity of Naga. When she becomes pregnant, Appanna gets furious. Naga knows that the village Elders would sit in the judgment and asks her to pass through the snake ordeal. As she passes the snake ordeal, she gains the status of goddess. Appanna falls at her feet and realizes his mistake. Naga fulfils the role of a husband by giving her a sense of security. Naga sacrifices his life for the sake of his love. There is another frame which can be placed inside the second frame. When Rani is alone in the house, she entertains herself by telling stories. She becomes a character in her stories. It shows how the narrative world helps us to survive. The third frame is a world of her dreams which is a contrast to reality. The main frame of Pirandello's play consists of the Six Characters and the actors of the acting company. They are the unfinished characters in search of an author to finish their story. The Six Characters are- Father, Mother, Stepdaughter, Son, the little boy and the little girl. The actors thought them to be lunatics. The Father says that they are bringing a terrible and grievous drama which has to be performed by the company actors. The small frames include the scenes acted out by the six characters. One such frame is the scene between the Stepdaughter and the Father in Madame Pace's shop.

There is reference to theatre building and the elements of staging in the two plays. The opening scene of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* gives us the impression of what happens during the rehearsals of a play. The actors in the acting company prepare themselves to rehearse the play *The Rules of the Game* by Luigi Pirandello. The producer comments on the plays of Pirandello. His plays are meant to annoy people. He argues that Pirandello fails to provide solace to the actors, critics, audience and everybody.

Producer :.....He deliberately goes out of his way to annoy people, so that by the time the play's through everybody's fed up....actors, critics, audience, everybody! [Pirandello 8-9]

Pirandello gives us a commentary on the nature of his plays. The Father talks about the task of a dramatist. According to him, it is the function of a dramatist to give life on the stage to imaginary characters. The Father, who is an illusory character comments on the immortality achieved by the

characters created by writers.

Father: Man...The writer ...The instrument of creation....Will die...But what is created by him will never die.

[Pirandello 13-14]

The Producer in Act 2, argues with the Father during the rehearsal. He makes the father realize that the characters in a play cannot act on their own. The characters are confined within the script. It is the actors who give life to the characters of a play.

In *Nagamandala*, the audience is introduced with the Man who fights between life and death. The Man is cursed for making his spectators fall asleep while watching his plays. He addresses the audience that he may be dead within the next few hours. He clarifies that he is not talking of acting like a dead person; he might actually die there on the stage in front of the audience.

Man :...You have written plays. You have staged them. You have caused so many good people, who came trusting you, to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs, that all that abused mass of sleep has turned against you and become the Curse of Death. [Karnad 22]

Both the plays include commentaries on the nature of dramas. They provide an onstage microcosm of the theatrical situation. They break the barriers of traditional dramas where there is no correspondence between the actors and the audience. Drama is not only a source of entertainment. It can be a criticism on the nature of dramas. *Nagamandala* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* provide a scope to the actors to communicate with the audience. The Man in *Nagamandala* addresses the audience in the opening scene. The Producer in the play of Pirandello has his first entry through the door of the auditorium. The Producer goes down the steps into the auditorium and stands in front of the stage, as if to get an impression of the scene from the audience's point of view when the characters are engaging in a conversation. The Flames in *Nagamandala* are not happy with the sad ending. So, they ask the man to give a happy ending to the story. The Man becomes the storyteller and the Flames act as an audience to his story. The Man cannot provide any ending which would not suit the taste of his audience. The Man's prime objective is to please

his audience. If he fails to do so, he would not be a good storyteller in the eyes of the Flames.

Nagamandala provides a commentary on the nature of stories. It exposes the paradoxical nature of stories. A story is born and grows. It has life. Each story has an independence existence. The stories exist only when they are passed on from the teller to the listener. The Flames save the story from being lost. An old woman knows a story and a song. She has never told the story nor sung the song. A story cannot be bottled up but would escape at the earliest opportunity as the story and the song escape from the mouth of the snoring old woman. Stories change forms and inflict revenge on those who do not tell them. The story is transformed into a woman and the song to a saree. They take revenge by creating misunderstanding between the old woman and her husband. The man agrees to help the Story not only by listening but also passing to others. If he does not hear the story, he will fall asleep and die. If he hears the story, it will keep him awake and save him from death.

Girish Karnad is influenced by Yakshagana performances. Literally, Yakshagana means the song of the "Yaksha" (nature spirits). It is believed to have evolved from pre-classical music and theatre during the Bhakti movement. In a Yakshagana performance, there is a background music played by a group of musicians (known as the *himmela*) and a dance and dialogue group (known as the *mummela*). The *himmela* is made up of a lead singer known as the *bhagavathar*. The *bhagavathar* directs the production and is referred to as the first actor. The *bhagavathar* narrates the story by singing as the actors dance to the music, portraying elements of the story as it is being narrated. The Story performs the role of a *bhagavathar*. The Story narrates the story of Rani. While narrating, it summarizes many parts.

Story : And so the days rolled by.

[Karnad 28]

The Story also interferes in the play. When Rani is unable to find any place to pour the love potion, the Story asks her to put into the ant hill.

Story : Rani, put it in that ant-hill

Rani : Ah, the ant hill!

[Karnad 37]

Doubling provides interplay between audience

and spectacle. Rani fails to find out the differences between real Appanna and the unreal Appanna. For Rani, one is the double of other. The audience know the difference between the two. The man who visits her in the night is not the real Appanna. The audience are aware of the reality of Naga. They know the truth that Naga is a cobra who enters the house through the bathroom door and takes the shape of Appanna. But, Rani remains oblivious of Naga's real appearance.

The dividing line between reality and truth is blurred in both the plays. The Flames, Story, Song, Naga, Yakshi are illusionary characters. Rani's experience with Naga lies on a dreamlike situation. The reality is reversed when Appanna hisses like Naga and Naga takes sweetly like a husband. In the world of illusion, Rani gets her identity as a wife, a mother, and a beloved. There are many instances in the novel which provide her with clues. Rani observes that during the day Appanna has no scars on him. But, she does not question him. Rani cannot bear too much reality. She is happy to live her life with half truths and partial knowledge. Rani, Naga and Appanna perceive truths from different perspectives. With her hand on the hill, Rani speaks the truth that she has been touched by two living beings- Appanna and the cobra. That is her truth and Naga cannot bite her. The truth of Naga is different from the truth of Rani. The truth of Appanna is that he has never slept with his wife. Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* also questions the binary assumptions. No one can expect the characters coming to the stage in search of an author. The characters in reality cannot speak. They can neither move nor sit. The introduction of the six characters in the shape of humans is a subversion of reality. The arguments of the characters are irrefutable. It is Pirandello who questions the morality of human beings through the characters.

Role-playing within a role is common in metatheatres. The Flames perform the role of the listeners. The Flames intrude into the story of Rani. They take their positions on the stage when Rani lights the lamps in the house.

Rani: (to the Flames) Wait now, Don't be impatient. It won't be long.....It will open out. Reach out with its fragrance.

[Karnad 49]

When Naga comes and embraces Rani, the Flames surround them and sing. The Flames break the barriers between audience and spectacle. By doing it, they add a flavour of metatheatrical elements in *Nagamandala*. The Italian play also provides the same scope for role playing within a role. The persons belonging to the acting company are- the Producer, the leading Lady, the Leading Man, the Second Female Lead, the Ingenue etc. They give us an impression of the actors who act in movies and theatres. After seeing the performance of the Six Characters, the Producer assigns the role of the characters to the actors of his company. The second actress is assigned the role of the mother. The Leading lady and the Leading man would play the roles of Stepdaughter and the father. The Juvenile lead is assigned the role of the son. Role-playing within a role is a technique used by the dramatists to heighten the effects of metatheatre.

Multiple endings in *Nagamandala* bring the play closer to the web of metatheatre. Girish Karnad has proposed three endings in the end. The first ending is provided by the Story. In the first ending, Rani attains the status of a goddess. Appanna falls at her feet and the concubine repents and volunteers to be a servant. Rani gives birth to a child and lives happily ever after. The man who listens to the Story is not ready to accept the first ending. He questions the "happily ever after convention". The fact that any story ends with happily ever after convention does not mean that all problems are solved. The mystery of the cobra not biting Rani surprises him and he would spend the rest of the days in misery. Moreover, the subplot of Kurudavva nad Kappanna does not develop equally with the main plot. The Story continues with her narrative. Naga visits Rani one night. He realizes that he can no longer assume the form of Appanna. He ends his life so that Rani might live in happiness. This ending becomes a kind of epilogue for the story of Rani. The Flames prefer happy ending and so they ask the writer to do something to change the tragic end of the snake lover. The man provides the third ending in which it ends in a happy note. It is a postmodern tendency to give multiple endings to any story. By providing multiple endings, Girish Karnad questions the fixity of any story. A story depends on the story teller. The story teller can tell any story from his point of view. Oral tales undergo changes

while handing down from one generation to another. In the process of telling, a story loses its earlier essence and it gets infused with new meanings.

The contribution of Pirandello lies in his re-evaluation of the nature of man and his reassessment of the nature of man and his reassessment of the concepts of reality. Pirandello challenges the assumptions of naturalism which is an even more accurate depiction of life than realism. Girish Karnad, on the other hand is not an admirer of Western realistic dramas. He feels that modern realistic dramas are alien to Indian audience. Western drams focus on individualism. Indian realism cannot progress beyond analyses of social problems. Indians define themselves in terms of their family, caste or class. They are defined by the role they have to play. Individualism, he thinks would not help the Indians to analyse the social problems of India. There are many similarities shared by the two dramatists in using metatheatrical elements-blurring of binary assumptions, role-playing within a role, reference to theatre building and the elements of staging etc. It would be wrong to say that Karnad is inspired by Pirandello as in none of his interviews, he has ever mentioned about Luigi Pirandello. His interest in the performative styles of Yakshagana and Bayalata inspired the choice of folk styles of enactment with 'framing tales' or the 'Bhagavat'. With the help of metatheatrical elements, Karnad and Pirandello try to satisfy the sensibility of modern man. The modern mind must grapple with reality by trying to re-vision and re-

interpret life by exploring various possibilities and complexities that one may encounter in one's journey through life. Both of them are pioneers in the field of metatheatre and try to resist the grand narrative of realism.

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Applied Indian Poetics and Aesthetic Enjoyment

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Abstract:

In the 21st century in the Indian Academies the focus has been shifted to the applied rather than the theoretical aspect of a subject. For example, Applied Linguistics acquires more significance than Linguistics as does Applied Economics over Economics but it is a matter of regret that we don't think over applied Indian Poetics. To interpret the literatures in English through Indian poetics is to decolonize our attitudes towards life and literature. Indian poetics deals with the principles that go into the composition of any literary work, be it poem or play or novel. It is high time we discovered the beauty of Indian poetics, the application of which is a must to literatures in English in order to enhance the aesthetic enjoyment of the text. The western literary theories focus on the interpretation of literatures but Indian poetics opens out the new vistas for the appreciation of literatures. Interpretation is the work of intellect but appreciation is the response of the whole being of the reader-here lies the superiority of Indian poetics over the western literary theories. In this article the schools of Indian poetics are highlighted and it is shown how these schools frame the principles for creation of masterpieces in literature that aim at recreation and modification of the sensibility of the readers.

The soul of Indian poetics is the intuitive perception of reality. In the 21st century the reality that we the Indians experience bites. It shocks and surprises sometimes. In this crucial phase of history the analysis

of situation which is the work of intellect is not enough; we must respond to situations with the whole of our being. We must understand reality through intuition which would provide better solutions. Intuition is the inner physician; it is the faculty which operates beyond reasoning-the sixth sense. It is the Indian poetics, the study of which, awakens intuition. In this context we highlight six schools of Indian Poetics: *Alamkara* (Figures of speech), *Riti* (Style), *Rasa* (Aesthetic Experience), *Dhvani* (Suggestiveness), *Vakrokti* (Oblique Expression) and *Aucitya* (Propriety). All these schools aim at analyzing literature for the maximization of aesthetic enjoyment.

The enjoyment of humans is of various sorts: sensuous, sensual, vicarious, masochistic and above all, aesthetic. Aesthetic enjoyment is of a higher order. A person falls in love, courts his beloved, quarrels sometimes, falls ill at times and finally dies. He experiences ecstasy and agony, union and separation, success and failure, prosperity and adversity but all the opposite emotions mingle and produce a kind of joy when he gets engrossed in a piece of literature that depicts the fortunes and misfortunes of life in a befitting manner- here is the case of aesthetic enjoyment. W.B. Yeats rightly puts a rhetorical question-; 'How can you know the dancer from the dance?' Here he points out the source of aesthetic enjoyment. Dancing is the source of enjoyment- the aesthetic enjoyment of the dancer is possible when he/she forgets himself/herself in dance. Beauty arises out of total involvement in an act ; if the doer experiences a kind of divorce between he/himself and his deed he does not have aesthetic enjoyment. Hamlet's statement, 'to be or not be that is the question

' is applicable for the persons who do not know the methods for aesthetic enjoyment. Clarity not confusion is the way to proper enjoyment where lies beauty. Aristotle points out that catharsis of emotions, that is, purification of emotions is the way towards aesthetic bliss. The exponents of Indian poetics hold that studying literature can be an aesthetic experience if the reader has a heart to appreciate and his method of study is proper.

Of the six schools of Indian poetics the school of *Alamkara* draws the attention of the lovers of literature first because without *Alamkara* (Figures of speech) no literature is worth-reading for aesthetic enjoyment. The Theory of *Alamkara*, propounded by Bhamaha, is based upon the identification of the elements of figurative expression that produce poetic beauty. Kuppuswamy Sastri defines figurativeness as deviation in expression from the commonplace. Dandin discovers figurativeness in hyperbolic expression. Kuntaka focuses on strikingness or charm to be essential characteristic of the figure of speech.

Rudrata divides the figures of speech into four types: I. The Pictorial description of the phenomenon II. Figures based upon Comparison III. Figures in which reality presented is heightened or altered or distorted IV. Figures that depend upon the plurality of meanings.

The views expressed by all the exponents of the theory of Alamkara can be substantiated by focusing on the pictorial description of *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* (W.B Yeats):

I shall have some peace there, for peace
comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to
where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a
purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

(www.poetryoutloud.org/poem/172053)

: The fragments of the day: the morning, the evening and the midnight have been pictured befittingly.

Like a woman 'the morning puts on veil' because the morning is not lighted like the day-the sun rays are soft and soothing. The evening has been pictured through the singing of birds ('cricket sings' and 'linnet's wings'). The use of images: visual and auditory is striking. The pictorial description is suggestive of the descent of peace which the speaker longs for. The poetic description corresponds with the purpose of the *Alamkara* theory as pronounced above by Bhamah and Kuppuswamy. Here *Alamkara* theory gets linked with *Dhvani* theory because nature is the ultimate source of peace.

Dhvani (the theory of suggestiveness) as expounded by Ananda Vardhana focuses on the dominance of the implied meaning over the word and its literal import. The Indian theories hold that *Dhvani* is employed in four senses: The word and the denotative meaning that works as suggester, the suggested sense, the process of suggestion, the poem that has suggested sense as its dominant meaning. Infact the entire theory is based upon 'significant power of words' (*Universals of Poetics* P.61)). A passage from *The Good Morrow* written by John Donne, the founder of metaphysical school of poetry, may be cited for illustration:

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have
gone,
Let Maps to others, worlds on worlds have
shown,
Let us possess our world, each hath one, and
is one.

(www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173360)

The Good-Morrow reads like a fine piece of love lyric. The image of 'sea discoverer' in context of the lover is suggestive. Woman's body has a geography of its own. The lover is to explore the sensitive parts of the body of the beloved in order to be physically united in an ecstatic way. Such an ecstatic physical union creates one world, one vision, one aim of a pair of couple who are in love. The epithet 'new' before world is striking because novelty in the game of love is essential just to avert boredom and matrimonial

disharmony. Thus the words ‘sea discoverer’, ‘new worlds’ have been used in the metaphorical sense. The manner of description corresponds with the idea of Anandavardhan, that is, the dominance of implied meaning over the literal meaning. The whole of description reverberates with layers of meaning. Such a style is complex but commendable. Here lies the justification for the study of John Donne in the 21st century.

Riti (Style) school of Indian poetics acquires significance because it is the style or the manner of expression in a piece of literature that determines the quality of literary work. Vamana, the proponent of this school of thought, holds that *Riti* (Style) lies in the special excellences inherent in the arrangement of words in a piece of literature. Dandin expounds ten excellences of poetic style: compactness, lucidity, evenness, sweetness, delicacy of Sounds, explicitness, exaltation, strength, grace and concentration. In order to understand the style of the literary artist we can quote a passage from R.W. Emerson’s *Art*:

Give to barrows, trays, and pans

Grace and glimmer of romance,
Bring the moonlight into noon
Hid in gleaming piles of stone ;

(Sastri:158)

Emerson focuses on inventiveness in the creation of a work of art. The purpose of the literary artist is, to borrow the language from Shakespeare, to give to ‘airy nothing’ – be it trays or pans ‘a local habitation and a name’. It is the style that lends grace or force or brevity to the expression of the artist. Both Vamana and Dandin agree on this point that the literary artist is abnormally sensitive and he always struggles to create something new out of the old something extraordinary out of the ordinary. Here is a passage from the poem *Discipline* by George Herbert which will instill the sense of discipline in the readers:

Throw away the rod,
Throw away thy wrath;
O my God,
Take the gentle path. (*Larger than Life* P.101)

If God is to maintain order in the universe he is to take the gentle path not stern measures. ‘Rod’ is the suggestive of harsh methods which Herbert feels does not work in the creation of disciplined environment. Love is the better substitute for it. He speaks in a language which is a mixture of the colloquial and the metaphorical:

Love will do the deed;
For with love
Stony hearts will bleed. (p.102)

Love not wrath is the secret to maintain discipline and order in life or society. Wrath is hatred mixed with anger; wrath causes dissipation of energy but love is the source of energy. Discipline is not something which can be imposed; it is something that emerges. Herbert’s perception of the notion of discipline is right and expression superb. The style is lucid and language is conversational because Herbert is teaching manners, the propriety of conduct. He is educating the sensibility of the lay man who looks upon God as the mentor as well as the tormentor of life.

Aucitya (Propriety) is the hallmark of a good literary style. It is harmony which lies in the relation between the whole and the parts: between the chief and the subsidiary. When a literary artist mingles various kinds of Rasas: the sentiments of heroism (*vira*), wonder (*adbhuta*) and the terrible (*raudra*) the artist is to maintain the quality to suit the vigour, energy and blaze (*dipti*). The doctrine of *Aucitya* pronounced by Bhamaha and Dandin and other aestheticians is based upon the principle of ‘adopt, adapt and adept’. The quotation from *Among The School Children* by W.B. Yeats illustrates the utility of *Aucitya*.

O Chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom of the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the
dance?

(Varshney:209)

Yeats uses two images: ‘tree’ and ‘dancer’ just to indicate the relation between the parts and the whole and the doer and the deed. It is difficult to separate the

leaf and the blossom from the tree; so is the dancer from the dance. The growth of tree is organic not mechanic; hence the division between the whole and the part is not thinkable. The dancer merges herself in dance; hence she can't be separated from her deed that is dance. Such analogy is applicable to the style and its author. The style bears the stamp of the author who practises it. The propriety (Aucitya) lies in the artist's ability to co-ordinate and focus so that the aesthetic enjoyment (Rasa) gets maximized.

Rasa (art-motions), the central concept of Indian poetics, is born in the process of transformation of life into art, of raw emotions into their aesthetic configuration.

Bharata classifies Rasa into eight kinds corresponding to eight basic emotions: rati (*the erotic*), hasya (*the comic*), karuna (*the pathetic*), raudra (*the furious*), vira (*the heroic*), vhayana (*the terrible*), bibhatsa (*the disgusting*), adbhuta (*the wonderful*). Another Rasa that is, Santa Rasa (*the quietistic*) is suggested by some aestheticians.

AbhinavaGupta and AnandVardhana maintain that Rasa is realised through suggestion. The relish of Rasa is manifested as a unity in the heart leaving no trace of constituent elements. This is why Rasa Dhvani is called Asamlakasyakrama-vyangya (suggested sense with imperceptible stages). To illustrate the experience of the *bibhatsa rasa* (the experience of the disgust) two lines from Kamala Das's *An Introduction* are quoted below:

He did not beat me
But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.
(Raveendran 37)

Das's husband is inexperienced in the art of making love; he is in dark about the psyche of his woman. Hence his woman complains, expresses disharmony in physical relationship with her husband. The lines are evocative of emotion-the emotion of disgust and indicative of the distinction between the psyche of male and female. Das narrates her experience in an artistic way; she does not expose the ignorance of art of love making of her husband in a

direct way.

Vakrokti (*Oblique/Artful Expression*) is the soul of Indian poetics. Unless the statements are made in an artistic way they in no way contribute to the beauty and grandeur of literature. K. Krishnamoorthy holds that *Vakrokti* is a theory of poetry which 'perceives poetry essentially in terms of language of its expression' (Devy:46). Kuntaka views that *Vakrokti* is the life-breath of poetry. It is an artful expression interpreted as a 'striking deviation from the ordinary modes of expression'.

Vakrokti can occur at six levels of expression: phoneme, lexeme, morpheme, sentence, section of a work, whole work. The opening passage of Yeats' master poem *Sailing To Byzantium* can be studied as a fine example of *Vakrokti*:

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
-Those dying, generations- at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

(Varshney:142)

The intention of the speaker is to be off to Byzantium, the holy place of culture and spirituality but he states his intention in an oblique manner- he expresses his disgust in a philosophical way. The repetition of /f/ sound in the expression: 'fish', 'flesh' or 'fowl' focuses on the sensuality of the creatures in the whole universe: under water, on land and in air. When sensuality is pitted against intellectuality the latter acquires more significance. Through contrast Yeats' intention becomes obvious. This oblique expression (*vakrokti*) lends beauty to poetry.

In the article *The Word and The world* Bimal Krishna Matilal transcreates the ideas of Bhartrhari: The essence of language has no beginning and no end. It is the imperishable Brahman, the ultimate consciousness, which is transformed in the form of meanings and which facilitates the functioning of the

world.

(SetuRaman:364)

The passage is magnificent; it focuses on the significance of language. Without language human world is not thinkable. The exponents of Indian poetics focus on inherent richness and beauty of language which the literary artist always tries to make experiment with-in such an experiment lies aesthetic enjoyment. To study literature in English through Indian poetics is an enjoyable aesthetic experience-such an experience is needed just to grow into an 'organic intellectual' rather than an 'intellect worker'. An organic intellectual develops a flair, which is genuine, for literary pursuits. He links life with literature and lives by the literary insights he gains through study. An intellect worker reads the pieces of literature for some other purposes, may be, marks in an examination or expectation of clapping from the audience if he is a speaker and so on. He does not understand the spirit of literature. He is just like a sex worker who sells what she has (body) for money, not for aesthetic bliss. Life turns mechanical and monotonous. All sorts of violent activities that are performed by an individual are the products of mechanical living to which a genuine lover of literature finds it difficult to contribute- here lies the striving for

aesthetic enjoyment. Such striving corresponds to the 'tireless striving' 'towards perfection' as advocated by Rabindranath Tagore in his masterpiece *Gitanjali*. The end of Indian poetics is to explore the avenues for maximizing aesthetic pleasure in artistic situations.

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Graphic Novels : Charting New Terrain

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Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988) have explored new concepts like "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" which refers to an instability of positioning. The location of the observer determines the shape of the world and we need to move beyond the simple oppositions such as inner-outer, high-class-low –class etc. In the context of canon formation or identifying a canonical text Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* (1995) was written as a bench mark but this text merely adheres to a falsifying notion of universalism. The most firmly fixed social structures are also subject to change under present circumstances. An individual is constantly subjected to social, economic and cultural pressures and this makes it impossible for him to remain within fixed structures or systems. He is impelled to move and change, set aside old forms and initiate new forms.

However this constant change leads to transience and the individual exists in a condition of "flux". A report which was commissioned by the government of Quebec on the state of modern knowledge was prepared by Jean- Francois Lyotard as *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) asserted as "Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the post industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age" (Woods.20). Lyotard identifies the advent of the postmodern age as the end of 1950's. This era is marked by the end of "grandes histories", "incredulity towards metanarratives" and the emergence of "micronarratives". Therefore knowledge in the postmodern age cannot be sanctioned according to the great narratives that have shaped western knowledge. Rather local narratives can be utilise to explain things,

therefore knowledge becomes partial, fragmented and incomplete. Postmodernism thus reaches out to embrace heterogeneity, pluralism and constant innovation; it is an aesthetic practice rather than a historical epoch. Jean Baudrillard focuses on contemporary communication and argues that while earlier cultures depended on face to face symbolic communication and print, contemporary communication is bombarded with images from electronic mass media. The distinctions between real and unreal have been effaced, in fact we are living in an age of hyper reality.

Postmodern literature has been surmised by Tim Woods in *Beginning Postmodernism* as follows:

1. A preoccupation with the viability of systems of representations.
2. The decentring of the subject by discursive systems, and the inscription of multiple fictive selves.
3. Narrative fragmentation and narrative reflexivity; narratives which double back on their own presuppositions of literary realism.
4. An open –ended play with formal devices and narrative artifice, in which narrative self-consciously alludes to its own artifice, thus challenging some of the presuppositions of literary realism.
5. An interrogation of the ontological bases of and connections between narrative and subjectivity.
6. An abolition of the cultural divide between high and popular forms of culture.
7. An exploration of ways in which narrative mediates and constructs history.
8. The displacement of the real by simulacra.

Postmodern literature has initiated different forms and genres of literature. Instead of the conventional forms of literature writers have begun to experiment with a wide variety of forms. Some of the unconventional forms initiated in literature include the cybertexts and the graphic novels. Cybertexts includes pieces of literature where each user obtains a different

outcome based on the choices they make. Cybertexts are transitions between a novel and a game. In a linear piece of literature such as the novel the characters and plot are chosen by the author but in a cybertext the reader/user has the choice of the plot of characters. However such a characteristic might place a cybertext on the same level as a computer game but there is a definite depth to a cybertext which is absent in a game. It usually has a point and a message to be translated. Espen Aarseth in *Ergodic Literature* (1997) made the term familiar in literary cycles. Aarseth focuses on the organisation of the text to determine the influence of the medium. However he refuses to classify cyber texts as a genre and believes that texts should be analysed at a more local level. However the concept of cybertexts is to expand the horizon of literary studies. An example of cybertext is *12 Blue* by Micheal Joyce.

Graphic novels are narrative work in which sequential art is used to convey the story. The art form might be in an experimental design or in a traditional comics form. It can include non fiction work or thematically linked stories. In 1976 the term was used to describe three works: *Bloodstar* by Richard Corben, George Metzger's *Beyond Time and Again* and Jim Steranko's *Chandler: Red Tide*. The term grew in popularity after Will Eisner's *A Contract with God*, and *Other Tenement Stories*. The short stories focused on lives of ordinary people in real world. The term has attracted a lot of criticism and writers like Allan Moore believes that the term is "a marketing term" and has vested commercial interest. Daniel Raeburn calls it a "neologism" and has "insecure pretensions". They have coined alternative terms such as "comic strip novel", "illustrated novel" and "picture novella".

Sarnath Bannerjee's "Corridor" is considered to be the first graphic novel in India. It was published in 2004. This work was the product of a fellowship awarded by the MacArthur Foundation in Chicago to, as he put it then, "research the sexual landscape of contemporary Indian cities." However in an interview given to Samit Basu on 3 July 2006 "Duck of Destiny", he claims to be a "comic book" writer and expresses his reservations regarding the term graphic novel: "It's an attempt at giving it the legitimate literature status, given that in the English-speaking world, a comic book is either obliged to be funny or adolescent power

fantasies for boy-men". In another article published in an online edition of *The Hindu* 19 April 2004 "The Tango between panels" by Bageshree S. Corridor has been reviewed as "a freaky, multi-layered, post-modern look at the irony-ridden urban condition". This novel charts the lives of a few urban characters Digital Dutta, Brighu, Shintu and D.V.D Murthy. Digital Dutta is a man born in Kolkata who aspires for an H1-B Visa and is inspired by Karl Marx. Brighu is a compulsive collector and Shintu is a newly married man who looks for the ultimate aphrodisiac as the key to a successful marriage. D.V.D Murthy, a forensic expert who loves to read Keats. The common thread the characters share is that they all visit Jehangir Rangoonwala, a second hand book seller in a corridor in Connaught Place. He hands out second hand books, tea and wisdom generously and considers his shop to be the centre of the universe. Sarnath Banerjee sums up the theme of the novel in his own words as:

"underlying knowledge that in the city some people meet, chat and part, some never do, living with the frustrating notion that the person sitting in the train, three seats away could be a potential lover, or the woman who just walked in possesses a rare LP of Woody Guthrie, which she has no use for". After the publication of Corridor Sarnath Banerjee went to Goldsmiths, University of London to study image and communication. Although the success of Corridor was confined to a certain high profile readership, it nevertheless "...brought in local idiom into an otherwise serious, gassy world of literature", as told to Angana Paul by Sarnath Banerjee in an interview published on 25 March 2012 in Graphiti.

His second novel is *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers*. The novel is based on the legend of *The Wandering Jew*, a Jewish merchant called Abravanel Ben Obadiah Ben Aharon Kabariti who once lived in 18th century *Kolkata* (Calcutta) and who recorded the scandalous affairs of its *British administrators* in a book called *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers*. The novel has many subplots but the core of the novel is about the narrator's quest to find a book, which his grandfather Pablo Chatterjee found at an old Jewish trinket shop in *Montmartre, Paris*, in the 1950s. Pablo's wife gave away the book, as well as her husband's other belongings, upon his Death and the narrator tries

to recover the book..

The title of the graphic novel is the English translation of *Hutum Pyanchar Noksha*, a 19th-century Bengali novel written by Kaliprasanna Singha. It was originally published as a series and later in novel form in two parts (1862 and 1864). Sarnath Banerjee's novel shows eighteenth-century Calcutta, a bed of scandals and vicious rumours, Paris in the fifties and modern-day London. The link that binds all this together is bizarre and fascinating at the same time, as are the characters that stare back from the pages — eccentric *zamindars*, a decadent aristocrat with a love for lady footballers, a psychic cartographer and even a haunted building. *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers* is simultaneously a postmodern jibe at history, cheekily offering an account, a valuable record of the past, and an exploration of Banerjee's city of birth, Calcutta, in the throes of successive periods of decadence. In 2007, wishing to venture outside of the book format, Banerjee began the "Harappa Files," an ongoing umbrella project for many shorter, often autobiographical, graphic works. These were exhibited in 2007 at Budapest's Karton Gallery and again in 2008 at Mumbai's Project 88, which the following year brought them to London's Frieze Art Fair. This series of pen-and-watercolor drawings and screen prints on paper contain vivid portraits and scenarios, part of what Banerjee has described as a "gigantic survey of the current ethnography and urban mythology of a country in the throes of great hormonal changes." These "hormonal changes" are the increasingly capitalistic reordering of Indian society after the country's formerly Soviet-inspired command economy began to liberalize in 1991. Plucked out of the dense narratives and visual effusion of his novels, Banerjee's sharp studies of India's subcultures are given room to breathe on their own sheets of paper.

Harappa Files (2011) firmly establishes him as a graphic novelist. He himself acknowledges that this novel offered him a "strict gaze into the graphic novel genre". The inspiration for this novel came from Akbarnama and Baburnama. Although the novel deals with lots of contemporary issues it has used a traditional form of storytelling. It is difficult to enumerate common threads in the novel and Banerjee focuses on diverse issues like Nano cars, Nehru's children, IIT, Vicco,

Lifebuoy, Ho Chi Minh and ends with Hillary. There is a certain difficulty in untangling the threads of the novel and the presentation is definitely a fragmented one, a postmodern creation. Sarnath Banerjee acknowledges the fact that "who can talk about Roland Barthes and Tintin in one breath". His reader is someone who Sarnath likes to "rather pretentiously call post-literate". A little like himself, who is a "film geek", grew up reading Bahadur comics, and came to be greatly influenced by writers like Rushdie, Borges, and Proust." However he also claims that novels like *Corridor* might be read by even those who are not familiar with Barthes and Derrida as anyone with a sense of humour might be able to read it. It "juxtaposes the heroic and the banal, the serious and the flippancy, deconstructing these categories themselves in the process" claims Sarnath Banerjee, characteristics that certainly place graphic novels in the category of postmodern fiction which at present caters to a distinctly urban audience. Jean Baudillard, another high priest of postmodernism claims that "...we have entered a new postmodern era of simulations which is governed by information and signs and a new cybernetic technology. In a society where simulations have become dominant, these models structure experience and erode distinctions between model and reality. Simulation is where the image or the model becomes more real than the real..." (Woods,26). Sarnath Banerjee believes that "... an image can explore the larger realities of life, and quite easily at that...". The relevance of this form can be surmised from another of his comments which he makes about comics and its importance but I would substitute the word graphic novels for comics: I feel that comics have a great deal to contribute in the field of education. Comics/graphic novels/graphic novels can fit in a lot of complex ideas in a single page, it can create atmosphere and psychological states, a theme can be explored in all its facets and point of views. This is particularly relevant in discussing history, sociology, anthropology, natural sciences and emerging technologies, reproductive or otherwise." Informed minds have to come together and collaborate creatively to get to this phase. A phase when we can say: "Let's do comics/graphic novels because it has simple funny pictures that will instruct simple people on simple principles of watershed

management is merely one way of looking at things. Aijaz Ahmed in an essay “Languages of Class, Ideologies of Immigration” included in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1994) premises that : “...there has been a very considerable aggregation of texts and individuals, but mere aggregation of texts and individuals does not give rise to the construction of a counter-canon. For the latter to arise, there has to be the cement of a powerful ideology, however incoherent and loosely defined”(Ahmed,91).The emphasis now is on the adjective “loosely defined” as the process of defining itself initiates a process of canon formation.

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The Margin Speaks : A Study of Few Select Novels of Anita Desai and Kamala Markandeya

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Abstract:

The present paper is a study of a few selected novels by Anita Desai and Kamala Markandeya in which the marginalized section are voiceless and have no role in decision-making or in articulating their say. The main issue of this comparative study is to assess how the two Indian English novelists portray their protagonists vis-à-vis their own socio-cultural background and problems. Anita Desai as a Psychoanalytical writer, in her novels, presents the Indian woman as one who plays a complementary role to maintain harmony in the family. She also underscores how side by side with that, the Indian woman has to undergo various inner confrontations in their mind. The author brings into focus the problems of the characters like Rukmani or Sarojini, who represent the Indian women in general. Markandeya presents the issues of migration and transition in her novels. He shows how the mind of the people who are physically away from their roots, have to negotiate with lots of difficulties in settling in the new places and have to experience traumatic situations at times. The problems highlighted are social disorders and even exploitations in case of women even as they become diaspora within themselves.

Key words: Margin, Diaspora, Protagonists, Alienation.

John Milton has referred in his epic Paradise Lost the phenomenon of marginalization through a speech of Eve: "O thou for whom And from whom I was formed, flesh of thy flesh, And without whom am to no end, my guide And Head! What thou hast said is

just and right." (IV. 440-443)¹ The action of Eve of surrendering herself and the subversion of her rights speak a volume about the essential root of the problems of women. Eve has unquestionably accepted Adam's superiority as a and in so doing she has acceded to become inferior to 'her husband'.

Kabideepa Handique rightly observes: "Identity in the postmodern context can be best understood as a set of attributes, beliefs that forms the basis of woman's dignity or self-respect in a socially acceptable manner. A modern woman has to play several roles, mother, wife, entrepreneur, social worker and so on. For a dysphoric person it is geographical Change of place but in case of a woman, the transition is both internal and external to attach with unknown situations and people. This journey is fighting for her rights and existence. She has to face conflict socially and in the matters of religious diction where still age-old orthodoxy prevails."²

In a few novels of Anita Desai and Kamala Markandeya, the women are marginalized having no role in decision-making or in articulating their say. The main objective of this comparative study is to assess how these two Indian English novelists portray their protagonists vis-à-vis their own socio-cultural background and problems.

Desai and Markandeya-both have dealt with the subjects of alienation, problems of migrants and landless farmers as the major themes in their novels with a note of feministic approach. The women characters portrayed by them in spite of their adverse circumstances are very strong, with a die-hard spirit to survive. Anita Desai's 'BAUMGARTNER'S

BOMBAY', published in 1988 and Kamala Markandya's 'NECTER IN SIEVE', published in 1999, may be taken as two illustrative texts in this context.

Defining Margin:

Normally margins are defined in the context of empowerment and financial capacity of a person. In India, women are situated at the top of the list of the marginalized people. These people are represented by certain characters in the novels of these authors. They are voiceless as they are subjected to gender discrimination in the society due to male chauvinism and patriarchy. According to Richa Bijalwan: 'women are mostly in the margin even if they belong to affluent family. Actually, they face margin of gender discrimination. Many people face being in the margin when they leave their own lands and find new lands. They are in margins of cultural spaces. They migrate to other places where they face cultural differences and transculturalism'³

Protagonists of Anita Desai:

Anita Desai is known for her graphic representation of the female characters in her fiction. She also shows special talent in her adopting of the technique of stream of consciousness and in her psychoanalytical study of the characters. In the words of John Chandana: "celebrated and sometimes reviled for the sensitive portrayal of the inner life of her female characters she is not a feminist but an individual who, through her characters presents a vivid picture of the agony that one can go through when he/she is not understood by the people around him/her."⁴ The characters suffer from loneliness and their emotional needs remain unsatisfied. Maya-one of her characters, for instance, has been subject to severe agony and tension which she silently undergo due to mismatch marriage and to be precise, due to the patriarchy – which create hindrances to her fulfillment of physical and mental needs. Through her character, Desai proves two different values of Indian society- family values and Individual values. Maya could not balance both of them and therefore has to suffer silently. In the novel 'FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN', the character of Nanda Kaul depicts herself involved in nature related problems and her mind is constantly tossed asunder by her heavy preoccupation with the household problems. On Desai's way of the portrayal of women characters,

Prof. Bhatnagar observes : "Her women are hankering after what has since long been routine pursuits for their male counterparts but what appears preposterous and appealing in their case. What these protagonists strive for itself-realization, self-fulfillment, craving out an identity, a true image of their individual beings, literal and figurative space to themselves to define themselves to make a foray into the outward, to make their own mistakes and retrace their steps if need be rather than being chaperoned everywhere."⁵

In 'BAUMGARTNER'S BOMBAY', the theme of alienation is woven around the protagonist: Hugo Baumgartner, a Jew, who suffers from the experience of exile and loneliness. Desai has presented multicultural background in this novel to prove her viewpoint. As an individual and migrant herself, she knows and realises the problems of the migrants. She has also dealt with these facts in her earlier fictions: *Fasting Feasting* and *Journey to Ithaca*. Hugo as German following Nazi camps suffers the alienation, which is insisted and highlighted by Desai in her fiction. Dr. Kanwar Singh in his article '*Belonging Nowhere: Uprootal/Exile and Identity Crisis in Anita Desai's Baumgartner's Bombay*' rightly observes: "Desai has tried to present the exile condition of the migrants with both their external circumstances and inner conflicts. The loneliness that Desai portrays in her characters experiencing dislocation of some kind is purely existentialist, envisaging the problem of existence with regard to both outer and inner human condition."⁶

Characterisation of Markandya:

Markandya has carved a niche for herself in the Indian English fiction. Her observations and understandings about the problems of the Indian women are very realistic and the pathos and sufferings of her characters are unparalleled in the contemporary fictions in the Indian English .

Markandya's *Nectar in the Sieve* is a fiction on the life of the villagers at the backdrop of the social transitions. The effects of Industrialisation on their life are observed in a very realistic manner. The novel deals with the predicament and expectations of the villagers regarding their present and their future state of being. Nathan is the character of a simple rustic villager who does not much expect from his life. He is very innocent and ironically completely unconcerned about the

changes beckoning the life around him. Rukmani -the protagonist of the novel is very beautiful and Markandaya depicts her beauty in his inimitable style in this way: "While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you." (p.7)⁷ The pictorial presentation of the villages is both catchy and sensuous. Rukmani has in her life both the happy and painful moments. Markandya is also very successful in portraying the conjugal lives of the people and the close family tie ups among his characters.

The impact of the transit from the rural life to an urban locality upon a character is very beautifully portrayed by Markandya in the novel. Rukmani helps Nathan to shift to the city though the urban culture in the city could not provide her any comfort. On Nathan's untimely death, she decides to return to the village. Returning to her original abode, she found her confidence restored, she started speaking in her own natural tone: "I looked about me at the land and it was to my starving spirit. I felt the earth beneath my feet and wept for happiness."⁸

Markandya develops the gender issues in her writings in a subtle manner. In *Silence of Desire*, which has bearings upon the spiritual and mystic aspects of the life in India, too deals with the conventional, male-constructed stereotypes. This very fact about the novel can be perceived in terms of this observation by P.Kannan: "... though there were no inequality between man and woman in India during the pre-Vedic times, it was introduced and nourished during the post-Vedic times very systematically by the patriarchal institutions. Woman was taught to remain obedient to man both directly and indirectly."⁹ The story of Dandekar and Sarojini can be read in terms of the feminist discourses of the contemporary literary theory. Significantly, they have differences of opinion in the matter of spirituality. Dandekar however is shown free in expressing his opinions but Sarojini is conspicuous by her relative inability about it. Sarojini is unable to fully internalize upon her own potentiality and is shown subverted to Dandekar's articulate authority. These words from the text about Sarojini, for example, make an oblique focus upon it: "She was a good wife, Sarojini, good with the children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a woman still gave him pleasure after fifteen

years of marriage, less from the warmth of her response than from her unfailing acquiescence to his demands."¹⁰ A conflict arose between Sarojini and Dandekar centering the development of a tumour in the former's kidney. Sarojini was having full faith upon the god man and chose to take the help of the faith healing through him, while Dandekar wanted that the God man should quit the town. Sarojini's frequent lies also reveal her suppressed feelings. Sarojini's speaking of lies may be unethical but her taking recourse to lies is reflective of her state of helplessness. Being rooted in convention, she is 'constrained' to be obedient to Dandekar. Therefore, she hides her feelings and also her faith on the God man. Her silence is symbolic of the silence of women in general in her country who are subjected to sufferings for want of proper protests.

Both Anita Desai and Kamala Markandya are thus feminists at heart voicing problems of the women of India. In their works, the people in the marginalized section are 'voiceless' and have no role in decision-making or in articulating opinions about themselves.

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A Voice for the Female 'Self': An analysis of Adrienne Rich's poems

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Abstract:

The paper attempts to show Adrienne Rich's assertion to give a voice to the female self by showing a kind of resistance to the strict patriarchal domains. Rich herself struggled in her own life through all sorts of resistance to mark the recognition of her 'self'. Rich has created the women characters in her poems which project the same vigour and resistance to assert her identity.

***Keywords-** Modern American Poetry, Identity, Feminism, Female Self, Resistance, Stereotypes.*

"Make it new"- Ezra Pound's famous slogan was a testimony of the new twist in the innovative techniques applied by the Modernist writers. A modern man suffered from a loss of faith in the authority of God with the advent of the scientific discoveries and inventions. Darwin's evolutionary theory altered the social consciousness of a modern man and the scientific explanations enabled them to find a new and rational foundation for universal truth. It created a great stir in the society and in the minds of the people as well. Doubt, scepticism, anxiety, loss and tension prevailed in the life of the modern man. As a result, the Modern poets created a sense of novelty in their writings by adopting a self-conscious break with the past to search for new forms of expression. They exhibited a complex picture of the period by writing difficult poems to mark the prevailing situation of the times.

Modern American literature witnessed great changes in the recognition of identity of the womenfolk with the beginning of the feminist movements. They broke the barriers of confinement and domination of the patriarchy and came out to assert their 'self' and

the position in the society. The first wave of feminism opened up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage. Women's participation in the suffrage as well as in the politics led to a realization of their capability of managing beyond the household chores and this helped them to challenge the 'cult of domesticity'. The second wave began in the 1960s and continued to the 90s. This wave unfolded in the context of the anti-war and Civil Rights Movement and the growing self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups around the world. The second wave was associated with the subjugation of women with broader critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, normative heterosexuality. They also focused on a battle against violence with proposal for marital rape laws, establishment of rape crisis and changes in custody and divorce law. Third wave feminism embraced diversity and change. They believed in the possible change of stereotypes of women and the language that has been used to define women. Therefore, third wave ideology focused on a post-structuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality. Sex-positivity, a celebration of sexuality as a positive aspect of life was considered a part of the third wave feminism, whereby the idea of sex and its implication of oppression and empowerment in the context of sexuality was understood. Thus, this kind of political scenario was surrounding America which made a direct impact on the literary dimensions as well.

A middle generation of American poets emerged in the 1950s and 1960s who wrote confessional poetry to explore their own psychology and their lives through the modernist techniques of irony, collage and wide ranging allusions. Confessional poetry broke away from Modernism's dedication to

impersonality and reopened poetry to intense self-exploration and frank revelation of their personal experiences. Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath's poetry explored tortured family relationship and examined the female psyche which in turn influenced the development of feminist poetry. The 1960s poetry also marked the change in attitude and took a militant turn with the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, Lesbian and Gay liberation Movement.

Adrienne Rich's poems revealed a break from the purely objective realm of celebrating America through the natural landscapes. Instead she merged her personal experiences with the political changes of the time to achieve the common goal – Women Liberation and Empowerment. She became a voice for every woman to reveal her liberated identity from the confined places of domesticity. While doing that, unlike Whitman, Rich sang the song of American Woman- her position, her difficulties, her place in the society rather than the song of the country 'America'. The emergence of the minority and ethnic voices during that time not only expressed criticism of discrimination and injustice but also expressed a culture to celebrate. Adrienne Rich, being a lesbian herself revealed her frustrated feelings overtly and also aroused the other women to achieve an identity. Adrienne Rich was influenced by the great male poets like Yeats, Auden, Frost and Stevens in the early period of her poetic career. Later, she gradually developed a distinctive poetic voice, reflecting on her experience as a woman feeling oppressed by inequality. In 1953, Rich married Alfred Conrad, a Harvard economist, and moved to Massachusetts, where she gave birth to three sons in the next five years. She felt the inner conflict between her role of mother and being a poet. She experienced tensions over what was expected of her sexually and over her desire for a creative role through art. Rich's book *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law* (1963) created a landmark in her poetic development. Rich brought out the domination of patriarchal standards over the lives of women which were also reflected by Beauvoir's slogan: "One is not born a woman, one becomes one". Around this time the emerging debates and rebellions of the 1960s including the Civil Rights

Movements, the antiwar movement and the women's movement addressed Rich's feelings of personal conflict, sexual alienation, and cultural oppression. Her poetry focused with an increasingly critical eye on militarism, homophobia and sexual identity, anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, the use of language as a means of power and thought, various other ways of exercising of power and women's role within and beyond marriage. As a poet, her mission was to speak for the powerless, especially to overcome denial and inequality in women's lives.

A woman is assigned with a handful of roles to be performed in the society. She becomes a wife, a mother, a daughter, a daughter-in-law and at the same time she moves forward to create an identity in her respective areas of interest. Identity is understood as a set of attributes, belief, and desire of a person that forms the basis of his or her dignity or self respect and distinguishes his or her in socially relevant ways. In postmodernist way of interpretation, identity is not fixed and single, but it has multiple dimensions. So, it becomes difficult to assess one's identity in a postmodern world. A woman finds herself in a situation where she has to adapt to her domestic duties and at the same time create recognition of her 'self' through her talents, abilities and interests. Their creativity arises from the urge to intensify their hidden or inherent talents, potentialities within them. This is often restricted by the patriarchal conventions of the society. So, a woman shows a resistance to these assigned norms to assert her individuality, although partially. As a result, a clash often arises while performing and maintaining these roles.

Rich created astronomers, scientists, painters in her poems to make an assertion of their individuality. Although the women characters have made an effort to climb that 'ladder' of perfection in their own fields, they still experienced a kind of tension between them and the existing patriarchal norms, which stand as a barrier to their work. But the characters did not pay much heed to it and proceed further to express themselves. With a growing consciousness of their selves, the Second Wave Feminists focused on a battle against all kinds of inequalities meted out to women in a patriarchal set-up. This kind of collective

consciousness among them helped to form a community of women to accumulate their views together and fight for their rights. Gradually, the Third Wave came up with strong resistance to their assigned roles and believed in the possible change to empower women. Such recognition of the abilities, talents within them brings about a re-defined identity. This was often obstructed or resisted by the socio-cultural conventions. Despite the resistance from the norms, she tried to reveal her inborn or acquired skills, talents, potentialities in their respective fields. So, her creativity in any field of her choice helped her to develop a new sense of selfhood. They adopted new ways of articulating their experiences and explore new forms of expressions

Adrienne Rich's position as a woman poet provided her an opportunity to decipher and thereby project a woman's condition in the society. Her poems envisaged the true accounts of experiences faced by women under the domination of patriarchy. Rich raised a radical voice to shun these gender disparities through her poems. She created this radical voice by exchanging the gender roles deliberately to assert her identity in particular and the whole community of women in general. Rich, in her poems, created a strong persona of female self. Rich opined that every woman must begin the change at her own home by asserting her rights over her body, her voice, her children and her mothering. The women character in her poems depicted a consciousness of their restrictions and burdens imposed upon them by the male-dominated society. A kind of conflict was perceptible in the minds of the characters. Thus, Rich became a voice for all the suffering women who wanted to create a space for themselves. What made her poetry particularly appealing was her desire to bring out an image of woman who can transcend the boundary of domesticity and move forward to assert her 'self'. Thus, Rich's poetry epitomised the revival of a woman's capacity and potentiality to create a different type of identity altogether. She showed a pathway to the innumerable women for acquiring self-empowerment against the male power. Thus, this became a kind of strategy of Rich to subvert the existing modernist tendencies and display a resistance to the male power. Her insistence on such kind of struggle for their 'independence'

marked a different dimension to her confessional poetry, where she fused personal life with the political changes of the time.

Adrienne Rich's poetry was characterised by her innovative, profoundly original and powerful voice and exhibits a peculiar kind of consciousness which marked modern American Poetry. To give a novel touch to her poetry, Rich have displayed a conscious breakdown of social and cultural norms. Rich, along with other women poets seek out to re-define or re-vision the very concepts of marriage and motherhood. Her poetry also provides a record of the evolving consciousness of the modern woman who wants to break away from her 'destructive' patriarchal conventions and create a culture in which women have equal economic, social and political rights with men. Her poems reveal her own experiences in a patriarchal set up and her radical voice is echoed throughout her poetry as a resistance to it. She has adopted the mode of Formalism in her early years to write her experiences, but gradually, her later writings showed a frank revelation of her personal feelings. In her poem, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers", Rich covertly expresses her wish to become powerful like a tiger, but she is unable to express it openly. She is repressed physically under the weight of 'Uncle's Wedding Band' but she exhibits a strong determination within her that enable her to create powerful tigers which 'do not fear the man beneath the tree'. So, a tension often prevailed within a woman's mind and her consistent struggles with the male confined culture remain unabated and unconquered. This kind of anxiety is inherent in every woman where she finds a strong, fearless awareness within her which want to transgress the limits, but they are trapped under the authority of patriarchy. These types of issues are provoked and questioned by Rich in her poems.

Adrienne Rich's position as a woman writer gives her an opportunity to create different woman characters in her poems who wants to give recognition to her inherent qualities and her interests and potentialities. These women characters wanted to create an identity by recognising her creativity in a male-dominated patriarchal society. These characters included scientists, astronomers and painters, who

showed their talent and surpassed these male-dominated domains. Adrienne Rich wanted not only to acknowledge these characters but also to create a kind of genealogy. Genealogy means the study of the family history or the family's lineage to know about their past history and responsibility lies in preserving it in the future times. In Adrienne Rich's poems, this Genealogy referred to the woman's history down the ages and the myths associated with them that defined them in the patriarchal society. "Diving into the Wreck" focussed on this exploration of a woman's past history and this was presented through a journey into a wreck. The wreck she was diving into was the wreck of obsolete myths, particularly myths about men and women. She wanted to explore the lineage concerning a woman's individuality in the society and envisioned to recreate it in the present context. In the poem, "Diving into the Wreck", Rich says:

"I came to explore the wreck.

The words are purposes.

The words are maps.

I came to see the damage that was done and the treasures that prevail. (*Diving into the Wreck*)

The woman character was making her expedition of the wreck to discover the reality behind the myths created for women. Rich here implied the suppressed desires of women under the stronghold of patriarchy which resisted the recognition of their potentialities and marred their talents into oblivion. Similarly, she presented the figure of Madame Curie in her poem "Power" to valorise the strength of a female scientist, her sacrifice of her 'self' to attain recognition of her expertise.

Adrienne Rich portrayed the apprehension of a woman in her poems to bring out her individuality in her profession. She had to resist all the stereotypical domains to assert her choice in her profession. In the process, she crossed all the limits of her assumed gender role to voice the female self.



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Advertisements – Look(ing) through the Ecofeminist Lens

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Abstract:

Advertisement today is a very strong medium and the representations therein convey powerful messages for the prospective consumer viewer. My paper is an attempt to study three very important representations in the advertising medium-women, animals and nature-and to offer a critique through the perspective of Ecofeminism. Instances of advertisements are galore where women, animals and nature are placed on the same footing. Women, animals and the natural world are all frequently represented under the framework of the on-looking human male consumer. Two basic trends are most apparent in these representations: the animalization, domestication and naturalization of women and the feminization of animals and the earth. Repeated over and again throughout popular imagery is the animalized woman: women in animal print lingerie, women prowling on all fours, women hiding in the shadows set to pounce. Wild animal prints are popular as they are associated with sexuality. Consider the Vodafone ad aired some three to four years back on the television where a pretty young woman with heavy curly locks is on the look for a doggy who is her look alike in looks and locks. The moment she hugs the animal, there is hardly any point of difference between the woman and the animal. The literal message behind the ad is not very difficult to comprehend-affinity for similar looks and tastes. On second thoughts, the metaphorical message too comes to the surface-animalization of women and the feminization of

animals-themes common to patriarchal cultural imagery.

Key words – advertisements, ecofeminism, animalization of women, feminization of animals.

The term ecofeminism, as almost every article on the subject reminds us, was first coined by the French feminist Francois d' Eaubonne (1974). However during the 1970's there was not a coherent body of ecofeminist theory. Instead there were differing accounts that wove together a perceived interconnection between the domination of women and nature. It is also problematic to speak of singular 'ecofeminist' since it is a far from homogenous standpoint. But modestly it may be said that all ecofeminists regard the western domination of 'women' and 'nature' as conceptually linked and that the processes of inferiorisation have mutually reinforced each other. For example Carolin Merchant argues that from the beginning the discourse of modern science in the west was informed by imagery that portrayed nature as female. Given women's status this both aided and eroticised the domination of nature for 'men of science'. Interwoven with the discourse has been the inferiorisation of women via the discourse of 'women as closer to nature' and thus 'further away' from a dualistically opposed and politically deployed concept of 'reason'

In the western thought and literature, one of the oldest binaries has been nature versus culture. Further, the two sides of the binary carry gendered values : Nature is feminine and Culture masculine. A whole series of such gendered binaries can be seen

proceeding from this primary one :

Masculine Culture	/	Feminine Nature
Mind		Body
Objective		Subjective
Rational		Emotional
Public		Private

Images like 'mother nature' achieve two things:

- They 'naturalize' women
- They 'feminize' nature

What this means is that nature is imaged as a woman whose basic tasks include reproduction and nurture. Then, women's functions are seen as 'natural' to her. Together, these dimensions ignore the role of culture and society in imposing functions on the woman. By arguing that women are like nature because of their biology is to ascribe qualities to the woman. Likewise to say that nature is 'mature' is to assume that the basic task of nature is to sustain and provide for the human race.

Feminists suggest that these qualities of women and nature are both attributes given by males. As a result

- i. Men dominate both women and nature
- ii. Men assume and act as though both women and nature are to be exploited by men.

Ecofeminist thought emerges from this basic assumption: both women and nature are equally oppressed by male ways of thinking and action.

We presently live in a world where advertisements stare at us from every direction – right from the pages in the morning newspaper to the hoardings that we pass, the advertisements displayed in public transport and public properties, the advertisements aired in radio and television sets, the commercial breaks in between the soap operas, the cricket match break to the breaks in the late night news – each and every step of our waking hours is in some way or other exposed to these advertisements. And its amazing to think how our choices as buyers is to a great extent determined by the advertisements. In a rat race to trap prospective buyers, the advertising agencies are exploiting various images available to them – the most powerful and frequently used image however, being the female body and various other images associated with the female physique. Be it the 'good' ad where the woman is doning a traditional role or a 'bad' ad where she is completely exposed – the

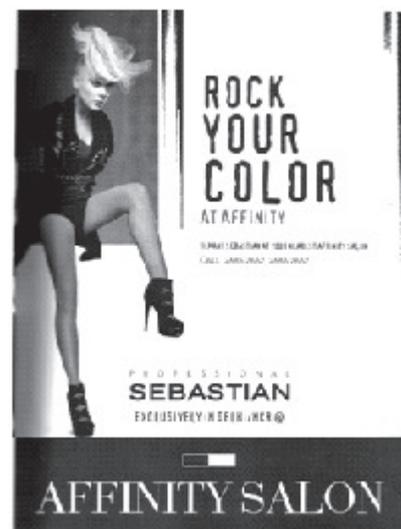
use of the woman's body has become the mantra of the day.

There are innumerable ways of selling a product by using female sexuality: by fusing the image of the product with the image of female sexuality, by commodifying a woman and reducing her to an object of male gaze, use of female dialogues tapping women as available for consumption, representing women as animals and thereby reducing them to the status of non-humans and the projection of woman's body or body parts to sale unrelated products.

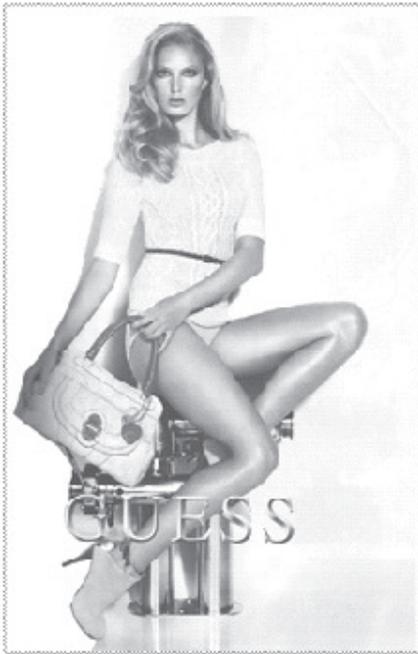
My paper is an attempt to take into consideration those advertisements where women are reduced to the state of non-humans and animals and projecting nature as purely feminine. My attempt is backed by ecofeministic perspectives in studying those advertisements which portray the animalization of women and feminization of nature.

Women, animals, and the natural world are all frequently represented under the framework of the on-looking human male consumer. Two basic trends are most apparent in the content of these representations: the animalization, domestication and naturalization of women and the feminization of animals and the earth. These stereotypes make up the content under analysis.

Repeated over and again throughout popular imagery is the animalized woman. Women in animal print lingerie, women prowling on all fours, women hiding in the shadows set to pounce. Consider the following images of women in various advertisements.



Cosmopolitan December, 2011, p-23



Cosmopolitan December,2011, p-119

In all these three images the women are projected in animal postures. The animalized women are ready to stalk their prey, calculatively choosing their moment, dangerously unpredictable. In the third frame, specially, the wolf tattoo in the breast of the woman with her animalistic posture, renders her a perfect wolf woman. But in the final analysis all these women do not amount to much more than sexual objects.

Under a consumerist patriarchal set up, most images are designed with the male viewer in mind, despite the fact that far more women may be exposed to the image than men. This is true of consumerist patriarchal culture because these images seem to occur primarily within the content of advertising, marketing products. In a free-market economy, business must continually devise upon and reiterate existing power structures as a way of stimulating sales. This imagery often appeals to Caucasian males by reaffirming their power, after all isn't it the powerful who have the economic resource to purchase these products? If these images are created for males they imply that males are looking at them. This implication is what is meant by "male gaze".

Gaze theorist Laura Mulvey in her 1975 article "Visual pleasure and Narrative Cinema" has made similar observations as she argues that the pleasure in a world ordered by sexual imbalance is split between the active male and the passive female; the male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure, while in

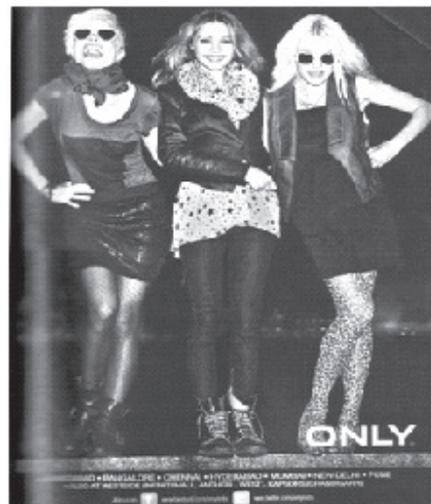


Vogue January,2012,p-229

their traditional exhibitionist role women are both displayed and, as it were coded to connote "to-be-looked-at-ness".

In the above three frames, although the animalized woman look like active women ready to attack their male prey, yet in reality the message has a reverse interpretation, the women are reduced to passive female where the male gaze projects his fantasy with the extended message that these wild women of nature need to be tamed by reasoned men of culture.

In my next projections, I have selected certain advertisements where women in animal prints arouse sexuality in the male viewer.



Cosmopolitan December 2011,p-101



India OK! December 2011, p-98

In frame 4, the leopard print stockings coupled with a sensuous look in the third woman, renders her a wild arousing beast. If you concentrate on her legs, for a moment its difficult to believe that they are human legs and not of a leopard's. The juxtaposition of the animal print and the sensuous look has achieved its target – the fusion of the product with female sexuality.

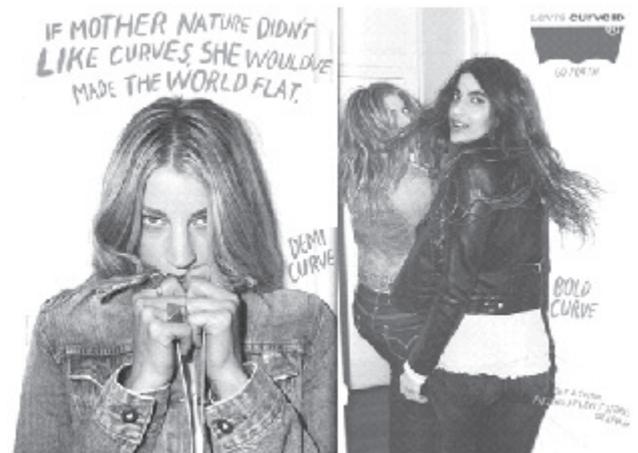
In these frames, the message is more direct, “Wild and Sexy” seems to be the punchline. Animal print costume have an emphasized sexual meaning. The women in this image are not just modeling costume, they are soliciting sex. The sex they are soliciting is heterosexual sex with the constructed male viewer in mind; the animalized woman loose their human identity and are reduced to just sexual receptacle.

The punchline of the 5th fame achieves a similar target : animalization of women and fusing female and animal sexuality as it boldly declares “Sexy Snakeskin“. The frame showcases a variety of female dress and accessories in snakeskin pattern coupled with celebrity Jennifer Lopez doning various snakeskin products. The ad for the products begin by saying “ Playing it safe is ‘hiss’ tory with Jennifer Lopez slithering her way into a heap of snakeskin”....the very use of the words ‘hiss’, ‘slithering’ etc. further dehumanize the status of women by linking her to the sexuality of a snake.

In the next two advertisements that I have picked up I would like to draw your attention to the language or dialogue of the ads along with the image.



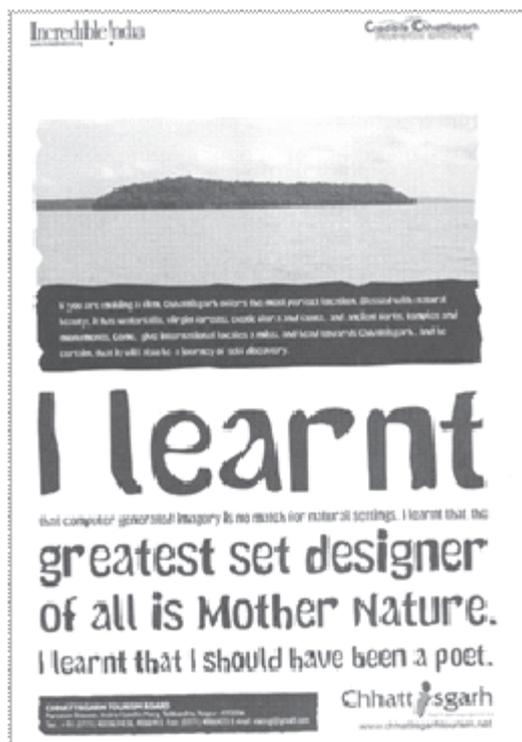
Vogue January 2012, p-30-31



Cosmopolitan December 2011, p-14-15

In frame – 6, the tagline for Garnier shampoo “ Jungli Hair? Set it Straight”, apart from projecting the woman as wild carries various other connotations. The use of the very word ‘Jungli’ meaning wild not only animalizes the woman but further throws the suggestion that she needs to be tamed by the use of the product. ‘Straight’ is directed not only at her hair but also her nature and appearance. For the woman both before and after using the product carries a separate image – the first wild, non-human and therefore untamed; the second straight and tamed.

The tagline in frame 7 talks of ‘Nature’; but nature is highly feminized as it talks of nature as “Mother Nature” and associates it with the female “curves”. Such feminization of Nature has become a common gimmick with the advertising industry. Such feminization of Nature is derogatory both for women and nature.



Cosmopolitan December 2011, p-339

Consider the following ad in frame 8 for Chattisgarh Tourism.

There is no problem with the image but consider the language: "If you are making a film, Chattisgarh offers the most perfect location. Blessed with natural beauty, it has waterfalls, virgin forests, exotic flora and fauna, and ancient forts, temples and monuments. Come, give international locales a miss, and head towards Chattisgarh. And be certain, that it will also be a journey of self discovery." The use of the words "virgin", "exotic", "self discovery" certainly equates nature with an exotic, erotic woman who needs to be explored by male.

The analogous graphic association of women with the earth is similarly dichotomous : women-as-threatening-wild-nature. "Mother Earth" may be either hostile or subdued. The shift in imagery from wild Mother Earth to passive Mother Earth seems to follow shifting awareness of the degradation of the planet: the Mother Earth image transforms from an overwhelming power to an innocent and wholesome pacifist. Consider this image from an Earth Day 2000



www.ecofem.org/journal,p-6

poster as an example of the latter:

The feminized animal and natural world is another common theme of patriarchal cultural imagery. An interesting example of this is Borden Dairy's icon, Elsie the Cow



www.ecofem.org/journal,p-6

There is no doubt that this animal is female: her neck-

lace, dark and long eyelashes, and accommodating smile declare her gender.

Such association of the women, non-human and nature not only stereotypes each but delimits the arena of their existence. It also legitimizes the instrumentalization of women, the earth, and animals in the minds of their oppressors by comparing each with a marginalized group of low social status: If women are “just animals,” why not command, abuse, or dismiss them? If the earth is feminine, why pay attention to its needs? And advertisement is one area where ecofeminist arguments that patriarchal society’s values and beliefs have resulted in the oppression of both women and nature fit quite well. The extremely low status of animals and the earth in patriarchal culture means that comparisons to animals and nature in popular culture are intended to be derogatory. Likewise, the degraded status of women means that likening to women – “feminization” – is intended to be derogatory when it occurs in the context of popular culture. The low status of each becomes a foundation for the metaphorical degradation of the other.

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Photo Sources: *Cosmopolitan*, December, 2011, *Vogue*, January, 2012, *India OK!* December, 2011, www.ecofem.org/journal.



Emergence of the Issue of Women's Identity in Assamese Literature: A Study of *Ramnabami-Natak*

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Abstract:

In the literary landscape of Assam in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the fictional and dramatic literature, foregrounding of the problematic concept of identity was yet to receive due attention from the contemporary writers. Making an exception to this scenario, significantly in 1857, Gunabhiram Baruwa wrote a play: Ramnabami-Natak, to reflect upon aspects of the subversion of women by the labyrinthine traps of a male-dominated society. It was the first definitive statement to be made in the contemporary Assamese literature about the predicament of women in a traditional Indian set up opening up an influential argument in favour of women's moral voice against certain codes of conduct assigned to them by the society which tended to maintain patriarchal dominance against them. All through the play, the protagonist exhibits her independence in choice as she rejects the institution of widowhood. Her struggle to emerge as a literate woman is also another brave act by her. It is significant to note that at a time when even in Europe, most women had been blatantly exposed to the control and subversion of the patriarchy amounting to their inferior status (politically, legally, economically and socially), and the movement to achieve social equality for women had been still at its nascent state, in a faraway and geographically distanced frontier state like Assam someone did seek to discover the deep seated causes of women's suppressions and affirmed his unequivocal supports to the cause of

emancipation of women beyond the parameters of patriarchal structures. The playwright shows how women are led to the process of subjectivation within the politics of patriarchal power structures. This study attempts to investigate the craft of Gunabhiram Baruwa in providing a dialogic mould to his dealing with an issue which must have been quite a sensitive subject in his contemporary social milieu. Baruwa combines realism with his comprehensive moral vision while he intrinsically shows the struggle of the protagonist to uphold her identity. The methodology adopted for the study would be close reading followed by highlighting and analysing selective specimen that put in perspective the dynamics of identity.

Keywords: identity, subversion, widowhood, patriarchy, dialogic.

The influence of the Western education in all fields of literature in India including Assam in the nineteenth century had been very strong. This influence did permeate through all the types and genres of literature including drama. English education helped in introducing a humanistic and secular tradition in literature and the English educated writers found in European science and arts a new and vigorous source of creative inspiration. Due to the new orientation through the new wave of influence of English education, new thoughts, new forms and new modes of expressions came to affect almost every genre of the Assamese literature. It was at the backdrop of this new wave that a few literateurs tried to spread modern ideas through their own literary works, thus performing

a pivotal role in shaping the Assamese mind and the Assamese literature. In 1857, Gunabhiram Baruwa (1837-94) wrote a play: *Ramnabami-Natak*, to reflect upon aspects of the subversion of women by the labyrinthine traps of a male-dominated society. It was the first definitive statement to be made in the contemporary Assamese literature about the predicament of women in a traditional Indian set up, opening up an influential argument in favour of women's moral voice against certain codes of conduct assigned to them by the society which tended to maintain patriarchal dominance against them. The play represented lucidly his conviction of the fact that no liberation of women could be possible without female education and no real progress of the society could be attained without proper education of the womenfolk. This study attempts to investigate the craft of Gunabhiram Baruwa in providing a dialogic mould to his dealing with an issue which must have been quite a sensitive subject in his contemporary social milieu. Baruwa combines realism with his comprehensive moral vision while he intrinsically shows the struggle of the protagonist to protect and preserve her identity braving all the predicaments associated with the process of subjectivation within the politics of patriarchal power structures. The playwright to emphasize upon the urgency of the need of discovering the deep seated causes of women's suppressions in his contemporary society, creates the theme of the tragic consequences of the amorous relationship between a Brahmin widow: Nabami and a Brahmin youth Ramchandra. The methodology adopted for the study would be close reading followed by highlighting and analysing selective specimen that put in perspective the dynamics of identity.

From the early part of the nineteenth century, the Bengali society was being under the beneficial lights of Renaissance, which was by and large a result of the colonial encounter. This, besides other things also ushered in a very vital period for the native literature. It was a vital period also for the social and intellectual uplift of the people of Bengal and the secret of such a development lay in English education. The forerunners of the modern Assamese literature, many of whom had been living in Kolkata at that time in their pursuit of

higher studies, came in contact with the influence of English literature and Western liberalism through their exposure to an environment which made them aware of their own national identity coupled with adoption of an analytical attitude. Groomed under the most favourable and vital condition laid out by the Renascent Bengal, they in returning home (Assam), took note of the contemporary socio-political conditions of their state. A few of them felt it was their onerous responsibility also to do something for the sake of the Assamese language and literature. The Assamese literature and language through passage of time received a strong ground to flourish in their hands. The humanistic, secular tradition was introduced into the Assamese literature by them and in turn they ushered in a renaissance for their literature (which meant a total break with the earlier tradition of religion - dominated social literature). Through their literary works, they mostly attempted at social uplift, making them in many a cases instruments for bringing about social reformation.

Gunabhiram Baruwa's *Ramnabami -Natak* was indeed emblematic of such a moment of transition of the Assamese literature. In the play the playwright advocates boldly the cause of widow-marriage. The play had a revolutionary concept due to the author's concerns and emphasis upon the rights and freedoms of the individual and his deep urge for reforms. The play was written in 1857 on his way to Assam from Calcutta in a boat and was published in 1867 in form of a book after he was transferred to Dhubri from Nagaon on his government service (he was serving as a Revenue Department official). Gunabhiram was a man of strong conviction upon his ideals and true to what he propagated about in his play, he married a widow himself. With Baruwa's *Ramnabami -Natak*, a kind of new drama came into being. The play hardly had any direct link with the pre-British Assamese drama having a four-century old history. It introduced into the Assamese dramatic literature a humanistic secular tradition in place of the earlier religion-dominated tradition.

Gunabhiram's play was based on the story of a widowed girl who had secret love with a young man.

Widow-marriage was a taboo in the contemporary society and just in 1856, the British government had passed the Widow Marriage Act making it discretionary for widows to enter remarriage. *Ramnabami -Natak* with its issue of women emancipation opened up a new vista in the Assamese literature. It was the first secular cum social kind of drama to be written in the language and following the footsteps of its author a number of new generation writers, mostly comprising of university-educated bright young men, yielded their pen to carry forward the trend, who together laid a strong foundation for the modern Assamese literature.

Gunabhiram Baruwa was greatly influenced by the spirit of social reform of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) of Bengal. Another major source of influence for him was Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91), who was vigorously advocating the cause of widow marriage and whose enthusiasm was mainly responsible for the Widow Marriage Act i.e. "The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856". Wedded to various modern ideas during his stay in Calcutta, Gunabhiram came to realize that no real progress could be possible without education. He received active help in his endeavour to make himself equipped with the modern day learning from his mentor cum near relative Anandaram Dhekial Phukan. Anadaram Dhekial Phukan too had been influenced by the thoughts and ideals of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and both Phukan and Baruwa felt the need of applying their learning and experiences in eradication of certain age- old taboos of the Assamese society.

The forte of Gunabhiram Baruwa was his advanced social viewpoints which he tried to express through the medium of literature. For instance, the false social values associated with caste superiority came into sharp focus in many of his writings. He detested social hypocrisy and ridiculed the same in several of his writings. The literary talent of Gunabhiram Baruwa got its first fertile soil for growth in the pages of the *Orunodai*, to which he contributed 24 articles. The write- ups were of varied topics. A few among them were about the necessity of education for both men and women, about women's 'rights' in matters of consensual marriage and education, about widow

remarriage and about the conjugal norms for the husband and the wife etc. It is significant to note that in those days when people were mired in their medieval outlook and a campaign for widow remarriage among the Brahmins had been something of an unimaginable proposition, he, in spite of being a Brahmin himself, adopted a radical posture to the established custom of his caste to write in favour of widow remarriage besides himself marrying a widow. In an article under the title: *Bidhabar Bibah* ('Marriage of a Widow') he wrote (translation mine):

"How can one who is unable to bear a child, appreciate the pains that a child bearing woman is constrained to undergo? Similarly, the men too cannot feel the intensity of sufferings that the widows have to undergo. Oh! It is so heart- rending, : the stories about the sufferings of the widows!"¹

Of course, in his essays, he did not harbour liberalism to the extent of approving the Hindu men and women to deviate from other traditional norms laid by the scriptures like the *Manu Sanghita*, thus displaying a right mixture of the Western liberal attitude and traditional Hindu opinion. In this regard, reference can be made to his article: *Bibahar Samayat ji Sakal Niyam Pratipalan Kara Kartabya Tar Katha* ("About Principles to be followed on Marriage"). In this article, he writes about the principles of the Shastras one needs to follow in beginning one's married life. Significantly, here he also affirms his views on widow remarriage by referring to the permissions given by the *Manu Sanghita* (one of the Hindu Shastras) in this regard.

Ramnabami -Natak is a social tragedy based on the subject of widow marriage. The play first serialized in *Orunodai* in 1857 was published as a book in 1870. It was the first modern Assamese play on a secular theme and has behind it a genuine urge for social reform. The dramatist tries to make a strong case for widow remarriage through the play besides attempting to depict realistically a slice of the social life of Assam during his time. Thus, *Ramnabami - Natak* can be considered to be the harbinger of the new literature, characterized by relative genuineness,

veracity and convincingness in its form, content, rendering and representation. Behind the advent of such a literature, there was the changing social, cultural and economic scenario of the world as in the nineteenth century, the world came to witness a modern era where the leaders of the societies all over the globe tried to preach a religion free from orthodoxy and dogma and lay emphasis on the religion of humanity. It was an era where the tradition was challenged and old values were considered tenable no longer. Writings of Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley, Aldous Huxley made a wide impact over the minds all across the globe through whom rationalism and ethical idealism found a good ground to grow. Rationalism was also growing in India. This also got reflected in the mass of literature produced in the country. The depiction of the individual characters and their correlations became a major concern for the narrative writers. Bengal was one of the few pioneering states in India in this regard, where in the hands of the contemporary writers a new literature concerned with the contemporary reality had been struggling to emerge. During this time there was also a burgeoning growth of newspapers and periodicals in Bengal which were the vehicles of newer reflections in the society. They empowered people with a new freedom of thought and opened new avenues of expressions for the readers and the writers alike. The vigorousness of such a movement obviously made a positive impact upon the creative few among the educated Assamese youths. In the works of some of them, the contemporary reality of Assam and the Assamese society and the social needs found their vigorous expressions. To be precise, it was through Bengal that Gunabhiram Baruwa and his compatriots from Assam who had gone to Calcutta for studies came to adopt some fresh enthusiasms, new outlooks and modern methods in writing. They realized that there was need to be extra-conscious about the social problems that confronted their society- the Assamese society. There were during that time in Bengal various debates on diverse social issues. There were for instance, animated controversies about women's education, the practice of *Sati* which got reflections in the emerging new literature of Bengal. At the centre of all this, there were such great thinkers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Iswar Chandra

Vidyasagar. Moreover, the Widow Marriage Act was passed in 1856 when Gunabhiram Baruwa was in Calcutta. The Act was adopted following a vigorous propaganda pursued by Vidyasagar and the success of Vidyasagar in this respect was crucial in inspiring Baruwa to begin writing the drama *Ramnabami- Natak* in 1858. Besides, Baruwa also had the opportunity to come in touch with a host of intellectuals in Calcutta during his stay there for higher studies who were known for their proactive role in the contemporary society of Bengal, through Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, his mentor. Some of them were: the author of the first novel in Bengali: Pyarichand Mitra, harbinger of women education in Bengal: Sir Radhakanta Deb, Brahma leader of more radical nature who campaigned vigorously for the education of women against child marriages: Debendra Nath Thakur, founder of indigenous theatre of Bengal: Maharaj Jatindra Mohan Thakur and President of the 'Sanatan Dharma Rakshini Sabha': Raja Kali Krishna Deva Bahadur.

The play: *Ramnabami- Natak* revolves around the theme of the sad end of a pair of lovers: Ram and Nabami. Nabami is a young widow with no child and both she and Ram were attracted to one another. Amidst blooming of their love, there were 'illicit' connections between the two and in due course of time it was unveiled to the society that she had been pregnant. At the point of being ostracized by the society the two commit suicide. The story decides the nature of the play. It is a social tragedy dealing with the situations of the tender aged widows of the Hindu society. Gunabhiram was a staunch advocate of widow – remarriage. In his own life he practiced what he preached and he married a widow creating a sensation in the orthodox society of Assam. True to his liberal attitude towards women, he got his daughter Swarnalata admitted into the Bethune School in Calcutta. Besides, he also encouraged his wife Bishnupriya and his daughter Swarnalata to write and publish their works. He also penned various articles on issues like women's education and marriage reforms in the contemporary Assamese journals. It is not difficult to comprehend then why Gunabhiram Baruwa wrote such a play like *Ramnabami- Natak*. Rebellious against orthodoxy, he himself later converted into a Brahma. That the play

is a means for propagation of the liberal ideas of the Brahmos, is well nigh justified by the fact that it has a reference to the great social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar directly in the speech of a character who utters his name besides eulogizing upon him as a champion of the cause of widow marriage:

PHULESWARI (aside):.....People are talking about someone called Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

in Kolikata who has shown a new way and some people here are also trying to follow that path. If

we too could have followed that path, this would not have happened! (Translated by Tiolottama Misra)²

Ramnabami -Natak testifies Gunabhiram's urge for propagating humanistic ideals in his contemporary society. As one critique of the hypocrisies of the moral guardians of the society, it contains his pungent satire against social orthodoxies and irrationalities even as the playwright extolls freely the beauty of passionate love- which was a new spirit to be introduced into the Assamese literature. As regards to the satire, a reference point could be the conversations among the villagers and religious heads inside the *Namghar* in the second Act of the play. The anecdote gives us an explicit idea about the material appetite of the few in the so called superior section of the society. The dialogue in the mouth of the concerned characters here bring into sharp focus the want of values associated with the upper class. The playwright unveils the irony that despite their hollow principles they are shown respects by the common villagers. They are put in ridiculous light particularly at that point of the play where they are made to say that they can reduce the penalties for wrong doings if they are offered a particular amount of money as 'penance-cost' (*Ramnabami -Natak*, Act V Scene II). In this way, the exploitative tendency of a few in the society and the situation of the peasantry under their hypocritical practices are being subject to clever ridicule.

Gunabhiram's concerns over the plight of young widows of the Hindu society are fully evident in

the play. The following extracts from the Act II, Scene, 1 and Act II, Scene 3 respectively, may be illustrative of his deep feelings over the condition of the tender-aged widows of the society during his time:

First in front of Shibakanta's house and then in the garden. Enter Nabami, Jayanti, and Urvashi.

Nabami: Are you observing the fast for Shivaratri today, Jayanti? Jayanti: Well, yes and no! My

husband is observing it. But I have secretly eaten a little bit of powdered puffed rice. Otherwise it is

so difficult to pull along on those long summer days. Nabami: I really wanted to observe the fast. But

my mother forced me to eat. When I was small, I used to fast every year on this day. If all of you come

along to our place tonight, we can stay awake together for Shiva. Urvashi, are you also fasting?

Urvashi: Oh, why should I? Since I am a widow, there is no need for me to Fast on the Shivaratri day .

I have fasting on this day right from my childhood till my eighteenth year. And look how I've been

rewarded! I don't need anymore rewards, friends! Why, Nabami, you look thinner than usual. What's

the matter?

Nabami: Perhaps because I am not keeping well ever since I've started having my periods.

Urvashi: (to Jayanti): Do you hear that? If the poor girl had had the chance to go to her husband even

once, it would not have been so. I have at least some experience on that count to relate before Yama

when I die! But this girl has been deprived of even that pleasure.³

* * * *

Nabami(To herself):.....It is true that I am a widow, but I cannot go against God's law by denying

myself the pleasures of the senses. Isn't my present condition proof enough of that fact? So,

it is not wrong to desire the company of a man. A husband is someone with whom and the man

with whom one can fulfill the main purpose of marriage. For me, this man could be that husband

if I am devoted to him and no one else, then my duty towards my husband will be done.

Some

shastras may say that woman cannot take another husband if the first dies. So what? What is a

shastra? There can be no shastra above God's law. And, if women cannot marry after the

death of the first husband, why should men be allowed to do so? This proves that law is biased

against women. Such a bias is customary in the satyayug. But it cannot be for our age. For if it

was suitable custom for this age, a woman like me could not have possibly fallen in love with

another man. Should I be condemned by the society as an adulteress if I express my devotion to this man? Certainly not! For if I remain as true to this man as I was to my first husband, then

I will surely be doing my rightful dharma as a faithful wife. If a married woman is attracted towards another man, can she be considered a faithful wife? Certainly not! I am convinced

that if I love this man and remain faithful to him I will not break any moral law.⁴

The play also embodies Gunabhiram's candid message about the need of facilitating liberal education for women by the society. The following excerpt from the Act I Scene V of the play is illustrative in this context:

Shibakanta's house. Enter Phuleswari, Jayanti and Nabami .

Jayanti: Amoi , did you call me?

Phuleswari: Yes, I did. Your friend here stays all alone at home. She feels happy when you come. You

can play cards with her or teach her to read.

Nabami: Mother, I am learning to read. I can read the small books. Jayanti is teaching me.

Phuleswari: (To Jayanti) Fate has been very unkind to my daughter. Otherwise, she is so good at

weaving garments. She can even weave beautiful floral motifs. And now you are teaching her to read

too.

Jayanti: I know about the weaving skills. Last year when my younger sister-in-law Kumoli got married,

I had woven a seleng for her with fine cotton thread and Nabami wove the floral designs in it.

Phuleswari: Do you have any good books at home?

Jayanti: We have them all—Anandamangal, Bidyasundar, Kaminikumar, Bhoogol, Purabrittasar, Padarthabidya, Mahabharat, Ramayan, Shakuntala, Kadambari. My friend has not read all of them. She has finished only the Adikand of the Ramayan.

Phuleswari: If you need money to buy books, take it from me.

Jayanti: All right, I will, Amoi.

Phuleswari: Is she reading any Asamiya books?

Jayanti: I have read a few, but Nabami cannot read handwritten books. She is reading Asamiya Lorar Mitra

and Orunodoi. *These books contain many good lessons. ...* 5

In the play, Nabami faces an exceptional calamity in her life due to her conflict with some other characters who represent some social evils. The impulses and desires of Nabami come in for a rude shock with the evil forces of her society opposing her wishes. This causes in her a sense of wretched helplessness and desolation. Her passionate declamations embodied by her soliloquy in Act V/ Scene III, just before she commits suicide, reveals her complete loss of faith upon the system of justice of the society as it is delivered by some despotic heads. In her soliloquy, besides cursing her own destiny, Nabami also affirms that by surrendering her soul to the love of Ramchandra, she had not done any immoral deed. Her veneration for her love revealed by her soliloquy draws both our commendation and sympathy. The inner conflict in Nabami thus is able to heighten the tragic grandeur of the play. The playwright sets Nabami to voice the mute miseries and helplessness of millions of such women terminated by the problems and predicaments caused by the patriarchal dominance against them. The play by articulating intelligence, imagination and sensitivity in a way seems to interrogate the readers/viewers about their own social conduct. The play ends in a triumphant disdain or ridicule over the follies and hypocrisies of the contemporary society.

In its content and representation, the play has the stamp of a naturalistic play. Defining and discussing the term Naturalism M.H.Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham in *A glossary of Literary Terms* say that the naturalist writers are those who “tend to choose characters who exhibit strong animal drives such as greed and sexual desire, and who are helpless victims both of glandular secretions within and sociological pressures without. The end of the naturalistic novel is usually “tragic”..... the protagonist of the naturalistic plot, a pawn to multiple compulsions, usually disintegrates, or is wiped out.” 6 - One can trace in *Ramnabami –Natak* all these basic tenets of naturalism which have come in good stead in making an impeccable representation of the human condition

related with the identity of the protagonist of the play.

To conclude, *Ramnabami -Natak* presents an influential dialogic argument in favour of women’s moral voice against certain codes of conduct assigned to them by the society which tended to maintain patriarchal dominance against them. All through the play, the protagonist exhibits her independence in choice as she rejects the institution of widowhood. Her struggle to emerge as a literate woman is also another brave act by her. It is significant to note that at a time when even in Europe, most women had been blatantly exposed to the control and subversion of the patriarchy amounting to their inferior status(politically, legally, economically and socially), and the movement to achieve social equality for women had been still at its nascent state, in a faraway and geographically distanced frontier state like Assam someone did seek to discover the deep seated causes of women’s suppressions and affirmed his unequivocal supports to the cause of emanipation of women beyond the parameters of patriarchal structures.

Notes:

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3. Ibid. 19.
4. Ibid. 24,25.
5. Ibid.14,15.
6. Abrams,M.H., Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.Andover: Cengage Learning, 2012.335. Print.

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