

Female ‘Alterity’ and the Non-Human: The Transformative Significance of ‘Laughter’ and ‘Leisure’ in Nitoo Das’s “Jokhini”

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Abstract

The witch as a locus of uncanny powers poses a challenge to patriarchal injunctions in Nitoo Das’ poem “Jokhini” by opening up new geographies of knowledge and socio-cultural maps in regard to its site of production, Assam. By positing the witch in the ambit of an interesting linguistic play, and drawing on the symbol of ‘laughter’ as a potent, subversive tool and re-contouring ‘leisure’ as a lopsided, gendered narrative that puts women under erasure, Das makes a new statement of female empowerment through the figure of the witch. The non-human here becomes a plane of radical understandings and new postulations of space and time, angles of vision, identity and gendered ‘truths’ in our society.

Keywords: Monstrosity, Alterity, Witch, Non-Human, Nitoo Das, Assam.