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Lokaratna is a refereed e-journal of the Folklore Foundation, Bhubaneswar, Odisha in India. The purpose of the journal is to explore the rich cultural tradition of Odisha for a wider readership as well as to explore the global cultural understanding through this effort. Any scholar across the globe interested in contributing on any aspect of cultural expression, language and learning is welcome. The present volume (VIII) deals with issues related to Literature, Culture, Language and Pedagogy.

The views expressed in this journal are that of the authors' and do not represent those of the Journal.

Cover Page : Origin of the Earth from the great Cosmic Egg in Kalevala , the national epic of Finland as narrated by poet Ellias Lonnrot

Inside symbols and photos: www.google.com and photo album of MKMishra

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From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Humanity Studies in many countries have faced a lot of crisis. The major discipline like Science and Arts, which was considered equally, is valued differently by the different systems. While some people promote and patronage Science as the major discipline, some people advocate for Arts. Some people think that it is only Science and its studies that can make the people and society materially happy and prosperous. Development Planners foresee the effective use of technology in the improvement of poorest of the poor and aspire to adopt it in the areas where even the minimum opportunity of literacy, health and livelihood has not been provided till date.

The whole globe has witnessed the great change that the technology and science has brought through inventions since last three centuries. But a human question arise, whether these inventions are in favour of human harmony or it has its dark side? What worries the global thinkers is about the future of humanity. It has been realized that the third world war may not take place, but the unrest already cropped up in many countries signifies the cruelty against humanity which is a threat to human harmony and peace. Students have never been a victim of such political unrest. The emerging disintegration between the power groups, the rift between the people in power and people in disadvantaged has reached its peak. It has signaled the global societies to integrate the human values and harmony between the differences and diversities, or the consequences will be more than the world war. For sake of exploiting the nature, the globe has never before been so distorted. As Gandhi said, the world is enough for need, but not enough for the greed.

The question is why the political theories are failing and the most advanced civilization is unable to maintain peace and harmony and why at all a handful people have become so insensitive to the Earth? Is it the outcome of the vast knowledge that the civilization has given to the human society? Or it is the socio- economic imbalance that decided a group of need

challenge the greed? The answer is left to the players of humanity, than the thinkers of humanity.

Human culture is a collective creation after affirming its utility, values, and necessity after yearlong experiences. Whatever is socially acceptable and useful for human sustenance has been maintained by the people. The association of the animate with the inanimate, visible with the invisible, theories with practice, scientific truth with intuition, physics with metaphysics and ideology with the realities has always represented the whole human endeavours, respecting both the self and others. That has kept this earth sustainable. A truth is a relative term and cannot be seen or realized from one angle. Homogenization of human civilization is a great blunder that the people in greed are practicing.

Culture and literature show the diversities of human creation. This is not myth or fallacies. The orality is not false and the written is not the final truth. The visible or tested is not the reality and the imagined is not without reason or logic.

This volume is all about the human culture, oral tradition, rituals, beliefs, of past and present. Each essay is different from the other in terms of understanding the meaning of human life-world that emanates from the praxis of human thought and action, individually and collectively. The sum total of all the articles is the sum total of human culture, envisioning a thread of relationship intertwined either in culture, or language or learning. Human is not alone and has a bond of past and present stored in his social action. Either it is culture of the past; development in socio-economic life or learning in classroom of the present, human thought has shown its excellence in totality. To understand the part is not just to ignore the whole. To exploit the nature and physical world is not just to undermine the beyond physical world. The horizon of thought and mind has always connected to the real world as copious as it has related to the imperceptible and imaginary world.

The space and power are not shared democratically and the opportunity is denied to the others half of the globe. Therefore the other's discourse has become more important than the pedants way of looking at the culture and literature, even development. Concept of development differs from region to region. To assert one's own identity, land, language and life, the others have always created their culture and literature with more human sensibilities to forgive the inhumanity and propagate compassion. Therefore, perhaps the

values and morals that is narrated in oral tradition and in rituals contains the ethics of the greatest human philosophers and thinkers.

I am thankful to the contributors across the globe, who have been so warmhearted of writing their papers from their cultural and educational world and have presented it to Lokaratna – the gem of the people. This is the eighth volume of Folklore Foundation created on love and solidarity of the writers. This volume is symbolically momentous in terms of Indian mythology that Krishna, the lover God was the eighth -birth from his mother's womb. We as a global group, believe that the *Sama-dharma* – “like minded” of this globe will withstand for nourishing the beautiful world with our beautiful mind. Singing the Vedic words *Vasudheva Kutubakam* – “where the whole globe is a family”, I hope to expand the esprit de corps to more writers of the globe, with their endeavours, love and of course *Karuna* – compassion.

My obligations are not adequate to Dr Anand Mahanand and Dr Ranjan Panda for their noble venture to be with me to edit this volume. I am also fondly thankful to Prof. Mark Turin, A noted Himalayan folklorist, University of British Columbia, US for his kind diassmination of Lokaratna in his World Oral Literature Project as a collaborator with Folklore Foundation, from its inception of this journal.

Mahendra Kumar Mishra

April, 3rd, 2015

Editorial



The broad theme of the present volume is folklore, culture, literature and pedagogy. When we are clubbing these categories together, we need to reflect on how these are related to one another. We are aware that literature and language are intrinsically related to each other. It is through language that literature expresses its meaning. Language is the medium and it plays an important role for conveying meaning for interpretation. Language can make a literary work funny, humorous subtle or serious. Literature provides language to be a medium. Language makes it survive. Without language, literature can't exist not can its content be expressed? Language and literature are two important components of culture. They enrich culture in a significant way. Culture also provides materials for the enrichment of both language and literature. Cultural contexts play an important role in shaping language and literature in creativity, interpretation and in the teaching and learning processes.

Pedagogy might be part of culture. It can be also seen as a notion as well as an instrument through which the teaching of literature, language and culture is done. Pedagogy is embedded in each of these components. Still we need to reflect on the nature of pedagogy time to time. It is heartening to note that the papers included in this volume make us reflect on these areas. Needless to say discussions, deliberations and circulation of ideas related to literature, culture and pedagogy are also forms of pedagogic exercises. We are happy that we have substantial resources for this volume on these subjects.

We have categorized the articles under three sections. The first section is devoted to Folklore, Culture and Literature. This section includes many

articles of significance and relevance. Ivy Hansdak's article "The Creation Myths of the Santals" studies the creation myths of the Santals by applying theories formulated by Mircea Elaide and explores how the influence of Puritanic values has influenced the study of the primitive pleasure principles. Tatyana V. Fedosova in her article "The Phenomenon of Kaichy in Altai Culture" discusses the story telling tradition of Alnotinia.

Shilpi Smita Panda in her article "Tribal Cosmology and Conservation Ethics" argues that tribal cosmology is deeply rooted in nature and their world revolves around it. She states that they view it as sacred but modern man looks at them as destroyers of nature though on the contrary they are the preservers as that is inherent in their belief system. Pullikonda Subbachary's paper on Ritual of sacred - as opposed to profane-, narrates the purest and divine condition of a person in ritual context. He has discussed how orality and ritual performance form the social ethics of sacrality as opposed to liminality in the folklore studies of south India. His paper concentrates on the theoretical issue, 'how does a person traverse from profane condition to sacred and back to profane in the folk ritual processes. Arenkala Ao in an article titled "Folklore and Memory in Ao Naga Community" argues that folklore constructs the value system and belief of a community. Hence, there is a need to recover different forms of folklore. In the same way, Pouriangthanliu in an article "Rice and Folklore among the Zeliangrong Nagas" emphasizes on the role of rice in cultural exchanges and practices. Priyadarshini Mishra in her article "Socio-Historical Study of the Kamar" studies the history of the Kamar tribe and try to elicit the identity across political boundaries of Chhattishgarh bordering Odisha. Sanjay Kausal and Nimmi Nalika in their paper titled "Interrupting the Myth: Post structural Approach to Community and Literature" look at myths and interpret them from post structural perspectives. Kailash C. Baral looks at representation of the Naga in the British colonial texts. He posits the colonial gaze from a post colonial perspective. Svitlana Volkova in her paper "Cognitive Semiotic Approach to

the Study of Native American Literary Texts” explores how folklore images, and motifs help in interpreting literary texts to foreground relationship between people, land and environment. Elina Rahimova looks at the history of folklore study over the years and points out that the emphasis of the earlier approach has been study of diverse oral materials and not much on literary aspect of these forms. In her article she wants to study the epic runo-poems in Kalevela metre. Tradition and culture also come into conflict with the process of modernization. Whereas traditional culture is sustaining and moves at its own pace, modernization brings about many changes and modifications in these forms. In her article titled “Tribal Development, Displacement and violation of Human Right in Odisha” Ratnaprabha Barik discusses the pains of enduring the imposed development and its side effects on environment. When development brings prosperity to a few, it adversely affects many.

In his article “Appropriating the Intangible Heritage: Folklore in Indian English Literature” Shubhendu Mund argues that the study of folklore and literature can be integrated as both complement each other though folklore is the mother of (written) literature. He also demonstrates how folklore has enriched the field of Indian English literature. Nidhi Pandey in her article studies the painted pottery of the Harappan civilization and explores how the depictions represent narration of popular folk narratives. Ranjit Mandal explores nature and women relationship in the novels of Anita Desai from an eco-feminist perspective. Nanditha Shastri in her article “Women and Identity” deals with the novels of Shashi Deshpande and explores how identity plays an important role in representation particularly the use of symbols, motifs and norms. Madhurendra Kumar Jha discuss on the “*Ballad of Mulan*” written during the Northern Wei Dynasty of north China, celebrates the heroic deed of Mulan and makes a hero out of her for joining the army in disguise to substitute her ageing father.

The second section is devoted to language and pedagogy. This also has many relevant and significant contributions from eminent scholars in the field. Professor S. Mohanraj in his article “A Brief Introduction of Dictionaries” looks at the use of dictionaries and the changes that have come upon in their use in the last couple of centuries. Ruth Hauzel in her article “Cultural Diversity and the Classroom” discusses how cultural diversity of our country can serve as a wonderful resourceful context for English language education. She explains this by citing example from context of tribal learners. Krushna Chandra Mishra in his article “Teacher Training and Empowerment of the Tribes” makes a case for teacher training to empower tribal teachers and equip tribal students with skills. K.B.S. Krishna in his article “Humanistic Rationale and Technical Writing Antagonistics?” foregrounds whether technical writing lacks humanistic rationale and proves that it does not lack but have humanistic attributes to offer.

Sadananda Meher in his article “Teaching Spelling, A Need or Waste of Time: A Summary of Teachers’ Attitude and Belief in the Use of L1 Classroom” discusses teachers’ beliefs and suggests the ways of teaching vocabulary in a multilingual context. Subhashis Nanda in his article “Teachers’ Attitude and Belief in the Use of L1 in ESL Classroom” makes a survey of teachers’ beliefs in the use of L1 in the second language classroom.

The third section has two book reviews. Soumya Sangita Sahoo and K.B.S Krishna review two books published by Anand Mahanand. It also has an Interview with Khushwant Singh by Amitendu Bhattacharya which deals with Khushwant Singh’s ideas, related to language, literature, culture and many other things related to life. This was perhaps the last interview by the veteran writer who left an irreplaceable place in the world of literature. The last part of the section is a new addition. It is called Lokaratna Khajana or the Treasure Trove of forms of tales, songs, riddles and so on. By including some

of these forms in every volume, we could document at least some of them and share with readers across the globe.

Going through all these articles has been a wonderful experience for us. In the process of interaction, we have not only learned from one another, we have also become collaborative participants leading to building a collaborative academic community devoted to research and sharing. We thank the contributors for their valuable contributions. We also thank the referees for going through the articles. I am thankful to Professor Ranjan K. Panda of IIT, Bombay for all his help and cooperation. I am personally thankful to Dr Mahendra K. Mishra for his support and guidance and to Subhashis, Sadananda and Amit for their help in formatting the pages.

Anand Mahanand

Executive Editor

Contents	page
From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief	3-5
Editorial	6-8
Folklore, Culture, Literature and Pedagogy: Contemporary Perspectives	
<i>1. The Creation Myth of the Santals</i> Ivy Hansdak	14-18
<i>2. The Phenomenon of Kaichy in Altai Culture</i> Tatyana V. Fedosova	19-28
<i>3. Tribal Cosmology and Conservation Ethics</i> Shilpi Smita Panda	29-39
<i>4. Becoming And Un-Becoming Of God</i> A Study of a Travel between Profanity to Sacrality back to Profanity in the Folk Ritual Processes of South India P Subbachary	40-59
<i>5. Folklore and Memory in Ao Naga Community</i> Arenkala Ao	60-67
<i>6. Rice and Folklore among the Zeliangrong Nagas</i> Pouriangthanliu	68-75
<i>7. Historical Study of the Kamar: An Introduction</i> Priyadarshini Mishra	76-88
<i>8. Interpreting the Myth: Post structural Approach to Community and Literature</i> Sanjay Kausal and Nimmi Nalika	89-100
<i>9. The Spectacle of the Other: Colonialism and the Naga (A working Paper)</i>	

K.C. Baral

101-109

10.Cognitive Semiotic Approach to the Study of Native American Folklore in American Literary Texts

Svitlana Volkova

110-121

11.The Finnish-Karelian Mythical Epics in a Comparative Light: Paeveolae Feast

Elina Rahimova

122-142

12.Tribal Development, Displacement and violation of Human Right in Odisha

Ratna Prabha Barik

143-154

13.Appropriating the Intangible Heritage: Folklore in Indian English Literature

Subhendu Mund

155-166

14.Narration of Folk Tales Go Back To the Harappan Times

Nidhi Pandey

167-170

15.Naturalized women and feminized nature: the Politics of nature-women relationship in Fire on the Mountain

Ranjit Mandal

171-175

16. Women and identity: A study of Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence

Nanditha Shastry

176-181

17.Reinventing the 'Ballad of Mulan': A Socio- Political- Cultural Analysis of Cinematic Adaptations of the Folksong of Mulan.

Madhurendra Kumar Jha

182-195

Language and Pedagogy

18.A brief introduction to Dictionaries

S. Mohanraj 198-205

19.Cultural Diversity and the Classroom

Ruth Z Hauzel 206-217

20. Teacher Training and Empowerment of the Tribes

K.C. Mishra 218-225

21.Humanistic Rationale and Technical Writing: Antagonistic?

KBS Krishna 226-233

22. Teaching Spelling: A Need or Wastage of time?

A Survey of Teachers' Attitude and Belief in Use of L1 in ESL Classroom

Sadananda Meher 234-248

23. Teachers' Attitude and Belief in Use of L1 in ESL Classroom

Subhashis Nanda 249-257

Reviews and Interview

24.Book Review 1

Soumya Sangita Sahoo 258-259

25.Book Review2

KBS Krishna 260-264

26.A Little More than Sex, Scotch and Scholarship:

My Reminiscences of the Man Called Khushwant Singh

Amitendu Bhattacharya 265-279

27.Lokaratna Khajana: Treasure Trove of Folktales, songs...

Suchismita, Bhavesh , Pratima, and Anand 280-288

Contributors

289-293

The Creation Myth of the Santals

Ivy Imogene Hansdak

Abstract

This paper will apply some theoretical approaches of Myth Studies to the study of the Santal creation myth, particularly those formulated by Mircea Eliade. Beginning with a brief definition of the genre of myth, it will then deal with the significance of myth and narrative in preserving memory and a sense of identity among the followers of primitive religions. As with other primitive religions, the ritual narration of the Santal creation myth also serves to regenerate the community spiritually. Finally, the Santal creation myth is examined in detail with reference to the peculiar circumstances in which it was first documented by missionaries in the late nineteenth century, the existence of several versions of it and the role played by several Santal deities like Thakur-Jiu and Maran Buru in the creation and procreation of the first human couple, namely Pilcu Haram and Pilcu Budhi. Finally, the rationale behind the pleasure principle underlying the tribal way-of-life, which has been condemned by puritanical thinkers from many mainstream religions, is also explained through this creation myth.

(Key words: Tribal, myth, religion, migration, Karam binti)

A myth may be defined as a story that serves to connect individuals to their cultures and to explain natural and supernatural phenomena, including the creation of the world and the origin of humans. According to Mircea Eliade, the Romanian-born historian of religion, myths have two dimensions which suggest two realms of being: the sacred and the profane. The former realm involves religious feeling while the latter involves the world of science. It was earlier believed that myths belonged only to ancient or primitive cultures, but this has been challenged by Eliade who argues that myths are compatible with

modern science. He points out those modern cultures also have their own myths.

In primitive creation myths, a god creates a natural phenomenon that continues to exist, such as the earth, the cosmos, human beings, animals, vegetation, flood, rain, the seasons, etc. This mythic feat occurs at the beginning of time or 'primordial time'. The act of narrating this myth is equivalent to revealing a mystery. Once told, the myth is accepted as absolute truth by the people of that culture. In other words, the myth enters the sacred realm and becomes part of the sacred history of that culture. Mircea Eliade has pointed out two important functions of myth: it explains and it regenerates. By hearing, reading and re-enacting a myth, the people are taken back magically to the time when it first occurred. This return to primordial time reunites them to their gods and their ancestors. Through this reunion, they are regenerated or renewed spiritually.

The German psychoanalysts, Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud, have also studied myth. Jung believes myths to be direct expressions of the collective unconscious of cultures while Freud traces many of the complexes and neuroses of the human psyche to mythic heroes and heroines. According to the French social anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, myths are like language that needs to be decoded to understand their 'real' message. He suggests a method of structural analysis whereby the meaning of a myth is discovered by examining its elements in combinations.

As with the oral traditions of many tribal groups in India, several documented versions of the Santal creation myth have also existed. Today, two main versions of it are generally known to anthropologists. Both were documented by European missionaries in the late nineteenth century. In spite of their divergences, both versions are accepted within contemporary Santal society. The earlier version appeared in 1887 in a valuable Santali work, *Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha* (literal meaning: 'The Stories as Told by a Santal Guru'), which was written by a Norwegian Lutheran missionary named Rev. Lars Ole Skrefsrud of the Indian Home Mission (IHM, later called the Santal Mission). Skrefsrud lived among the Santals of Eastern India from 1867 to 1910, gained mastery over their language and went on to write several Santali books, including a Santali grammar and a Santali translation of the *New Testament*.

Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha was primarily an ethnographic work that recorded the social and cultural traditions of the Santals. It was an *in verbatim* recording of an oral narrative told by a venerable Santal guru named Kolean Haram to Skrefsrud, who became the guru's disciple for about a year in 1871-72. Though Kolean Haram ended his narrative in February 1872, the work lay on the shelf for sixteen years until it was bought and published as *Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha* in 1887. About half-a-century later, it was translated into English by another Norwegian Lutheran missionary named Rev. Paul Olaf Bodding and published as *Traditions and Institutions of the Santals* in 1942. This paper will use Bodding's translation while referring to Skrefsrud's work.

The Traditions and Institutions of the Santals begins with "The Ancestors' Story", which narrates the Santal myth of the creation of the world and the first humans by *Thakur-Jiu*.¹ In brief, the creation myth goes in this manner: At first, there was only water and the earth was under the water. *Thakur-Jiu* began by creating the creatures of the water like the crab, the crocodile, the alligator, the fish, the prawn, the earthworm, the tortoise and others. Then *Thakur-Jiu* made two humans out of earth and was about to breathe life into them when the *Sin-Sadom* (literal meaning: 'day-horse') came down and trampled them into pieces. So *Thakur-Jiu* decided to make two birds. He made two beautiful *Has-Hasil* birds (literal meaning: 'geese') with material taken off his breast. The *Has-Hasil* birds flew about the sky and then alighted on *Thakur-Jiu's* hand. Then the *Sin-Sadom* came down again for a drink and left some froth on the water. *Thakur-Jiu* told the *Has-Hasil* birds to alight on the froth but they asked for a firm place. So *Thakur-Jiu* made earth with the help of the earthworm and the tortoise. The tortoise stood quietly on the water while the earthworm went down to bring up the earth. The earthworm ate the earth which was passed through his tail on to the tortoise's back. As the earth spread and became firm, *Thakur-Jiu* planted seeds in it and so land was made.

The *Has-Hasil* birds alighted on this newly-created earth and bore two eggs in a nest. These hatched and give birth to two human beings, a boy and a girl. *Thakur-Jiu* then instructed the birds to take the human beings to a place called *Hihiri Pipiri*. Here, the two human beings lived by themselves. They were naked but they felt no shame and lived in great peace. They were called *Pilcu*

¹ The use of the term "Thakur-Jiu" for God became the subject of debate for some missionaries working among the Santals. While Skrefsrud supported the use of "Thakur-Jiu" for God, Campbell and some others preferred "Ishwar" or its Santali form "Isor".

Haram and *Pilcu Budhi*. One day, *Lita* or *Maran Buru* (the principal deity of the Santals) came to them in the guise of a grandfather and taught them to brew rice-beer. After becoming drunk, they were amorous with each other. That night, they slept together and had sexual intercourse. Later, the two humans were ashamed and made coverings for their bodies with leaves. When they confessed their sexual act to *Maran Buru*, he just smiled and said, "It does not matter." Thereafter, the two human beings lived as man and wife, and bore fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls.

The narrative goes on to speak of the marriages between these boys and girls, which resulted in the formation of the first seven *paris* (septs), namely, Hansdak', Murmu, Kisku, Hembrom, Marndi, Soren and Tudu. Later, five more septs were added to these, namely, Baskey, Besra, Pauria, Core and Bedea (the last one, i.e., Bedea, has been lost). The narrative also speaks of their migration to a land called *Khoj Kaman*. Here, they fell into evil ways and were punished by *Thakur-Jiu*, who sent down a rain of fire for seven days and seven nights. But two humans were chosen and warned by *Thakur-Jiu* to hide in a cave. They emerged after the fire-rain had ended and found some animals alive. They multiplied and divided into different tribes. The narrative then speaks of their wanderings through many lands like *Sasan Beda*, *Sin Duar*, *Kaende Disom* and *Cae Campa*. They also came in contact with the *dekos* or *dikus* (literal meaning: 'non-Santals of the better class; does not include Muslims or Dalits') and made friends with them. They even fought along with *Ram Raja* (King Ram) against *Rabona Raja* (King Ravana) in Lanka. Later, however, they started fighting with the *dekos* and were driven out of *Cae Campa* by them. Since then, they have lived in *Bir Disom* (literal meaning: 'jungle country'). Some have also gone to other lands.

This, in brief, was the Santal creation myth narrated by Kolean Haram to Rev. L.O. Skrefsrud in 1871-72. Skrefsrud's version of the Santal creation myth was soon followed by another version of it, documented by Rev. Arthur Campbell and published as "Santal Traditions" in the *Indian Evangelical Review*, 1892.

The Santal theologian and writer, Dr. Timotheas Hembrom, has made a study of the Santal creation myth in his work, *The Santals: Anthropological-Theological Reflections on Santali and Biblical Creation Traditions* (1996). Here he begins by comparing Skrefsrud's version with Campbell's version, and then concludes by validating the latter. This version is then compared with the Biblical creation narrative. Two other writers, Marine Carrin and Harald Tambs-Lyche, have also commented on Skrefsrud's version of the Santal creation myth in their

work, *An Encounter of Peripheries: Santals, Missionaries, and their Changing Worlds, 1867-1900* (2008). According to them, Skrefsrud presented this myth as a parallel to Genesis, a tendency still found among Christian Santals.

Mircea Eliade's theory of myth as sacred history is particularly useful in understanding the significance of this creation myth. Here, a primitive culture uses story-telling as sacred ritual. The Santal creation myth is ritualistically narrated as *Karam Binti* during the Santal Karam festivals by the Karam Guru, usually late at night and before a group of people gathered around a Karam tree branch that is planted in the village street. Here, as pointed out by Eliade, the myth serves to regenerate the people by taking them back magically to primordial time and reuniting them with their gods and ancestors. When taken symbolically, this creation myth also has other meanings. It could mean that an act of creation involves both the creator and the created. Similarly, the role of *Maran Buru* is also significant. By enacting the role of a benign grandfather who teaches the first couple how to brew rice-beer and to have sex, *Maran Buru* elevates pleasure and procreation to the sacred level.

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The Phenomenon of Kaichy in Altai Culture

Tatyana V. Fedosova

Abstract

The paper is devoted to sacral images in the traditional culture of Altaians, in particular to the image of kaichy (a storyteller and a shaman). The nature of kai (throat singing), thanks to imagination generates special poetic life, a complete picture of the world with original digression to the past and future communications through the present moment. The tradition of kai which has grown from archaic models constantly varies depending on a performing context. Storytellers are recognized not only by the form of performance, a variety of kai, but also by lexicon, features of a plot and composition structure of epic monuments. The power of kaichy art, according to many researchers, is similar to the power of the shaman. So many singers were simultaneously shamans, in particular such widely known storytellers in Altai as A. Kalkin, N. Yalatov and others. The storyteller and the shaman used a common mythological fund, the general formular arsenal, were guided in a complex information system of folklore, leant against the common cultural traditions, at times had the common family tree, could combine in itself functions of the storyteller and the shaman. However their products refer to two different independent systems, each with its own artistic and aesthetic religious orientation and a different functional orientation. Wisdom of the past forms the personality of a modern artist and the creativity which, in turn, changes a cultural ethnic space and helps to keep a cultural genetic fund of the ethnos. It testifies about a continuity of rhythms of a life of the ethnos.

Keywords: kai, kaichy, the Altai culture, throat singing, sacral images, incantation, story-telling, mythology, historical and cultural factors.

Each culture contains the arsenal of sacral images. In the traditional culture of Altaians such images are a kaichy (storyteller) and a shaman. A kaichy possess special “memory art” in which numerous poetic and graphic subjects and composite formulas of the heroic epos remain.

Altai is one of few regions in Russia where folklore, throat singing, and heroic legends are preserved until now. The epos belongs to major historical and cultural factors thanks to which Altai people have managed to keep their ethnic identity, original culture, a national language, a traditional way of life, and primordial ethical standards and customs. The epic heritage of Altaians is a part of world epic culture.

The Altai heroic epos has existed in the national memory for millennia, refracting and synthesizing history, mythology, pagan religion, and material and spiritual culture of the people. More than 200 legends were written down in different versions and variants. Besides each of them contains from 900 to 4-8 thousand poetic lines which are reproduced by national singers-performers.

The classical form of performance of the Altai heroic epos is kai (throat singing to the accompaniment of a plucked two-string musical instrument called topshur). The person performing kai, is called kaichy. Throughout centuries he, as well as the shaman, took an important place in a spiritual and cultural life of Altai people. The shaman acts as a certain spiritually strong-willed energy, “a ball of fire”, a mediator between the worlds. A kaichy possess special “art of memory” in which numerous poetic and graphic constants, narratives, and compositional formulas of the heroic epos are preserved.

Kai is a unique phenomenon of living functioning traditional forms of art. Throughout a centuries-old way of its development the art of kai was generated in quite independent specific aesthetic phenomenon possessing high artistic merits. Kai with a great intensity accumulates features of worldview, attitude of the ethnic group, and is an effective way of storage and translation of artistic intelligent ethnic information. The art of kaichy in all its aspects (functional, structural, psychological, creative, and social) promoted the insurance of structural stereotypes, specifications, and finally, the formation of traditional axiology.

The first records of a genre of heroic legends in the territory of Gorny Altai began in the middle of the 19-th century. At the beginning of this work there were the following researchers: V.I. Verbitsky and V.V. Radlov,

later A. Kalachev, N.M. Potanin, N.M. Yadrintsev and others. Their works contained the first data on the musical culture of Turkic people of Gorny Altai – statements about songs, a musical part of the epos and shaman ceremonies, and also short descriptions of musical instruments.

Since 1958 the series edition of “Atai Baatylar” (“the Altai Worrier”) has begun; it contains a huge epic material. Fourteen volumes of Altai heroic epic contain 88 texts from more than 32 storytellers since 1958 till 2008 (in records of the 19th century not all names of storytellers are mentioned). The series contain the texts which have been written down by storytellers, such as N. Ulagasheva, A. Kalkina, N. Chernoeva, S. Markova, T. Chachiakova, N. Yalatova, K. Kokpoeva, E. Tashtamysheva, D. Yamanchikova, O. Alekseeva, Ch. Butueva and other storytellers.¹ They were real keepers of a cultural memory of people, having preserved numerous heroic legends.

A kaichy, the specificity of performance of kai, and the effect which it produces on a listener are mentioned to a certain degree by almost all researchers of the culture of Gorny Altai.² More than a hundred years ago a student of the Petersburg university A. Kalachev described the performance of a Telengit kaichy near the village of Kosh-Agach in the following way: “The first sounds were shy, uncertain: only vowels *a, u, i* were heard, but then he got inspired at once, dumped his hat which closed almost all his face, and started singing. He sang in a low octave, a moderate rate sometimes strengthening his voice, sometimes softening it to the expressive whisper <...>. My nerves strained more and more ... The whole song without a break was performed for more than 4 hours, but on the first day all the same it was not finished. It was a saga about the Altai-Buuchay, rich in purely epic colors.”³

Legendary stories are left about many storytellers of the past (Sary, Uul, Dindiley, Anika, Shonkor Shunekov, Ospynak, Nastan, Sabak Bochenov, Kydyr Otlykov, Kabak Tadyzhekov, etc.).

The tradition of epic storytelling in Gorny Altai has been preserved not only thanks to skills of storytellers, but also continues to develop. The description of the phenomenon of storytelling is in the works of the Altai researchers, among which are the works of S.S. Surazakov, S.S. Katash, S.M. Katasheva, Z.S. Kazagacheva, E.E. Yamaeva and others.

All researchers notice that Altai kai has a unique intonation shape, and in its authentic sounding it is always recognized aurally by a special intonation, an articulation, and a timbre. A kaichy, possessing a special musical talent, masterly skills of playing musical instruments, besides,

possessed the ability of a powerful mental and physical concentration of intelligence, a body, and emotions, a gift of creation and influence on the surrounding world, nature, and people.

Altaians have two forms of performing the heroic epos: telling and kai. In total Altaians point out two to twelve styles of throat singing, but there are two basic styles: *kyrgyra* and *khomey*; they give birth to all others. The most widespread style of throat singing in Altai is **kyrgyra** – a especial low guttural voice. A way of producing kai is unique for each performer, as well as his abilities. A traditional position while performing kai is a pose of a “lotus”. This position occurs in meditative technics and in religions.

Starting to perform the legend, a kaichy first of all blessed his instrument. All was important — from what tree and from what skin it would be, and the hair of mane of what horse would make two stretched strings. The sound of strings of the topshur is clear and pure, but it is not loud. Nevertheless, it creates the best sound background for a voice of a kaichy who varies a rhythm, depending on pictures, images, and plots of a legend.

Altaians call kaichy not any person who can transfer complete plots of epic products rhythmically and in an organized manner. A kaichy could be a person creatively gifted by nature, possessing a good memory and an ability to transfer to the listener pathetically a plot and artistic beauty of epic products. One of the main conditions of recognition of a kaichy is an ability to perform a heroic legend from the beginning to the end by throat singing to the accompaniment of a topshur. A kaichy is an expert professionally prepared in his art, trained for it since his childhood.

The status of a kaichy in a society was very great. A kaichy was a guest of honor of hunters who saw in him a person capable of propitiating the owner of a taiga, to entice animals into places convenient for hunting. Before going hunting a kaichy performed a certain epic legend, intended for this purpose, as though magically influencing animals and thus alluring them to hunters. But a leading role belonged to a taiga eezi (the spirit of a taiga) who gifted the storyteller for the performance of a heroic legend.

The tradition which has grown from archaic models constantly varies depending on a performing context. Storytellers are recognized not only by the form of a performance, a variety of kai, but also by a lexicon, special features of a narrative and composite structure of epic monuments. Z.S. Kazagacheva marks this fact as follows: “The main distinctive feature of each of three storytellers is his language. Taking into account all the abundance of graphic and expressive means similar

on the level of artistic synonymy pressed by centuries, texts of each storyteller differ stylistically, and have a variety of forms of a live folk speech.”⁴ The strength of art of a kaichy, according to many researchers, is similar to the strength of a shaman. A great number of books are devoted to the problem of relations of a storyteller and a shaman.⁵ A detailed characteristic of these interrelations was given by D. Foonk and V. Kharitonova in the editions of the latest years.

Detailed research of a ratio of an epic tradition to a shaman and burkhan ceremonial poetry was undertaken by E.E. Yamaeva in her dissertation thesis “The Altai Spiritual Culture. A Myth. An Epos. A Ritual” (1998). She specifies that many kai-tellers were simultaneously shamans, in particular such widely known storytellers in Altai as A. Kalkin, N. Yalatov and others. Considering the published and archival materials, the researcher writes: “A kai-teller and a shaman used a common mythological fund, a common toolkit of forms, were perfectly good at a difficult information system of folklore, leaning on a general cultural tradition, at times they had a common family tree, could combine the functions of a storyteller and a shaman. However their works belong to two different independent systems, each one with its own artistic, aesthetic, and religious focus, having a different functional direction.”⁵

Finnish scholar L. Kharvilakhti in his monograph “Sacred Mountain. Research of the Oral Poetry of Gorny Altai” (2003) presented a thorough and a detailed study of a phenomenon of Altai storytelling. The author investigates the Altai archaic epos in a close connection (diachronic and synchronic) with adjacent areal ethnic cultures (Turkic speaking and Mongol speaking) and, more widely, with a world cultural process. The analysis of metric features and means of poetic figurativeness of the epic “Maaday-Kara”, “Ochy-Bala” and “Khan-Altyn” reveals their similarity to the Finnish epic about Kalevale, the Buryat heroic epos, Evenki heroic legends, Yakut Olonkho, halkha-Mongolian and Oyrat traditions, beginning from the basic subject structures to micro-poetic features and forms of poetic recital.⁶

The book became a result of the researcher’s great interest in the oral tradition of the Central Asia; in different years L. Kharvilakhti conducted field work in Mongolia, Bangladesh, India, and China. During the expeditions which were held in Gorny Altai in the fall of 1996 and 1997, the Altai-Russian-Finnish research group worked with Alexey

Kalkin, a well-known epic storyteller in the region, Tabar Chachiyakov, the performer of the epos in a special style of a recitative prose and Nastasia Makarovna Pustogacheva, an expert of numerous folklore genres.

The author of the book managed to fix the last lifetime performance of the epos by A. Kalkin who was not simply the performer of the epos, he was the last “yeelu kaichy”, that is the storyteller who was under a special protection of spirits who as it is considered, perform heroic legends with his lips. L. Kharvilakhti mentions about a unique epic memory of A. Kalkin who stored in his mind not only epic legends (42), but also their numerous variations, and, besides, other folklore genres which he performed in different dialects.

A. Kalkin is a hereditary storyteller, since his childhood involved in the world of legends, tales, and myths. It is worth mentioning that not only the house environment where kai was constantly performed, but also the place where A. Kalkin was born, was wrapped by legends and tales. The Ulagan district of Gorny Altai is especially rich in the monuments of an ancient culture: rock paintings and archaeological monuments. The well-known Pazyryk barrows are concentrated in this area. A personality of a storyteller of such a scope who became a true keeper of a thousand-year history of the Altai folklore, throughout half a century has attracted researchers of folklore. Thanks to such unique phenomena as A. Kalkin, considers B.N. Putilov, “we have a significant and the most interesting material on typologically early forms of the epos in its live, natural state. These forms, most likely, will not be repeated any more in a human history.”⁷

Unique sound recordings of the heroic epos and other folklore genres of Altaians performed by A. Kalkin are stored in the funds of the Pushkin House (Saint-Petersburg), the Central House of National Art (Moscow), the State Conservatory named after M.I. Glinka (Novosibirsk), and the Institute of Philology of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Science, Institute of Altai Language and Culture Studies named after S.S. Surazakov in Gorno-Altai. Legends performed by A. Kalkin also have received a wide popularity abroad. The translations of “Maaday-Kara” were done into English, Turkish, and German languages.

The artistic heritage of N. Ulagashev, A. Kalkin, and other kaichys plays a large role in the revival and preservation of culture of the people – their language, history, traditions, and art. It is not by chance that a number of poems of the Altai poets of the senior generation such as A. Adarov, B. Bedyurov, P. Samyk, and B. Ukachin are devoted to them. These poetic testimonies possess special emotional persuasiveness as their authors communicated directly with well-known kaichys, listened to their legends which lasted for many hours, and a changing effect of kai. It is necessary to note that the melody of kai makes the space of Gorny Altai especially recognized.

In the poem “Conversation with the Native Land” among the signs of the homeland B. Ukachin notices traditional landscape details, and other features that make this place original and inimitable: “*The music of the shor, a melody of kai ...*». In A. Adarov's poem “The Altai Bogatyrs” it is heard that as if shadows sing in the distance, and rough rivers and streams compose their songs.

A. Adarov's poem “Kaichy” is devoted to the legendary storyteller N.I. Ulagashev. The poet reveals a spiritual essence of the glorified storyteller, a scope of his personality for whom his own blindness is nothing compared to a true problem, from his point of view, to remain without a topshur. A. Adarov's another poem is devoted to the known storyteller Alexey Kalkin whose voice he calls magic. A fascinating magic of a kai melody involves all listeners in its force field.

Listening to the storyteller in G. Kondakov's poem “Kaichy” occurs in the atmosphere of a high elation. The poet focuses a special attention on the co-authorship of a kaichy and a listener. This artistic and aesthetic process of sympathy to a kaichy and listeners forms integrity of the perception of the world and creates the atmosphere of the inspired co-authorship.

An artistic imagination of a kaichy and an aesthetic experience of listeners give rise to a special poetic dimension of the reality where the world of a habitual existence and the world of a poetic life are organically connected. There is a doubling of the reality. Ancient, primary, and modern merge indissolubly. Thus the artistic and poetic gift of a kaichy enables the awakening and intrinsic formation of a person of the ethnos and gives a chance to feel the belonging to the past. It is characteristic that the poets exalting a kaichy open the deep essence of kai as a creative process, and not just as a result.

The image of a kaichy as a keeper of people's wisdom and the folklore heritage has attracted Altai painters. I. Ortonulov's work "A Storyteller", P.A. Yelbaev's work "Kaichy", and D.Ya. Togachayeva's work "Kaichy" are widely known. The resort to traditional images of a kaichy and a shaman as carriers of ancient cultural traditions gives the masters of a word and a brush a possibility to feel their belonging to the national culture, and they use this device as a variant of its preservation.

It is necessary to note the influence of kai on the formation of a musical culture of Gorny Altai. Under A. Kalkin's direct influence the whole galaxy of talented young kai performers has grown. Thus, the centuries-old storytelling tradition has not been interrupted, but thanks to A. Kalkin and other national kaichys it has become stronger and remained a major component of a modern Altai culture.

The melody and the text structure of epic legends have become a basis of artistic work of many Altai composers and have become a part of a repertoire of young performers of the heroic epos. For them kai performed by A. Kalkin is an original tuning fork which helps to keep a kernel of a national Altai culture.

If in the middle of the last century the art of kaichy underwent a recession wave, then in the 70s-80s the number of young performers again began to grow. Today many performers acquire the techniques of throat singing in Gorny Altai. Very close to the tradition of throat singing are the modern kaichys – Nogon Shumarov, Bolot Bairyshev, and Emil Terkishev. They show various styles of kai, and each one introduces an individual interpretation to a coin box of an unusual genre.

The ensemble "Altai Kai" (the leader is Urmat Yntyev) created in 1997 for the purpose of preservation and development of a traditional Altai culture occupies a special place. It is a member of the international organization on national creativity of IOF UNESCO. The ensemble became the winner of All-Russia and international festivals and competitions: the recipient of a gold medal "Delfy Games" (Moscow, 2000), the recipient of a gold medal of the international festival of throat singing "Earth Breath" (Ulan-Ude, 2005). In 2001 the ensemble "Altai Kai" received the award of UNESCO and was listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest performance of the epos of kai incessantly during 4 hours and 26 minutes. The tour map of "Altai Kai" is extremely wide: the USA, many European countries, and the countries of Asia. "Altai Kai" has recorded twelve disks. In London the ensemble

gave a concert in the Royal Opera House - it took place thanks to the organization of the world music "WOMEX" which every year reveals interesting musical directions and the member of which "Altai Kai" became a few years ago.

It is necessary to notice that kaichys of the beginning of the 21st century are professional musicians who enrich their repertoire with various techniques. They appear on a stage, record disks, thus making a genre of kai popular. So, it is traditional in Gorny Altai to hold the international competition of national storytellers – "Kurultai Storytellers" where the representatives from the republics of Tyva, Khakassia, and from far away countries of Japan, England, and the USA take part. Their goal is preservation, continuity of national mastery, attraction to participation in a forum of young performers, popularization, and promotion of kai-telling.

Thus, the wisdom of the past forms the personality of a modern artist and his creativity which, in turn, changes the cultural ethnic space and helps to keep a cultural genetic fund of an ethnic group. It is a direct testimony of a connectivity and continuity of rhythms of a life of ethnic groups. The very nature of kai thanks to imagination generates a special poetic life, "a complete view of the world with an original digression to the past, the connection of the past and the future through the moment of the present."⁸

The beauty, power, and uniqueness of the techniques of a kaichy performance allow us to speak today about this art as about the present masterpiece of a non-material spiritual heritage of Altai people.

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Tribal Cosmology and Conservation Ethics

Shilpi Smita Panda

Abstract

The tribals for years have been living in a close proximity with nature. They depend on the bounty of nature for their sustenance. They have revered Nature as their God, regarded it as sacred. The tribals have personified nature and offered prayers to the mountains, forests, rivers and performed a number of rituals to appease the spirits dwelling in the nature. The modern man blames the tribals to be the exploiters of nature. In the process most of their primitive practices centered round nature are abandoned. The tribal cosmology is deeply rooted in the nature. The conservation ethics is also a part of their cosmology. The culture and ritual practices of the community help them to adapt to their eco system. It is the religion and moral responsibility of the tribals that help them to conserve their environment.

Keywords: Cosmology, Conservation Ethics, Culture, Ecosystem.

Introduction

The nature has created man, nurtured him, nourished him with its rich resources and has also destroyed him with its negative repercussions. On the other hand, the man has also used nature, manipulated it for their existence and degraded its resources to meet their greed. The process of industrialization, modernization, urbanization and globalization have changed the use of nature by man, which not only exerts a pressure on the environment but also exploits and affects the life of those who are dependent on the nature. The tribes have always lived in close proximity with nature. The tribes have been dependent on the bounty of the nature in order to sustain themselves and maintain their livelihood. Most of their rituals and cultural practices are related to their environment. The traditional and primitive occupation that the tribes practice is not done at the cost of the environment.

The life and livelihood of the tribes depend on their relationship with the nature. The tribes have tried to carve out a space for them from the forest range. The forest and village share a complex relationship of dependence and

independence, identity and difference. The forest also claims to get back the life it has given once. People are born out of the rich soil and are again called back into it (Valeri, 2000).

The tribal communities in India are located at two major concentrations. The North-eastern region accounts for 12 percent of the country's tribal population and the Central region accounts for 83 percent (Sah and Sisodia, 2004). According to Mishra (1998) the central Indian tribal region has become the nerve centre for India's upcoming industrial society. The adoption of capitalist economic development has resulted in the marginalization and land alienation of the tribals. During the colonial era, the British's interest was to extract the surplus from the tribal areas, which resulted in the failure to access the land and common property resources (CPR) by the tribals. But the colonialists were sympathetic to the tribals and their culture and tried to protect it. The post-independence period brought about more suppression and marginalization to the tribals.

The Forest Survey (2003) Report reveals that 60 percent of the forest covers of the country and 63 percent of the dense forests lie in 187 tribal districts (Madegowda, 2009). In terms of ecology forest can be defined as a plant community predominantly of trees and other woody vegetation usually with a closed canopy (Sagreiya, 1967). Forests are a renewable natural resource having many direct and indirect benefits for the tribals. The forest provides small timber, fuel, bamboo, and many other domestic products for the people who are living close to the forest. Forests provide land for grazing of livestock. It also yields wide variety of commercial products like charcoal, rayon, gums, resins, dyes, tans etc. It also provides medicinal drugs. Indirectly, forests check soil erosion, mitigate floods, and help in agriculture. The forest help to control the climate and gives shelter to the wild life. It helps to maintain an ecological balance in the nature.

In 1864, the forest department was created in India for the first time. The department tried to inspect, demarcate and map out the reserved and protected forests under the Indian Forest Act in 1865 (Sagreiya, 1967). The Government of India (GOI) adopted the Forest Laws in 1878 which restricted the traditional use of forests in rural and tribal areas. This law classified several legal categories of forests such as; the *Reserved Forests*, the *Protected Forests*, and the other categories of forestland which were under the Revenue Department, private owners or the village communities (Tucker et al. 2012).

The traditional activities of the locals like cattle grazing, fires, fuel wood, collection of forest fruits were restricted in the reserved and protected forests during the colonial period. Most of the tribal land turned into a rich natural resource base to provide raw materials for the industries situated in the urban areas. The tribals, peasants, artisans, fisher folk were marginalized and they were alienated from their land and living.

The situation has become worst in the post colonial period. The exploitation and marginalization became more intense for the tribals. In 1960's the Government Forest Department promoted for the plantation of fast growing species of plants like eucalyptus in the state owned land. In this process, a wide variety of trees were felled for the plantation of a mono-cultural species of plant for industrial use (Guha, 2000). The large scale deforestation by the state affected the rich biodiversity. The wild animals did not feed on the single species of plants; as a result they had to change their habitat. The locals have to migrate to the cities in the search of employment and have to live in more poor and unhygienic condition, as they have lost their land to the industries.

The lop-sided development has threatened the life and livelihood of the tribals. In such a situation, resistance against the state was the only way out for the tribals. The struggles of the locals were not only limited to regain their lost claim over their land, but they also fought for the protection of their environment and conservation of their biodiversity.

Most of the protests and rebellions led by the tribals have been to protect their customary rights. The locals demanded for two major things in the conflict. The control over the forest must be shifted back to the villages and communities. And the forest management must balance the sustenance needs of the locals and the commercial orientation of the state (Gadgil et al. 1994).

The cultural and religious rights of the tribals over their habitation has always been neglected by the Government while land acquisition. But such rights were asserted very recently by the Dongria Kondha community in Rayagada and Kalahandi districts of Odisha. The Dongria Kondha have been resisting against the Vedanta Aluminum Limited (VAL) to protect their mountain range of Niyamgiri which the VAL wants for extraction of bauxite ore. The villagers regard the mountain as their own property as their God. Thus under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, the Supreme Court ordered the State to take the consent of the villagers whether the proposed mining would harm the religious and cultural rights of worshipping the mountain (Jena, 2013).

The environmental movements have spread concern for the consequences of the loss of biodiversity and depletion of natural resources. In 1982, the term Sustainable Development appeared for the first time in the Brundtland Commission Report 'Our Common Future'. This principle of sustainability was based on the traditional knowledge of the locals.

The Traditional Ecological knowledge (TEK) of the locals has gained more prominence in the last three decades. Earlier the TEK remained restricted to the local community, the anthropologists and ethnographers who studied those communities. But recently it has gained concern by the environmental experts and the developers. The TEK is not found in an organized and documented form. It is inherited through generations and can be collected through the oral histories. It remains hidden in the traditions of the tribals. The need of the hour is to save this tradition from extinction. The development people are looking for resources to document these TEK which would promote sustainability. This recognition of the TEK has been an initial victory for the tribals to assert their identity. According to Nygren (1999) these traditional experiences of the tribals or their life projects should be incorporated into the development projects in order to resolve the struggle over the natural resources and to achieve the goal of sustainability.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the tribal cosmology that is enrooted in the nature.
2. To analyze the relationship between culture and ecology.
3. To examine the conservation ethics which the tribals use for nature conservation.

What is a Cosmology?

According to Baumeister (2005) there are three different worlds. The Physical World, where all living beings derive their needs from the physical environment in order to survive and reproduce. The biological progress was more important. The Social World that imposed the physical world. Social interaction became a strategy for survival and reproduction. And the culture is the third world, which made living better.

Cosmology is a relative system of beliefs, rituals and practices which people redefine in order to accommodate the exigencies of everyday life. It provides the rationale through which people adapt to their environment, and also to the outer culture (Powers, 1987). Every society has its own cosmology in order to

live in harmony with their environment. Cosmology can be also called as the life world. The life world is the taken-for-granted reality in which the man continuously participates in an inevitable and patterned way. A common, communicative world can be constituted only in the world of everyday life. A life world is always a shared domain (Schutz and Luckmann, 1984). The cosmology or the life world includes the shared experiences, belief system, practices, and knowledge system of a community in order to adapt to the environment. The archaic society was deeply connected to their cosmos (Eliade, 1959). World view or cosmology includes the intrinsic beliefs pertaining to religion and ethics, structures and observation that produce knowledge and understanding (Berkes et al., 2000).

Understanding Cultural Ecology

Ecology is the scientific study of the interactions among the organisms and their environment, biotic, abiotic and cultural environment. Cultural Ecology is study of the ways in which culture is used by people to adapt to their environment (Sutton and Anderson, 2010). According to Rappaport (1979) Humans generally depend more on the cultural means to exploit the ecosystem. Culture determines the economic and ecological activities. In the archaic world, every activity like fishing, hunting, agriculture, games, conflict, sexuality were considered to be sacred. But majority of these acts have undergone desacralization in the modern times and have become profane (Eliade, 1959). The indigenous people with their language, culture and knowledge system are gaining increasing attention. The countries that are rich in biological and cultural diversity treat their flora, fauna and traditional knowledge as a valuable national resource. And it must be protected from the unauthorized exploitation, and developed in order to benefit the entire country. The traditional communities possess conservation ethics that developed from their living in a particular ecosystem (Posey, 2005). The primitive hunter-gatherer and agrarian societies depict an era when the humans strove to live in harmony with nature. Till the present, nature and its forms have been personified into deities to be worshipped and revered. This reverence or nature deities is present in spiritual traditions of Shamanism, Paganism and Hinduism. In regard to man and nature relationship, it is most important to find a holistic balance between the ordinary world of material reality, symbolic or social world of human societies and spiritual world of the universe (Fischer and Hajer, 1999).

The Traditional Ecological Knowledge

There is an African proverb that ‘When a knowledgeable old man dies, the whole library disappears.’ Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is the cumulative body of knowledge, practices and beliefs evolving by adaptive process and is handed down through generations by cultural transmission (Gadgil et al. 1992). The natives are more balanced in their utilization of natural resources. They are not governed by the organic and economic needs alone. Traditional Ecological Knowledge include livelihood practices like agro forestry, multiple cropping patterns, slash and burn cultivation, pest- control mechanism, soil fertilization and tilling, small animal husbandry, use of wild plant species, unique botanical taxonomies, hunting, gathering of forest products, fishing, curative qualities of herbs. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is dynamic and cumulative, it is built upon experiences of earlier generations and adapting to new changes of present (Stevenson, 1996). Such knowledge system is not found in recorded and documented form, it is orally transmitted through folklores and stories. It is holistic; all elements are viewed as interconnected, and can’t be understood in isolation. The knowledge is exclusively owned by the entire community devoid of age and gender. The TEK is the interconnecting element between ecological, socio-cultural and economic dimensions.

The Interaction of Culture and Ecology: Tsembaga Community of New Guinea

Rappaport (1979) focused on the ritual cycles of the Tsembaga communities of New Guinea. He emphasized on the interrelationship of the Tsembaga with their human and non- human environment. The Tsembaga are Maring speaking communities who don’t have an authoritative political structure for administering their society. They are a primitive, egalitarian homogenous community. They depend for their livelihood on the environment and forest. They are bush horticulturalists; they have mixed gardens of roots and greens. They are normally vegetarian; their intake of food is more than the production. The Tsembaga also practice pig husbandry, the pig population is high in the community. They use pigs as cultivating machines. The pigs help to clean the garden and keep the field free from garbage and feces. After first cropping the pigs are allowed to the garden to soften the soil and free it from weeds. The pigs also served as ritual offering for the ancestors. The Tsembaga observed Kaiko festival (Pig Festival) in which they sacrificed the pig and perform some ritual to please the ancestors. The sacramental pork is equally distributed among all the members present in the festival. The festival becomes a medium

of social interaction among different communities, there are new alliances established through the ceremony. The Tsembaga also finds a market for trading during the fest.

Conservation Ethics in the tribal cosmology

Nature must be conserved not just for its own sake but also for the sake of *Homo sapiens*, to which it supplies an indispensable array of ecosystem services (Daily 1997, Chapin et al. 2000) and products (Beattie and Ehrlich 2001). Most of those scientists, and large numbers of environmentalists, regard conservation as a major ethical issue (Rolston 1988, Nash 1989). The cultural evolution operates on the ethics of environmental preservation (Ehrlich 2002). There is a diversity of attitudes towards environment conservation ethics. The hunter–gatherers and subsistence agriculturalists had a deep cultural, perhaps genetically based understanding of their relationship to their environments, and were thus “natural” conservationists (see examples in Krech 1999). Due to their close association with the nature, they were termed to be the exploiters of the natural resources by the industrial and modern society. They were forced to abandon their primitive practices and change their world view under the impact of the colonial imperialist. This resulted in their cultural drift.

According to Johannes (2002) the Pacific Islander invented deliberate conservation measures, only when they learnt their natural resources were limited. Some Pacific Island cultures learned that their marine resources were limited and introduced marine conservation measures accordingly. While others never learned this lesson because their marine resources always exceeded harvesting pressure. Most of the historical and anthropological evidences claim that before the arrival of the Europeans, the Pacific Islanders developed some marine resource management measures.

The social institutions is linked to biological resource management are often related to the religious myths and socio- cultural belief system. There are a number of sacred entities which help in the nature conservation by practicing social and cultural prohibitions (Ramakrishnan, 2001). Some traditional societies value a large number of wild species of flora and fauna for both economical and spiritual reasons. The traditional societies have tried to continue the concept of sacred grove either due to fear or respect for God and ancestral spirits or due to the utilitarian values of biodiversity.

Sacred Groves

Sacred groves are the segments of landscapes containing vegetation and other forms of life and geographical features that are delimited and protected by the humans (Hughes and Chandran, 1998). According to Kosambi (1962) the institution of sacred grove in India is very ancient and dates back to pre-agrarian, hunting –gathering stage. The total number of sacred grove in India is between 1, 00,000 and 15, 00,000 (Malhotra, 1998). There is variation in the management of sacred groves. The sacred groves of Oraons in Rajasthan are managed by the Gram Panchayats, the Haryali grove is managed by the temple committee. The clan-based management is widespread among the tribes like Santhals, Mundas , Kharia, Oraon and other tribes of Central, Eastern and North-Eastern India. In Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh the sacred groves are managed by the local communities.

Religious Role of Sacred Groves

The sacred groves are associated with some deities and annual rituals and ceremonies are performed to propitiate the deity. During these rituals, sacrifices of animals and vegetables are made. These rituals are performed for the well-being of the people, animals and crops.

Ecological Role of Sacred Groves

The sacred groves act as nursery and store house of many ayurvedic, folk medicines. It helps in bio-diversity conservation, prevents extinction of species. It helps to preserve some genotypes which may be useful in forest tree breeding programme. Many sacred groves hold water resources in form of springs, ponds, lakes, streams, rivers. It provides a dependable source of water for organisms living in and around the sacred groves. It also reduces the incidence of forest fires. It helps in soil and water conservation.

Shifting Cultivation

Most of the tribals in the primitive society used slash and burn farming for their livelihood. It is also known as shifting cultivation or Jhum. The slash and burn cultivation is an extensive method of cultivation in which farmers rotate land rather than crops to sustain their livelihood. This traditional farming system is linked with the ecological, socio-economic and cultural life of the indigenous people and is closely connected to their rituals and festivals that revolve round their fields and take place at various phases of cultivation. Jhumming is seen as a way of life; it starts and ends with ceremonies. Shifting cultivation is often regarded as anti-development and primitive. Shifting

cultivation is a form of agriculture widespread in tropical moist forests. Crops are grown for one or two years until the soil is depleted of nutrients. Then the area is abandoned and a new patch is occupied. The same patch of forest may be re-cultivated years later. In north-eastern India, where shifting cultivation is a common practice, a typical fallow period lasts about 10 years. The success of slash-and-burn cultivation depends on the length of the fallow period. The system appears to be relatively sustainable when the fallow period is fairly long.

Some ecologists have suggested that jhum may increase biodiversity because it creates new habitats, while others see it as a largely destructive practice (Raman, Rawat and Johnsingh 1998). The Soligas of Karnataka have been practicing shifting cultivation without degrading their environment. They generally stay in a particular habitat for three to four years. The land for cultivation is generally decided by the elders then the land is cleared from weeds and bushes. They practice multiple cropping and grow maize, millet, mustard, pumpkin, cucumber, various climber beans, banana etc. Before sowing they perform a ritual to earth goddess. When the Soligas changed their location they left some crops in the field for the animals. They also dug wells near the cultivated land which later became a source of water for the animals. The Soligas also performed some rain making rituals to get proper yield. They also practiced controlled burning as a technique for forest management, farming. Thus the Soligas had a dependable knowledge about their ecology (Madegowda, 2009).

Conclusion

Thus the ethics, culture of a community affects their practices and treatment of nature. The regard, respect and fear for nature that the tribals possess, don't allow them to use nature beyond their sustenance. Thus Dwivedi (1990) has rightly stated that religion evoke a kind of awareness in the persons that is different from the scientific and technological reasoning. It helps to create a self-conscious moral society which focuses on conservation and respect for God's first creation. The present ecological crisis reveals the urgent moral need for a new solidarity especially in relations between the developing nations and those that are highly industrialized.

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Becoming And Un-Becoming Of God

A Study of a Travel between Profanity to Sacrality back to Profanity in the Folk Ritual Processes of South India

P. Subbachary

Abstract: The folklorists and anthropologists from East and West discussed much about the social and ritual context of the liminality (Gennep, Arnold Van.1960, Turner Victor. 1969), but not on the concept and dynamics of the sacrality in the folk ritual processes. Liminal period in folk belief system is primarily a period of pollution. It is a ritually polluted period in many of the life cycle rituals and in other contexts too in Indian folklore. Ritual sacrality, which is considered as the purest and divine condition of a person, was not much discussed in the folklore studies of south India. This paper concentrates on the theoretical issue, 'how does a person traverse from profane condition to sacred and back to profane in the folk ritual processes. The persons who are part of the folk ritual processes might not be able to know or explain the embedded meaning or condition in which they traverse but the hidden symbolism reveals the travel of persons --from profanity to sacrality and back to profanity--when it is unraveled by the scholars. The folk Epics of Mallanna and Ellamma of South India explain in many contexts how gods and goddesses lived on earth as one among the human beings. There are separate Cult traditions of Mallanna and Ellamma in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and in some parts of Tamil Nadu. The Cult of Mallanna belongs to the castes of Kurumas and Gollas. Mallanna rituals are conducted and observed from Sankranti festival to

Ugadi festival that is between January to April. Many of the persons male and female of Kurumas themselves become Mallanna and Ellamma in these ritual days. They are considered as sacred and pure persons until they are in the ritual attire and in the entire ritual days. Finally they come out from this sacred condition to profanity or to their usual life. Widespread ritual officiations and practices and belief system are involved in this ritual processes where a person travels between profanity to sacrality and back to profanity. The paper delineates; 'how, the social mobility or the social elevation of the caste is possible' through the ritual process and how the rituals are "Power of the Powerless". The paper also focuses the issue of technical terms coined by the western scholars and their Indian replacements to suite the native ritual processes.

Key words: Divyasthiti, Paavitryam, Divyaadivasthiti, Manushasthiti, Punakam, Vidupu, antaram, maryada.

"To repeat what I said earlier, liminality is the not only cultural manifestation of communitas. In most societies there are other areas of manifestation to be readily recognized by the symbols that cluster around them and the beliefs that attach to them, such as "the powers of the weak", or in other words the permanently or transiently sacred attributes of low status or position".- Victor Turner .

The *divyasthiti* or sacrality, which is a ritual status of Kurumas, manifests the social power through their ritual power. Man could become God by his deeds and may be loved and worshiped by the public for his contribution to the common good. Such process may take a lifetime of a person and such reverence is possible only by such great sacrifice of persons or may be by *tapasya*. But a person may become God or Goddess by participating and

officiating in a ritual process; for time being, may be for few hours, one day, for a month and so on. He would come back to normal life or to his life of a human being after the specific period. This ritual period transforms an ordinary person into a God or Goddess. I would like to call such period or such state of human being as *divyasthiti* or divinity. These two words *divyasthiti* and divinity are used as technical terms in this entire paper. I purposefully avoid the term *liminality*, which is in vogue in Anthropological and folkloric research in various countries in addition to India.² The English word divine and the Sanskrit word *divya* give the similar meaning. The resemblance in their pronunciation too is an interesting co-incident.

In this paper I am going to delineate the ritual practices that have been going on in the Cult of Mallanna belong to the Kuruma Gollas. The paper analyzes the ritual power and how it transforms into social power, some times political power and elevates a caste into higher social order or reverses the real social order existing in the society.

The Kurumas:

There are two pastoral castes in Andhra Pradesh. One is Golla and the other is Kuruma Golla. Gollas are also called Yadava. Golla is the native word and the yadava is the Sanskrit loan word used in Telugu. Adding yadava as a suffix to the names of Gollas is a recent phenomenon in Andhra Pradesh. Gollas practice agriculture in addition to cattle rearing. They are basically cattle grazers. Some of them graze sheep too. They move place to place with their cattle for their feed in summer and remain at their homes in the remaining seasons, few decades ago. But Gollas in last fifty years settled permanently in various villages like any other caste in villages and practicing agriculture. They have been maintaining their cultural practices like worship

² The terms *liminal* and *liminality* are introduced by Van Genep and latter widely used by Victor Turner. I would explain the problem in using these terms in this paper, in the forth-coming discussion.

of Katama Raju Gangamma even when they switch over to some other professions. They also worship all other gods and goddess like any other caste people in the village and go to such temples. But their main cult is of worshipping of Katamaraju. Gollas are predominantly vishnavites and Krishna is considered as supreme god.

Kurumas are basically Shepherds. They are also called as Kuruma Gollas. Gollas and Kuruma Gollas are two different castes. No inter dining and inter marriage is allowed. Their *gotras* or the clan names are also totally different. The little similarity that is there is only in sheep rearing and nothing else. Kurumas have very vast knowledge in the method or 'knowledge system' of sheep rearing comparing to Gollas. Kurumas are transhumant. They move place to place with their sheep for the grass for their sheep that is particularly during the months of March to May. Male persons of two to three families form into a cluster and move place to place with their sheep. Generally each family may have hundred to three hundred sheep in their possession. Two to three families around six to ten persons move in a cluster. Kurumas are not totally nomadic people. They settled in their villages with permanent houses and even farmlands. Their nomadism is partial as mentioned above they move with their sheep only in summer season. This practice is in vogue even today.

Another important profession of Kurumas is blanket making. They weave blankets by using the wool of their own sheep. Some Kuruma families specialize in making of blankets and make it their profession. They generally graze sheep but some families dedicate themselves for making blanket and the entire family i.e., women and children also involve in the work at various stages like cutting wool, cleaning and processing of wool, making thread from the cleaned wool that is spinning and finally weaving on the loom. Weaving and selling of the blankets are generally done by the male persons in the family and women and children do the other jobs like cleaning, ginning, spinning and making thread of the wool at home. A wool blanket is a very important friend

and companion to any Kuruma person. He uses the wool blanket in all three seasons i.e., in rain, in cold and even in the hot summer they wear the blanket on them for protection. A Kuruma golla is identified always with a blanket either on the shoulder or on the head. It remained as the mark of their cultural identity. Kurumas are easily identified by their unique kind of dressing their silver jewelry. Their way of wearing Dhoti, is different from the men of other castes. They pull it up to the knee level. They have a different kind of jewelry for their anklets, hands, ears and even in the neck. Many of the Kurumas like to wear their traditional jewelry of silver. Kuruma women too have their own ethnic jewelry. The Kuruma women are also easily identified with their traditional attire. Kurumas in total have a unique cultural identity by their professions cultural, social and religious practices.

Kurumas live in most of the parts of Telangana area of Andhra Pradesh.³ And Gollas are there in other parts of the Andhra Pradesh also. Kurumas are called Kuruba in the Rayala Seema part of Andhra Pradesh. The religious practices of Kurubas of Rayala Seema and Telangana are different. The myth of Mallanna of two regions is also different. The caste of Kuruma is there in other South Indian States. They are called Kuruba in Karnataka. Kurubas are very strong caste in Karnataka by their political participation. The present Chief minister of Karnataka belongs to Kuruba caste. They are called Kurumba in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. They are having similar kind of life styles as mentioned above, in all four states.⁴

A Similar caste to Kuruma is there in Maharashtra and it is called Dhangar. The only difference between Dhangar at Maharashtra and the Kuruma in Telangana is the language. Kuruma worship Mallanna and Dhangar

³ Very valuable ethnography of Kurumas of Telangana is available in Hasan Siraz Ul, Sayad 1920. Pp. 362-370. *Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. Nizam's Dominions*.

⁴ Detailed ethnographic information of Kuruma, Kuruba and Kurumba of all four Southern states is available in the *Castes and Tribes of South India* (Vol. IV pp. 133-176), by Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari.

worship the same God. Mallanna is called Khandoba in Maharashtra. The image of Khandoba and the Mallanna in Telangana is one and the same. The priests of Mallanna of some temples travelled from Maharashtra and settled in Telangana.⁵ A big number of devotees of Mallanna, from Maharashtra visit the important temples of Mallanna in Telangana in their annual rituals.

The caste Kurumas have their own dependent caste, called Oggollu are Oggu-gollas. Oggu is the name of a musical instrument looks like the Damaru of Shiva. Because of this instrument the performers are called Oggollu and the performance tradition is called Oggukatha. Oggollu are the professional performers of the caste myth 'Mallanna puranam' or 'Mallanna Katha' to their patrons Kurumas. They also narrate the genealogies of the patron families. Some of the Oggollu also practice the ritual officiation at the Mallanna temples. They extend their services to all of the Kurumas visiting the Mallanna temples. The Oggu pujaris living in near by villages of all prominent Mallanna temples in Telangana register names in the Mallanna temples. They officiate the rituals in the temple not for the presiding deity but for the visiting Kuruma devotees. They receive remunerations in various forms, from the devotees, like rice money and clothes. They perform two, very important rituals to Kurumas. One is the *Mailatitiyadam* that is removal of impurities of all kinds from the entire family members and in their house in general. The second one is officiating of *Kalyanam* to Mallanna deity by the family members. There is another dependent caste to the Kurumas called Birappallavaru. They are the priests in the temples of Biranna. Birappa or the Biranna is another important God of Kurumas. He is the cultural hero of the caste. But the God Mallanna is the originator of the Kuruma caste. Birappallavaru officiate rituals at the temples and narrate/perform the story or the legend of Birappa to their patron families.

⁵ Detailed ethnography of Dhangars, worship of Khandoba and comparison of Kuruma and Dhangars is described in the Sontheimer 1989. *Pastoral Deities in Western India*.

The Cult of Mallanna:

Mallanna is the supreme God of Kurumas. He is considered as another incarnation of Shiva. The myth of the Mallanna says that he is the son of Shiva and also considered as Shiv himself. But the ritual practices of Mallanna and Shiva are different. Shiva is worshiped in the form of Lingam in any shiva temple. His human image is not found and worshipped in any Shiva temple. But the Mallanna is worshipped in the human form, with four hands big mustache and Naga hoods over the head.⁶ According to one version of the myth of the Mallanna he has two wives in each incarnation and had three incarnations within the Mallanna incarnation. According to the myth of Mallanna performed by Oggu artists, Baliya medala devi, Gollaketamma, Padmakshi, and Ratnangi are his wives.⁷

The worship of Mallanna is very widespread in Telangana. Devotees from other than Kuruma caste also participate in the annual rituals of Mallanna. There are three very important Cult centers and very old Mallanna temples in Telangana. One is at Komurelli in Warangal district. It is established in the time of Taniisha rule, that is in the mid 17th century. Ainavolu is another village where another very big temple was constructed around 800 years ago by Kakatiya kings for Mallanna. It is also in Warangal district. The third very important temple is there in the Odela village of Karimnagar district, which is also very old and very big and prominent. In addition to these historical temples almost in every second village of Telangana a Mallanna temple is there in the form of village-god-temple, small in structure.

Mallanna is not only the Supreme God, he is the source for giving boons for every desire of the Kurumas, he is an exemplar epic hero. He kills demons

⁶ The paper is supported by some visuals; photos and videos of the Mallanna rituals.

⁷ Sixty-five hours of Mallanna katha performance was video documented in the month of June 2013.

and evil creatures. The epic of Mallanna is itself a great Maha Bharatha to the Kuruma people and it is a sacred tome for them. Kurumas like to take the shelter at the feet of their God Mallanna for every domestic needs and for their caste society as a whole.

Annual rituals are performed between January and April. They start on the immediate next Sunday after the *Sankranti* (Pongal) Festival and end on the Sunday immediately after the *Ugadi* Festival. Each and every Kuruma family likes to visit the Komurelli or Ainavolu temple to pay their annual obeisance and their vows to the God. Mallanna, Komuraiah, Odelu, and Ailaiah are very widely given names among persons of Kuruma caste. They offer only Bonam (cooked rice) to the God Mallanna. No animal or bird sacrifices are in practice.

Ellamma, a very powerful, ferocious Goddess, is considered as the elder sister of Mallanna and the daughter of Shiva. Hence the temple of Ellamma is situated on the side of Mallanna temple everywhere. Ellamma who is also called Renuka Ellamma is a village Goddess. Ellamma is worshipped and sacrifices are offered in the month of *Ashadha* (August) in addition to the annual rituals that are offered along with her brother Mallanna. Very widespread ritual practices are there in these temples in the annual rituals. Rituals and pujas are offered in the temples, every Sunday and Wednesday in the whole year.⁸ The strong evidence to mention Mallanna as a pastoral God is; all of his temples are constructed either in the midst of forest or outside of the village, not in the midst of the village like the gods of Shiv, Krishna, or Rama.

Becoming of Mallanna and Ellamma:

As it is mentioned earlier, multiple kinds of ritual practices and belief system are there in the cult of Mallanna. One among them and very important

⁸ The paper has to concentrate on the Main theme of 'becoming of Mallanna and Ellamma' within the Cult of Mallanna hence a very brief introduction on the other aspects, is given here in the Cult of Mallanna.

is observing a *diksha* for three months, which is considered as a service to the God Mallanna. This *diksha* is called *pabbati or pabbatipattu* in the native Telugu by the caste men. This *diksha* is nothing but a bunch of ritual rules sacral practices for two to three months. Men and women who have a very strong faith and reverence towards Mallanna adopt this ritual practice. The persons perform a puja at their respective homes.

A Oggu Pujari the priest to Kuruma caste comes to their home and officiates the ritual. The household, the male person who wants to undergo this ritual, invites the Oggupujari for this puja. A small platform in the unpolluted⁹ front yard is erected for this puja. After completing the puja to the image of Mallanna in Telugu mantras the pujari ties a cloth belt adorned with the *Gavvullu* or shells on the neck of the person and asks the person to wear a specific dress; half white, silk upper robe and a nicker on which, jingling bells hang on two parts and shells or also adorned. Once the puja is over the person is called Mallanna that is the God Mallanna. The person who took this *diksha* continues it until the completion of the annual ritual cycle of Mallanna in that year. The person who became Mallanna has to lead a very pious life in that entire period may be a week, a month or till completing of the ritual cycle of the year; it depends upon the each individual person. The person is expected not to eat meat, not to drink any kind of liquor or intoxicating drinks, not to tell lies, not to harm or hurt any person. The person is also expected not to meet any person for sex in this entire period. He or she has to keep his or her house free of pollution caused by women or death. In such occasions he or she has to leave the house and live in another house, which is free of pollution. Not only the person the entire house is transformed from a profane state to a sacred domain. A space is created for the person and for the family members to

⁹ Pollution in this context is not just physical cleanliness of the room. The home should be free of married or unmarried women who are in their monthly menstrual period. No person must have died in that home in that particular year. A woman in the bed of child delivery is also causes pollution until she undergoes a ritual bath on 21st day after giving birth to her child. Such home is also considered as polluted.

go away from their worldly life for time being and the same gives them a relax and a difference.

The Kuruma person leads such pious life for such limited period and finally he visits the Mallanna temple and offers *bonam*. In the annual ritual all of the persons who become Mallannas gather in the temple premises with their whips in hands and in their ritual dress. They take *bandaru* and apply it head to toe. The bandaru is nothing but a powder mix of turmeric and vermilion. 80% of turmeric and 20% of vermilion is mixed and the prepared powder looks in yellow color. *Bandaru* is considered very sacred in the entire worship tradition of Mallanna. Every devotee apply the bandaru on their fore head. Once all Mallannas gathered the final ritual starts in the morning. A big fire is arranged in the front yard of the temple where the devotees are gathered. They see the flame is subdued and the entire fire came to a simmering state. Then the devotees or the Mallannas are allowed to walk on the fire in a rapid succession, one by one in a fast way. They go on fire walk and enter in the main threshold of the temple and take a *darshan* of the Image of the God Mallanna in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple and go out from the side door. This process continues till the evening or the whole devotees take the sacred fire-walk and *darshan*. The Oggukatha performers perform the katha and songs of Mallanna in the entire day till the completion of the ritual in the same premises.

Once the Mallannas complete this ritual process that is walking on fire and having the *darshan* of the God and going out; each Mallanna go to his home and offer a *bonam* and puja to the Mallanna and completes the *Diksha* by removing the ritual dress. From the next day the person is considered as usual person and called by his name by all of his neighbors. Till then he was called as 'Sami' or 'Mallanna sami'. The word coined by Schechner 'transformance' is an

apt word for this ritual as a performance and a transformation of ritual states are combined at one place and event.¹⁰

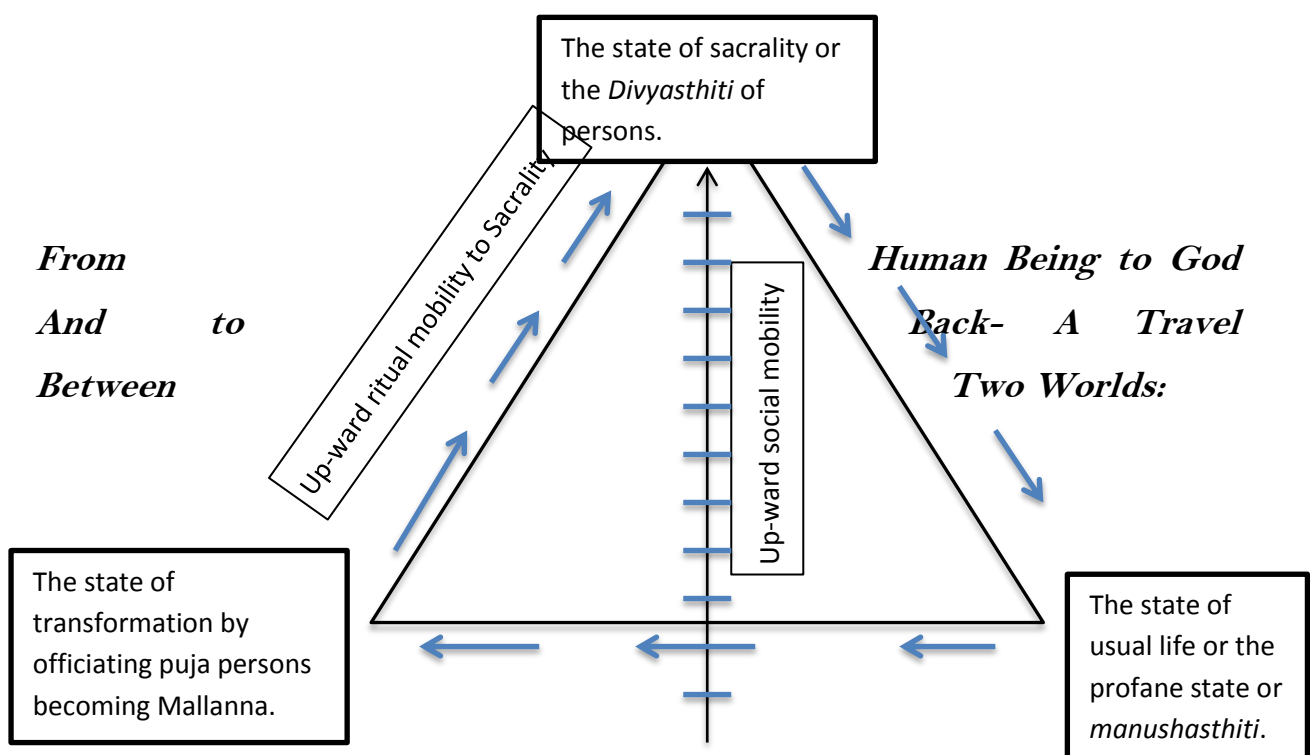
Some persons of Kuruma become Ellammas that is taking of Ellamma ritual process for the ritual year. They offer puja in their houses similar to the puja of above mentioned Mallanna puja. It is almost the similar kind of ritual processes as above-mentioned Mallanna *diksha*. But the male person who adopts Ellamma puja wear a sari adorned with the holy bells and shells. He remains in this sari in entire ritual days of the year. He is called Ellamma in this entire ritual period and not by his original name. His Ellamma puja completes by finishing the fire-walk and having *darshan* of the God, similar to mentioned at Mallannas ritual. In addition to this ritual process the person has to visit the Ellamma temple and offer puja, there also. The devotees at Ellamma temple can offer animal and bird sacrifice in addition to bonam or the cocked rice. Traditional home made liquor is also offered to the goddess Ellamma to appease her.¹¹ After the puja at the Ellamma temple the person goes to home and comes out from the entire annual ritual processes and from the ritual womanly dress. Then he is considered as a normal person and is called by his name by others.

¹⁰ Schechner Richard. 2003. P. 126.

¹¹ Beer and whisky from the unopened bottles are also offered, by opening the bottles in the temple premises, in recent years.

Women of Kuruma who came out of the menstrual pollution also adopt such annual ritual practices like men as mentioned above. But they do not wear male dress even after they becoming as Mallanna. But they wear a sacred whip in hands, like male devotees till the completion of the ritual.

The phenomenon could be displayed in a diagram as below:



The ritual is a routine annual activity

for the caste people. They do not care for what is its meaning and why such kind of worship is going on but they do it because their elders did it, and the elders of their elders too did it. If somebody asks a question why such practices are continuing they may narrate the myth of Mallanna and even say that it is taught by their temple priests. Even when they give their exegesis it may be different than the interpretation of a scholar. The dress, the colours, the shells, the Bandaru all are part and important symbolic value and are narrated in the myth of Mallanna.

The age-old ritual processes contain a meaning and it is actually a social process. It is a kind of travel between terrestrial and celestial realms. The process in brief: A person, after performing the initial puja to Mallanna, is treated as Mallanna himself. And the person is called as Swami (the god) and nobody calls him by his name. The person retains this ritual status until he completes the annual ritual cycle and walks on the fire and comes out from the sanctum sanctorum after having a *darshan*, and comes out from the ritual dress and ritual status. When the person moves in his village on his routine daily life all of the villagers from all castes consider him as a godly person and respects him with high reverence. Households from any castes may invite him into their inner parts of the house, if their house is not polluted. The godly person might not enjoy such respect in his normal days.

This kind of social respect and reverence for the ritual persons or the devotees remain for some more days even after coming to his normal life. Finally the person comes to his normal life and to his sheep grazing or blanket making profession and to his social activities with other castes and social interaction with other communities.

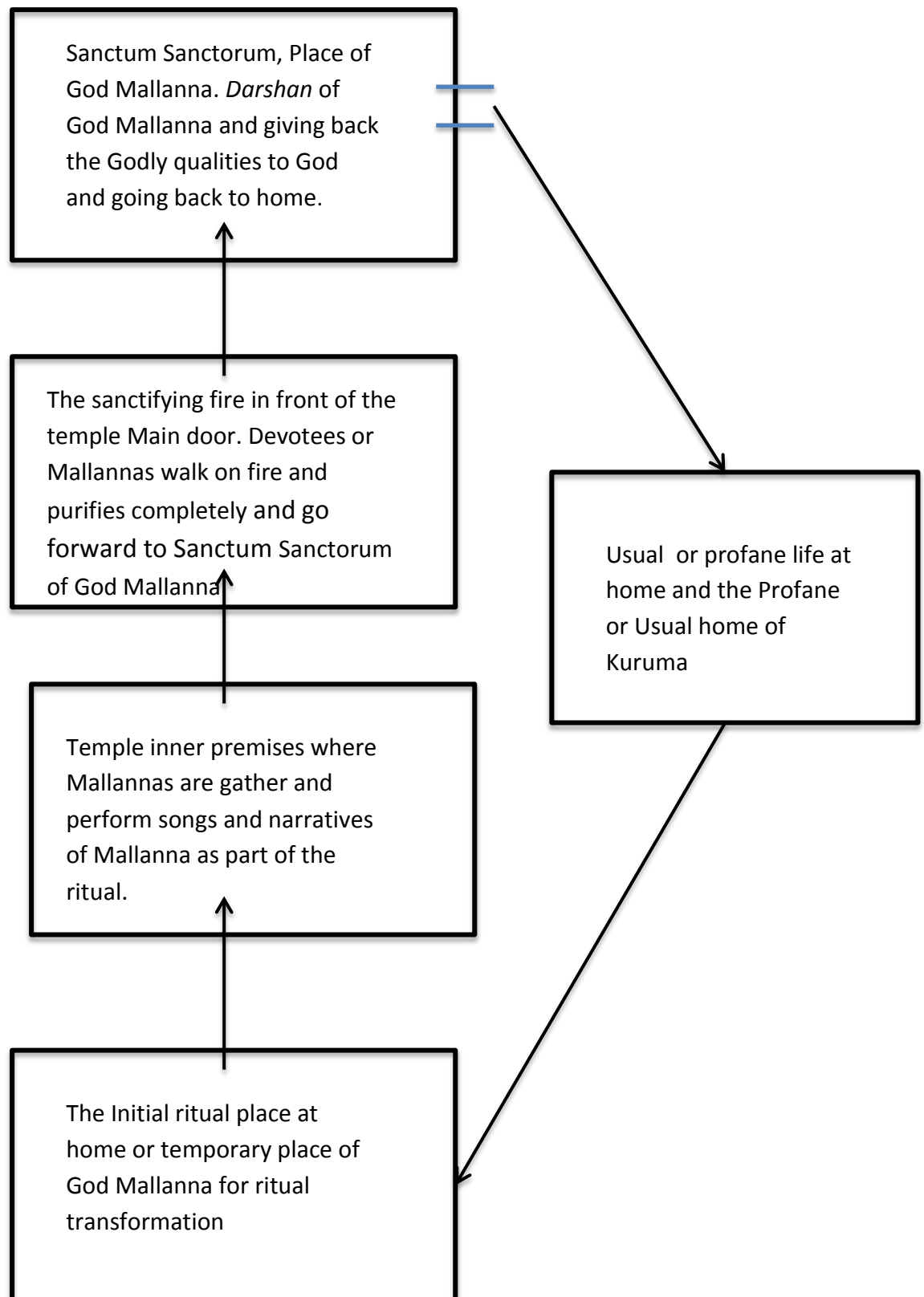
The Meaning of the Ritual:

The gamut of ritual processes could be understood in the following way. A normal Kuruma person undergoes a transformation into a sacred person or the Mallanna himself. Thenceforth the person is treated as another Mallanna. In the Virashaiva Cult, which ruled South India with a militant force for some decades, mentioned that the devotee of shiva is more than Shiva and a more sacred person than Shiva. The believers of the Virashaiva believed and respected all Shavities or devotees of Shiva as Shiva. They treated all others as *Bhavas* or the lowest persons in the society lower than the untouchables. The Cult of Mallanna is another form of Virashaiva and the Mallanna is nothing but the Shiva of others.

The Kuruma person remains for some weeks in this *divyasthiti* or in the divinity and receives social respect. In the final part of the ritual process he moves to the Main Mallanna temple may be any of the aforementioned three holy places. He enters into the temple premises, which is also a place of *divinity* or the sanctified place. After that he walks on the fire. That means the person if at all retains any minute kind of impurities or sins and any bad qualities; all such things are purified in the fire and he comes out as a completely pure and sacred person. Then the next stage is, the completely sanctified person enters into the sanctum sanctorum and gets the *darshan* of the God Mallanna pays his devotion to the God. Not only the devotion he pays to the God. But He handover, the Godly qualities he acquired few weeks ago, back to the God. The devotee does not know the concept or might not able to explain the meaning. But in every ritual after acquiring the godly qualities the person has to give away the same and go back to normal or the profane state. The *nimajjanam* of any statutes or images contain the same meaning its godly quality is taken out before it is submerged in the water. Even after taking out the godly quality the image of the God should not be desecrated by any kind of pollution, hence it is thrown into water. The devotee has to go out from the temple as a normal person. It is needed because the *sacred time frame* is another very important point in addition to sacred place. The annual sacred time is also finished along with the completion of annual ritual. After going back to his own home the person removes his ritual dress gets back to his complete mundane state from the sacrality or *Divinity*, which he enjoyed for few weeks.

This is the ritual process in which a person travels terrestrial to celestial world, from the mundane world to sacrality or divinity and back to mundane normal life. The process could be shown in the below diagram in the next page:



Ritual Processes of Mallanna:

Kurumas and Gollas are classified as Backward Classes according to the governmental classifications of Andhra Pradesh. In a village Kurumas are generally treated in a very lower social order in the traditional social setting in the villages, even today by the 'upper castes' in a village. Their professions of grazing of sheep and making of blankets are also treated as lower and unclean kind of professions. Kurumas have their own social identity by all kinds of their life styles. It is even applied to Gollas. The dressing pattern, the jewelry of men and women, the language, the food, marriages, social customs their religious life, their gods and goddess, their myths, their folk performances in every aspects of Kurumas are treated as unique and it is a different kind of folk life when it is compared other castes in any given villages. There is so much of folklore about Kurumas and Gollas in the other castes of a village. There are sayings proverbs on Kurumas, and lot of cross ethnic slur is there on Kurumas in a village. Kuruma is a caste, which raise a voice and cry for social justice for which they are deprived from centuries. The caste myth of Kurumas "Mallannakatha" rejects their social status which they actually enjoy in the society and establishes a very higher social order by claiming their origin directly from Mallanna that is Shiva. Kurumas and Gollas are sons are the descendants of Mallannas from two different wives.

As the myth of Kurumas or the Mallanna Puranam elevates the social order of Kurumas, in the similar way the ritual practices as mentioned above too elevate not only the individual person who practices the ritual but also the Kuruma caste itself. The adoption of rituals and the practicing period of ritual may be for one day, one week or one to three months make the person a higher one, than the social status that was there in his actual life. This period is a sacred period. The ritual process is sacrality. It is a religious process at the same time it is a social process. The social structure actually available in the society is being reverted in the sacral period or in the sacrality to a higher one

or to top position in the society and again the person comes down to the normal social life in a gradual manner.

This kind of ritual process and the reverting of the social order has been analysed as the anti structure by Victor Turner in the study of Ndembu tribe. An ordinary tribal person becomes the Chief of the entire tribe in that liminality.¹² There is a qualitative difference between the structure and anti structure analysed by Turner and the ritual process of Kurumas. Because the tribal society and the society of Andhra Pradesh with multiple castes with ladder like multiple social rungs, are different. There the social structure is made, totally topsy-turvy.¹³ But in the case of Kurumas, they stand somewhere in the middle of the social strata and raise to higher order not necessarily to the level of Brahmins or other twice born castes, and again comes down to his original level which is not the lowest level as there are some more lower castes than the Kurumas in a village.

There are some similarities between the concept of liminality and the sacrality, divinity or the *divyasthiti* of Kurumas. But liminality and the sacrality mentioned in the cult of Mallanna are some way different. The basic meaning of liminal is a threshold. The word coined by Van Genep meant by liminal is; transfer of a person from one life status to another life status. The rituals that are practiced at the liminal status like birth; puberty, circumcision, marriage and death are defined as rites of passage. Victor Turner got inspiration from the theoretical concepts of Van Genep and developed a vast theoretical realm on ritual processes and the study of societies of various tribes and communities. The theories, concepts of Victor Turner are very much useful in studying folk rituals of South India.

¹² Turner Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti Structure*. New York. Aldine De Gruyter.

¹³ "Our present focus is upon liminality and the ritual powers of the weak. These are shown under two aspects. First, Kafwana and the other Ndembu commoners are revealed as privileged to exert authority over the supreme authority figure of the tribe. In liminality, the underling comes uppermost. Second, the supreme political authority is portrayed "as a slave," recalling that aspect of the coronation of a pope in western Christendom when he is called upon to be the "*servus servorum Dei*." Ibid P. 102

At the same time subtle differences, which are culture specific, may be observed between the rituals mentioned by Turner and our folk rituals. The ritual process analysed above is one such ritual. Liminality is a state in which sacrality may also be there. But basically the liminal period is somewhat a period of pollution. But the *divyasthiti* or the divinity or the sacrality that is analysed in the cult of Mallanna is not such state. More over the sacrality of the Kuruma person in the ritual process is not a state or one among the rites of passage. It is nothing to do with his life cycle. It is a regular process happens every year.

Despite the limitations of the theories of Victor Turner in applying to our folk rituals the theories of Turner are valuable in the analyses of our folk rituals. We can come out with new kind of theoretical concepts even while looking at our ritual processes through the windows of Victor Turner. One important point mentioned by Turner is “Rituals are power of Powerless” is truly applicable in the case of Kurumas and their ritual processes and to the caste myth of Kurumas, the Mallannakatha or Mallanna Puranam.

Against the ascribed status, Kurumas acquired and claim higher social order and a unique social Identity by their rituals and caste myth. Kurumas become very stronger even in political power with their claimed social power. In other words, the religious life of Kurumas the ritual processes making the caste powerful in their social life and in political power. The same is evident in Telangana in Rayalaseema. The process is much more strong in Karnataka. As such the folk rituals the belief system are playing a key role in the society beyond their realm of religion and proving their need in the present age as a catalytic tool.

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Folklore and Memory:
With Special Reference to Ao-Naga Community

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Abstract

The value system and beliefs of a community and of an individual is inevitably constructed and shaped by the folktales that have been existing in its society for a long period of time. However, these stories are forgotten or changed due to various factors inter-related with the factor of time and social mobility that has been expanding the borders of community while crossing the politically or culturally marked boundaries. When the communities are no more to be found within the geographic-political boundaries, when the values and norms of a particular culture are mixed with other cultures due to the unavoidable arrival of the 'other', the urge to protect the 'authenticity' and a 'purity' of the indigenous culture is intensified. It is in such a context, the idea of 'forgetting', 'change' or 'death' of folktales is considered as 'bad' and 'sad', due to which the need of 'retaining' them is highly demanded. The crux of the problem lies in the effort of retaining since we do not know what we retain when we retain. Thus, the effort of retaining is in question.

Focusing on the effort of retaining of folklore, the paper will try to describe the 'impossibility of retaining' of folktales due to fluidity of space and time in relation to the idea of being. Then, it will seek to analyze how it is impossible for folklore to die or disappear from any context absolutely and permanently, bringing the notion of 'remnants' and 'memory' in relation to the idea of death through which the idea of writing, which is literature will be taken into consideration. Here, the above mentioned ideas will be discussed and analyzed with regard to the Naga community.

Introduction

A culture, a society, a form, a structure, a friendship, a relationship, a life, an effervescent beginnings have formed, are forming, through us, between us, within us, those of us who have encountered with people in and around us¹⁴.

Folktale is in some way or the other considered as an alternative way of reinventing the past in the presence. This is generally relevant in the Northeastern region of India and particularly in the context of Naga community where increased growths of several ethnic identity issues are prevalent. Preservation of one's culture under the hues of 'arrival' of the other and therefore protecting its cultures become indispensable in such kind of context.

Since time immemorial, the Nagas communicated through the medium of speech which clearly shows that the absence of writing system was not of importance to them in old days. Likewise, the Ao Naga also followed the oral system out of which the stories about origin of living beings and nature surrounding them were shared among the community. Since there was no written system, the narration of folktale was orally transmitted and passed down to generations. Eventually, the need to interact with other cultures became unavoidable which added to the flavor of reminiscing the past. Thus, this paper is an attempt to investigate as to how far one can revive the memory of the past and whether through the process of reviving the past with the help of folktale, one is able to secure the authenticity of the past.

Fear of losing one's heritage and especially of one's uncertain identity haunts the minds of the Naga people. Perhaps, this creates in them a feeling of retaining the history of their vague origin and language. No one can challenge the absolute habitat of one's origin and language except by testifying its omnipresence in one's self. Since the time of the inception of belonging to a certain group, the effort of retaining the ancestral culture, tradition and language

¹⁴ Rosenzweig, 2005, p. vii

became an indispensable effort by the Nagas. And this is done through the path of memory where the origin itself precedes the origin of memory which is difficult to unfold.

With the factor of time and the social mobility spreading to the borders of community, crossing the politically and culturally marked boundaries, conglomeration of certain values and norms of a certain culture gets mixed with other cultures due to the arrival of the 'other' which becomes impossible to avoid. Cross cultural encounters take place all over the world bringing with them movement and change, through the means of tourism, migration, colonialism or war. Such encounters leads to numerous contacts and interactions of various types, whether peaceful or violent, between people from different background. When the communities undergo such experiences, the urge to protect the 'authenticity', 'purity', 'genuineness' etc. is intensified.

Though people were greatly influenced by Christianity and affected the previous lifestyle of the Naga community sensing a loss of its legacy, we can take this in a different way. That is, even though the convergence of Naga with Christianity happened and it keeps on mixing with Christianity, still certain things were kept and carried forward. This is where the space of memory is constructed which helps to some extent in enabling us to know who we are. Besides memories creating identity and a sense of belonging, they can also create divisions and disagreements. The preservation of memories in the form of buildings and monuments or in the form of symbols and narratives, involves major political and societal considerations.

Since the time the western culture had taken over the Naga society; there is a longing for an 'original community' – the restoration of the ancestor's culture. The inception is that we all once lived in a harmonious and intimate, warm and cozy pre-modern community which had declined lately due to which the longing for an immediate being-together is being sought for by the present community. It can also be perceived that the essence of the communal ties which had existed in the past had been broken down by the selfish modern artifact individuals turning into a metamorphosis of memories. Such impact and influences leads not only to the disintegration of society, but also to violence, changes in the norms and values, loss of certain cultural heritage and so forth. Thus, the need of fighting against social disintegration is to turn back to the time where communal ties were actively present. However, the problem one

may encounter while trying to retrieve the old ways of communal ties is failure to locate the existence of the original past.

The insecurity that haunts the people in relation to their origin and identity plays a crucial role in longing for the past. The different voices and forces comes with so much intensity that the agitation, agony, sadness, misery are all concocted as one and thrown upon the people who in their own will to power starts searching for 'pure' identity through the help of memory of the past. At this juncture, it becomes difficult to locate the location of culture, community, language, identity, as we do not know what kind of elements are involved in an individual.

Considering this kind of situations, we can frame questions like which kind of memories should be considered as valuable and significantly important for a community when a collective memory is being formed and monuments are being set up? Under what circumstances/reasons memorial functions are organized? Or which kinds of memories/folktales are considered as 'bad', 'good', 'sad' etc.? Up to what extent can a community organize a quest for knowledge to find out the origin or purity of a social group?

In a gist, the above questions are difficult to decipher because there are remnants which are beyond repair and "completely beyond definition"¹⁵. Most importantly, memories itself is difficult to unfold as there can be no such thing as 'pure memory' which will bring back the memories that people long to revive through the means of Ao ancestors festivals like *tsungremong*, *moatsu* etc. Nevertheless, the echoes of the folktales strongly ring in people's mind and therefore, the need to return to the past and the sense of nostalgia that the past or old days were better is considered as a recognizable phenomenon in every aspect of a society.

Memory somehow is retained when a community, state or nation as a whole undergo suffering and pain through the powerful domination by the 'outsider'/the 'other' coming from outside. There comes a certain point of time and space when the dominant nation permeates their culture and language to the fallen nation which is taken it as something 'good'. Similar case can be seen in the Ao-Naga history. After embracing Christianity, the Ao-Naga more or less abandoned their old way of worshipping God because they were made to

¹⁵ Nietzsche, 1996, p. 60

believe that their traditional belief system is 'bad'. Eventually, they adopted the Christian belief system. However, when they sensed that their traditional and cultural heritages were in a danger of 'disappearing', the idea of 'sadness' brought by the sense of 'loss' was felt which intensified the need of reviving back the past. The myth is that a pure identity can be established by retaining the memory of the past.

To retain the memory, translation in the form of writing from oratory tradition is sought for. But the question again is "what is to retain when there is no authentic element to retain"? Because language does not know where it comes from, where it is going, what they are speaking from. Every time a memory is translated, it is being deconstructed. However, there seems to be possibility of retaining because some remnants from the past are still there and these remnants are time and again revived to keep it alive. And these remnants are identified in the form of folktale.

One can even find asking questions such as 'What is the significance of folktale in today's context? Or where is folktale going? Such general assertions can be turned towards history where one can fathom that at a certain point of time folktale seems to be going towards itself or towards its essence which is disappearance. In other words, folktale for today's generation is a thing of the past. Thus, one can even conclude that folktale is incapable of bearing the demand for its own existence. It is only in the past that folktale retains value and power because in olden days, values and moral ethics were permeated to the community through folktale. Thus, what can be worse disgrace than folktale becoming a mere aesthetic pleasure or cultural accessory in the present. However, if we look at folktale itself at a deeper level, what it seem to say is quite different. Folktale has its own artistic creation; it is to some extent already been given.

Perhaps it is probably necessary to return to the world of mystical folktales that guided the livelihood of Naga forefathers in order to understand something about the past today. Entrance to such a world takes place though a guide, which can be in the form of narrating folktales through word of mouth or through writing. In this context, I would like to take the readers to an interesting insight where it shows that memory is impossible to be effaced completely from the minds of the people; or how one tries to retain and make it unforgettable. This is reflected in the Ao Naga Bible.

If we refer to Revelation 21:11 in the Ao Naga Bible, we will find that the word *lungkonglapu*¹⁶ is used as a translation of *crystal clear*¹⁷ from the English Holy Bible. The usage of the term *lungkonglapu* can also be viewed as an example of cultural translation through the usage of folktale, in this case the folktale of *lungkonglapu*. Since, the narration of folktales is soon disappearing and the new generations are hardly aware of the existence of mystical tales which had acted like the stories in the Holy Bible, words like *lungkonglapu* takes a person back to memory to narrate it all over again. However, this narration may not be conveyed to a person in the form of a folktale, but certain traces and remnants are there which are still being delivered. It is such kind of insertion of words especially in the Bible that folktales are brought back to life again. This is a kind of way in keeping the folktale from disappearance. Therefore, literature through writing can be taken as a way of narrating and also a way of keeping those narratives going without being imprisoned in specific 'time and space'. Because, writing not only brings what comes to pass leaving the traces, but also becomes the very opening up of the given language which accommodates past, present and future at the same time.

Summing up, our nostalgia for a return, amongst other things, could arise from wanting to return to the past, of integrating folktales in one's cultures in order to improve it; or, in order to preserve the survival of one's culture, language and heritage one could securely stay at home, in one's own country and in one's own culture until one forgets what staying at home could be because in the present era of globalization there is always a possibility of opening oneself to the other. Thus, change is an incessant process of happenings, comings and goings. We can observe this in two trends: i) in the midst of all the changes, ii) a community still ponders and reminisces the past with fond memories. They long to go back and revive the past with a hope of defining who they are. Some also imagine that the solution to the nostalgia for a return can be done in reviving the past. However, changes only open spaces for more and more 'beginnings'. On the other hand, memory is always there which has properties of remnants and traces and these remnants and traces are unforgettable thus the impossibility of death.

¹⁶Ao Naga Temeshi Lai Bushir, 2004, p.1650

¹⁷Holy Bible New International Version, 1984, p. 1075

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Rice and Folklore among the Zeliangrong Nagas

Pouriangthanliu,

Abstract

A sense of place is integral to identity. For the Zeliangrong Nagas of Northeast India, rice is a central object that represents the community connection to the land. Likewise folklores are integral in explaining cultural practices, creating, transmitting cultural identity. The article will situate Paddy/Rice and its role in the everyday practices of the Zeliangrong people. Rice is as much a sustenance as an item having complex association with many forms of cultural expression – be it ritual, custom, medicine and healing system – in both historical and contemporary times.

Key words: Rice, rituals, Naga, story telling

Introduction

Cultivating rice is a common practice among diverse communities in different parts of the world. This is particularly the case in the South Asian context; rice is the staple food and the prominent crop cultivated. Apart from being the major nourishment, it is used in various rituals and medicinal purpose by several communities. With particular focus on the Zeliangrongs, this paper looks at rice and its place in that said community; how a sense of place is integral to understand the socio-economic activities of any human group.

Most of these communities have developed since long a unique cultural practice system of not only cultivating paddy for growing rice but also using rice in cuisines, rituals, customs and medicines. Culturally, paddy crop is seen not just for food requirement, its usage as a crop for cuisine or culinary items as well as an item having complex associations with many forms of cultural expressions such as ritual, religion, ceremony, custom, medicine, healing systems, social practices, etc., in both historical and contemporary times as such it encompasses the whole social system of a community.

Community, Geography, History

The term 'Zeliangrong', in the present day, is a collective name given to four communities *viz.*, Zemes, Liangmais, Rongmeis and Inpuis. It was relatively coined in 1947 to initially club together three communities – Zemes, Liangmais and Rongmeis – using their prefixes (Ze+Liang+Rong).¹ Based on origin myths and migration stories, they are considered as being related to the Tengimae group.² But in colonial times, they were classified as one of the 'Naga tribes'.³ According to the colonial state's inventory, they are known by different names – 'Kabui and Kacha Nagas.' Ironically, the colonial category 'Kacha Nagas' (denoting the 'Zeme' and the 'Liangmei' communities collectively) and 'Kabui Nagas' ('Rongmei' community) was operative as late as 2012 for recognition as 'Scheduled Tribes' of India. Apparently, the word 'Kacha' was wrongly spelled. The actual word appeared to have been 'Ketsa' which is an Angami Naga word for 'thick forest'. These communities inhabited three administrative jurisdictions – the North Cachar Hills (Assam), Peren sub-division (Nagaland) and mainly Tamenglong district, the north-western parts of Manipur state. Such disjointed aspect figured as a perennial problem in the modern political discourse, a legacy of colonial boundary making as late as 1842.⁴ As per the Linguistic Survey of India their language are regarded as a member of the Tibeto-Burman family.

1 The term 'Zeliangrong', though not officially recognized by the Indian government, is now used commonly by the people concerned in the present-day political and social discourse. It came into existence with the formation of the Zeliangrong Council and the Manipur Zeliangrong Union in 1947. For a brief discussion of the evolution of the Zeliangrong Council see Gangmumei Kabui, "The Zeliangrong Movement: An Historical Study", pp. 53-66.

2 Tengimae group made up of seven tribes sharing a single origin and migration legend, and common ancestor. The seven tribes are Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Zeme, Liangmei, Rongmei and Mao. Refer Vibha Joshi, *The Birth of Christian Enthusiasm among the Angami of Nagaland*, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, Vol. XXX, No. 3 December 2007.

3 The word 'tribe' here is solely used for uniformity as it corresponds with the 'Schedule list' as a valid discourse under the protective discrimination accorded to those listed in the Schedule of Tribes (Article 342 of the Indian Constitution)

4 These areas were known as Naga Hills (which went on to become Nagaland), North Cachar Hills (which remained under Assam) and Tamenglong (which

stayed in Manipur state). For further description see Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1984); Gangmumei Kamei, *History of the Zeliangrong Nagas: From Makhel to Rani Gaidinliu* (Guwahati: Sepctrum Publication, 2004).

Types of Agricultural Practices

Rice is pivotal in the lives of the Zeliangrongs. The Liangmeis, Rongmeis and Inpuiis practiced 'Jhuming' or shifting cultivation, Slash and Burn; while the Zeme practices 'cycle migration' which meant migrating from one village to another, cultivating and then abandoning the site for a period of time so as to obtain optimum agricultural yield, and also protection against any diseases that an older site might have been associated with. The society is governed by the rituals of the agricultural cycle.

Sense of Place

A sense of place helps to develop a concept of home, an integral building block for personal and community identity. The concept of home – helps in giving way to discuss the interconnectedness of place, community and self identity. It is also symbolic as most complex and powerful symbol system of human language is created. Tuan Yi Fu (1991) postulates that home "is created through naming natural features, classifying them in some manner, and telling stories about them." In this way a "landscape immediately acquires symbolic resonance" as it vibrates with meaning imbued through "the human magic of storytelling".

The Human Magic of Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful force in the lives, experiences and identities of people across the globe. According to Cruiskshank (1990) "Storytelling is a universal and ancient form; humans the world use stories to transform land and space into home." Valdes (2004) also argues that "the foundation of communities depends on storytelling." Humans, then, use stories to create homes, develop communities, recall histories, communicate identities, transmit cultures and express a sense of place. This seems to be particularly the case in the context of the Zeliangrongs. Disjointed as they may be in contemporary geographical coordinates and its agricultural practices, the Zeliangrongs shared a common sense of place – 'Sinluang', a distant place call home.

As stated earlier in the introduction, this paper looks at rice and its place in that said community; and how a sense of place is integral to understanding the socio-economic activities of any human group. I will try to highlight these through an analysis of one folksong sang during a popular game among the Zeliangrong community.

The paper revolves around this simple game of “Sinluang”. The innumerable depiction it carries – rice/ paddy is depicted, the occupation and its associated activities of the communities is enacted in the game. It also suggests ‘traditional education system’. The song short and simple yet encompassed all facets of the community, the emotions, the desire the beauty of that wonderful place call home.

I grew up playing the game, with my cousins and the neighbour’s kids during our visits to our grandmother’s place for our summer and winter breaks. It made no sense to me back then. Now coming into the field of Paddy Culture through IGNCA, the implications as well as the intrinsic meaning embedded in it. I would also like to mention here and I believe my generation were the last to have played this game.

I would like to give a brief demonstration of how the game is played: The game is called “Sinluang” taken from the folksong. In this game boys and girls would gather and sit in a row, each holding the waist of the one in the front forming a circle. The eldest of them sits in the front as a leader as they sing swaying from side to side in tune with the melody:

Singluang, Singluang nap biru tai... tai...

Nap biru tai... nap biru tai...

Free Translation:

Singluang, Singluang, that rich and bountiful place, that rich and bountiful place

When the song ended the boy or girl at the end of the line comes in front of the leader and says:

Apeh, Akina tekbung Kabuina Kaabaa niza

Akinaa Tekbung Leng pilou Sua!

Free translation:

Grandma! A mithun has broken my little brother's/sister's bowl,
So give me one again.

The leader would then name a place where they are going to jhum that year. On cue, the child from the other end comes in front, repeat what the other had said and ask for another bowl and the leader tells them that a site has been cleared for Jhumming. The children will play on enacting how the seeds are sown, the weeds plucked out and the paddy ripens. The leader, then, stands up and says: "Let us taste and harvest". He lightly taps all of them on the head and the game ends.

The enactment and the song accompanying it are compelling in many ways.

First, the song in the game positioned rice as a key component in the everyday practices of the Zeliangrong. As evident, it is a song of request to the goddess for rice and a good harvest as ascertainable from that line: "*Singluang, Sinluang, Nap biru tio.*" But, importantly, the song and enactments clearly depicts the economic activities involved with an agricultural cycle: sowing, weeding and harvesting. It is remarkable that the whole performance ends and only when the leader would name a place where they are going to 'jhum' that year. Note again that only when the leader taps on the head of the players would they end the game and go home. A seemingly mundane or playful activity of kids, then, highlights important aspects of the beginning and end of an agricultural cycle.

Second, a sense of place and a shared identity is communicated – 'Sinluang', a distant place where the Zeliangrongs believed they migrated from. One of the origin myths of the Zeliangrongs recounts the time of their departure from this place 'Sinluang' whence forth they migrated and occupy the present place. From the song, it was a place of abundance, a place revered as home. It also portrays the idea of home, a family when they say

"Apeh, Akina tekbung Kabuina Kaabaa niza

Akinaa Tekbung Leng pilou Sua!

Third, the game inherently portrays the cultural value of rice not just as sustenance but also its complex association with many forms of cultural expression – be it the intangible and tangible culture. Rice, in the Zeliangrong society, is used in all the rituals and ceremonies. From birth to death rituals,

rice plays an important role. Social ceremonies – namely *Gaan Ngai* (Rongmei), *Chega Gadi* (Liangmei) and *Hega* (Zeme) – are performed during the winter season marking the end of the harvest season when the farmers have stored their food grains in their granaries. It also heralds a New Year; a new fire is produced by rubbing dry wood and split bamboos pieces and is distributed to every household. The five-day celebration – as usually happened – is a time for worshipping the Gods, a thanksgiving for the good harvest and a prayer for a successful and long life in the coming year. But it was also a time for celebration. Such celebratory mood is captured in the song and the sways to the rhythm melody.

Fourth, the formation of a circle in the game creates a sense of community supporting one another; it also represents co-existence of the gods and goddesses. The giver of rice is a goddess represented in the song as *Apeh* or *Apei*; its literal translation is grandma, but the Zeliangrong community used *Apei* as a synonym for goddesses.

Fifth, the song also represents their attachment towards the mithun (an indigenous bull) which they domesticate for food as well as for ploughing the field. In the not so distant past, the bull represents wealth. A man's status in society is determined by how much bull heads he owns. Like most upland society of this region, the Zeliangrongs celebrated success in terms of male virility and masculinity. Indeed, one of the games for the youths of the Zeliangrong is called '*Guaiannuamei*', literally "Bull Wrestling". There are two stages in this game. First, a bull was released and all men folk of the village chased to get the bull. To the one catching it goes the bull itself. Once the first stage is over the bull would be slaughtered in the house of the winner as a show of respect to him. Then began the second stage; in local renderings it is called "*Guaipi Kajapmei*", literally translated as "Catching Bull Horn". The bull's head would be hung upside down on some sort of a pedestal. Competitors would line up to jump, catch the bull's horn and hold on to it for some duration. The individual who managed so is declared the winner with the bull's head as a reward.

Rice cultivation also necessitated the community to invent and develop tools and appliances to facilitate every chore possible. The leisure time after harvest and before the new cycle starts the men folk would sit together and weaves matt for drying the grains, Baskets to carry and for storage. They would build or repair their granary. The women folk would create beautiful

traditional costumes and blankets for the family. Whereby getting ready for all festivities and the next agricultural cycle.

The song and the enactment of the players in the game is laden with historical and nostalgia. It also played a role in construction of the group's historical narrative real or mythical. It also highlights the importance of the rice. I would like end my paper by reproducing a popular saying, usually used in a reprimanding stern manner, which goes: "*Nap inroi bam tu ram mak ge*" / "*Nap dat gaan bam tu ram mak ge.*" (Literal Translation: "Rice is not meant to be thrown away").

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Socio- Historical Identity of the Kamar: An Introduction

Priyadarshini Mishra

Abstract

The Kamar is a community inhabitants of eastern Chhattishgarh bordering Nuapada district of Odisha. Numbered about 30000 the kamars use a cultural territory of their own politically divided in to Odisha and Chhattishgarh. While the Kamars of Chhattishgarh are enumerated as scheduled Tribe in Chhattishgarh, the Kamar of Odisha are nontribal. The aim of this paper is to assert that how the political consideration of the states split the tribal identity breaking their culture, language, territory and education.

The Kamar, also traditionally known as 'Paharia' in an eco-cultural area encompassing the political boundaries of east Chhattisgarh and western Nuapada district of Odisha, has a social history across the ages. Russel and Hiralal, in 1916 have identified the Kamar as a tribe in central India and have conducted an extensive research on their origin, socio- economic life, religion and belief along with their Gods and Goddessesⁱ (Russel and Hiralal: 1916).

After that, SC Dube,ⁱⁱ an eminent anthropologist of India conducted his field work on the Kamar in Khariar and Bindra Nawagarh Zamindaries of erstwhile Central Provinces during 1944- 1947. Dube, collected some oral tradition from the Kamars and wrote a monograph entitled Field Songs of Chhattisgarhⁱⁱⁱ (1947) published by the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Lucknow. Dube conducted a complete socio- developmental study on the Kamar and his work was published in 1954^{iv}. Dr. Verrier Elwin,^v during 1940-55, also trekked from corner to corner the same region, rather more than anybody else, and collected the Kamar folklore and placed them in English language in his work 'Tribal Myths of Orissa' (Elwin: 1954: 40).

The ethnographic work of Dube was significant in terms of looking at the Kamar as a primitive tribe dwelling in a specified cultural-geographical region. The Kamar consider Bindra Nawagarh to be their domicile of settlement as the

capital of their Kamar rule in remote past. They have witnessed the conquest of the Gonds and other tribes and castes in their forest-land which affected their autonomy of hunting territories.

Both Dube and Elwin have significantly contributed to the identity of the Kamar as a scheduled tribe before the independence of India. But the separation of Khariar zamindari from the Central Provinces and amalgamation in the state of Orissa, based on forest and rivers as boundaries of the state, politically overdrawn the solidarity of the Kamar tribe between Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. While the Kamar of Madhya Pradesh acquired the status of scheduled tribe in the constitution of India, the same tribe was incorrectly computed as a nontribal 'caste' in the state of Orissa. Thus in 1936, the cultural-territory of the Kamar was divided into two political states. The Kamar recognized as tribe and got all facilities and incentives from the MP government, but the Kamar of Orissa were deprived of this opportunity. Till now they are struggling to acquire themselves registered in the list of scheduled tribe of Indian Constitution. Even after their repeated efforts and submission, recommended by the state authority of Odisha, the Kamar remain deprived and disadvantaged for last 66 years. How can one believe that the linguistic and cultural rights of a smaller indigenous tribe in Odisha have been victimized due to their culture of silence and ignorance? Government, universities and commissions are yet to see register them as a scheduled tribe in the constitution !The deprivation imposed to them, more than half a century was not their fault, rather the moral responsibilities of the anthropologists, tribal welfare authorities and the governance.

Article 342 of the Constitution of India defines a 'tribe' as "an endogamous group with an ethnic identity; who have retained their traditional cultural identity; they have a distinct language or dialect of their own; they are economically backward and live in seclusion, governed by their own social norms and largely having a self-contained economy."^{vi} With this in mind one can safely categorize the Kamar as the scheduled tribes.

The simple reason of their deprivation was the mistake of enumerators, since the 'Kamar' in coastal Orissa means the iron-meltor (blacksmith) and iron-meltor cannot come under the scheduled tribe. The word representing blacksmith in western Orissa is 'Luhura'. The irony is that, since the Kamar are the most primitive tribe living in the lap of thick forest, iron melting is one of

their varieties of occupations along with fishing, hunting, *dahi* (shift) cultivation, and basket making. Therefore, “the word Kamar or Kommar”, writes Elwin, “is elsewhere an occupational term meaning a worker in iron, but the Kamars of Khariar (in Southwestern Orissa) have no tradition of this.”(Ibid)

Kamar Origin Myth:

The worldview, customs, beliefs, concepts and knowledge that is shaped in the Kamar cultural tradition is stranded in their sacred geography and environment. Kamar people walk in the night without torch-light and when they see a tiger they say, “I saw a dog (tiger) on my way”. Being inquired that why they prefer to live in forest where the threat of tiger is there, they say “Where the tiger will go leaving his own house? We are master and tiger is our dog.”

As per Kamar creation myth the human being were born after the Gods. The imaginary world of the Kamar was known as *indakap bhuinghar* –the underworld. The sunlight was also inept to spread there. After the God took his birth in that nether region, the first human took birth in that sacred place was a Kamar. Next took birth were twelve brothers ‘*dhani*’ sixteen sisters *raja devi*, sixteen sister *bandhri* etc.

First of all, Budharaja – the supreme God took his birth in a place named ‘*ambed thandar*’. He looked at the universe and found that nobody was ruling it. He took the whole universe as his own kingdom and again he slept. Two Kamar brothers took birth in *ambed bhandar*. That place was located in other side of seven oceans and sixteen rivers. These two men tried to cross the seven ocean and sixteen rivers, but failed. They took help of the tortoise and the crocodile. The bank of the river they crossed is known as *Baruka ghat*. The two Kamar were brothers since their origin was from one source. But while crossing the river, they separated in to two clans. The man who took help of the tortoise was known as *Netam* (dog) and another brother who crossed the river through crocodile was known as ‘*Sodi*’ – they became *saga* (kin) or *bandhu kutuam* to expand their progeny and thus the Kamar community originated in the earth.

Then the twelve brothers *Rajdhani* and sixteen sisters *Rajdevi* ruled over the earth. Meanwhile there was a quarrel between Budharaja and Desdhani god

Bhima. Bhima said, “I am ruling this land.” Budharaja said, “No. I am ruling the country, not you.” They fought each other, but could not resolve it. There was a war between them. Finally Bhima asked Budharaja, “Better you rule the subject.” Budharaja took some water from the water-gourd and sprinkled on the earth, and that was not sufficient for the cultivators. The rain was patchy and the farmers could not cultivate. So Budharaja could not rule the earth. He left the rule.

Subsequent was the turn of Bhima, but he desired to end the epoch in deluge. He also fixed a day to put an end to the whole creation of his time-*Yuga*. None but the fish, frog and water borne creatures were aware of this flood. Meanwhile Kamar women had been there to fetch water from the pond. She found that the frog was playing the game of love with the fish and the fish was with the frog. The Kamar woman asked them that why they do such unethical act? They replied, “Don’t you know, that *Desh Dhani Bhima* has fixed a day for a deluge to end this earth. Better you also go to your home and play with your husband the game of love.”

Listening this, the Kamar woman returned back hurriedly to her home and requested her husband to her bed. The old Kamar asked, “Surprisingly, pretty a long time, you have not called me for a mating. What is the matter to day?” She replied, “There will be a deluge, so the fish and frogs are mating each other. Why not to enjoy before we perish.” After listening this, the Kamar old man could speculate that *Desh Dhani Bhima* has decided to end up this creation. So he made a boat from the *Gambhari* tree. He kept all the belongings like food, clothes, house, well, fire wood in that boat so that their progeny can survive for another yuga- era.

Before the day of deluge, the Kamar couple positioned their son and daughter in the boat and waited for the deluge. When Bhīma opened his water-gourd, there was an unadorned rain for seven days and seven nights. All the creatures in the earth were perished. Due to flood, the subterranean water sources became plain land and the land where the boat was blocked became mountain and upland.

But the boat was floating on the water in the deluge for 12 years.

One day Bhīma wanted to listen to the voices of human being. He was curious to know if some human species was still alive after the deluge. So he created a crow from the dirt of his thigh. He ordered the crow to search the existence of human being. The crow searched for 12 years but did not find a human. Being tired, the crow sat on the boat and could listen the voice of human inside the boat. The crow informed Bhīma god about the presence of human. Bhīma sent three gods – *Inder*, *Lakha Rai* and *Agin Rai* to dry the deluge water. After drying the water Lakharai hit the boat at his axe. The axe bounced from the hand and hit his forehead. *Desh Dhani* promised that he would not end up the earth any more. He promised, the day when the horse would bear horns, and then he would end the earth in deluge.

The God rescued these two brothers and sister from the boat. He thought to teach the art of archery, cultivation and production of food to these two. He also taught them the Kamar language. Therefore the language of the Kamar is known as language of God. The first few words that the Kamar learnt from the God are, *Sahaya Bhandar* (house) *bajarmundia* (raggi) *beda fewa* (paddy) *bichhalmundi* (masa – brihi) *kadad got* (bean) *kanabin* (koshla-millet) *narmanja* – human, *dadukhanta* (baby) *ang* (body) *kantakhai* (sheep) *sonarkhure* (cow) *sing bahan* (buffalo).

Culture Hero: kachra Dhurua

The legend of Kachra Dhurua as collected by SC Dube reveals their cultural geography and their historical memory from which it is revealed that they have originated in Bindra Nawagarh and Khariar region of erst while Central provinces of India.

“The Nawagarh-raj was originally inhabited by the Kamars. Although they had no Kind of their own, they were the undisputed lords of the land. Then gradually the power of the Bhunjias increased. Chinda Bhunjia, a great fighter, became the ruler of the land. Chinda was the King, and the Chaukhutias were paik (footmen). Then came the Dhurwa Gonds from Lanji, and fought against Chinda. Chinda was treacherously killed. Thus, the way was paved for the supremacy of the Dhurwas in this land.

During this period two Kamars from a distant raj in Orissa came to this part. Their names were Niriya and Kariya. In Sonabeda they halted with Thutwa Mahajan, who was the phul' of their father. 'Where are you going, boys?' asked Mahajan. 'To Nawagarh,' answered the boys. When they were ready to depart, they asked Mahajan to give them some money. Mahajan gave them the money and said, 'Sons, you must give me twelve maunds each of wax, horns, leather and honey.'

In Bengarpalli they asked the Dhurwa Gonds to give them some land and shelter. The Dhurwas directed them to settle in Amatpali near Mardha. The two brothers went to Amatpali. There they constructed a small kundra (temporary hut) for themselves and lived in it.

One day they went hunting in the hills near Bengarpalli. There they saw a small Bhengraj bird on the top of a tree. They took it out from its nest and took it to their shelter.

The next day, as they woke up, they found that the Bhengraj bird was speaking to them'. 'Come, father, let us go for hunting,' it said to one. 'Come, uncle, let us go for hunting,' it said to the other. The two brothers went with the bird into the jungle. The bird knew where the animals were in the jungle and could even bring them near the Kamars. Every day the Kamars got plenty of shikar. So much so that in a few days they sent to Thutwa Mahajan, their father's phul, twelve maunds each of horns and leather.

The Dhurwas did not get any shikar in the jungle.

'what is the reason? We must find it out,' they said.

The Dhurwa-raj of Milcowa asked them to find out the reason. When they discovered the secret to Bhengraj, they decided to kill it. In the forest near Mardha, as the bird was coming on the back of a wild animal, the Dhurwas shot it.

The two Kamar brothers were very angry when they learnt about the death of their pet Bhengraj. They resolved to avenge their loss. They left the Nawagarh-raj and went back to Orissa. For twelve years, they served a Kind there; and made tokna , supa, chariya, etc., for him. The Kind was very much pleased with them, and gave them a good reward.

The two brothers had not yet forgotten the loss of their dear Bhengraj bird at the hands of the Dhurwas, nor had they give up their

determination to avenge it. With the money they got from the Kind in reward they went to the North and from there they brought the forces of man-eating Munguls.

The man-eaters created havoc in the Nawagarh-raj. The Dhurwas did not know what to do. They ran to the Kamars for help. When armed Kamars came in large numbers to help them, the Dhurwas were inspired to fight the enemy. The jungle-folks organized themselves and, armed with their bows and arrows, barchhi, ballam, etc., they began fighting the man-eaters.

The man-eaters were not very brave, but they were treacherous and cunning. Half the Munguls fought the Makars, and the other half went in untis to the Kamar settlements to eat their women and children. When a parrot brought the news of the deaths of their wives and children, the fighting Kamars became desperate. They began fighting the enemy without any care for their lives.

In one of these battles, Singal Sah, the chief of the Dhurwas, was killed. His queen, Gangi Dhurwin, who was pregnant, was alone in the village. When she found the village surrounded by the enemy on all sides, she jumped from a high hill-top with the intention of committing suicide. But destiny had something different in store for her. Like a flower, she fell on a rock; her body was not injured, not even slightly.

Mara Manjhi (Kamar) came to know about it and decided to rescue the queen and take her to a place of safety. He went to her and said, 'O queen, in your womb you have the kind of our land. Come with me. I will take you to some place where you and your child will be safe'.

Mara Manjhi took her to the Patna-raj, and kept her in the house of a Brahmin. He then made a little wooden sword, and giving it to the queen he said, 'Take it, Queen mother. When our King is born, present it to him on my behalf'.

The queen worked as a maid servant in the house of the Brahmin. One day, as she was taking out Kachra (rubbish) to throw it on the ghurwa(the place where dust and rubbish are thrown), she delivered a male child. The child called Kachna Dhurwa.

In the Nawagarh-raj, at this time, the Kamars were desperately fighting the man-eaters. They gradually drove them away. On the bank of the Pairi river near Baruka, all the surviving man-eaters surrendered

themselves to the Kamars. On the dand-ghat the heads of all of them were cut off. From that day, man-eaters do not cross the border of the Bindranawagarh-raj and never enter its territory.

Having killed all the Munguls the Karmars went into the Dhamtari-raj to find wives for themselves as the wives and the Munguls had eaten children of most of them.

In Patna, Kachna slowly began to grow. He was the son of a kind and had martial blood in his veins. As a child he was very naughty.

When the women-folk want out to fetch water, he used to break their earthen pots with his gulel. When they took out brass vessels, he broke them with iron arrows.

The complaint reached the King of Patna. He summoned the boy to his court.

‘Who are you?’ asked the king.

‘He is the son of a poor woman,’ said Gangi Dhurwin, the Queen.

But the king knew that such an extraordinary boy could not be the son of an ordinary woman. He asked the same question again. When the question was put to him thrice, Kachna Dhurwa boldly came forward and said, ‘I am Kachna Dhurwa, son of the Dhurwa Kind of Nawagarh.’

‘You will have to prove that,’ said the kind.

On the seventh day, the kind summoned Kachna Dhurwa to his court.

In the middle of the court he had kept a plantain tree with one stroke of the sword,’ said the kind.

Kanch Dhurwa smiled. He took up the wooden sword made for him by Mara Manjhi (Mamar) and with only one stroke of it, he cut the tree into two pieces. The king was very much pleased with Kachna Dhurwa and have him the kingdom of Bindra nawagarh. Here kachna Dhurwa lived and ruled for many years. He fought and won many battles. He won success after success, till at last he was killed by Bhilai Mata, with whose sister he fell in love. His headless body still lies in Dhaba – Kareli while his head is in Nawagarh¹⁸. (Dube, SC 2000, 158-161)

¹⁸ Dube, SC, The kamar, 2000, Oxford University Press, pp.158-161

Territory:

The Kamar territory is distributed into many states- *Raij*. The Kamar of Deobhog is *Deobhogia* and the Kamar of *Churra* state is known as *Churaraia*. Similarly Kamar are identified from the region as *Nuagadhia*, *Khalso Rajia*, *pahar patria*, *Khariar rajia*, *Phingesaria*, *Mainpuria*, etc. The above two myths implies that the Kamar are the indigenous community of the said land and territory. They have narrated these terms in their myth which is their ancient creation myth and heroic history. Kachra Dhurua is a clan God as well as a village God worshipped in more than 200 Kamar and Gond villages of eastern Chhattisgarh. This shows the transformation of a Supreme God manifested in to a Culture hero and Culture hero manifested in to their clan God.

Population

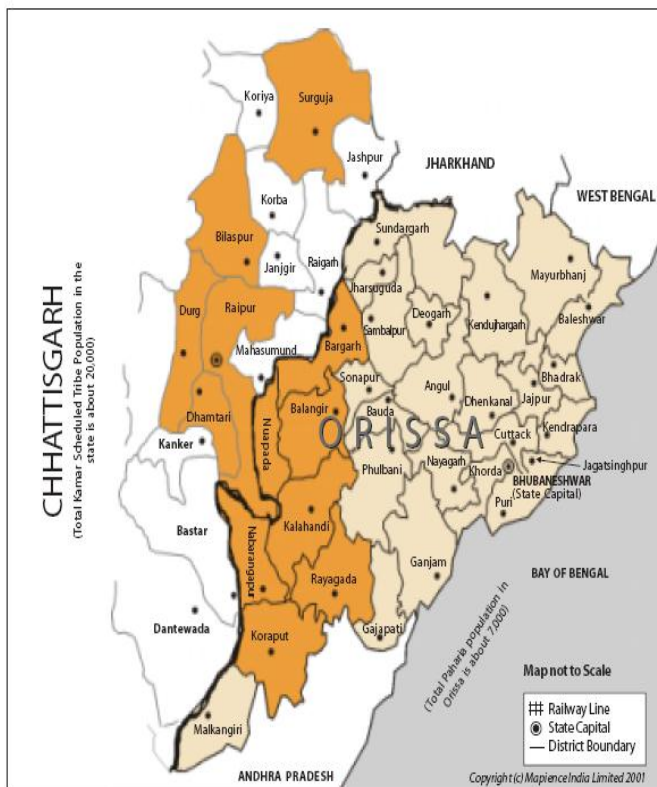
The approximate population of the Kamar was 7000 in 1911 in the Census of Central Provinces.^{vii} According to the Census of India 2001, the total population of Kamar in the state of Chhattisgarh was 23,113. Their literacy rate is 32.26, and their sex ratio is 1025.^{19viii} (Vaishnav: 2012: 20-21). While male literacy is 43.05 Kamar female literacy is 21.10 in Chhattisgarh. In Odisha the total population of the Kamar are 1500 Kamar families (4241 persons) living in the Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, and Bargarh districts. (See Swain and Majhi 2001:3). The literacy rate of the Kamar of Komna, Boden and Sinapali Blocks put together are 18.1 percent (2004). The female literacy rate is lower than the male literacy rate. (Lokadrusti)^{ix} Lokadrusti, and a human right-based NGO has reported after studied the socio – economic condition of the Kamar, Kamar in three Blocks of Nuapada district. The report indicates,

“Over the decades, the Kamar of Orissa has languished in extreme marginalization. The socio-economic profile of the Kamar reflects this exclusion: a literacy rate of 18.1 percent, which is half the literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes in Orissa.” (Lokadrusti: 2008: 5)^x

¹⁹ Vaishnav, 2012, Chhattisgake Jana jatiyan, TRI, Chhattisgarh, Raipur, PP.

There are 79 villages and 1278 households and their population is 4284. According to the survey taken up by the state Government, out of 1278 households 1209 households are Below Poverty Line (BPL). About 50 % of them live in forest areas. (Ibid)^{xi}

The Kamar territory based on their inhabitation, language and culture is maintained in the map shown below.



(Source : Lokadrusti, Paharias: The struggle for recognition 2008)

Occupation

Hunting, fishing, netting, making bamboo baskets and practice of *dáhi* – shifting cultivation are some of the occupations of the Kamar. They live in small huts made of small wood and straw. They form a small group in the forest and about 4- 5 families stay together. They stay back in the forest when they need the facilities of hunting, fishing and water resource.

But in the absence of water and hunting of animals, they migrate from one place to the other. While leave behind the forest, they burn the huts and abandon the place. They have a belief that, if they leave the huts as it is, the ghosts may come and stay there which is inauspicious.

They make bamboo baskets, bamboo mats and winnowing fans etc. and sell in the weekly market. They come to the market creating a group and sell the goods. They depend on the weekly market for many things that they like to present to their dearest one.

Family and Village

The Kamar are endogamous families having the rigidity of group definition. They are divided in to two sects, viz; *Budharajia* and *Makadia*. The *Makdias* are monkey eaters, so the *Budharajias* looks down upon them. They form their associational clustering through their settlement of residence or a small village in segregation. It is seen that the Kamar don't settle with other castes / tribes and they form their own caste/clan based village. They are also divided into two clans called *Netam* and *Sori*. Based on their clans they are subdivided in to 16 families of *Sori*, 12 families of *Netam*, 8 families of *Markam*, 4 families of *jagat*. These clan names are also found among the Gonds.^{xii}

Religious Belief:

The Kamar believe in Gods, Goddesses and supernaturalism. Their association with the forest and wildlife forms their visible and invisible connection with their universe. They worship many male and female divinities who have come from the lap of nature. Their male gods are *kasha Dura*, *Buddha Deo*, *Thakur Deo*, *Dulha Deo*, and female goddesses are *Mata Duma*, *Badi Mai*, *Majhli Mai*, and *Budhi Mai* etc. Moreover, they worship ancestral god (*Kul devta*) and sacrifice pigs, cocks and goats etc.

They believe in the absolute God as *Iswar* and *Parvati* and their first ancestor is *Linga*-(the Gond God?).Some of their Gods and Goddesses are known as *Brahman Devta*, *Bhagvati*, *Bramhan Dharni*, *kali kankalin*, *Bhima* etc.They believe in life after death and believe that the displeased soul of a departed

person is supposed to be the evil spirit and catch hold of the living beings. *Raha* - is their forest god; he is not revered by anybody. He takes the human form and takes human life. *Agin Devta* (fire God) is worshipped by the Kamar. *Nangapat Dharni* is a festival takes place once in a three years. They also worship their Bow which is known as *Dhanu puja*.

Language and Oral Tradition

Kamar have a rich linguistic and cultural repertoire. They belong to Indo-Aryan language group. Kamar tribe has a rich reservoir of oral tradition. Besides, there are innumerable songs like marriage songs, lullabies, love songs, work songs, chants and invocation. Tales are also based on imaginary realities. There are many tales connected to ghosts and spirits, family, jungle and society.

Sukal Sai kamar the first Bachelor of Arts from Biju patnak College of Boden has been fighting for the status of scheduled tribe under the umbrella of Kamar Bikash Manch is fighting for their rights. It is not possible when they will get their identity.

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Interrupting the Myth –

Poststructural Approach to Community and Literature

**Sanjay kaushal
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ABSTRACT

Folklore narratives have been playing a major role of shaping cultural identity of an individual as well as of a community, for their didactic nature transmit the value system, norms, and beliefs of a particular culture into an individual. Consequently, this paper presumes that folklore is essentially grounded on myth, or that they are entwined with each other. However, modern rational discourses exclude myths from their project of knowledge construction. This exclusion of folklore narratives is the means of being away from myth. Therefore, the knowledge constructed in such a discourse affirms the knowledge as ‘the absence of myth’ so that it arrives at the truth, which, this paper questions if at all it is possible to detach ourselves from myth. On the other hand, this paper discusses the arguments by Jean-Luc Nancy of how the absence of myth itself can be taken as another myth, for myth is something that does not disappear. Moreover, this paper also explores in depth the possibility to continue with the idea of myth by ‘interrupting the myth’. This need of ‘interrupting myth’ is extensively discussed in relation to the idea of literature through writing.

Introduction

The belief of the existence of community is an *uninterrupted myth*²⁰ that came up with the myth of humanism. Humanism was invented with the dawn of modernity, where it was differentiated from animalism on the opinion that holds human being as a rational being. The idea of community essentially comes from and through the collection or the gatherings of individuals, which also holds an individual as the “atom”²¹ of the community. However, though it is certain that the availability of the individual is necessary for constructing a community, yet once the community is constructed, identified and named, it becomes a powerful space. It is through this space an individual is supposed to have an identity, which happens to be shaped by the culture and values of that particular community. Moreover, it is also this belongingness to a particular community, through which one has to affirm himself not only through his existence but also through his death. In this context, not only an individual constructs the space of a community while constructing a community, but he also takes an oath of protecting that space of community along with its essence. Besides, this essence is the manifestation of the authenticity and specificity of a community. It is in such a context, where folklore narratives have to be considered as something which plays a major role in constructing or inventing communities and their spaces tying the individuals together making them the listeners, followers, and guardians of the stories and communities.

According to Jean-Luc Nancy, it is the story and the story-telling that could assemble people together. “They were not assembled like this before the story; the recitation gathered them together.”²² Accordingly, “there is a gathering, and someone is telling a story. We do not know whether these people gathered together form an assembly, if they are a horde or a tribe. But we call them brothers and sisters because they are gathered together and because they are listening to the same story.”²³ These stories are *about* the things and the beings which the listeners have no familiarity or knowledge of. Thus, the things brought in and through the story are unknown and unseen, yet they are understood by the listeners gathered around the stories. In that sense, what can be seen is not only the invention of the story through story telling but also the invention of the community. Therefore, folktales and communities are invented

²⁰ The idea of *uninterrupted myth* is explained further in detail in the paper.

²¹ Nancy, 1991, p. 3

²² Ibid, p. 43

²³ Ibid.

together and simultaneously, due to which the hierarchy between them cannot be made.

However, as far as the folktales are concerned, it is through them the lessons of good and bad, good and evil, friendship and enmity, merits and sins, and etc. are communicated to the individuals of the community. Thus, these folk narratives, explicitly or implicitly, can be taken as the representations of humanism with regard to their didactic nature. This representative aspect, which is substantiated through the history and also in modern times, can be seen in relation to political and religious discourses. Consequently, individuals are expected to follow these beliefs that are transmitted to them through the meanings which are made in and through the language of telling tales to make the relationship between the individual and the community strong. Further, doing so, they realize themselves as the emblem of their own communities who carry the *essence* and the *spirit* of the communities. Accordingly, this development of the beliefs becomes the truth, knowledge, and the dominant force which enforces the *order of the society* to which individual is subordinated, which in informal sense can be understood as the *law of the culture*.

In such a context, the law of a culture takes the shape of a community followed by dominant discourses. In such communities, only those dominant ideologies are imbibed, in which the singularity of individual is suppressed. Consequently, individual is carried away with the monologue of the community, where, as Nancy writes, “an inconsequential atomism, individualism tends to forget that the atom is a world. This is why the question of community is so markedly absent from the metaphysics of the subject, that is to say, from the metaphysics of the absolute for-itself.”²⁴

However, getting back to the crux of the order of community, as mentioned above, it could be seen that it is something invented along with the story-telling. Moreover, it is the sedimentation of the story and story-telling which lies beneath the discourse of community. Therefore, it ceases to be

²⁴ Ibid, p. 4

merely a story or a narration; instead it becomes the *nature*, *truth* and the *essence* of the community on which the foundation of science and technology is laid. Considering the knowledge of modern times, it is a knowledge that is constructed in and through the Cartesian reasoning and rationality that attempts to be away from the “world of senses”²⁵. As Lévi-Strauss explains, “at the time of Bacon, Descartes, Newton, and the others, it was necessary for science to build itself up against the old generations of mythical and mystical thought, and it was thought that science could only exist by turning its back upon the world of the senses, the world we see, smell, taste, and perceive; the sensory was a delusive world, whereas the real world was a world of mathematical properties which could only be grasped by the intellect and which was entirely at odds with the false testimony of the senses.”²⁶

Idea of ‘sensory world’ is a delusive world which science wants to be away from. It is an argument brought through Cartesian rationalism, which can be seen as an effort to find the *truth* that is away from *myth* in order to exclude myth from truth. However, the problem with this idea is that it itself is grounded on myth. It is a myth in two senses. As Nancy remarks, in one sense, the belief of the possibility of the “absence of myth”²⁷ is a myth. On the other hand, the communities which have been identified *as such* in socio-economic, religio-cultural, and political terms are themselves myths since the community is based on a “mythic foundation”²⁸. Community relates back to a mythic foundation which cannot be traced back or substantiated, thus, is an unlocatable origin. Along with the *mythness* of the myth e.g. unlocatability and un-substantiality of the origin of the community, it is also the *accumulation of space* with the *time* that makes a myth a myth. Moreover, on the other hand, the mythness when embedded with the source of world view of people, can be understood as a context of folklore. Therefore, the idea of community which puts itself as a completed entity or a work, is itself a myth.

Thus, there is no such possibility of completely getting away from myth in terms of negation of myth, since, in Nancy’s point of view, ““myth”

²⁵ Strauss, 2001, p. 1

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Nancy, 1991, p. 47

²⁸ Ibid, p. 45

designates [...] something that cannot simply disappear”²⁹. On the other hand, the above impossibility does not suggest that myth should be continued uninterrupted. If it does, it creates a closure fixing individuals, community, language and meaning into *oneness* where homogeneity is maintained against heterogeneity. In other words, if myth continues as it is, it *ends up* becoming a myth. Therefore, it becomes the end of myth due to its fossilization as a myth – the accumulation as a myth or myth as a completed work due to which it becomes the myth *as such* – the recognized myth.

Therefore, what is needed to be done is the *interruption* – “*the interruption of myth*”³⁰. However, the interruption does not suggest the idea of “demythologizing”³¹. According to Nancy, demythologizing is an “activity that distinguishes between “myth” and “faith” and that depends, moreover, on the possibility of positing something like “faith”, while leaving untouched the essence of myth itself.”³² Instead, interruption of myth is that which neither negates the myth, nor continues with the myth. Consequently, myth does not disappear. Moreover, the interruption of myth is also an interruption of community, because, as mentioned above, community is a myth in which case “myth and myth’s force and foundation are essential to community and that there can be, therefore, no community outside of myth. Wherever there has been myth [...] there has been necessarily, community, and vice versa.”³³

Since, in the context of myth, the most needed thing is the *interruption*, next point that has to be explored is *when* and *where* this interruption has to be attempted. Accordingly, it is the notion of *edge* that has to be taken into consideration for accounting the above questions of *when* and *where*. Here, the edge has to be understood as something which not only marks the end but also as the beginning of something. In this sense, the edge becomes the most crucial point – the point of departure and the point of arrival.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 47

³⁰ Ibid, p. 47

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, p. 57

In that sense, the edge of the myth or the community is the point where community sees its own absolute domain within which it identifies itself *as such* with a “recognized face”³⁴ – the revelation with the light. Moreover, it is also the point where the work of constructing or creating of the community ends. It is the *last day* of creation – the Biblical sixth day, which announces the end of the work and the beginning of the next day for *resting*, is the final day of work where one sees the completion of all works.³⁵ In this context of community, the last day which announces its success as the *formed community* is the success of collectivity or the birth of collectivity, while it also announces the death of the individual – the *singular* being with *singularity*.

Hence, as Nancy says, the interruption is that which “interrupts fusion and suspends the communion, and this arrest or rupture once again leads back to the communication of community. Instead of closing it in, this interruption once again exposes singularity to its limit, which is to say, to other singularities.”³⁶ Thus, the interruption of myth makes the myth turn towards the other side in which case it gets open to the *outside*. However, this interruption is made in order to resist the possibility of *appropriation* of the myth as myth so that it can pass on from one to the other as an incomplete work, which is to be worked on, not in order to produce a completed work but to affirm the very impossibility of a finished or completed work. This resistance to the possibility of appropriation is needed, because it attempts to appropriate the individual to the community, meaning, identity and essence, suppressing the singularity of the being.

This interruption can be made through *literature*, where literature as a “fictive institution”³⁷ appears to interrupt the continuous *voice* of collectivity. However, this interruption is a *voice*, but not necessarily coherent, because interruption gives rise mostly to a “rustling”³⁸ or “murmur”, “which rose among the wounded”³⁹. Here, the *voice* has to be understood in relation to literature through which literature becomes the way of expressing or saying something

³⁴ Levinas, 1969.

³⁵ Genesis 2, [The King James version of the Holy Bible, p. 1] 2004

³⁶ Nancy, 1991, p. 60

³⁷ This idea is presented by Jacques Derrida in the interview ‘*This Strange Institution Called Literature*’ which appears in his book *Acts of Literature*, 1992, p. 36

³⁸ Nancy, 1991, p. 62

³⁹ Blanchot, 1995, p. 183

different than what has been already said till the point of the interruption. In this sense, the *voice* can be the voice of crying, squeaking chocking, sighing, or anything which are not necessarily any linguistically identified expressions. Moreover, such voices are made not due to one's strength, but through the pain of being feeble. Therefore, the voice that interrupts is already a suppressed voice which is the voice that rises with fear and trembling, in which case it appears more as a murmur rather than a speech made with coherent and meaningful words. In a *murmur*, voice or the sound is audible, but not clear. In other words, in a murmur what is heard is the *murmuring*, but not what is *murmured*; thus, though it cannot be grasped to identify with *what*, yet, it continues indefinitely. Besides, this murmur, which "opens near us, underneath our common utterances"⁴⁰, is before the word, speech and meaning.

The murmur, which is heard at the interruption, is literature. It does not *sermon*, *perform* or *represent*, but only expresses; it is the expressing while being the expression. However, this expression does not end where it ends, for it detaches from the one who expresses and passes on to the outside. It is this detachment that is possible in and through literature through writing since writing is the passage that passes from one to the other through continuous displacement. The detachment and displacement is that which is marked by the movement from the author to the reader. As Nancy explains, "literature does not come to an end at the place where the work passes from an author to reader, and from this reader to another reader or to another author. It does not come to an end at the place where the work passes on to another work by the same author or at the place where it passes into other works of other authors. [...] it is unended and unending."⁴¹

In that sense, writing is the way through which the word becomes a nomad. Also, in writing, word is "no longer anything but its appearance – the shadow of a word"⁴². In this context of word, folktales can also be understood as nomads and mere appearances which keep coming without getting caught in the snare of definite meaning. Moreover, folklore is an oral tradition which has to be understood not in terms of speech and passing of speech in the general

⁴⁰ Blanchot, 1982, p. 181

⁴¹ Nancy, 1991, p. 65

⁴² Blanchot, 1982, p. 25

sense which excludes writing, but in terms of *writing*⁴³, as Derrida says, which imbibes speech as a way of writing.

This opening to the outside is that which makes folklore as fiction, which, in terms of its recurrent appearances, is in its play of nomadism. However, it is required to be explored that what appears through such appearances. It can be said that it is the appearance of what had *not* appeared. In that sense, what appears is not the presence of presence, but the presence of absence and absence of presence – the absence of the togetherness, togetherness which binds scattered things together, togetherness of speaker, speech, meaning, reference and recognition, which is visible in the everyday uninterrupted speech. Furthermore, this nature of folktale makes it a myth, since it moves with the time without identifying any beginning *as such*. As far as the myth is concerned, what keeps appearing is not the myth as such, but the mythical figures whose force remain effective despite their fictive nature, due to which what happens in the myth appears *as if* real. However, though it is impossible to locate the time of the beginning of the myth, the interruption of myth is as ancient as its emergence or its designation of myth, in which case myth becomes the invention of literature.

As Nancy remarks, “*literature does not know what it has interrupted: it only knows that it inaugurates itself with one stroke, one incision, and it names “myth” that which it represents to itself as having been present before this stroke. Its own myth, consequently, is to link up with its own “myth”, to reground itself in “myth”, which is to say, in itself. [...] But forasmuch as it is haunted by this myth, the stroke of writing, bravely confronting this haunting memory, must never stop interrupting it again.*”⁴⁴

Thus, what is expected through interruption is to unbind the bonded, to unwork the worked, or to untie the tied so that the collectivity that is made through community that represses the singularity does not occur; and that the

⁴³ Derrida, in *Of Grammatology* (1976), takes up the idea of *writing* which is not restricted only to the general notion of writing rather it is that which includes *speech* as well.

⁴⁴ Nancy, 1991, p. 72

singularity of being can appear with its *singular being*. When this is reflected with regard to the myth or folk stories, it is the *interruption* that keeps the stories wandering, detaching them from the joints through which they are joined constructing the discourses, ideologies, institutions, and orders. These are the joints which stop their nomad life as stories or as myths and make them the *truth, right, moral*, or the *essence*. It is only through detaching them from forcefully tied knots that they can become mere stories which have no specific ground, time, date, or community. It is this detachment which makes them appear from the past or the history without becoming monuments or museums, whose function is obsolete and got limited only to a particular time. It is this detachment which makes them move towards infinity in terms of time and space. It is this particularity which makes them universal not in terms of similarity of genres or content, but in terms of the *difference*.

Therefore, considering the contemporary scenario of rational scientific and technological advancement, folklore is something that cannot disappear. This idea can be exemplified in relation to the day-to-day discourse of the idea of God. The idea of God which was created can be understood as myth. For instance, in contemporary scenario it can be understood to have a didactic or moral impact on the people in order to keep the *moral order* in the human societies. As far as God is concerned, the myth of God itself is that which has a long history of detachment and displacement due to which large number of stories and meanings of God have sprung. Accordingly, also the other narratives like nation and community got different kinds of Gods due to which God has become *multinational*. As Nietzsche explains, God “has gone abroad, gone wandering about; since then he has sat still nowhere: until at last he is at home everywhere, the great cosmopolitan – until he has got ‘the great majority’ and half the earth on his side.”⁴⁵ According to these different stories, God has become something that makes meaning that is constructed through *is* due to which *God is*, as spirit, as the God of the sick, God as redeemer, forgiver, kindness, love, punishment, giver, and etc. However, yet it has not seen the *end* as such due to which God appears as God *to come* along with different manifestations and meanings. Therefore, despite being the great myth for years of human civilization, idea of God still remains as a myth to be invented.

⁴⁵ Nietzsche, 1968, p. 139 - 140

Nonetheless, going through the communities which exist in the world in terms of nation, religion, culture, language, gender and etc., what can be noted is their attempt to maintain their respective spaces to preserve the *essence* or the *spirit* of their *traditions* and *values*. Moreover, this attempt is made through creating closures that are somehow made through holding onto some myths, through which the totality of community, language, and meaning is constructed. Consequently, these closures can mark nothing but the end of community, language, and meaning, due to which monotonous, monolingual, and dominant discourses are constructed, which necessarily neglect the singularity of being. In this sense, those communities can produce nothing but the continuity of the *Same* with no novelty.

It is through such closures everything becomes finite and finitude which has its affirmation on the *end* of everything. Therefore, the continuity of tradition, cultures, communities, or languages can be expected only through constant unfolding of the folded; in other words, through opening up to the outside i.e. interruption. However, this continuity is a disrupted continuity through which all the worked becomes unworked. And, it is through these openings, things seep in and out and things undergo transformations. Although these transformations are sometimes imperceptible due to which what is lost and what is gained cannot be measured, counted, or viewed. But, in such a context, to believe in absolute loss or a disappearance of something, be it culture, folklore or language, is another myth that makes us sad and melancholic. Also, it is that myth which makes us believe in something called *essence* that is constructed through the mythically invented center. Therefore, in real sense, nothing disappears permanently; rather keeps appearing through the *traces* left behind while passing through transformations *becoming* other than the *given*. It is this nomadism that has to be understood in the sense of “plural voices of singular beings”⁴⁶. Here, plurality refers to the plurality in terms of the number of singular beings, and also plurality within singularities.

⁴⁶ Nancy, 1991, p. 76

This singularity of being is that which interrupts the continuity of community due to which community cannot continue to be the community through collectivity. It is the singularity which leaves the community undone. Therefore, community is not the totality in totalized sense, but it has to be understood as the totality in terms of *fragments*, because community itself is a *story* or a *myth*. However, this fragmented aspect of the community is possible only through literature through writing. Blanchot writes about this nature of literature with reference to Kafka's writings as, "Kafka's main stories are fragments, and the totality of the work is a fragment. This lack could explain the uncertainty that makes the form and content of their reading unstable, without changing the direction of it. But, this lack is not accidental. It is incorporated in the very meaning that it mutilates; it coincides with the representation of an absence that is neither tolerated nor rejected."⁴⁷ It is this lack that keeps the myths, folklore, community, and language continue and open to the outside.

Therefore, the domain of literature constituted by language is thus one which stretches beyond the confinements of *concrete reality*. It embodies the socio-cultural dimensions of communities as well. Further, not only does it serve as a communicative system, but also as a constructivist system and cognitive system. The movement out of the Self to the Other, is what literature allows through language.

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The Spectacle of the Other: Colonialism and the Naga

Kailash C Baral

Abstract

This paper attempts to problematise and contextualize colonial gaze; the way it has brought the colonized to spectacle. Seeing is believing--the old saying goes! The colonizers were not simply guided by this universal saying. In colonial sight, the *other* was not only seen but constructed and described, hardly understood thereby creating a rupture in cross-cultural communication. The term 'gaze' has assumed criticality in contemporary theoretical debates; for example, feminists deconstructing male gaze in cinema, cultural theory and so on having in mind Lacan's psychoanalytic use of the term in terms of the subject's desire to control the object and Foucault employing the term in medical, surveillance and biopower contexts. Colonial gaze has been instrumental in producing ethnographic narratives and other modes of documentation for example illustrations and photography. The present paper would examine and critique how far these modes facilitated colonial production of Naga identity.

Colonial/imperial gaze connotes the self/other relationship in which the colonialist occupies a position of privilege having his/her own set of value-preferences (Ashcroft et al 2000:187). Asserting its command as an ordering force, the white Western subject becomes central much as the male gaze assumes the centrality of the male subject (Waugh 2006:514). Waugh's understanding has implications to race, culture and gender the way it works between the colonizer and the colonized in which the gaze does not simply remain unspoken but becomes a mode of constructing the other, even if such

constructions remain unequal and uneven yet provide the privileged subject the power to control the narrative. The gaze becomes central in the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized, the way the colonized is objectified—as seen and described. This encounter basically privileges the colonizer who not only takes a view of the land as colonial resource but also at the people who inhabit the land to be subjugated. Thus the moment of encounter that actualizes the gaze is significant. The unknown other is visualized along with his/her habitat, territory, physiognomy, dress, and other cultural markers and practices. Thus the trope “seeing” empowers the already constructed other in stories, legends, fantasies to appear before the observer to substantiate the facts to be renarrativised.

Colonial travel (euphemistically official tours) archive is both informative and problematic. Travel here includes different modes and with different objectives. There were official tours with administrative-military purposes, field studies for academic study (mostly anthropological), travels to study the flora and fauna of the subject country and other travels. There are ethnographic accounts produced by administrators (J.H.Hutton, J.P. Mills), military personnel (Col.Shakespeare), naturalists (J.H. Hooker), anthropologists (Heimendrof and Verrier Elwin) and missionaries about the people and territories of Northeast. The experiences of these colonial travelers (administrative and non-administrative) are articulated in the form of journals, diaries, tour reports, scholarly works supplemented with illustrations and photographs. Their accounts of travel experiences and impressions of alien people, and their cultures intersect time and space zones. J.H.Hutton, colonial administrator and anthropologist, has written extensively on the Nagas. An anthropologist by his own right; author of *The Sema Nagas* (1923) and *The Angami Nagas* (1921), Hutton went to become the Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Cambridge. As an administrator, he undertook journeys (official tours) with different objectives to different areas of former Naga Hills on different occasions. His two tours to the ‘Unadministered Area East of Naga Hills’ which is roughly the present districts of Mon and Tuensang were conducted between 3-27th April 1923 and 9-30th November 1923. Following Hutton’s, Mill’s and Heimendrof’s footsteps, Peter Van Ham and Jamie Saul visited these areas during 2002-2006 and have recorded their travel accounts in a volume entitled: *Expedition Naga: Diaries from the Hills in Northeast India 1921-1937, 2002-2006*. They have extensively dealt with the material cultures and practices of the Konyaks, Phoms, Changs and others thereby producing a text that is intertextual as well as interrogative of texts produced by colonial

administrators. Van Ham and Saul are not from the colonial centre; Saul from South Africa and Ham from Germany. As scholars, they have the privilege of being outside of the colonial paradigm but have used the colonial texts of J.P. Mills and Heimendrof (The author of *The Naked Naga*) along with Hutton's as their point of reference so that they could follow the footsteps of the colonial traveler/explorer/anthropologist in their attempt to offer a critique of colonial monolingualism that has distorted the knowledge about the colonized. In their narrative space/time, colonizer/colonized, gaze/sight are contested and complicated to produce a document that also compares and contests the spectacle of the native as their work is supplemented with a video CD like the photographs and illustrations appended to Hutton's diary.

In introducing their work Van Ham writes:

Our goal in travelling to Nagaland was to compare Hutton's, Mills' and Haimendorf's books with the present situation and to determine which of the customs and traditions they described were still current in the areas they visited. Of course, we are aware of the historicity of these documents – their colonial style, the views of the people presented in them and the historical paradigms which underlie them. Many of the research concepts and ideas may appear outdated and politically incorrect... And it was these historic descriptions that brought our attention to the extraordinary cultural characteristics of these regions (2006:10).

The *telos* of any travel is weaved in time and space. Physically, travel is always set to a destination; less provocatively it is also a visit to a place with a map. A map is not a territory, said Alfred Korzybski, the father of General Semantics. According to him, "The map is however worthless if it shows a traveler a structure different from the terrain, he sets out upon. Structure in this context means order and relations, what comes after what (Chase 1955:137). If a place could be only geographical and colonial, space is both pre-colonial and a cultural territory, as Korzybski would explain, it evolves out of time-binding. The human aspect of time-binding is that we live in the present of the past. The past always renews itself in the present hence any travel writing should look into a culture intersecting time and space. Within this dynamics, the way a word comes to mean or an expression used by a cultural group cannot be reduced only to its literal meaning but to a culture of meaning

that the traveler should explore. For example, in Hutton's tour diary a Tamlu Naga asked where did the expedition party rested on previous night in Nagamese: "Kon phale chunka marichhe, marichhe?" The expression creates confusion as Hutton translates it "Where did you eye-die, die?" which otherwise would simply mean where did you sleep last night? This is one of the examples of not understanding yet describing people's expressions in literal sense. The linguistic problem is obviously more complex as it becomes a hindrance in cultural understanding. Thus the colonial travel narrative is at the best descriptive that describes what is seen or sighted from a physical perspective, making the narrative very reductive to certain preconceived notions within a colonialist paradigm that differentiates people on the basis of dress they put on, the food they eat etc thereby describing them as 'primitive', barbaric or uncivilized. As Krozybski would maintain "language cannot tell "all" about an event; some characteristics will always be omitted" (Chase 1955:137). As we differentiate between a traveler and a tourist, we understand that a tourist uses travel brochures and his/her journey is always already guided but the same is not true of a traveler. A traveler always wants to know more of the people and of a territory only then s/he can produce an enduring travelogue. With an intense desire to walk the cultural space of a geography, a traveler attempts to unravel what is seen or sighted in a particular cultural terrain. Travel writing thus becomes a mediated text of diverse aspects of the human condition, cultures and social practices. If the impressions or understandings of the traveler of other cultures constitute the narrative, the narrative also unfolds the attitude, the cultural prejudices of a traveler. The traveler not only discovers the other but also discovers himself/herself through the other.

Colonial travel is organized around a plurality of thematics and objectives. I will not dwell more on this, but to bring to your attention another mode of describing the other that was used during the colonial travel was illustration that was gradually replaced by photography in order to produce the spectacle of the other. Photography was an improvement on illustrations. The illustrations usually draw the difference between/among similar objects, for example, in anthropological and other texts on Nagas, the shape of the morungs, body tattoos, dress codes etc. Photography is an improvement on illustrations that helps underline differences more sharply. More than that photography becomes another textual representation that supplements writing as well as deepens the spectacle of the other as authentic. Colonial narratives always incorporated illustrations as well as photographs in order to make the

written more visible and meaningful. Photography was the best means of manifesting and controlling the colonial gaze to racial differences, focusing on colonial bodies and capturing those aspects of cultural practices that could be looked down upon as uncivilized.

The colonial construction of the tribe goes beyond the narrative resulting in physical exhibition of the “body”. It was important for legitimizing the authenticity of an ethnographic narrative. In 1940 an Igorot man from Philippines was brought for exhibition at the Saint Louis fair. Such an exhibition was planned for the ethnological congress at Calcutta in 1866, for exhibiting a human specimen from Northeast which of course could not be carried out because of administrative constraints, informs Verrier Elwin. However, this piece of information is important to know how colonial gaze moved from physical exhibition and was supplemented by photographic representation.

Colonialism and photography have had a close and a troubled relationship. The mass-circulation of photography during the heyday of colonial expansion was integral to the colonial process, used to map and control, to produce knowledge of both people and places. Photographs were part of the vast flow of information on which the colonial project depended. Colonialism and photography operated in mutually sustaining ways, the latter creating images of vacant spaces for settlement, taking policy decisions how to civilize the ‘primitive’ tribes while classifying racial categories for ordering habitation. For this purpose, Dr. B. Simpson one of the most successful colonial photographers was deputed by the colonial Govt to Brahmaputra valley to take photographs of the natives and the skills of Dr. Brown, the Political Agent of Manipur was pressed into service for making illustrations of the people of Manipur.

The spectacle of the other is always fascinating as well as mysterious. For example, the meaning of different tattoos on different male and female bodies, as a clan and tribe marker may be made a spectacle through photography but their embodied/embedded cultural/ritual meanings are not often available to an outsider as it would to a cultural insider. Similarly, the significance of embedded/embedded cultural signatures is often misread and misinterpreted for example, headhunting in the Naga context. For the colonial Govt., the Naga culture is degenerative as it is involved in head hunting. The express intent of the colonial administration was to stop headhunting and slavery; hence most colonial narratives overlook the material cultural practices

of the Nagas. Van Ham and Saul with reference to colonial description of the tribes of Nagalnd write:

However, the expansion of the British Empire was often accompanied by serious clashes of cultural perceptions. In Naga Hills these were specially the practices of headhunting and slavery... which the British did not tolerate within their Imperial borders. As rulers they felt provoked and threatened if groups did not obey their orders and then felt duty bound to enforce their rules and laws (2006:280).

The British were paternalistic towards the Nagas and with the authority of their reign they tried to change the Naga life style thereby erasing the central core of their cultural world view. Such an onslaught made the Naga restless as headhunting was considered an act of barbarism instead a fertility principle that was intimately connected to Naga life-world:

The age-old principle 'Increase of life-force for the clan by getting an enemy's head' all of a sudden could no longer be fulfilled...The most important insignia reserved for successful headhunters became unreachable, social prestige unattainable...An entire religious sway of thinking, which was built around the assumption that the life-force could be personally added to and directed to one's will (by headhunting) and so made it possible to change death into life (for the clan), was obsolete as an instant (Ibid:281).

Colonial narratives were focused mostly on the practice of headhunting whether in narrative or photography; the Naga was exoticised as if headhunting was an animal practice without unraveling its core that revolved around surplus of fertility for reproduction, good harvest etc. Even Nagas would not leave the heads of their dead to the enemy and take the heads with them for keeping the spirits of the dead in the village for increasing fertility.

Photography not only provides the spectacle of the other but also is a semiotic site for exploration. From still photography to digital mode photography has been a troubled mode of representation. There is every possibility that the targets of its gaze could be manipulated as the mode is

mostly subjective. However, as a mode, supplementing writing it fills the gaps of some of the unsaid aspects of representation.

Roland Barthes in his *Rhetoric of the Image* (1964) asks: do the images produced by photography constitute a language, and if they do, how does meaning work within this language? He uses an advertising image to analyze these questions with the assumption that an advertising image clearly has an intended meaning. How do we then look at the images produced by Hutton's use of illustrations and photography that seem to be frozen in time and that of the video produced by Van ham and Saul. While Hutton's photography could be of historical importance, Van ham and Sauls' are representation of an ongoing, changing mode of embedded cultures coming to life through videography.

The morung in Hutton's photography would be only an impression of the place or people, so also the display of heads hunted as well as tattoos and other images as they lack simultaneous verbalization. In the process of verbalization the cultural members participate as well as supplement the narrative adding their voice to it. The dobhasi (bilingual translator) of Hutton in most cases is not from the same group. It is not important for the colonial administrator whether the Dobhasi knows well the people or not but should have the ability to communicate effectively with the colonial master. Thus there is a gap in understanding a cultural phenomenon through the inadequate translation of a Dobhasi hence the need to supplement it might be through illustrations or photography.

But in case of Van Ham and Saul, the interpreter/translator is well versed in English and is from the same community. But during the colonial times the Dobhasis did not have the competence to interpret the cultural meanings of some tribal practices; even if they did it was not understood in context by the ethnographer. This deficit is predictably filled in by the recent interpreter/translator with his/her participation as a cultural insider.

I will discuss only two examples from Van Ham and Sauls' work: 'The Interview with a Headhunter' and the 'Inauguration of a new Morung.'

The headhunter who has participated in couple of inter village wars knows the persons whose heads he took. It is interesting to note that in Naga culture, the village comes first. In an inter-village conflict one would not think twice taking the head of a person even if known or a friend from another village. The heads carry a ritual as well as spiritual connotation hence killing a

person is abstracted as a duty so that the spirits of the dead bring good fertility and harvest. This ritual significance of the act enhances the prestige of a person in the village for he in taking heads adds to fertility surplus of the village. The wars are not carried out simply avenging former deaths from a village but carry deep cultural signification. If the warrior is a married person his wife would cook a ritual meal for him and the warrior takes only that food during the fight. The feminine energy is also harnessed for the war even if women do not participate in headhunting. They do participate in the ritual dancing before the party leaves for the war and also participate in the ritual dancing after the warriors return to the village. Therefore killing was indiscriminate, only counting heads irrespective of gender, age etc. The head hunter in his interview says that although Christianity has brought about peace it is an emasculated life. It should not be therefore considered something as humanizing the barbarians because the practice was encoded in the world view of the pre-Christian times.

In the inauguration of a new Morung in a village is interesting because the institution of the Morung is totally irrelevant in the wake of Christianity. The Morung is traditionally a youth dormitory where the young men of the village spend the night together. In some of the anthropological writings the youth dormitories carry a negative connotation as a place for the meeting and mating of young people. But Morung is a cultural institution. Traditionally it is a place to watch out for the enemies and protect the village, besides the myths and the lores are passed on to the younger generation in an oral cultural set up. While the younger boys are trained in war fare, the young ladies are also taught skills of diverse types. The Morung also serves as the village museum as the heads collected from a conflict are also preserved there.

These two examples clearly suggest that the deeper cultural meanings get lost in their representation either in photography or illustrations that are selective and used only to supplement the narrative. The spectacle thereby loses authenticity. Thus colonial ethnographies need to be re-examined in the real cultural context and the figures on the carpet need not be relooked at not only as spectacle but as a means to explore deeper cultural structures that give a community its world view and define its way of life.

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Cognitive Semiotic Approach to the Study of Native American Folklore in Amerindian Literary Texts

Svitlana Volkova

Abstract

American Indian writer Linda Hogan wrote in the preface to her book “Dwelling”: “It has been my lifelong work to seek an understanding of the two views of the world, one as seen by native people and the other as seen by those who are new and young on this continent. It is clear that we have strayed from the treaties we once had with the land and with the animals. It is also clear, and heartening, that in our time there are many – Indian and non-Indian alike – who want to restore and honor these broken agreements” (Dwelling, 11).

The paper aims at analyzing cognitive semiotic ways of revealing folklore images, motifs, genres, which occur to be reinterpreted in literary texts and make the mythologic (synthesis of mythology and folklore) ground of modern Native American fiction. Our special concern deals with the images considered being cultural symbols, accumulating cultural information of ethnos and verbalized by means of lexical and stylistic devices in literary texts.

Key words: folklore , Native American fiction, motifs, cultural studies, Barthesian

It is generally known that folklore comprises the unrecorded traditions of any ethnos. The study of folklore records and analyzes these traditions because they reveal the common life of the mind below the level of “high” or formal culture, which is recorded by civilizations as the learned heritage of their times. Only by turning to the folklore of peoples, probing into its meanings and functions, and searching for links between different bodies of tradition we may hope to understand the intellectual and spiritual life of man in its broadest dimensions.

The chief difficulty in defining “folklore” adequately is that the word has acquired varying meanings among the different people who use it. The word was coined by a nineteenth-century English scholar, W.J. Thoms, to supply an Anglo-Saxon word to replace the Latinate term “popular antiquities”, or the intellectual “remains” of earlier cultures surviving in the traditions of the peasant class. Modern folklorists have long since abandoned the peasant connotations of the term, although these linger in Europe, but they still use it partly in the original sense to signify that portion of any culture that is passed on in oral tradition. Researches of the folklore texts tend to exclude as spurious or contaminated any supposed folklore that is transmitted largely by print, broadcasting, or other commercial and organized means. American folklorists sometimes use the term “fakelore” (coined by Richard M. Dorson in 1950) to disparage the professional writers’ contrived inventions – like Paul Bunyan – which are foisted on the public as genuine examples of native folk traditions.

Others use the term “folklore” with different meanings, ranging from children’s literature to rumor and hearsay; it is in the scholarly sense of “oral tradition” that we will employ the word here.

Depending upon how it is defined, “American” folklore may be pictured as non-existent, relatively rare, or extremely common (Brunvand 1968, 20). As late as 1930 Alexander H. Krappe, a prominent American folklorist, was still European-oriented enough to take the extreme position that there was no such thing as American folklore, but only a few importations that eventually lost themselves in our mechanized age. The American Folklore Society itself was formed in 1888 partly to collect the “fast-vanishing relics” of foreign folklore in the United States, as for the phrase American Folklore, that referred to the Indians, or to the nationality of members of the society.

The materials of folklore in this limited sense, are extremely wide-ranging and diverse; they may seem, at first glance, to constitute a vast chaotic mass that would defy any attempt at logical organization. Yet elaborate schemes of classification have been devised, notably by Swedish and Irish folklorists. But these systems do not lend themselves to a classification of American folklore because of differing concepts of the subject here and abroad. Instead, a simple and workable arrangement of the types of folklore may be based on three modes of existence: folklore is verbal, partly verbal, or non-verbal (Brunvand 1968, 2).

In the focus of our scientific interest it is verbal American Indian folklore. This type is most commonly studied in the United States, may be logically classified from the simplest to the most complex varieties. At the level of individual word is folk speech, including dialect and naming. Traditional phrases and sentences make up the area of folk proverbs and proverbial sayings, while traditional questions are folk riddles. Next are folk rhymes and other traditional poetry, then folk prose narratives of all kinds, and finally folksongs (Brunvand 1968, 3).

Traditional prose narratives – that is, oral stories – often loosely termed “folktales”, constitute one of the largest and most complex branches of folklore. These narratives include stories that are regarded as true, called “myths” and “legends”, and stories that are regarded as fictional, properly called by the term “folktales”. Myths are distinguished from legends (as anthropologist William Bascom has formulated it) by the attitudes of story-tellers toward them, the settings described in them, and their principal characters. Myths are regarded as sacred, and legends as either sacred or secular; myths are set in the remote past in the otherworld or an earlier world, and legends in the historical past; myths have as their principal characters gods and animals, while legends generally have humans in the major roles.

In the framework of Barthesian cultural studies, myth, like connotation, can be seen as a higher order of signification. Louis Hjelmslev had argued that above the connotative level there was a metasemiotic to which belonged geographical, historical, political, sociological, psychological and religious issues relating to such concepts as “nation, ... region, ... the value forms of styles, personality ... mood, etc.” (Chandler 2007, 144). Barth did not see the myth of contemporary culture as simply a patterned agglomeration of connotations but as ideological narratives, and, following Hjelmslev, he saw

mythical form as a metalanguage” (Barth 2001, 104), which he defined as “a system whose plane of content is itself constituted by a signifying system.

According to Levi-Strauss myths serve the ideological function of naturalization (Levi-Strauss 1978). Their function is to naturalize the cultural – in other words, to make dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs seem entirely natural, normal, self-evident, timeless, obvious common sense – and thus objective and true reflections of “the w

Rhetoric and connotation generate complex signs, and myths are complex sign-systems which generate further ideological signs. Rather than characterizing myths simply as a cluster of tropes and connotations, Barthes argued that they function in amore integrated fashion both in their content (ideology) and in their form – as metalinguistic semiotic system of codes, of which specific cultural connotations and tropes can be seen as fragments (Barthes 1957, 99-103].

Myths and legends as cultural and historic codes of Amerindian ethnos compile the canvas of images, motifs and plot structure of Amerindian literary texts.

The writings of Native American novelists (N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, James Welch, and Gerald Vizenor) are full of mythological foundations. But one cannot understand Native American Literature without a clear understanding of mythology (Lundquist 2004, 2). Mythographer John Bierhorst claims:

Mythology does not have the antiquity of geologic ages, but it is nevertheless a very old pattern, woven into the terrain over the course of thousands of years. Each continent – except Antarctica – has its own mythological imprint and will probably never receive another, at least not in the foreseeable future. Viewed at a distance, myths create a luxuriant configuration that gradually changes from region to region. At close range, these same myths reflect the desires and fears of distinct peoples, granting them trusteeship of the land with the consent of unseen powers. (Bierhorst 1985, 2).

What Bierhorst is suggesting, then, is that there are distinct mythological maps that have guided cultures from ancient times to the present.

In more familiar terms, this means that Native Americans have their old and new testaments too. Paula Gunn Allen tells us that Native mythologies (“mysticism”) are based on a sense of propriety, an active respect for ... Natural powers; on a ritual comprehension of universal orderliness and balance; and on a belief that a person’s every action, thought, relationship, and feeling contributes to the greater good of the Universe or its suffering. Human beings are required to live in such a way that balance is maintained and furthered, and disorder (also perceived as disease) is kept within bounds (Allen 1998, 40-41).

Using the term *mythology* to describe the foundation narratives of particular Native Nations is problematic – particularly when mythologies are often thought to be fictions created by unsophisticated cultures to explain the inexplicable. From Allan’s vantage point of view, however, mythologies house immemorial systems of belief concerning human relationships to the environment – natural (science), moral (ethics), emotional (psychology), communal (politics), and physical (including medicine). Gary Witherspoon suggests that the “emergence accounts” in the Southwest are “literal enough to provide a recognizable framework that resonates with contemporary people and are metaphorical enough not to be mistaken as solely literal representations” (Witherspoon 1996, 3).

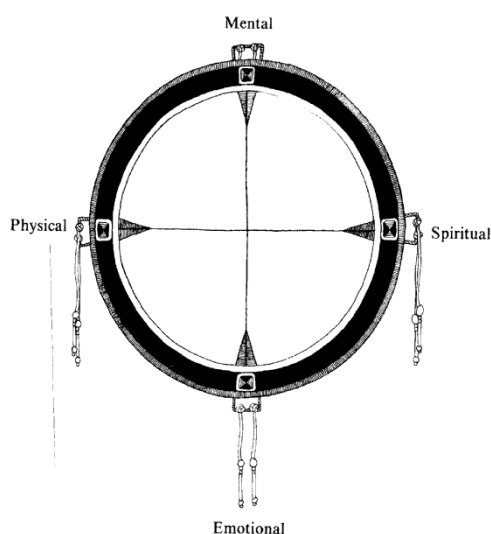
Native fictions – particularly the novels. Mythographer Mircea Eliade claims that “the epic and the novel continue mythological narratives, though on a different ends” (Eliade 1975, 190). Indeed, modern Native American novels are individually authored and are primarily produced for consumption by uninitiated readers – including readers from tribes outside particular narrative contexts. However, transformation of being, expanded consciousness, and greater ethical response to the Other are still desired outcomes.

Numerous nineteenth and early twentieth century Native American “autobiographies” chronicle various responses to the incursion of “the white man”. Many autobiographies often extol the strengths of tribal life-ways while criticizing the hypocrisies of “civilized” peoples – even when the authors voluntarily participated in dominant institutions. John G. Neihardt’s *Black Elk Speaks*, Charles Eastman’s *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, Gertrude Bonnin’s *Impressions of an Indian Childhood* include famous examples, discussions of historical contexts, and the challenges to authenticity involved when Native voices are filtered through editors, translators, anthropologists, and other enthusiasts (who have their own agendas).

Linda Lundquist noticed that contemporary Native authors have turned to creative *nonfiction* or *literary autoethnography* to express how tribal affiliation, myth, ancestry, gender, life stages, education, geographical locale, and historical moment impress their consciousness and inform their identity and works. These authors have become anthropologists of their own experience. Notwithstanding, these authors also see themselves “in relation to collective social units or groups” rather than as isolated individuals (Krupat 1985, 212). N. Scott Momaday’s *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and *Names*, Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Storyteller*, Paula Gunn Allen’s *Off the Reservation* are among this new genre. These writers do not attempt to “re-present” their cultures. They are not spokespersons. They are, however, individuals whose lives are lived with enlivened and often reclaimed tribal awariness.

As the material of investigating we have chosen N. Scott Momaday’s novel “*House Made of Dawn*” which started the epoch of Native American Renaissance.

Preceded by a prologue that addresses mythic time, *House Made of Dawn* is divided into four sections. Four is sacred number among many Native tribes, representing the seasons, stages of life, four directions, and wholeness (symbolized by the circle or cycle). It is graphically shown on ethnocultural artifact Medicine Wheel: *The medicine wheel is a symbol of symmetry and balance. During the process of constructing the wheel you will begin to recognize what areas of your life are not in balance, and where your attention is lacking and requires focus. Continuing working with the wheel after you constructed it. Sit with your wheel in silent meditation. Allow the wheel to assist you in gaining new and different perspectives* (Sun 1994, 3).



These meanings attend the novel as well. However, the four sections of *House Made of Dawn* (1969) also represent four diverse perspectives regarding Abel's malady and its prognosis; four conceptions of the sacred – Jemez, Kiowa, Navajo, and Christian; as well as four conceptions of the power of language: deracinating effects of language loss as well as Kiowa, Navajo, and Christian theologies about the power of the world.

Each section is named after the pivotal roles played by Native characters (and their various conceptions of language) in relationship to Abel, main hero of the novel. "The Longhair" is Francisco, Abel's grandfather and a Jemez Indian traditional; this chapter begins on July 20, 1945; in Wallatowa Valley upon Abel's return from the war. "The Priest of the Son", is a Kiowa Indian and preacher, Tosamah; this chapter takes place on January 26, 1952, after Abel has been relocated to Los Angeles following a six-year prison term. During his sermons at the Native American Church, Tosamah also rehearses the recovery of his Kiowa roots and the oral tradition. "Night Chanter" is a Navajo Indian and traditional, Benally; this chapter also takes place in Los Angeles a month following the preceding chapter, on February 20, 1952. Benally reports on Abel's beating and hospitalization as well as the plans that he and Abel make to return home. Banally introduces Abel to the Night Chant. And "The Dawn Runner" is Francisco and subsequently Abel. The story has come full circle and back to Wallatowa.

The house made of dawn is that substantive moment of re-creation – both for Francisco and Abel, the dawn runners, and through Navajo ritual. Because rituals are central to many contemporary Native American masterworks, a discussion of their sacred/psychological import should be conducted on the base of cognitive semiotic approach, the unit of linguistic analysis is symbol

There are many texts of myths and legends – reenactments of sacred narratives: Now by a miracle Santiago brought forth from his mouth the rooster, whole and alive, which the old man and woman had given him to eat. The rooster warned him at once of what the soldiers meant to do and gave him the spur from its right leg. When the soldiers turned upon him, Santiago slew them with a magic sword.

At the end of the journey Santiago had no longer any need of the horse spoke to him and said: "Now you must sacrifice me for the good of the people."

The blood and feathers of the bird became cultivated plants and domestic animals, enough for all the Pueblo people. (House Made of Dawn 1998, 40).

Such rituals represented in the text of myth/legend are rites that move an individual from the state of an initiate into the calling of a holy man. Such common rituals – like the Sundance or the feast of Santiago – where entire communities are renewed and rededicated to living lives in HARMONY with the earth.

To understand such moments of becoming or renewal, several concepts need explanations. First, symbolic recreation or healing ought to be addressed. In such instances, like those involving Abel, individuals are moved from passive or reactive onlookers to active participants in their own futurity, and therefore, the active renewal of entire communities. Sandner explains that “Life symbols make of a culture what it is specifically, and govern the thoughts and feelings of the people who are part of it. By means of origin myths and cosmogonic myths, a picture is built up of what the world is, how it came to be, and how it may be expected to function in the future” (Sandner 1991, 13). These ideas are not archaic. For, as Sandner reminds us, using the words of Leslie White, “All human behavior originates in the use of symbols.” Furthermore, “All civilizations have been generated, and are perpetuated, only by the use of symbols” (Sandner 1991, 13). Words, paintings, musical notations, mathematic equations, dreams, and so forth are symbols/symbolic – one sign used to represent something else, to create images, sounds, structures, and meaning. Clifford Geertz reports that the effects of a sign (like the Night Chant) rest “ultimately on its ability to give the stricken patient a vocabulary in terms of which to grasp the nature of his distress and relate it to the wider world”. Such signs are “concerned with the presentation of a specific and concrete image of truly human, and so endurable, suffering powerful enough to resist the challenge of emotional meaninglessness raised by the existence of intense and unremovable brute pain,” Geertz explains (Sandner 1991, 14).

Symbols act powerfully, according to Sandner, to “change the psyche by converting energy into a different form, a form that can heal” (Sandner 1991, 14). Carl Jung, in his analysis of numerous cultures, came to the conclusion that “Symbols act as transformers, their function being to convert libido from a “lower” into a “higher” form. This function is so important that feeling accords in the highest value” (Sandner, 14-15). This kind of psycho/social/spiritual

healing is cultural, intuitive, and relies on the patient's willing participation and desire to gather in and act upon large amounts of information (the recombining of symbolic elements into new wholes). Such healing processes, however, thrust patients into liminal space – a space where the sick person is willing to leave one mode of being (a death) and enter into another (a rebirth). Such a state is not without grievous alternatives. Like atomic energy, the power to create or to destroy originates from a common source. When Abel assumes his grandfather's place as a dawn runner, he is both chasing away evil (the night) and running toward re-creation (a new day):

Abel was running. He was **alone** and **running, hard** at first, **heavily**, but then **easily** and **well**. The road curved out in front of him and rose away in the distance. He could not see the town. The valley was gray with rain, and **snow** lay out upon the dunes. It was dawn. ... He was running, running. He could see the horses in the fields and the crooked line of the river below.

For a time the sun was whole beneath the cloud; then it rose into eclipse, and a dark and certain shadow came upon the land. And Abel was running. He was naked to the waist, and his arms and shoulders had been marked with burnt wood and ashes. The road curved out and lay into the bank of rain beyond, and Abel was running. Against the winter sky and the long, light landscape of the valley at dawn, he seemed almost to be standing still, very little and alone. (House Made of Dawn, Prologue).

And such running exhausts – thrusts Abel into another dimension: “All of his being was concentrated in the sheer motion of running on, and he was past caring about the pain. Pure exhaustion laid hold of his mind, and he could see at last without having to think. He could see the canyon and the mountains and the sky.” The novel concludes: “He was running, and under his breath he began to sing. There was no sound, and he had no voice; he had only the words of a song. And he went running on the rise of the song. House made of pollen, house made of dawn. Qtsedaba.” In that ending/beginning, Abel is a pueblo dawn runner with the words of a Navajo healing ritual in his possession. And “Qtsedaba” is the Jemez formal marker indicating the end of a story. This moment is preempted (the end is told; but not the “thereafter”). Does Abel live or does it matter if he lives? If he can imagine – re-image his own being at the centre, at the moment of creation, is that enough?

Pollen often symbolizes a creative potential. Renowned anthropologist, Victor W. Turner outlines several ritual processes. This complex of cultural expressions deserves thorough study. However, Turner's definition of liminality is pertinent and useful to a discussion of life-crisis narratives like Abel's. Turner claims that "Liminality can perhaps be described as a fructile chaos, a storehouse of possibilities, not a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structures, a gestation process, a fetation of modes appropriate to postliminal existence" (Turner 1974, 42). The story ends without clarification of the possibility of an anterior space where Pueblo, Kiowa, Navajo, and Christian symbolic systems meet to create new mythic potentials. And yet, Abel is running on ... toward the dawn. Certainly, in the dawn, the regenerative potential is evident.

In the focus of cognitive semiotic approach we may also reveal the symbolic meaning of landscapes described in the text of novel, scenery of nature which predicts this or that event presented in the plot. Landscape incorporates the natural and cultural features and has personal and cultural meaning. D.W. Meinig identifies landscape as "an intimate intermingling of physical, biological, and cultural features". Edward C. Relph defines it even more broadly as "everything I see and sense when I am outdoors," including not only visible forms but also "the smell of gasoline fumes, the feel of the wind, and remembered experiences." Landscape is fruitful material for investigation from narrative point of view as it fulfills the definite role in the composition of the text. In creating landscapes author expresses values, aspirations, and even fears of his heroes.

So, in the beginning of the narrative Abel observes the flight of eagles in the sky: "They were **golden eagles, a male and a female**, in their matting flight. They were cavorting, spinning and spiraling on the cold, clear columns of air, and **they were beautiful**. The female was full-grown, and the span of her broad wings was greater than any man's height. There was a **fine flourish** to her motion; she was deceptively, incredibly fast, and her pivots and wheels were wide and full-blown. But her great weight was streamlined and perfectly controlled. She carried a **rattlesnake**; it hung shining from her feet, limp and curving out in the trail of her flight. ... The male swerved and sailed. He was younger than she and a **little more than half as large**. He was **quicker, tighter in his moves**. He hit the snake in the head, with not the slightest deflection of his course or speed, cracking its **long body** like whip." (House

Made of Dawn, 16). Eagle, in texts of American Indian folklore, is sacred bird, symbolizing Great Spirit, the Spirit of Sky; Snake, just the other way round, represents the domain of dead that symbolizes the Spirit of Earth. So, Abel feels as if he were an Eagle. He thinks that their flight is strangely beautiful, so is the measure of his world perception through interiorizing the feelings of sacred animals.

Different antitheses are included by author into the narration. So is the contrast between the representatives of wild and domestic animals: "These – and the innumerable **meaner creatures**, the lizard and the frog, the insect and the worm – have tenure in the land. The other, **latecoming things** – the beasts of burden and of trade, the horse and the sheep, the dog and the cat – these **have an alien and inferior aspect**, a **poverty of vision and instinct**, by which they are estranged from the wild land, but then they are gone away from it as if they had never been. Their dust is borne away in the wind, and their cries have no echo in the rain and the river, the commotion of wings, the return of boughs bent by the passing of dark shapes in the dawn and dusk." (House Made of Dawn, 103).

On the base of given research it may be concluded that Native American oral tradition revives in Amerindian literary texts. Folklore images are reinterpreted in literary images compiling their mythologic base. Cognitive semiotic approach to the study of oral prose tradition in American Indian literary texts help to map between folklore images-symbols and their reinterpreted analogues in modern literary texts. These writings search out a world of different knowings, enter a doorway into the mythical world, a reality known by their ancestors, one that takes the daily into dimensions both sacred and present.

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The Finnish-Karelian Mythical Epics in a Comparative Light: *Paeveolae* Feast

Elina Rahimova

Absract

The typological approach, elaborated by the Russian folklore scholarship up to the latest decades of the Soviet period, was applied on multiple and diverse epic traditions, that appeared orally, despite fading away soon after recording. among numerous peoples of Russia and contiguous Soviet republics. The typological paradigm's problematic suitability to the Finnish-Karelian oral epics in the Kalevala meter is concerned in this paper. The approach is deepened with ethno-linguistic studies of the epic textuality, poetics and descriptive devices of the Kalevala-meter songs. The analysis is focused upon the coherent poem about *Lemminkaenen* the hero that was recorded in numerous oral variants from the Viena Karelia. Textual and content parallels are drawn from the Russian *bylina*-epics, recorded primarily from the North-Western Russia as well as from the large scale oral epics of the Turkish and Mongolian peoples of Siberia. Hero's mother's crucial role is lightened.

{Key-words}

oral epics, Finnish-Karelian folklore, Kalevala-meter songs, Lemminkaeinen, hero's mother, typological, Russian *bylina*-epics, large scale epics.

Since the sixties of the 20th century up to the last decades of the Soviet period Russian folklore scholarship has adhered typological approach to multiple and diverse epic tradition, that have appeared orally or had recently faded away after recording among numerous peoples of Russia and contiguous Soviet republics. According to this generalizing and evolutionist comparative approach to oral folk poetry, epic genre has been regarded as multi-stage

entire sequence. The typological approach has been rather fruitful due to the unique abundance of diverse oral material available for research: epic songs were authentically performed, although rapidly vanishing, up to the midst of the XX century among many peoples of the former Soviet Union, and among Turkish and Mongolian people of Siberia and Middle Asia they proved to be extremely *large scale* [Gatsak 1983, s.190], over thousands of lines long. Typological approach has developed on the basis of path-breaking studies by acad. Viktor M. Žirmunski (1891-1971), that embraced a wide range of oral and literary preserved epic traditions. The flourishing of the evolutionistic comparative approach to epics took place in the latest decades of the Soviet period, e.g. in studies of Boris N. Putilov (1919-1997) and Eleazar M. Meletinski (1918-2005). Acad. Viktor M. Gatsak (1933-2014) and his disciples have expanded typological approach with complex texture and epic topic studies, focusing upon the multidimensional spectrum of traditional depictive poetic devices in their ethnic peculiarity.

The epic *runo*-poems in the Kalevala meter have been reckoned to the archaic heroic, mythical stage of the typological development, despite being rather short in length, whereas Russian *bylina* epic songs, being similar in length, have been regarded as the highest historic national stage. Major amount of *bylina* oral tradition had been recorded from almost same and adjoining territories of the North-Western Russia, including the Russian Karelia, i.e, *Archangel (Viena)* and *Olonets* provinces. The publishing of oral-derived literary “Kalevala”, compiled by Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884) in 1835 (1849) on the basis of his own and others field recordings, conducted at the Archangel province and at Finnish Border and Northern Karelia, has been significant for evolutionist studies of oral and literary epics in Russian folklore scholarship since the late 19th century. The entire amount of oral poems in the Kalevala meter, that are reckoned both to the epic and to multiple other genres (spells, wedding songs, lyrics), is surpassing (over 85 000 texts published up to 1948 only in Finland, whereas later field recording have been published in Russia as well).

Although, as Anna-Leena Siikala reveals, epics generally reflect a “mythic history”, in which myths and concrete history are merged into an entity [Siikala 1986, s.82-85], alternate between historical and mythological rendering has been significant for the studies of the Kalevala epic in Finland since the studies by Kaarle Krohn (1863-1933), acknowledged as the leading creator of the historical-geographical approach. He suggested that oral

Kalevala poems had been created in the Viking era and early Middle ages by some unknown skalds from the western Finland, from which they disseminated eastwards to Ingria and to the Viena Karelia [Krohn 1918, s.200]. Undoubtedly, such a view was determined by the pursuit for the Finnish national identity [Honko 1985, s.115]. The most brilliant poet of the New Romanticism trend in the Finnish literature, Eino Leino (1878-1926), himself deeply fascinated by the grand eternal beauty of the Kalevala epics, wondered, whether it were an astonishing poetic exaggeration to impose strict historical prototypes upon events and characters of the epics, whereas «Kalevala's superhuman, semi-divine heroes did not differ from the heroes of Homer» [Leino 1939, s.95-97.]

There in the Kalevala mythical epics, most obviously in the composite cycle about *Sampo*, the fantastic object providing eternal prosperity, that is forged and then ravished, cosmogony events immediately follow earthian and common conflicts between the heroes (one could imagine such an event to happen in Elderly Scandinavian prose), but the characters are portrayed as supernatural beings. E.g., in the Viena Karelian variant SKVR I (1) 4, recorded by *A. A. Borenius* (1846-1931) the out-standing collector from *Maksima Riigoinen* the singer from *Kellovaara* in 1872, "old *Väinämöine*" the hero while riding on a blue elk (line 18: "*selässä sinisen hirven*") was attacked by the "squint-eyed Lapp" because of "everlasting hatred". An arrow from the fiery bow killed protagonist's horse, he was drifting along the sea during "6 years, 7 summers" until the creation of the Universe with Heavenly Bodies took place. An ornithic creator is involved, it can be a swallow or one of the waterfowl, like a goose. *Riigoinen* has chosen a scaup the duck (in Latin "*Aythya Marila*"), in Karelian "*sotka*", this singer's decision seems the most usual locally. The "scaup-duck, a bird from the air" (line 39 «*sotkoine ilman linduine*») laid three eggs over *Väinämöinen's* knee and thus, when the eggs smashed into pieces, gave birth to the cosmos with the upper sky and the lower mother-earth, the sun, the moon and stars (lines 50 – 59). Then the plot unfolds into the adventures associated with *Sampo*. The creation and music playing the specific Finnish (pluck stringed) harp, *kantele*, is possible also. For a vast number of variants, obtained from Viena Karelia, such a plot macrostructure reoccurs regularly.

Semantic equivalents appear regularly in the beginnings of the Turkish and Mongolian «large-scale» epic songs. Epic events take place at the absolute past, during the days of creation, as Innokentiy V. Pukhov (1904-1979)

observed, in the Yakut *olonxo*-songs about lonely heroes (named *Er-Sogotox*) [Pukhov 1975, p.58-59]. The last recordings of Altai narrative songs in overtone singing *quai*, obtained during field work by Lauri Harvilahti (Finnish Literature Society), Viktor M. Gatsak (the Russian Academy of sciences, Institute of World literature), Zoya S. Kazagačeva et.a from the Upper Altai division of the RAS in 1997 – 1998 from the famous singer of tales *Aleksei Kalkin* (1925 – 1998) [Harvilahti 2003, pp.42-75.], contain the same kind of beginning [Harvilahti 1998 s. 60]. There in the Buryat epic *uliger* –poem about *Alamži-Mergen* such a standard cosmogony beginning comprises to 50 lines [Alamži-Mergen 1991, lines 9-59]. The young hero is said to be born during the times of creation, «¹²(²²) when a paper had been completely thin, / ²¹ when a snow had been completely white, ...⁴² when *Angara*-the broad river / ⁴³ had flowed as a tiny brook, / ⁴⁴ when *Abarga* the great fish / ⁴⁵ had been a fry». There in the Kalevala *Sampo*-cycle such a cosmogony motif is reversed semantically. A heroic deed, conducted by the Lapp, isn't described against the background of the cosmogony past, but mythic world-view is explained by means of an epic event. Moreover, the horse *Väinämöinen* mounts or harnesses into a sledge to drive upon the open sea, though depicted as a fantastic one, has little in common with the grand steeds, idealized and admired by Turkish or Mongolian singers of tales for their magic wisdom, beauty and hyperbolized size ("the slender bay steed / ...with its chin / touching shine of stars, / with its withers, / touching rays of sun" in the *Alamži-Mergen's* Buryat *uliger* - poem). *Väinämöinen's* horse's epithets vary in the formula, linked by the alliteration, usually with Genitive case for the syntax object. There appear "a straw stallion" ("...olkisen orihin"), "a horse with a pea-green coat" ("...hernehkarvaisen / henehvartisen hevosen"); sometimes the hero merely «harnessed his chosen colt» ("valjasti valio varsan"). Constant lines, verbalizing the description of harnessing, horse-riding and sledges of the heroes, present strict formulae according to oral-formulaic approach [Lord 1994 s. 42], or a "formulaic paradigm" [Harvilahti 1992, s.37] and do occur in other poems. Morphologically different epithets depicting *Väinämöinen's* horse present another type of formulaic paradigm [Harvilahti 1992, s.48–50]. For me, the formulaic attributive description of riding "horseback" on "the blue elk" seems the most significant for the mythological interpretation, because it contains an allusion on an ancient concept of the divine Elk, common to other Finno-Ugric mythologies. Lotte Tarkka concerns epic images and events of the *Sampo*-cycle in the inter-textual context of wedding rituals and healing practices and estimates them to manifest the mythological world-view on the symbolic level

[Tarkka 2005, s.162-165, s.198]. Epics did interact with verbal incantations, performed by the sage healer (“*tietäjä*”) whereas the magic healing practices remained considerably significant in the Archangel (Viena) and Finnish Karelia [Tarkka 1994, s.272.]. The mythological worldview, reflected in the epic landscape and narrated events, as well as the mythic dimensions of verbal description, determine ethnical poetic peculiarity of the Kalevala meter oral poetry.

Recently deceased Eino S. Kiuru (1929-2015) has deepened the Soviet typological approach characterizing the crucial significance of the marriage topics, primarily the “Courtship from the Otherworld”, for the Finno-Karelian epics [Kiuru 1993, s.9, 32-33.]. He revealed deep semantic links underlying the plot of the «Competition in Courtship» (*Kilpakosinta*). The dialogue between Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen’s sister Annikki contains false answers about suitor’s intending to «shoot swans» or «fish salmon». On the metaphor level hunting and fishing objects symbolize the bride, these intensions predict on difficult tasks to be committed by this suitor or by his rival further on, as to obtain the big scaly pike («*suuri suomuhauki*») [Kiuru 1993 s.28-35, s.83-85]. The scholar combined typological comparison and revealing of loans from Russian *bylina* songs while concerning the wife-killing Viena Karelian ballad plot [Kiuru 1994, pp.220-235].

Walter Heissig compared corresponding motifs in the Mongolian “Geseriad” with one of the literary “Kalevala” by Lönnrot courtship plots – the *Lemminkäinen*’s courtship to the *Pohjola*’s maiden (songs, or “chapters” 12 and 13 of the edition from 1849 include the motif of suitor’s difficult tasks) [Heissig 1985, s.337-346]. Actually the entire plot, examined by the acknowledged expert of Mongolian folklore, was composed by the compiler of the literary epic poem. Its authentic oral source, including the task of shooting the Swan of the Tuonela stream and ending in hero’s perishing, was unique [Kiuru 1993, s.86]. It is the variant recorded by Elias Lönnrot himself from *Juha Kainulainen* the singer from *Kesälahti* area in Finnish Border Karelia in 1828 [SKVR VII (1) 823]. There in the Viena epic repertoire «difficult tasks» are imposed to *Lemminkäinen* wooing Anni the maiden only in a single variant. This SKVR I (2) 771 was recorded by A.A. Borenius from *Moissei Piirteini Ahonen* from *Latvajärvi*. The tasks imposed by the Mistress of *Pohja* are verbalized in a way standard for the local courtship topics. The hero has to obtain a pike-fish from the *Tuonela* river (“kalasen hauvin 270 Tuonen mustasta jovesta”), to step over needles and males’ swords for the whole day

(“...päivän nieklojen nenie, 275 miesten miekkojen terie”) and to shoot a star down from the sky in the lines 281-282 (“...tähen taivahasta, / pilkan pilvien lomasta”). After accomplishment of the tasks, “Anni the mother’s bird” the bride is given to *Lemminkäinen* to marry her.

The *motifeme* of the heroic marriage with difficult tasks imposed on the suitor to be performed seems to be genre defining for the mythical epics, as Žirmunski has revealed. A deep semantic similarity is therefore apparent between diverse realizations of this motifeme, on one hand, in Karelian and Ingrian songs in the Kalevala meter and, on the other hand, in the Turkish-Mongolian epic tradition. Oriental examples drawn by Harvilahti prove that “suitor’s difficult tasks”(«*ansiotyökosinta*») – episodes could not be understood as a later innovation, loaned from the fairy tale, but on the contrary belong to the most deep-rooted traditional level. As he proves by means of quantitative analysis of the schematic superstructure’s variation and alteration between direct speech and indirect narration, fulfilling of the difficult tasks by the suitor is integrated into the stable semantic macrostructure of numerous variants of the “Courtship from the Underworld” (“*Tuonelta kosinta*”), performed by Ingrian female singers [Harvilahti 1992, s.98-112]. The differences between diverse ethnic manifestations of suitor’s difficult tasks are not confined to the length of verbal textualisation, however striking it may be between at most 100 lines long Ingrian ballades and the large-scale Turkish-Mongolian epics. It comprises to singers’ traditional evaluation of the hero. Hero’s moral victory enhances monumental heroic idealization [Žirmunski 1962, s.169, s.29-30] Siberian singers of tales had a clear idea of an insidious goal, the bride’s father intended while imposing dangerous tasks, i.e. to annihilate the hero. In the Upper Altay “*Maadai-Kara*” poem it becomes apparent, when *Kogudei-Mergen* the hero instead of perishing himself, brings the ordered monster, one of the two giant black bear-males from the great black mountain. The cattle and the people of the coming father-in-law take to flight and terrified *Ai-Kaan* requests the hero to remove the monster back [Maadai-Kara, lines 7080-7170].

In this paper typological comparative analysis is focused on the poem about neglected hero’s journey to the feast at Paeivoelae (*Päivölän pidot*). Hero’s name is *Lemminkäinen* usually, sometimes *Kaukomoinen* or even *Ahti Saarelainen* – “Ahti the Islander”. This Kalevala plot received historical and moreover nationalist interpretations, being reckoned to the poems of Islanders

(*saarelaisrunot*), that were regarded as the Viking epics [Krohn 1918, s.601, 610, s. 819; Kuusi 1963, s.217, 236, 1980 s.228]. Kaarle Krohn sought for (re)construction of “untainted” ancient poems, he supposed to be invented by anonymous scalds from the Viking and Crusade periods or even by court poets of the catholic High Medieval period. Thus he re-composed a «purely» Viking story from the oral episodes about *Kaukomoinen*’s adventures, sword plays and marine journeys. On the other hand, the story of *Lemminkäinen*’s death and resurrection had been subjected to comparative analysis to reveal wandering motifs [Krohn 1903, s.572-594, Haavio 1965, s.359-372, Haavio 1967, s.232-262].

There in the academic edition of the oral *runo* poems in the Kalevala meter, the first volume, i.e. “Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot I (1-4.2). / Vienen läänin runot” (1908-1921), is dedicated to Viena Karelia, including the parish of Kimasozero (“*Kiimasjärvi*”) of the Olonets province. “Lemminkäinen’s Verse” (“*Lemminkäisen virsi*”) was often named as “The Feast at *Paeivoelae*” by collectors and *runo*-singers. The coherent plot is represented by 165 oral variants, recorded up to 1919 [SKVR I (2) ## 700-857; I (4.2) ## 2166-2172]. Such a voluminous number of items is appropriate for observations on oral variation. Despite cyclization of episodes, there in the Karelian local poetry separate plots remained stable as macro structures, as well as definite sets of poetic images and depictive details. Stability is evident in the sets of stereotypical poetic devices, that organize formulaic texture, and in line pairs united by parallelism. Of course it does not mean that some given variants coincide verbatim due to memorizing, but on the contrary, the stability is a result of living variation by performers, who re-composed epic tales learnt from predecessors (thus stability can be observed only in a plurality of variants). As the Ingrian material demonstrates, the Kalevala oral poetry formed an multilevel grid of alternative solutions confined to the borderlines of tradition; ...individual preferences crystallized in the course of repeated performances [Harvilahti 1994, s.110].

One can distinguish between two versions of the plot or rather two re-occurring core sequences of semantic macro propositions. The semantic macrostructure, that contained the journey, drinking snake-beer and victorious sword duel with the host or another guest at the feast and fleeing from revenge, prevailed in frequency. It could be summarized as follows: «It is smoke appearing over the island, / a bonfire flaming on the end of the cape » («*Savu suarella palauve, / Tuli niemen tutkalmessa*»), because the *Paeivoelae*

Mistress is preparing a great feast. Brewing of ale and beer, in which zoomorphic helpers – small furry animals like a squirrel – are involved, comprises in many variants to a quarter of the entire texture. Everybody is invited, among them “crippled, lame and blind”, but “wanton” *Lemminkäinen* («*lieto Lemminkäinen*») did not receive any invitation. He desires to attend to the feast despite warnings by his mother (who describes dangerous obstacles barring his way) and further on overcomes these «marvels». On arriving he demands refreshments and hospitality, offending the hostess and the host and drinks beer, served from a tankard with curling snakes and worms, successfully. After the singing competition with the hostess the male host or family's son challenges him to a sword fight. After winning the duel *Lemminkäinen* flees home from the murdered kinfolk's revenge. Some variants end up after it. In numerous variants hero complains to his mother and following her advice sails to the Maidens' Island, from which he gets out-casted again because of offending sexual affairs. Opposite, rarer version ends with the perishing of the hero during a “singing” magician competition (he is conjured to a waterfall or killed by means of the water-snake) and his mother's efforts to resurrect him. The turning happens after the stereotypic proceeding of the first part there in the variants [SKVR I (2) 722, 722a] performed by female singer *Marppa Joussej's* daughter *Klim's* wife from the *Akonlahti* twice (in 1872 to *A. Berner* the collector and 1886 to *M. Varonen* the collector). Famous *Arhippa Perttunen* in his variant recorded by Lönnrot in 1834 told *Lemminkäinen* to perish after his visit to relatives missing *Vellamo* the Maiden that had appeared to him as a salmon [SKVR I (2) 758]. There in the variant performed by *Joussei Timonen* from *Akonlahti* [SKVR I (2) 733] «*old Väinämöinen*» perished during his visit to mother-in-law at *Vuojela*, also in some variants, recorded by Lönnrot in *Vuonninen* area. This singers' decision turned to be important for invented “reconstructions” of the ancient poems, because *Vuojela-Luotola* the epic toponym seemed to derive from Gotland the Island in Sweden [Krohn 1903 s.508-509, s.569].

Dangerous obstacles faced by *Lemminkäinen* during his journey and the feast hall of a grand size were interpreted as being loaned from catholic visionary literature [Haavio 1952, s.310-312]. The hero's perishing was supposed to originate from an Ancient Egyptian novel about Horus-magician's adventures at the Egypt's king's court [Haavio 1965, s.359-361.]. The novel had been preserved in papyrus-manuscript and contained certain corresponding events: mothers' warnings, death-signs as bleeding rake-comb at home, incantation competitions between arriving and local wizards. It does

not seem sufficient for proving genetic relationship between two narratives. Tracing hypothetical migration of the plot Haavio proposed a Russian *bylina* about *Vavilo*, who joins vagrant musicians against his mother's will, to serve as a mediatory source for the *Kalevala* song. Only one corresponding motif, namely a bulk created magically for drinking a lake during the magic contest [Haavio 1965, s.363] is peculiar both to these two poems. It can't prove entire plot's borrowing. It is inappropriate to evaluate structural correspondences as sufficient proofs of loaning. The model of triple repetition is not only used in both poems under consideration, but serves as regular, even core compositional device for both epic traditions: Finno-Karelian and Russian. Matti Kuusi (1914-1998) noticed, that the poem about *Kaukomoinen's* adventures with feast scenes had possibly arisen from the same ground, as the *bylina* songs, namely from Novgorod the great medieval town of the North-Western Russia [Kuusi 1963, s.244].

In fact, it seems fruitful to compare the *Lemminkäinen's* song to Russian *bylina*-songs dedicated to *Dobrynja* and *Djuk*, examining different levels of the poetic system, used in these specimens of small-scale epics. Two neighboring epic traditions, both recorded from remote villages of Karelia and the Russian North-West, may contain even mutual borrowings, as loan words occurring in the dialects witness. For oral epic poetry neither a fact of influence nor possible depth of interaction can be proved.

Mothers inquire their sons, who are sad while returning from feasts. *Dobrynja* is worried about the impossible task imposed on him by *Vladimir* the King, *Lemminkäinen* is afraid of the revenge after he has killed the greatest hero of the *Paeivoelae* in the sword duel. Episodes include similar questions and answers. These are standard in the *Dobrynja's bylina* variants [e.g. Gilferding N 79, recorded from famous *bylina* singer *Trofim Grigorievič Rjabinin* from *Sennogubski* parish at *Kiži* in 1871]. The same occur in the *Lemminkäinen's* song's variants by *Arhippa* and his son *Miihkali Perttunen* [SKVR I (2) 759; I (2) 766]. Was the hero offended by a beer tankard not served for him at feast? Was his honor at stake due to unsuitable place offered at the feast-table? Did maidens (in the *Kalevala* song) or foolish drunkards (in *bylina*) laugh at him? Did his steed fail the race competition? Even a Russian loan-word, *tšarka*, is used for the tankard by *Perttunens*. There in the *bylina* epics same formulaic lines are used otherwise, if it is the king who inquires about warrior's sorrow during the feast in order to offend him. Inquiring about the hero's sorrow is similar with *bylina* about *Dobrynja* nearly to the extent of

verbatim equivalence there in one about warrior *Suhman's* suicide [Rybnikov N 148]. The episode of hero's returning dejected, «with his helmet askew» («*pahoilla mielin, ...kahta kallella kypärin*») and mother's inquiring, but without mention about honor or a feast, is used in the final parts of the Kalevala «Singing competition» («*Kilpalaulantä*»). Own mother questions sorrowful *Joukahainen*, who had been defeated by *Väinämöinen* and forced to offer his sister as a bride [eg. SKVR I(1) 169, performed by *Siimana Riikoini* from *Kontokki*, the *Kostamuš* area, to I.K. *Inha* the collector].

Hero's farewell to mother –episodes are similar between «*Dobrynja and the Dragon*» and *Djuk Stepanovič's* bylinas on the one hand, and in *Lemminkäinen's* runo-song. There in Russian epic poetry this episode is recurrent neither bound to coherent *bylina* plots, so it can be regarded as a type scene [Putilov 1971 s.111-112]. Hero's wise mother is a constant main character, in *bylina* she is called a «respected widow». Wanton *Lemminkäinen* bids farewell from his mother twice in longer variants: in the beginning before leaving to the feast and after its culmination in killing the antagonist in the sword-duel, if the plot still unfolds in this given oral performance. The *Kalevala* verse addressing formula is recurrent despite slight lexical and phonetic variation, the most usual is as follows: «Oh my mother who has born me» («*Oi emoni kandajaini*») [e.g. SKVR I (2) 703, recorded by A.A.Borenius from *Simana Miihkalinen*, Kellovaara]. The hero requests to bring him his war-gear. Hero's demand is regularly represented by a line-pair with parallelism and synonym verbs: «*Tuo sie on sotisomani, / Kanna vainovoattien*» («Fetch, oh You, my war-gear, Carry my armour-suit»). Sometimes hero calls his steed, as in *Simana's* performance. In the variants, obtained from *Olonets* and *Ladoga* provinces, *Lemminkäinen*, as well as suitors in other *Kalevala* plots do, harnesses his horse into a sledge. *Fekli Jouhkimaini* from *Pääkönniemi*, the *Kiimašjärvi* area [SKVR I (2) 712] has mentioned also “the steady spear” (“*keihä*”), which is described by means of a stereotypic *Kalevala* simile as “neither very small, nor very little: fitting for a cow to lay on the stem, a cat on the edge”. This formulaic description occurs also in rare runo-poems about Ahti the Islander's marine campaign. In the *Dobrynja's* bylina hero puts on best clothes, brings his steed and saddles it with 12 girths. The description may occur twice, e.g. in singer from *Olonets* Kosmozero-village *Ivan Anikejevič Kasianov's* variant, in which it comprises to 25 lines [Gilferding N 158]. Siberian large-scale epics contain vast, comprising over thousand lines,

descriptions of hero's preparations before leaving to the journey, and the warrior steed is admired and idealized [Bordžanova (Basangova) 2004, s.86].

Lemminkäinen's mother warns him from leaving (supernatural female beings are mentioned regularly as prohibitors also). She describes three dangerous obstacles as "hard deaths" («*kolm on surmia kova*») or marvels. The episode's texture is composed by means of the model of the dialogue repetition [Kuusi 1957, s.116-117], combined with other models of line or hemistich repeating in questions and answers or constant depictive or evaluation lines, as {this is} "against Lemminkäinen's head" – "*Lemminkäisen peän varalla*". Hero's three-time demand to bring war-gear occurs in several variants like SKVR I (2) 757, 757-a, performed by female *Maura Marttini* from *Latvajärvi* area, or SKVR I (2) 766, performed by *Miihkali Perttunen*.

There in the *bylina*-poem about *Dobrynja's* fight against the Dragon farewell to mother - the episode precedes hero's leaving to the *Soročinski* hills, where the Dragon resides. If the plot begins without king's command, i.e. Vladimir the King has not ordered the warrior to annihilate the monster, mother's prohibition acquires prediction meaning. She forbids *Dobrynja* from deeds, which exactly he is intending to execute fulfilling his heroic mission. He must not swim in the *Puchai*-river neither trample down young serpents on riding his steed in the open battle-field (e.g. in the variant recorded from *T. Rjabinin* the singer in 1871 [Gilferding N 79] or, very closely resembling it, in the variant performed by *Piotr Lukič Kalinin* [Gilferding N 5]). Via neglecting mother's interdiction the hero encounters the monster, achieves the victory over it and saves Russian captives from the Dragon's cave. That was the goal of his heroic deed.

Besides compositional figures, that underlay formulaic clusters [Harvilahti 1994, pp.105-106] regular (not necessary equivalent) repetition of crystallized line-sequences, or rather of the segments of the texture functions as the core axis of the composition and fastens the narrative "skeleton". The Finnish study over the *Perttunen* singer dynasty reveals different «danger-sequence» and the «journey-sequence» there in the episode of farewell to mother in *Miihkali Perttunen's* variants [Saarinen 1994, pp.188-189].

The execution repetition was observed as a composition device of the Kalevala songs. E.g., mother brings war-gear requested by the hero or the squirrel obtains and fetches ingredients for beer ordered by the *Paeivoelae* Mistress. It seems to me, that such a term as «prediction repetition» would be

more relevant for both *Dobrynja's bylina* and *Lemminkäinen's* song. There in the *bylina* poem negative warnings revealed hero's very intentions, which were not declared by him explicitly, but still should be carried out during the unfolding of the plot. The core constitutive model is verbalized on the surface-structure level through morphological and syntactic variation of the formulaic lines (or rather their units): verbs' 2nd person is used in mother's monologue-mode warnings and 3rd in the narration about journey events, in the Kalevala song the future tense alters with the imperfect, in the *Dobrynja's bylina* mother's direct speech contains negative imperatives of the verbs. If visiting to the Dragon's cave by the order of his king *Dobrynja* merely bade farewell from his mother. There in the Upper Altay "Maadai-Kara" the oral poem, performed by Aleksei G. Kalkin, the protagonist *Kogudei-Mergen* is forbidden from leaving to his journey as well. The prohibitors are both female. The Mistress of the Altay-mountain (*Altai-eezi*), when the hero is going to seek for his parents and take revenge for them, and Mother (the parents), when the hero is going to marry an extraordinary beautiful bride, warn him from leaving. In both cases his replies present nearly a verbatim equivalence, but the proverbial explanations attached to them are slightly different. In the first case *Kogudei-Mergen* addresses the Mistress of the mountain: "2218 Instead of saying that I had not left, / 2219 better people would say that I had left, / 2220 instead of calling me a coward, / 2221 better people would say than I had perished. / 2222 There is no cattle that would never eat grass. / 2223 There is no warrior that would never die". In the second case he addresses parents: "5537 A steed is not carved of gold and must croak [sometimes], / A warrior is not eternal and must die [sometimes]. / 5540 Instead of saying I had not left, / 5541 better people would say "He had left", / 5542 instead of calling me a coward, / 5543 better people would say "He had perished".

Correspondence between the verbal manifestation of "hero's farewell to his mother"-type-scene seems still closer between the *Djuk's bylina*-song and the *Lemminkäinen's* Kalevala song. *Djuk* bids farewell and blessings from mother on leaving to Kiev the epic capital, mother forbids him to leave and describes the dangerous obstacles in the same way as it has been in the "Paeivoelae Feast". Colliding mountains, giant birds of prey and a cursed serpent (dragon) with 12 trunks serve as frontier posts against *Djuk Stepanovič* [Gilferding N 9, performed by *Piotr Kalinin*]. The hero aspires to leave despite warnings.

Mother's key role in the character set of the *Lemminkäinen's* song gets apparent in the "perishing" semantic macrostructure. In the both variants, performed by the female singer *Marppa Jeussej's* daughter the female perspective is stressed in the very resurrection episode, where the mother (may be, the former wife, for she is called «*naini Lemminkäisen*») rolls the sea-waves into a thread-clew ("kun kerä meren kerällä") trying to obtain the hero's corpse [SKVR I (2) 722].

Interpreting the «perishing» plot from a plot vagrancy - point of view, Krohn proposed in 1903 such sources for loan as the «Christian legendary story of Christ's death» (and mother's seeking after the lost «blessed» child) [Krohn 1903, s. 572-594 ! 577] through the mediation of the Balder's myth in the ancient Nordic «Old Edda» - literary epics. Such a borrowing hypothesis can't be proved. Semantic similarities are not exact. Anna-Leena Siikala has explained that all tales dealing with death and resurrection had been enrooted in the agricultural rituals [Siikala 1992fi s.263-271].

Moreover, the motifeme of perished hero's resurrection by his mother (or other female family-member, sister or wife) is represented in epic songs throughout the Northern Eurasia. Another bylina -poem dedicated to *Dobrynja*, that deals with the hero's love affair with a dangerous female witch, also starts with mother's warnings neglected by the hero [Gilferding N 267]. *Marinka Kaidalovna* the witch conjures the hero to "turn into" a golden-horned auroch (in Latin *Bos Bonasus*, in Russian "zlatorogij tur"). The hero's god-mother saves him. Restitution of the human status is a sign of resurrection from a temporary death, because the auroch had been a totemic animal for eastern Slavs.

A Buryat *uliger*-poem about *Alamži-Mergen's* sister *Agui Gokhon* contains the clearest plot pattern dedicated to a female family-member as a savior of the perished hero. After overcoming a *Mangadhai* the monster antagonist, *Alamži-Mergen* the young warrior drinks poisoned wine, served by his perfidious uncles in order to conduct his kin duty, disregarding warnings by his wise "slender bay steed". The steed brings his corpse to his sister. Being incapable of resurrecting him herself, she seeks for advice from a magic book, and according to the prediction, puts on brothers clothes and war-gear and clips her long black hair [Alamži-Mergen, lines 2584-2589] in order to obtain *Bulad Xurai Basagan* the (divine) maiden. The sister carries out heroic feats destined to her brother, overcomes obstacles and fulfils difficult courting tasks

concealing her gender, brings the bride so that the latter resurrects the hero and marries him.

Thus mother's role is extremely important in the character sets of both «*Paeivoelae* feast» and bylina-songs about *Dobrynja* and *Djuk*. It is manifested through standard situations and events. Mothers' images of diverse epic specimens manifest a typological role on the higher level of abstraction. Observations upon stereotype character-sets of bylina-poetry and South-Slavic *Junacke* songs are significant. Through the recurrent type-scenes «hero's mother appears as a wise soothsayer, that predicts the turn of events, gives important advices and provides him with magic devices» [Putilov 1971, s.112-113]. The same role is typical of a true sister and of divine female helpers of the hero in the Turkish and Mongolian epics.

Comparison with Russian bylina songs and specimens of Siberian large-scale epics is fruitful for interpreting the ethnically specific episode-sequences of the obstacles on the way to the *Paeivoelae* feast. Structural position of the episodes dealing with dangerous obstacles there in the texture unfolding a given oral variant is not relevant for comparative examination. However, the prediction repetition can become evident on the surface level, if the dangers and their crossing by the hero during his journey are also described by the narrator in the 3rd person. Otherwise singers have placed the description of the obstacle in the beginning part. Description is verbalized through the mother's direct speech and in discussion *Lemminkäinen* answers announcing his strategy. If further dealing with the obstacles from the narrator's perspective is lacking from the given oral recording, it manifests singer of tales' syncope, a composition feature revealed e.g. in Russian bylina-songs and Romanian epics [Gatsak 1971, s.17-21].

The Viena Karelian version of the *Lemminkäinen's* runo-poem contain an optional set of fantastic crystallized imagery, portraying the «harsh deaths». According to their preferences singers chose 3 or 4, e.g. a sequence: fiery eagle – a giant worm across the way – wolves and bears near a fiery fence from the ground up to the sky). Each obstacle induced proper actions of the hero. Verbalization includes stereotypic evaluative and depictive line-pairs. Obstacles, barring the way, fall into two categories. Landscape elements, that don't appear frequently, include: some vaguely portrayed «high or copper mountains», e.g. variants [SKVR I (2) 749 – 750], a fiery abyss brimming over with hot stones, blazing boulders (SKVR I (2) 728: «*tulinen hauta, / Täysi kuumia kiviä, / Palavoja paateroja*») and a hill bristling with poles for male

skulls, one left without, e.g. [SKVR I (2) 706]: «*Sad' on seivästä mäjellä, / Yks' on seiväs peättä jeänyt*». The latter image, that resembles a fairy tale, is used by Miihkali Perttunen [SKVR I (2) 766] as well.

Border-guarding monsters' imagery is more elaborated and manifold. It occurs regularly in the variants of the "Paeivoelae Feast" -song. Besides hyperbola, igneous features are key signs of these monsters. The fiery eagle (*tulini kokko*) was very popular among Viena Karelian performers. On the micro level its verbal description is based on chain parallelism enhanced with a repeated epithet "fiery" ("*tulini*"), e.g. {SKVR I (2) 729}, recorded by Lönnrot from *Soava Trohkimainen* from *Akonlahti, Kontokki* parish:

Tuloovi <u>tulinen</u> koski	Then appeared the fiery rapids,
Koskess' on <u>tulinen</u> luoto,	In the rapids there is a fiery rock
Luuoss' on <u>tulinen</u> koivu,	,
Koivuss' on <u>tulinen</u> kokko.	On the rock there is a fiery birch,
	On the birch there is a fiery eagle.

Second, not ornithic group of monsters is related to the notion of the serpent. It consists of: – a fiery fence from the ground up to the sky, tightened together with worms / snakes and lizards (e.g. [SKVR I (2) 706] by Gostja Ondreini: «*Titiliuskuill' on sivottu, / Moan mavoilla vitassettu, / Jeäd' on hännäd häilymähä, / Peäkehät kehisömähä*»); – a giant worm across the way, – adders' field hero must plough. e.g. in the variant by *Maura Marttini* [SKVR I (2) 757]. Order to plough adder field ("kyntää kyisen pellon") serves usually as a difficult task for the suitor in the marriage plots. Singers regarded the monsters of the third "Canidae" group as watchdogs of the *Paeivoelae* estate. A giant black dog appears in incantations also. More frequently there are «bridled wolves and bears in the iron fetters» ("*Suved on tuola suittsiloissa, / Karhud raudakahlehisssa*", e.g. [SKVR I (2) 703] by *Simana Mikkalinen*). The fiery eagle, but other monsters as well, possess such features, as «its mouth burning with fire, / its jaws hot with blazing flame» ("*Sillä suu tulipalaa / Kita kierein lämpiä*", e.g. [SKVR I (2) 725]). They intend to destroy the hero and for this sake each of them "At the daytime grinds its teeth, / In the night sharpens its claws" («*Päivät hammasta hivoo, / Yöt kynttä kitkuttaa*»). Singers emphasize their giant

size by the formulaic line-pair, «a hundred men under its wings (snout), a thousand on the edge of its tail» e.g. [SKVR I (2) 741].

Exact correspondences to the *Paeivoelae* journey's dangerous obstacles concern narrative-descriptive sequences in the epic traditions enrooted in shamanism. Images that resemble Kalevala monsters and «landscape» bars by the depictive detailization and the plot role are evident in Upper Altay epics, e.g. in the 7738-line “*Maadai-Kara*” oral poem, performed by *Aleksei Kalkin*. Border guarding monsters met on the way to a remote kingdom of the hero's enemy or of his bride reoccur regularly during the plot's unfolding. The epic enemy *Kara-Kul-khan*, who had conquered the people and the cattle belonging to aged *Maadai-Kara*, wields power over multiply monsters, acting both as border-guardians and his personal assistants. A dark-grey mare with four ears and four plaits in her crest, who had fled from the enemy's cattle, succeeded in overcoming 7 frontier-posts guarded by monsters (2 whales supporting the earth [lines 1255-1259: 1279-1311], 2 similar yellow serpents, 7 grey wild-boars, 2 black camels, 2 bear-males). After the dark-grey mare conjured guardians to magic sleep, *Kara-Kula-khan* sent his most dangerous monsters to destroy the hero. The first heroic feat, that *Kogudei-Mergen* had performed in his childhood, had been the killing two giant wolves and two ravens with a rush arrow from his just received bow. Hero received a magic wise steed, dark-grey with cotton-white crest, who helped the youngster during his first journey and instructs him before they encounter the first obstacle on the way to *Kara-Kula-khan's* kingdom: two monster warriors, descendants from *Erlik-khan's* [dead people's] kingdom have already destroyed 99 steeds, only the steed with cotton-white crest is lacking for a whole hundred, have already killed 99 heroes, only young *Kogudei-Mergen* is lacking for a whole hundred. They fail in attempt to kill him with their large copper cudgel, after their unsuccessful strike the hero kills them by means of his lash. Hero's steed overcomes landscape bars: hurdles over a yellow poison sea and between colliding mountains. Thus the hero arrives at the enemy's kingdom and revenges him finally. There in the Russian epic songs “Fight against a mythical monster”-motifeme is related to the ethnocentric ideal of defense of the Motherland. Features of nomadic invaders are incorporated into the “Cursed Dragon's” (*zmeja prokljataja*) image. On the contrary, *Lemminkäinen's* overcoming strategy is different. He treats obstacles very cautiously, with good will: proper refreshments, or more exactly, a sacrifice, are offered to monsters. It has been acknowledged already within the typological paradigm, that so-called archaic epics performed among Turkish and Mongolian peoples

of Siberia contained magic water obstacles as Fiery or Poison Seas and monsters that serve as frontier-guardians, all of them were enrooted in the notion of the Otherworld [Žirmunski 1962, s.210-217,249, 297].

Heroic deeds are committed by Kalevala *Lemminkäinen* only in a few variants, as [SKVR I (2) 709] recorded from an unknown singer from Jyskjärvi area. The hero is going «to set upon the wolves bridles, upon the bear iron fetters». His intentions announced to his mother before leaving sound still courageous: “*Ei tuo surma miehen surma / Eigä kuoloma urohon*” – “There is no death for a male in it, / neither a doom for a hero” [e.g. SKVR I (2) 703, thrice in lines 95-96,107-108,120-121]. The hero applies some dead-man’s skull to the only pole remained without a head amidst hundred upon a hill. The fiery eagle is served with fowl, proper to a bird of prey: the hero “pulled grouches from the grove (hill), / Wood hens from the birch thicket” («*Temmo teiriä leholta, / Koppaloita koivikolta*») [SKVR I (2) 725]. There in the [SKVR I (2) 703] Simana stresses: into «the handful of the fiery eagle, / the claws of the gryphon» («*Kobrih on kokon tulizen, / Voagalinnun varbahilla*»). To sacrifice the watchdogs *Lemminkäinen* intends to create such a proper food as a sheep-flock, a herd of curly-woolen by singing an incantation (*Laulan laukan lambahie, / Kinkon kiero-villaizie, / Suuhu Undamon suvenge, / Kidah on kiro-kabeheh*”), e.g. [SKVR I (2) 703, lines 122-125]. The treatment of the serpentry group’s monsters is even more peculiar. *Lemminkäinen* addresses them with incantations, that sound very friendly. Similar charms could be applied to the situation of facing a snake in the informants’ real life. The interaction between mythical epic and incantation genre has been noticed as a phenomena of the charm crustification into the epic song [Tarkka 2005, s.131-136]. The sole worm across the way, «longer than a room’s timber, / thicker than a room’s pillar» (“*Mat’ on tiellä poikkipuolin, / Pitkempi on pertin hirttä, / Pakšumpi pertin patšasta*”), was addressed as “God’s creation” in the 2nd person with the pronoun and requested “to give passage for the travelling men, *Lemminkäinen* above all” (“*Sie mato jumalan luoma, / Mie mies jumalan luoma, / Anna männä matkamiehen, / Lemminkäisen liiatenki*”), e.g. in [SKVR I (2) 746]. This item was performed by *Osippa Iivanainen* from *Akonlahti* area, who was acknowledged as a healer. According to *Moarie*, *Paavo*’s wife, the female singer from *Kostamuš* in her [SKVR I (2) 748] the snake was adressed as “a black worm from underground, / crawler among withered grass” and it was requested with the verb’s imperative to turn towards tussocks and crawl through tree roots (“*Mäne läpi mättähistä, / Pujottelet’e puun juuresta*”).

Thus, *Lemminkäinen* overcomes the obstacles very cautiously. Epic hero's conduct follows a model of behavior, conducted by a Shaman travelling to the Otherworld (imagined by the performer at ASC). At the same time this motif resembles "Hero treats a Donator or a Helper friendly" -- situation of a fairy tale. This situation [Apo 1986, s.93] is one of the basic macro propositions of the genre-specific plot sequence of the fairy tale, that has been invented in 1946 by Vladimir Ya. Propp (1895-1970), the leader of the Formalist trend in Russian literature and folklore studies. Whereas heroes of bylina-songs or large-scale epics annihilate a monster, travelling *wanton Lemminkäinen* eludes fight neither trails the way for people. The monsters are not harmed, but survive safe and intact usually in the multiple variants of the Kalevala epic songs. The motifeme of the struggle against monsters is enrooted in the most archaic, mythological stage of the epics genre's evolution (assumed to explain the vast diversity of ethnic manifestations). The Kalevala dealing with monsters contradicts its interpretation as reckoned to the archaic stages of the hypothetic epic evolution. On the basis of literary "Kalevala" by Lönnrot, it has been suggested that the archaic character type of epics is embedded in *Lemminkäinen* [Meletinski 1963 s.152]. But such a young courageous hero must be eager for fighting against every opponent for the only sake of trial of strength, not to speak about glory. How could he neglect an ideal monster opponent for a sword play and offer fowl to the fiery eagle that is characterized by Trohkimainen Soava the singer in [SKVR I (2) 729] with a formulaic evaluation:

Se on syönyt sata miestä, It has eaten a hundred men,

Tuhonnut tuhat urosta It has annihilated a thousand heroes

Cautious overcoming of the Otherworld's border obstacles and sacrificing the monsters by the hero is consistently incorporated into the semantic macrostructure of the Viena Karelian "*Paeivoelae* Feast". The story about Wanton *Lemminkäinen* (*lieto Lemmingäini*), who is "quarrelsome always" (*kaikitse toraisa*) and therefore attends the feast uninvited and unwelcome, contains obvious novel features as well. But the "methonymic referentiality", immanent to traditional oral epics [Foley 1995 s.28], was induced by the very stereotypic imagery of monsters and obstacles proper to the mythic landscape of the Otherworld, that were applied to portray a journey to a remote mythical locality. The associative links occurring in the memory of competent epic singers are the result of the corresponding links in the collective "epic knowledge" [Gatsak 1989, s.230].

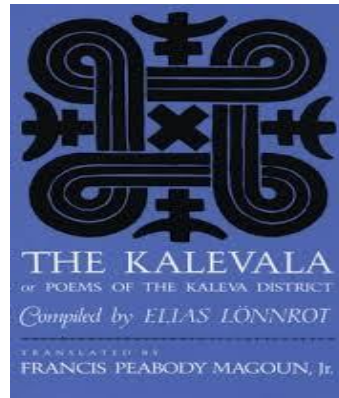
Finnish folklorists of the 20th century regarded several rune-poems, such as “The Visit to Underworld” (“*Tuonelassa käynti*”), “The Visit to Vipunen” {the Bygone Giant} (“*Vipusessa käynti*”) and «The Singing Competition» (“*Kilpalaulanta*”), as arisen from definitely shamanistic background [Kuusi 1963, s.242; 256-259]. The plot of the *Lemminkäinen*’s death during his visit to relatives in-law, that involved the overcoming of the dangerous obstacles, was supposed to have preserved a shamanic poem, recomposed from the more archaic plot elements by the scalds of the later Viking and Crusade period, in its most pure form [Kuusi 1963, s.253-254]. The singing competition between Lemminkäinen and the host is thus regarded as a key event, and the whole poem is confined to a story about a shaman’s journey to the home of the rival. Anna-Leena Siikala has noticed, that “the dispute through incantations in the song of *Lemminkäinen* is much more closer to the classical shamanic tradition” than the entire “Singing Competition” Kalevala poem. It is proved by the chain of animal figures (a hair and a red fox, a squirrel and a martin with gold breast), regarded as zoomorphic helpers, who conduct the fight on behalf of the antagonists [Siikala 1992, p.82.]. Namely the image of the remote World of the Dead («*Etävainajala*») and the shaman’s journey to the Otherworld, reflected and transformed in the Kalevala epic tales [Siikala 1992fi, s.120-131, 250-271], seems to be a key item, that explains sufficiently typological counterparts, apparent in ethnically diverse oral epics with a shamanistic background.

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The Discourse of Tribal Development, Displacement and violation of Human Right in Odisha

Ratna Prabha Barik

'The millions of displaced people do not exist anymore. When history is written they would not be in it, not even as statistics. Some of them have subsequently been displaced three and four times.... True, they are not being annihilated or taken to gas chambers, but I can warrant that the quality of their accommodation is worse than in any concentration camp of the Third Reich. They are not captive, but they re-define the meaning of liberty and still the nightmare does not end. They continue to be uprooted even from their hellish hovels by government bulldozers...The millions of displaced people in India are nothing but refugees of an unacknowledged war...'

Arundhati Roy, 1999

Abstract

Development is an enigma. It has brought many changes and challenges to the society particularly to the tribals. In the name of development they are being displaced and discarded forcibly from their homelands. The various challenges are occurred that because of the various projects. The mineral resource base of Orissa is mainly spread in the tribal community dominated pockets. In the past several years, Orissa has emerged as dynamic state that is poised to turn around its development fortunes by utilizing its mineral resource. Mineral- intensive

growth is known to create significant environmental externalities and this is clearly observed in mineral rich districts of the state. This study has sought to explore the impact of mining on the surrounding environment & on the most vulnerable sections of society. The present paper tries to magnify various projects which have displaced the tribals threatening the present models of development. The concluding remark enhances us to re-think the process of green development in a sustainable world.

Keywords: Development, Displacement, Dispossession, Alienation, Degradation, Sustainable, Marginalization, Modernization, indigenous, Deforestation,

Introduction

Development is a very widespread phenomenon. With the changing scenario, it emerges as an enigma in the society. It refers to the situation where both material and quality living standard of masses will increase. In the most fundamental goal of economics, development seems to be to advance the welfare and wellbeing of the people. It is quite understood that a country can be developed only if its economic sector is developed but by affecting a vulnerable sector in the name of development is not development at all. The essence of development fails to achieve the objectives of it. It acknowledges us about a question that what is the reason for which the tribal people are not developed besides different developmental scenarios like infrastructure established in modern times. There are number of industries, small and large scale projects in the tribal areas. Since the time of globalization the industrial revolution has brought many changes and challenges in each and every corner of the world. On the one hand it has brought the alternative and new infrastructures by setting industries, factories and different new avenues; on the other hand it has caused displacement, dispossession, land alienation, land degradation, deforestation, environmental pollution, health hazards etc. it not only violates the human rights but also goes against the Nature and Natural law.

There are various developmental policies, adopted by the government, has based on the improvement of the poor and marginalized section of the society. The developmental policies are suitable in ethical terms and free from

differentiation, discrimination and even against the smallest communities. In the passage of time, often development projects which are positive and desirable from the point of view of the majority in the society are ethically unacceptable because they lead to violations of human rights and further marginalization of the most vulnerable groups of affecting and displacing them. It may be noted that the total elimination of the negative impacts of large development projects is not always possible but those who are responsible for implementing these should at least try to reestablish to the displaced and affected communities economic conditions similar to those that existed before the start of the project. Also, in the long term, local communities should be able to enjoy the fruits of development projects on a basis of equality with other nationals of the country.

In India, the different developmental projects are ranged from hydro power projects to tourism. The Hydro or water based big developmental projects like big dams, irrigation, canals etc. , Power or thermal projects including mines, nuclear power reactor, National security related projects like setting up of defense headquarters in various zones, defense training school etc., Natural resources including agriculture and its related industrial set up e.g. tea, coffee, rubber, jute plantation etc, natural gas and petroleum, refineries, oil rigs and its related set up, Tourism projects which includes tourist spots, tourist lodges and hotels, theme parks, beautification of cities, religious places, places of interests, reserve forest areas which debarred human habitation except aboriginal tribes which are on the threshold of inexistence etc. being the real and actual propagator of the property, the originals are depriving from their basic needs and necessities. Their life has become a curse for them. Their unending labour and respect to nature is the sole thing behind their unique culture. Their strong religious belief, God resides behind trees, forests, hills, mountains, lakes and rivers etc., has brought them a new identity in the world. The voice of

Development induced Displacement: Meaning and consequences

Society needs infrastructure for its development. Infrastructure needs adequate place for its set-up. The essence of it may not be necessarily good but firstly it forces the dwellers to move from their places and the state is the key

factor behind all these as the modern democracy prevails today. The idea that State has the right take away any property for public good is a controversial issue as it raises the classic debate of power of state versus individual rights. The world is no longer with the idea that the King owns all property and bestows rights, including rights in property, upon his citizens. The above sphere of ideas has been changed with the implementation of parliamentary democracy in India where 'the voice of the people is the voice of God' (Arora, 1999:145). Popular sovereignty in democracy and states supremacy on them (tribals) are the two contradictory situations what the indigenous people are facing today. Government need not take over an individual's property, either the common man or the tribe.

Development-induced displacement can be defined as the forcing of tribal communities out of their land, homes, often also their natural habitat for the purposes of economic development. Moreover the use of intimidation of any nature by the government or any private organization is central to the idea of development-induced displacement which is viewed as a violation of human rights at the international level.

Displacement and Dispossession of Tribals in Odisha

In Odisha, it is estimated that owing to construction of over 1500 major irrigation development projects since independence, over 16 million people were displaced and dispossessed from their villages, of which about 40 percent belong to tribal population. Odisha is extremely rich in minerals, most of which are found in the tribal districts. During the last five decades more than fifty million people have been displaced from their homes and huts and sacrificed at the altar of National Interest. It becomes clear that mostly powerless and voiceless people are displaced and to pay the price of national progress. The era of globalization has brought many projects for the development of people at national as well as international stages. The establishment of these mega-projects has encroached on tribal people's traditional lands and displaced them. Odisha is geographically divided into hill districts of Western Orissa and coastal districts of plain. The coastal districts of Odisha, in comparison to the hill or Western districts are in a much more expedient and advantaged state both in political as well as economical overview. In view of large mineral deposits, a number of large scale industries have developed in this area – such as The Talcher Super Thermal Power (TSTP) project is being executed by the National Thermal Power Corporation

(NTPC) at kaniha near Talcher. A total of 1463.16 hectares of land has been acquired for the project, affecting 1940 families in 53 villages in around Talcher. The Talcher Thermal Power Projects(TTPP) set up in 1964, was the first thermal power project in Odisha. It acquired 205.67 hectares of land and displaced 157 families over 17 villages in and around Talcher town in Aunugul district. The IB- Thermal Power Station (ITPS) at banharpali in Jharsuguda district was started in the early 1990s. The project acquired 486.48 hectares of land from three villages, affecting 329 families(Ota,2010).

The other major industries in Odisha include the Rourkela Steel plant, National Aluminium Company plants functioning at AnugulDamanjodi, Fertilizer Corporation of India plant at Talcher, Paradeep Phosphates Limited at Paradeep, Aluminium plant at Hirakud, Tata Refractories at Belpahar, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited at Sunabeda and Ordnance Factory at Saintala. There are plans to construct five more steel plants at Daitari, two at Gopalpur and two Aluminiums plants in Kashipur. In the fifties the Rourkela Steel plant acquired 7917.84 hectares of land and displaced 2464 families from 30 villages in Sundargarh districts. (Roy-Burman,1966). According to an estimate by Mahapatra, 1231(50.37%) out of the 2464 families displaced were tribals and 733 families (30%) were Scheduled castes(Mohapatra,1999). In DamanjodiKoraput 2741 hectares of land had to acquire for the Aluminium plant, mining activities and township of NALCO. The project affected 17678 people in 26 villages, out of which tribals constituted 52.44%, Scheduled castes 10.84% and other castes 36.72%(ibid:23). In NALCO, further 3877.81 hectares of land was also acquired for the smelter plant, captive power plant and township. This affected 3997 families in 40 villages. Out of the affected families, 12.76% belong to Scheduled castes and 2.78 to Scheduled tribes (Fernandes et al, 1992). The MIG factory and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at Sunabeda in Koraput district acquired 3764 hectares of land and displaced 468 families in 10 villages (Reddy, 1993). The Ordnance factory at Saintala in Bolangir district established in 1984 displaced 1200 families from 14 villages (Pandey, 1998). The total number of families affected by industries in Odisha is 10704, which accounts for 11.47% of the total displacement in the state (Ota,2010). However in Odisha industry has been the second biggest reason for displacement. Within the broad spectrum of industry, mineral based industries have caused greater displacement than other industries.

From among the different mining projects, operating in Odisha, Coal mining project has caused the maximum displacement.in the North Odisha

large number of people has displaced whose exact magnitude of displacement has not been fully documented (Mohapatra, 1994). The Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCI), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL) has acquired 2576 hectares of land in Talcher area. 23 villages in the area were affected by 4 undergrounds mines while 38 others were affected by 5 open castes mines (Ota, 2010). In the Ib valley area of Jharsuguda district, MCL acquired 929.58 hectares of land by 1993 for 5 open caste mines. With this 130 families of 17 villages were displaced (ibid:26). There are around 600 mines all over Odisha; located mostly in the tribal pockets of the state. It is common that exploitation of minerals through open caste mines results in displacement of human settlements, felling of forests and acquisition of agricultural land. From 1950 to 1993 there were 3143 families displaced accounted for 3.37% of the total displacement in the state. It also required acquisition of 2427.03 hectares of land (Ota, 2006). Development of urban infrastructure, creation of wild life sanctuary and construction of roads and railways has also contributed in no small major to the problem of displacement in Odisha. The two wild life sanctuaries Chandaka Elephant sanctuary and Similipala Tiger Reserve have displaced 100 and 42 families respectively (Ota, 2008). From the various kinds of development projects in Odisha 81176 families displaced and 6.22 lakhs hectares of land was acquired between 1950 and 1993. In the construction of the dams around 6 lakhs hectares of land and 70% of families of total displacement were counted.

From the irrigation and Hydel dams such as Machhkund, Hirakud, Balimela, Rengali, Upper Kolab and Upper Indravati. Machhkund dam project displaced 2938 families, out of which 51% belong to ST and 10.21% to SC (Mahapatra, 1990). Hirakud dam project affected 249 villages, submerged the area of 74300 hectares including 23988 hectares of forest lands and 49888 hectares of agricultural land (Ota, 2010). The Balimela project submerged 17496 hectares of land in Odisha, displaced 1507 tribal families. The Rengali project submerged 42300 hectares of land and affected 10897 families who are popularly called chasa in Odisha (ibid:25). The Upper Kolab multipurpose dam submerged 16258 hectares of land and displaced 3180 families from 53 villages (ibid:27). The Indravati project displaced 5301 families from 99 villages out of which 2223 families were tribals. (ibid:28). The Subernarekha project displaced 3830 families in 36 villages of Odisha.

Violation of Human Rights and the Tribals in Orissa

To safeguard the human rights should be the guarantee of a welfare state. After sixty five years of guarantee to protect the rights and improve the situation of the people has not been able to fulfill its promises. Due to the advent of liberalized force the state is trying to make a shift from its welfare model of development to the capitalist way of thinking, which is causing with the new kinds of legislation by compelling the indigenous people to leave their traditional rights of community (common property), resources and minor forest produces. In course of time, their lands and forests became the property of the state. As a result, their livelihood is under threat. The modern state, which took the responsibility of protecting the rights of the common people after independence, now pitching in and advocating for the interests of the multinational market forces. Instead of the interest of the people, protection of the interest of the multinationals and profit occupied the central place in every move of progress by the state.

From the United Nations document entitled 'The Practice of Forced Eviction: Comprehensive Human Rights Guidelines on Development based Displacement', it is clear that states that expulsions create primarily violation of a wide range of worldwide documented human rights. In 1990, the Comprehensive Commission on the understanding of the Right to Development as a Human Right underlined that the most destructive and prevalent abuses of indigenous rights which are failed to direct consequence of development strategies in respect to the fundamental rights of self-determination. The result has been the elimination and removal of natural resources, waters, wild life, forests and food supplies from indigenous lands either through commercial exploitation or incompatible land use; the degradation of natural environment; removal of indigenous people's from their lands; and their displacement or preemption from the use of their lands by outsiders (Das, 2001: 86).

Violation of Constitutional Provisions

Under the fifth schedule of the Constitution of India the provisions of the Panchayats Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996, prohibits the state to make any law, which would not be in consonance 'with the customary law, social and religious practices, and traditional management practices of community resources'. It further mandates that 'gram sabha or the panchayats at the appropriate level shall be consulted before making the acquisition of land into the scheduled areas for development projects and before resettling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the

scheduled areas' (Bandopadhyay, 2004: 409). The Act seeks to provide significant protection to the tribals in the scheduled areas against arbitrary, discretionary, and motivated action by the state relating to land acquisition and resettlement and rehabilitation package for the project affected people (PAPs). As per the data 75 per cent displaced people were still awaiting for rehabilitation. It has to be mentioned that rehabilitation is not considered a 'right' by the constitution of India (Nag, 2001:4758). The tribal people have no say in the legitimacy of setting up development projects. The state never consults on the type of development people desire, thus violating the right to decide their own priorities as a part of right to development as an inalienable human right (Das, 2001:92). The obvious question remains here that if democracy is of the people, by the people and for the people; all development projects should have the consent of the people (Pinto, 1999: 240).

Land Alienation and Human rights

Affected with the large-scale industrial and infrastructural projects, the tribals are displaced from their productive properties such as land, forest and homes. The Land Acquisition Act of 1894 empowers the government to acquire private lands and properties in 'public interest'. This 'sovereign domain' of government alienates people from their traditional sources of sustenance (such as lands, forests, and village habitats), livelihood and social networks and causes untold hardships and miseries (Sharma, 2003:907). With the acquisition of lands, the displaced people lost very precious land, but could not either get replacement of such land nor could get any compensation whatsoever for this land as there was no record of right over such encroached land. Thus, in a broader sense, homelessness is also placelessness, loss of a group's cultural space and identity, or cultural impoverishment.

Ecology, Forests and Human Rights

With the Forest Act of 1878, the forests are classified into three categories such as Reserve, Protected and Village forests. The National Forest Policy 1894 declared the forests on the slope of the hills as protected which ultimately leading to the process of shrinking tribal access to minor forest produce. With the establishment of industrial projects, felling trees to supply timber for laying railway tracks, building towns and collecting raw material for industries gave birth to a process of deforestation. This has unbridled a situation where more and more people are being displaced from

their communities and traditional ways of life and resulted in an insecure livelihood for the tribal and indigenous communities in the hilly areas and tribal belts of Orissa. The compensation for the loss of the natural habitat and the cultural milieu of the tribals cannot be amounted. This process can be characterized as a process of debarment and a progression where by the tribals are gradually denied access to the support system of their livelihood. It meant loss of rights enjoyed earlier by the tribal community over the forest and land sources around them (Mohanty, 1998: 81).

Social Disarticulation and human rights

The tribal displacement undoes the existing socio-cultural fabric and economic base of the displaced families, which has been built over centuries and generations. It diffuses and wrecks groups, dismantles arrangements of social organization and interpersonal ties, kinship groups become scattered as well. The loss of that valuable 'social capital' compounds the loss of natural, physical and human capital of the tribal regions violating the human rights.

Employment and Education

With the displacement process, the tribals have been deprived from the employment opportunities causing impoverishment. This is directly denying the tribals from their right to employment, work and livelihood. It has increased the dropout rates and caused a wider loss to the children of the displaced tribals and denied their basic right to education and literacy. As education and employment helps us in the process of development, it has failed in the case of the displaced tribals because of their nomadic life.

Displacement and Insecurity of Tribals

The Human Rights Declaration stated that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security. Under the heading of economic, social and cultural rights, all governments are expected to try progressively to improve the living conditions of their citizens. But the forced displacements have created major socio-economic risks. Cernea developed his eight-point impoverishment danger for the involuntary displaced persons caused by the development process. These are: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, and social discrimination. To this list Courtland-Robinson (2003) added two more access to community services, violation of human rights, loss of educational opportunities (Bandopadhyay, 2004: 410). The human rights which

are being affected are Right to life, Right to own property and Right to residence. The right to life and livelihood is threatened by the loss of home and the means to make a living when people are displaced from habitual residences and traditional homelands. The right to life is protected in the Art-3 and Art-6 of the constitution of India. In Indian context the Supreme Court in *OllegaTellis* case envisaged right to livelihood under the Aegis of Art-21 and condemned the unjustifiable displacement of people from their land. Right to life does not mean merely animal existence but living with human dignity and all that goes along with it like right to shelter. Moreover unsystematic and piecemeal approach to development has resulted in depletion of the environment which makes life worth living, materially and culturally and so it has led to violation of right to clean and healthy environment. The right to adequate housing and security of the person and property serve to protect individuals and communities from being arbitrarily displaced from their homes and habitat. The right to own property and not to be arbitrarily deprived of this property is spelled out in the Art-6 and 17. The eviction or displacement of persons unlawfully amounts to violations of the rights to freedom of residence Art-19(e) of the Indian constitution asserts right to residence as fundamental right.

Conclusion: ‘Rethinking Development’

Displacement has brought many changes and challenges forcibly to the life of the tribals. They are no longer the forest dwellers as the impact on modernization in the name of development has displaced them from their homelands. Only thinking about development is not enough. Development should go side by side with environment, ecology and human sustenance. However, since last few decades, development has been looked at as something beyond a “mere growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). The Human Development Reports look at “Development” as “increasing people's choices”. Development should be in a way to ‘re-thinking and re-vitalizing process’, which can bring equality, justice, prosperity and happiness for both the sections of the society i.e., the Tribals and the Non-Tribals. There have also been speculated self-assured basic needs or basic capabilities that all people are entitled to, for a society to ensure true development. If this be so, it is essential that the laws of a democratic country ensure that due to acquisition of land for the growth of few, the displaced persons are not made worse-off. The process of ‘green development’ has represented and acknowledged to the existing developmental models, which

are unsustainable, directing the 'development' in a new paradigm. Now is the right time to think about the aboriginals and their proper rehabilitation. However, at these circumstances, it is pertinent to contemplate the Gandhian approach of 'Inclusive Development', which is a decentralized and less anthropocentric approach, and aims at internalizing 'happiness' through moral obligations. After finding the effects of displacement, especially on the tribals, it is necessary not only to recognize, evade and alleviate threats in each development project that entails displacement, but also to focus on benefits over and above compensation and rehabilitation for damages as well as benefit sharing arrangement. There should be judicious approach demanding long term commitments, financial and institutional guarantees and the use of professional approach in dealing with the issues of social development of indigenous people. There should be continuous nursing by technically competent sovereign observers can go a long way in ensuring more effective resettlement and rehabilitation arrangements in case of the displaced families which can end up in not only restoring the pre-displaced living condition of the millions of displaced families but also in substantially bringing in improvement in their socio-economic condition in the post-project period.

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**Appropriating the Intangible Heritage:
Folklore in Indian English Literature**

Subhendu Mund

Abstract

Literature studies and folklore studies are generally perceived as two different and even divergent entities, but it is not so. As literature of a given community emerges out of the racial memory of its individuals, it has to both consciously and unconsciously reflect the elements inherent to its collective unconscious. In fact, my paper has been structured on *a priori* hypothesis of an intimate and indissoluble relationship between the two academic activities. While folklore is the most spontaneous form of literature, there can be no literature worth its salt without the matrix of folklore. In my opinion, folklore, an intangible heritage of a community is the mother of (written) literature. I intend to bridge the gap between the studies in folklore and literature by elucidating how folklore has not only enriched Indian English literature but it has also helped construct its national identity during the colonial era. More precisely, I shall seek to demonstrate how the folklore of the land – thematically as well as stylistically – was efficaciously appropriated by the Indian writers in English as a strategy of cultural politics and consequently the endeavour also helped foster the essence of *Indianness* of this new genre of Indian literature. In addition, this practice successfully moulded the western narrative forms into Indian and structured its canons of narratology.

(Key words: Literature, folklore, Indian English, Literature, narratology)

Folklore and Literature

Notwithstanding the general perceptions, the inter-relatedness between folklore and literature studies has of late been acknowledged in the world academia. In the last two decades or so, there has been greater emphasis on the mutuality between the two disciplines and this has given a new direction to this area of study. Even a novice like me has come across several works on Folklore and Literature Studies such as *Form and Fable in American Fiction* (1965) by Daniel Hoffman; *The Voice of the Folk: Folklore and American Literary Theory* (1972) by Gene Bluestein; *Interrelations of Literature*, edited by Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Joseph Gibaldi (1982); 'The Study of Folklore in Literature and Culture: Identification and Interpretation', a paper by Alan Dundes, published in *The Journal of American Folklore* (Vol. 78, No. 308: Apr.-Jun.1965), and *Folklore and Literature: Studies in the Portuguese, Brazilian, Sephardic, and Hispanic Oral Traditions* (2000) by Manuel da Costa Fontes, just to name a few.

In *Encyclopedia of Folklore and Literature* (1998), [Bruce A. Rosenberg](#) and [Mary Ellen Brown](#) foreground "the profound influence of folklore on literature". They talk about four categories: 1. writers and literary works that use folklore as a resource or source; 2. concepts that make it easier to look at folklore and literature together; 3. themes and characters that originated in oral literature but are also found in written literature; and 4. scholars who have studied and contributed to the field of folklore and literature. Incidentally, they believe that in order to understand the value of folklore in literary terms we have to explore both *high* and *low* cultures. Understandably, these studies seek to examine how folklore supplements an understanding of the early oral tradition and enhances the knowledge of the early literature without which studies in written literary narratives cannot be complete. They also follow comparative research tradition equipped by methodological influences from

contextualist theories of folklore, narratology and linguistic anthropology. Besides, it is through various kinds of appropriation that folklore also achieves its much deserved sustainability. Contemporary folklore researches also underscore issues related to cultural heritage and the politics of tradition. More importantly, studies in oral history, biographical materials and the politics of history and memory have also been the recent focus of folklore studies. It is in this context that my hypothesis draws its motivation.

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that written literature, especially narratives in both verse and prose have always drawn from the fountainhead of the folklore of the community. In the western literary traditions, [hymns](#) attributed to Homer, *Beowulf* (an anonymous Old English verse epic of the eighth century AD), works of Roman writers Virgil and [Boccaccio](#); great masters of English literature like Geoffrey [Chaucer](#), William Shakespeare, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden; American writers [Edgar Allan Poe](#), Walt Whitman, Mark Twain (especially *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1885); and Tales of Brothers Grimm in German literature are some of the most prominent examples. Similarly, [Elias Lönnrot's Kalevala](#) (1830s) has become the foundational narrative in Finland. The novels of Chinua Achebe, the renowned African writer, draw their strength from the accent on folklore of the Igbo community. In fact, fictional works of the most of the major writers of the so-called New Literatures in English thrive on folklore of their communities. The recent focus on Magic Realism in fiction is yet another pointer towards the significance of folklore in literature. The unprecedented popularity of comics, graphic novels, and the like, clearly demonstrate myth and folklore can still excite the popular imagination.

Folklore and Indian English Literature

Indian English literature, the outcome of the colonial encounter between India and England/the West, has always been inflicted with the anxiety of *Indianness*. Its medium being English, the coloniser's language, which has not exactly been the first language of any geocultural entity or community of India, is arguably the foremost problematic. Arguably, English has been the first language/mother tongue of certain constituencies of Indian demography,

but such speakers do also have a *second* language, which is as good as their supposedly first language, English. Moreover, there are two other categories which use English as their first language: 1. The children of the elite communities of contemporary India, sensitised by public school education; and 2. The new class of migrant professionals who live a cosmopolitan existence and have to resort to English/Hindi as lingua franca.

So, can there be creative/imaginative writing in a language which is not one's mother tongue? Can one be honest in one's self-expression in a foreign language, that too the language of the colonisers? Much has been said on this very complicated position of Indian English literature, and I do not wish to go into all that again here because that is not the point of my argument. All said and done, Indians have been writing in English for more than two hundred years, and writing too well to be questioned their honesty. What I intend to address here is, what are the ingredients which would make a literature true to its soil, even though it is written in a foreign/coloniser's language?

C. D. Narasimhaiah, one of the founding fathers of *Indian* English literary theory and criticism addresses the problem at length vis-à-vis the bhasha literatures in his essay, 'Wanted: The Concept of a National Literature for India'. He selects four Indian language novels to demonstrate how the elusive and enigmatic *Indianness* is concretely manifest in them. These works, he points out, "... show a remarkable Indianness" owing mainly to "the manner in which the great Indian tradition is kept alive in each work". Some of the characteristics of Indianness, according to him, are "continuous references woven into the texture of the work as metaphor, symbol, myth, allusion, analogy from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagabata, Buddha, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Sankardev, the Bhakti poets and the *folktales*" (181 *emphasis mine*).

In the contemporary globalised world, the local/national faces the threat of extinction. Bill Ashcroft's plea for "the materiality of local experiences and the engagement of local communities with global culture" may be seen as yet another discourse marginalising the *local*, although he admits that "The agency of the local is most powerful when it is transformative (*Postcolonial Transformation* 216). The engagement of the local with the global culture may

be an experience which as postmodern communities we cannot escape, but the local is what forms the very basis of fictional work. Real people and real places matter in fiction. Edward Said argues in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983) that a literary text is a part of “the social world”, and underscores the significance of *locatedness* of a text to the social realities:

My position is that texts are worldly, to some extent they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.
(4)

It is the amalgamation of elements of folklore that substantially attributes *locatedness* to a text; and more importantly, saves “the materiality of local experiences” from being lost to globalisation or a dominant metropolitan culture

I intend to illustrate how Indian English literature, contrary to popular perceptions, has been quite *Indian* in its content, technique and spirit owing to its seminal affiliation with the essence of India and *Indianness*: folklore, legends, myth and history. In fact, the large corpus of folk tales, mythological stories, fables, etc. retold in English, and published in the nineteenth century seemed to have aimed at fostering a cultural identity of India. Since its very inception, Indian English writers have been consciously (and maybe unconsciously) going back to the roots of their culture which lies in legends and folklore of the land.

It is my submission that appropriation of indigenous folklore has amply enriched Indian writing in English both in narrative techniques and canon formation. Moreover, to the nineteenth-century Indian English writer, the inclusion, narration, and incorporation of folktales and oral narratives in their writings served not only as a strategy of cultural politics but also legitimised the *Indianness* of the Indian English Literature. As folklore is the essence of cultural life of a community, its incorporation infused the spirit of the community in the literature albeit written in a foreign language, the language of the masters. More importantly, western forms of literature like the novel, short story, essay, etc., the by-products of the colonial interaction, were

perfectly indianised by synthesising the western forms with the traditional narrative traditions, both oral and written, of the country.

However, folklore is not used in literature in the raw. The narrator incorporates a folktale, song or riddle or some such element to serve a narrational function. The open-ended character of oral/folk songs and tales is manipulated by the writer for various reasons. When Indians began experimenting with their creativity in English language, they were consciously or unconsciously trying to re-construct their identity in the face of the imperialist master narratives. Needless to say, the coloniser's language became the most powerful weapon of the colonised to re-assert and resist. Contrary to the popular perception, a holistic study of the early Indian English writing reveals an astonishingly uniform schema of identity formation and construction of the idea of nationness. The peculiar social and cultural background of the vast and diverse Indian society, and the poetics inherited from the literary traditions of the country, as well as its paraliterature: its folklore, oral traditions and myths and archetypes inherited in the racial memory were skilfully exploited by the early writers to make Indian English Literature truly *Indian* in essence. The diversity of India has allowed space for the *sthalapuranam* – the local tales, myth and legends -- also, not to speak of those of the mainstream society; the diverse narrative interpretations of the theological doctrines, and so on; but the centrality of common traditions and value systems has always provided an invisible bond of unity.

Another important aspect where the Indian English novelist succeeded in innovation is the form of the short story and the novel. Although recent researches have exploded the myth – yet another imperial mega narrative -- that the narrative forms which are generally believed to have been borrowed from the West. It is the other way round. India is not only the source of most of the tales/folktales of the world; all the narrative forms have also been borrowed from the ancient and medieval Indian resources. However, in the early phase the western form of the novel was Indianised by the novelists by unconsciously superimposing the narratology of Indian classical literature and folklore. The novels became episodic: one main story being encircled by a number of sub-stories, even anecdotes, tales, fables, parables and *sthalapuranam*. Such features as the omniscient, sometimes omnipresent character of the narrator; the novelist's weakness for didacticism; and

characters representing ideas and ideologies rather than human beings rendered the Indian form of the novel essentially different from the English one.

India is an inexhaustible source of folklore. The early practitioners of fiction in Indian English made use of this resource to enrich their narratives. As I have already mentioned, in the nineteenth century, this project served multiple ends. Many of the writers, even major ones like Shoshee Chunder Dutt (1824-85) and the Reverend Lal Behari Day (1824-94) compiled folk tales/folklore and retold them in English. Interestingly, some of the colonial administrators also contributed to the project of retelling the folktales. Some notable examples are William Crooke's *Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (who also edited *North Indian Notes and Queries* between 1890-96); Sir George Grierson's *Hatim's Tales, Kashmiri Stories and Songs* (to which Crooke appended a note on the folklore of the tales).

Some of the noteworthy Indian English works which retold folklore and legends in the nineteenth century are: Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *Times of Yore: Or Tales from Indian History and Realities of Indian Life*; Lal Behari Day's *Folk Tales of Bengal* (1883) and *Tales of India* (1921, republished as *Folk Stories of Bengal*, 1941); V. Mungaji's *The Brilliant Simantaka: Or the Most Striking Legend of an Antique Kohinoor* (1889), P. V. Ramaswami Raju's *Tales of Sixty Mandarins* (1886) and *Indian Fables* (1887), Manmatha Nath Dutt's *Gleanings from Indian Classics* (Vol. I: *Tales of Ind*, 1893; Vol. II: *Heroines of Ind*, 1893; and Vol. III: *The Prophets of Ind*, 1899), T. Ramakrishna [Pillai]'s *Tales of Ind* (1896), B. R. Rajam Iyer's mythological stories published in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and later included in *Rambles in Vedanta* (1896-98), Sakgendi Mahalingam Natesa Sastri's *Tales of Tenali Rama* (1900) and anonymously written *Hari Vijaya and Sivalila* (1891), K. Raghunathji's *Nasiket Akhyani: Or the Journey of Nasiket to the Realms of the Dead* (1892), and *The Ideals of Truthfulness* (1897).

The diverse folk traditions of India found expression in descriptive nonfiction prose writings as well. Lal Behari Day wrote essays like 'Bengali Games and Amusements', 'Bengali Festivals and Holidays' in the *Calcutta Review* in 1851, and soon this practice was followed by the publication of a

number of ethnographical studies on Indian life and manners. Besides the impressive corpus of essays and sketches by Shoshee Chunder Dutt, which were incorporated in individual books as well as his omnibuses, *Bengaliana* and the several volumes of *The Works of Shoshee Chunder Dutt*, written and published between 1878 and 1885, there were many individual works of enduring merit, such as, B. M. Malabari's *Gujarat and Gujaratis: Pictures of Men and Manners Taken from Life* (1882), and *The Indian Nation* (1894), Bulloram Mullick's *Essays on the Hindu Family in Bengal* (1882), N. S. Ginwala's *Parsi Girl of the Period* (1884), Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati's *The High Class Hindu Woman* (1887), Devendra Nath Das's *Sketches of Hindu Life* (1887), Gurulal Gupta's *Rural Sketches* (1888), Gury Purwar's *In the P.W.D.* (1888), T. Ramakrishna's *Life in an Indian Village* (1891), Nagesh Wishwanath Pai's *Stray Sketches in Chakmakpore: From the Note Book of an Idle Citizen* (1894), Krupabai Satthianadhan's (1862-94) *Miscellaneous Writings* (1896), B. R. Rajam Iyer's collected works *Rambles in Vedanta* (published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* between 1896 and 1898), and anonymously written *Tirhut and Its Inhabitants of the Past* (1900). Needless to say, these works incorporated a good amount of folklore also. A. Sarath Kumar Ghosh (1879-1963), the well-known novelist, published essays, sketches, folk tales, etc. in the London and the US periodicals like the [*Harper's Monthly*, *The Red Magazine* and the *Pearson's Magazine*](#). Cornelia Sorabji, yet another significant writer and activist wrote *Indian Tales of the Great Ones: Among Men, Women and Bird-People*: a collection of stories retold from Indian mythology, history and folklore in the early twentieth century.

More importantly, the early Indian English writers incorporated folklore in their works as an integral part of the narrative structure. All the fictional works of Shoshee Chunder Dutt, for example, created their narrative reality by the interplay of history, myth, folklore, legend and imagination. His predilection for folklore and legends makes him one of the major writers in Indian English literature. For example, in his magnum opus, *The Young Zemindar* (1880), Babaji Bissonath, the mysterious guru takes his young protégée, Monohur, the young protagonist on a tour of India – which I see as a nationalist pilgrimage – and narrates the tales associated with the places. The Rev. Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta: Or Bengal Peasant Life* (1874) narrates the story of rural India's transformation under the colonial rule and the narrative is enriched by the artistic inclusion of superstitions, rites, folk festivals and folklore. Similarly, Mirza Moorad Alee Beg's *Lahun the Beragun*

(1880), Krupabai Satthianadhan's *Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Young Wife* (1888>), B. R. Rajam Iyer's *True Greatness: Or Vasudeba Sastri* (1896-98), T. Ramakrishna's *Padmini* (1903) and *Dive for Death* (1911) and many other novels make use of folklore in their narratives. Alee Beg's *Lalun the Beragun: Or the Battle of Paniput. A Legend of Hindoostan*, is a historical fiction, set in the back drop of the Battle of Paniput III of 1761; whereas Kshetrapal Chakravarti's *Hingana* (1896) is a romance relating to a non-specific historical time. These two romances adhere to all the pre-requisites of the traditional English form of romance, but not without a blending of the Indian way of storytelling. While the former tells a long story episode after episode -- something like the ancient epics and puranas -- the latter follows the pattern of Indian folklore.

Two other works of fiction which derive inspiration from the folklore narratology are Charu Chandra Mukherjee's *The Life of Tantia Bhil: The Renowned Bandit Chief* (C1890), and H. Dutt's *Lieut. Suresh Biswas: His Life and Adventures* (1899). These two very interesting works seek to create folk heroes out of two living human beings as a counter narrative to the imperialist myth of colonial masculinity and effeminateness of Bengalis/Indians.

I wish to add here that this tradition of the propinquity between folklore and Indian writing in English did not come to an end with the early writing. With the advent of the twentieth century, and the rising nationalist mass movements, the authors were even more passionate to tell their stories of Indian realities in their own ways. Folklore, myths, and legends became mediums of postcolonial strategies of identity formation and culture resistance. For example, in his novel *The Dive for Death: An Indian Romance* (1911), T. Ramakrishna strives to re-create the cultural identity of the country by narrating the history of South India with the help of legends and folklore.

It is important to note here that a great novelist like Raja Rao (1908-2006) speaks about the significance of "*Sthalapuranam*" in his Foreword to *Kanthapura* (1938). What he tells about Indian narrative style is very close to the storytelling tradition of puranas and folklore. This is what he writes on his idea of the narratology of Indian English fiction:

The Puranas are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous “ats” and “ons” to bother us – we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our storytelling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story. (*Kanthapura* vii)

The major twentieth-century writers of fiction like R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Sudhin N Ghose, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Gita Mehta, Amitav Ghosh, Gita Hariharan, Arundhati Roy, et al have not veered away from the tradition of their predecessors. For example, in *A River Sutra* (1993), Mehta ties several ‘stories’ with the *sutra* or the thread of the *sutradhar*, the narrator. The novel executes a brilliant blending of reality with myth, folklore, legend, history, and *sthalapuranam*. Even the contemporary writers of fiction bank upon the inexhaustible reservoir of Indian folklore to enrich their narratives.

In poetry also, the incorporation of folklore has been manifestly perceived since the very inception of Indian writing in English. Henry Vivian Derozio’s (1809-31) *The Faqeer of Zangheera*, Michael Madhusudan Dutta’s (1824-73) *The Captive Ladie* (18), Rajlaxmi Devi’s *The Enchanted Fruit* (1876), Toru Dutt’s (1856-77) posthumous publication, *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882) may be taken as classic instances. Later day poets like Sarojini Naidu, Nissim Ezekiel, Gieve Patel, Keki N Daruwala, A. K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Bibhu Padhi, Niranjana Mohanty and many others have made intensive use of folklore in their poetry. The greatest strength of the Indian English poetry from the North-East lies in its soulful use of folklore.

The most neglected department in Indian English literature is drama. However little the number of plays may be, this species of literature is also heavily enriched by the folklore tradition. In the original and translated plays of Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, T. P. Kailasam, Asif Currimbhoy, Badal Sircar, Manoranjan Das, Vijay Tendulkar, Uma Parameswaran, Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani, et al the use of myth and folklore adds to the essence

of ethnicity and authenticity to themes and treatment. In the recent years, Karnad has attained unprecedented recognition among readers and scholars for the treatment of myth and folklore in his plays like *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970), *Nagamandala* (1972), *Tale Dande*, etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I may say that the element of folklore invests mainstream literary composition with authenticity and honesty which are the basic characteristics of literature. Thankfully, our writers appear to be aware of the fact that folklore not only gives shape and colour to their literature, it also helps invest authenticity to it. On the other hand, written literature widens the reception of folklore and preserves it as expressions of the culture of a community. In view of these aspects in the mutuality between folklore and literature, it becomes all the more significant to look upon folklore and literature as reciprocally collaborative.

In my humble opinion, folklore, myths, and legends constitute the essence of any community. While bhasha literatures do not have to suffer the “anxiety of Indianness”, Indian writing in English has always been questioned about its legitimacy as an *Indian* literature. As we have seen in my foregoing arguments, contrary to general perceptions, Indian English literature has demonstrated an intimate complicity with the folklore of the land. In that, it has proved itself an integral part of the great Indian tradition and since its inception, it has been striving to reconstruct a national cultural identity by narrating the very essence of Indian life.

In the recent decades, with the incursion of extra-literary discourses into literature studies, especially postcolonialism and cultural studies, the collusion between literature and folklore as well the studies in their interrelationship is sure to open up hitherto unrevealed dimensions in these two complementary disciplines. It is therefore expected that there will be further research on this neglected area of study so that this very Indian aspect in the Indian English literature could be explored.

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Narration of Folk Tales Go Back To the Harappan Times

Nidhi Pandey

Abstract

The Harappan Civilization is one of the greatest civilizations of the ancient world. Harappans produced a wide range of the decorative objects in which the most unique objects were sculpture, tools, seals, pottery and others. There are several narrative scenes depicted on harappan seals and potteries that throw light on several cultural dimensions of the harappan civilization.

We propose to focus on some of the depictions on the painted pottery of the harappan civilization. Hence these narrative depictions talk about some of the folk tales of the harappan times. It is not out of place to cite the example of the tales of '*The Thirsty Crow*' and '*The Cunning Fox*' that might have originated from such depictions. On the basis of above mention justification, origin of our folk tales from the harappan times cannot be denied.

Key Words- Harappan civilization, Decorative objects, Narrative scenes, Folk tales and continuity.

Fifty years ago in 1947 when, the countries of India and Pakistan gained Independence from Great Britain the Harappan civilization had been known for about twenty-seven years. Excavations in the 1920s had revealed ancient cities of vast proportions, with unique artifacts and architectural planning that was unparalleled in the ancient world.

Harappan culture became extant with various features in which the most appealing and stunning and most unbelievable yet it seems to be true, that some of our folk tales had their origin during the Harappan times. Whether, the bed time stories narrated by grandmothers to their grandchildren as do their modern counterparts. The evidence regarding these tales comes from painted scenes on pottery. Here we shall take up two such examples.

A painting upon a small vase depicts a deer and crow, the main actors of the story, along with a pitcher which is in between them (Fig-1). The scene also depicts two trees, one in front of the deer and the other between the deer and the pitcher, but these have no role in the story. The outstretched front right leg of the deer indicates that the animal is about to go away. However, his neck is turned backwards and the eyes are wide open, which suggest that he is looking with some kind of amazement at the crow. The crow's beak is right above the pitcher, indicating that it has just taken it out of the latter. This scene seems to narrate the story '*The Thirsty Crow*' according to this story, there was water in a pitcher and a thirsty deer wanted to drink it. The water was at a low level and the deer could not manage to push his head deep enough into the pitcher to reach the water- level, particularly because of his horns. The crow too was thirsty. But he was intelligent enough to find a way out. He picked up and dropped some pebble into the pitcher, as a result of which the water-level rose up and he quenched his thirst.

The other painting seems to portray the story of '*The Cunning Fox*' (Fig-2). It is depicted on a large jar. It shows a tree on which two birds are perched. Each one holds a fish in its beak. The birds as well as the fish are cross-hatched. At the bottom left there is an animal, portrayed in solid colour. From the way the tail is depicted it seems that a fox-like animal was meant. Close to it is a small hatched object. Altogether, the story that seems to have been narrated goes as follows. There was a fox that saw some birds sitting on a tree with some food in their mouth. The fox wanted to snatch away the food from the birds. But the fox was unable to fathom how to do it? An idea struck the mind of the fox. She thought that she should tell the birds that they were very good singers and request them to sing a song. The fox did accordingly. The birds, simpletons as they were, got elated by the praise and started singing. As they opened their mouths, the morsel of food dropped down and the cunning fox ran away with it. In the scene depicted on the pot, the food in the mouths of the birds is shown in the form of fish. The opening of the mouth by the birds

and the falling of the fish from their beaks could not be shown simultaneously, unless the artist had drawn another panel to continue the second part of story. However, the depiction of the fox a little away on the left and the presence nearby of a fish-like hatched object meet the needs of the story.

All have defied the ravages of time and are met with even in today's world. This is precisely the scene depicting the story that the grandparents narrated to dear children. We all grew with these tales. Survival of such folk tales has two imports. On the our hand it indicates that the Harappans must have evolved their own tales and on the other the tenacity of Indian culture and civilization is also reiterated. India a unique blend of modernity and tradition finds its best depiction in tangible remains like archaeological artifacts and intangible traits in the form of beliefs and folk tales. To have a better understanding of past we need to unravel the material past and the embedded history of our myths and stories.

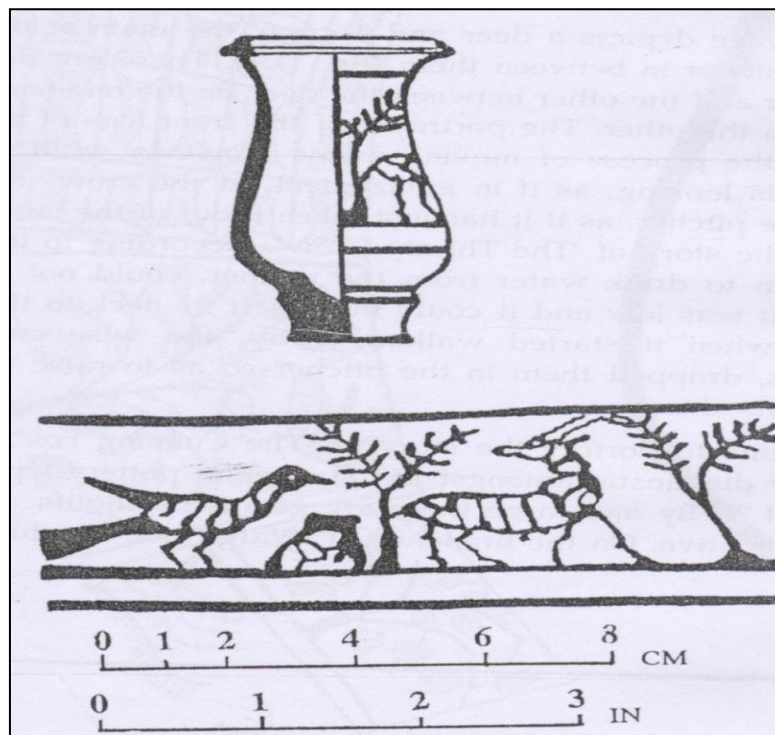


Fig-2, A Vase, the painting on which probably depicts 'The thirsty crow

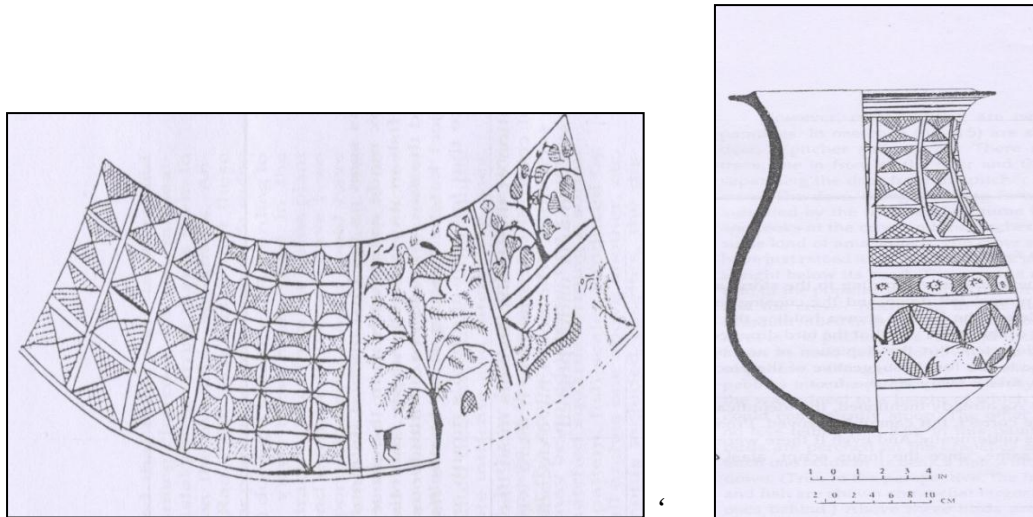


Fig-2, A painted jar, one of the panels probably depicts 'The cunning Fox'

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Naturalized Women and Feminized Nature: The Politics of Nature- Women Relationship in “Fire on the Mountain”

Ranjit Mandal

Abstract

Women and Nature are inseparably associated in various ways. They are treated as inferior entities and exploited without any rhyme or reason. Being inflicted with pain and agony, female characters in *Fire on the Mountain* are seen running away from human contacts. This gradually develops the tendency of being integrated with Nature in them for solace, security and integrity.

Keywords:- Ecofeminism, feminine sensibility, environment, integration, anthropocentric, ecology.

This paper seeks to outline the Nature-women relationship in Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*. The study of such relationship comes into limelight with the emergence of the term *Ecofeminism* in recent time. Many Ecofeminists argue that women and Nature are intimately associated in various ways. The treatment of women is connected with that of Nature. Both are seen as a source of pleasure and comfort. This relationship is well established through the female values like reproduction, reciprocity and nurturing prevalent in women as well as in Nature.

To pursue this idea further is to suggest that there is an inseparable relationship between Nature and women. Both are treated as an integrated entity to be exploited by human beings who think themselves potentially superior to others. As a result, a gradual division is emerged in the run of struggle for existence in the Darwinian Theory. Men along with culture are on one side and women along with Nature are on another side. While woman is

considered as inferior to man, Nature is treated as inferior to culture. Because of this inferior complexity, a tendency of being integrated with Nature seems to envelop the feminine sensibility. Whenever women feel insecure, neglected, isolated, oppressed and exploited, they turn to Nature in search of solace, security and integrity.

Anita Desai offers a postcolonial critique by raising the tendency of being integrated with Nature in her female characters in *Fire on the Mountain*. Like many contemporary native American writers, Chickasaw poets, novelists and essayists, Anita Desai views Nature in its indispensable connection to the females inhabiting it. She maintains Nature as a source of mental solace and physical comfort for the female characters throughout the novel.

In their struggle for existence, the characters in *Fire on the Mountain* are painfully conscious of their interconnection with Nature and the sort of solace they find inhabiting it. The novel familiarizes such consciousness in the depiction of the central character Nanada Kaul who spends the last phase of her life in the hill town (Carignano) of Kasauli. Running away from human contacts, She finds there what she wishes for.

“Everything she wanted was here, at Carignano, in Kasauli. Here, on the ridge of mountain, in this quite house. It was the place, and the time of her life, that she had wanted and prepared for all her life... she wanted no one and nothing else. Whatever else came, or happened would be an unwelcome intrusion and distraction”(Desai 3).

Carried out an unhappy relationship with Mr.Kaul, she led her life the way he wanted out of duty. He treated her as a decorative yet useful mechanical appliance required for the efficient running of her household. Virginia Woolf rightly comments that *women as a class “are comparable to the humblest domestic servants”* (Marder 35). Being caught in the busy schedule of unpleasant domestic life, Nanda Kaul found herself difficult to survive. Fuel was added to the fire when she found her prof. husband carried on a lifelong affair with Miss David, the math mistress. Such kind of agony and emotional deprivation resulted in disillusionment with human bond.

“After the death of her husband she has been so glad when it was over. She had been glad to leave all behind in the plains, like a great, heavy, difficult book that she had read through and was not required to read again... discharge me she groaned, I have discharged all my duties. Discharge” (*Desai 30*).

She eventually decided to restore her peace of mind inhabiting in Nature’s lap. She identifies herself with the

“ripening apricots and the pair of bulbuls that quarreled over them till they fell in a flurry of feathers to the ground, stirred up a small frenzy of dust, then shot off in opposite directions...” (*Desai xi*).

Like Nanda Kaul, Mrs. Mac Dougall and Miss Applby were very fond of living in Nature. They were very jealous to the polluted climate and preferred Carignano over it. What satisfied them was its peaceful and fresh atmosphere. “It had rocks , it had pines. It had light and air. In every direction there was a sweeping view- to the north, of the mountains, to the south, of the plains” (*Desai 4*).

By turning to Nature, women thus find a safe abode compared to the life spent in the patriarchal society. Being inflicted with pain and agony, they see Nature as the only source of their comfort and delight. The prevailing silence in Nature seems to be better than the crowd and pollution in urban life.

Raka’s visit to her great grandmother signals the unhealthy environment and woeful plight of city life which makes no good to her illness. She “looks like a ghost and hasn’t quite got over her typhoid yet. She is very weak and the heat and humidity of Bombay will do her no good” (*Desai 17*). In such a situation, the only way out for Raka is to visit the hills to recuperate. She too finds Nature as a source of delight, pleasure and healthy environment as opposed to her polluted urban life.

Such environmental degradation has always been a part of postcolonial ecocriticism aggravating the imbalance of ecology. It so happens because of the anthropocentric attitude of treating Nature as a resource for consumption and

self-assertion rather than as a part of greater living identity. Timothy Clark posits: "Ecological problems are seen to result from structures of hierarchy and elitism in human society, geared to exploit both other people and the natural world as a source of profit" (*Clark 2*).

However, Nanda Kaul initially views her attachment with Raka as a preface to a new betrayal because of her earlier bitter experience of being victimized. The news of her arrival did not please Nanda Kaul. She was rather happy with her own way of living in the hills alone. So is seen in little Raka as well. She too likes to disappear into the hills exploring the beauty of Nature. And this tendency is well established when we see Raka showing no interest in Nanda's talk. Being oppressed by the postcolonial patriarchal society and affected by the unhealthy environment of urban life, both of them eventually restore their happiness not through their contact with humans but through their contact with Nature.

Nanda Kaul and Raka thus enjoy the company of Nature and build a strong resemblance with it. The garden of Carignano seems to be a projection of their longing for loneliness and privacy. The garden here symbolizes the bareness and emptiness which have been prevailing Nanda's selfhood over a period of time. She, however, enjoys the company of this garden which itself seems to be as alone as its owner. Thus, the garden of Carignano and Nanda are united in one ball resulting in latter's happiness which she has been yearning through her relationship with Mr.Kaul. Like Nanda Kaul, Raka too have an indomitable desire of disappearing suddenly and silently into the hills. She always enjoys the bliss of solitude which she has futilely groped in the crowded scenario of Bombay. Thus, Anita Desai portrayed her female characters, who find their physical comfort and mental solace in the garden of Carignano, as an integral part of Nature.

Like Nanda Kaul, Ila Das too is a pathetic creature. She finds her interest in the unending concern and love for the poor. But her act of devoting herself in the welfare of people proves to be futile. The people for whom she serves ironically turn out to be hostile. While returning from her friend's house, she is killed. "*Crushed back, crushed down into the earth, she lay raped, broken, still and*

finished”(Desai 156). The human beings, thus, prove to be harmful and hostile towards one another. This is why people like Nanda Kaul wish to end all kinds of contact with human world and find their safe abode in the Nature. This is where Nature triumphs over the human world.

Thus, Anita Desai minutely observes the dislocation of women from the human world and their association with Nature. Such dissociation and association denote an awareness of colonization of women in the patriarchal society. The hostile human society, that fails to satisfy women's need and fulfill their desire, exploit and oppress them without any rhyme or reason. This develops the tendency of being integrated with Nature in women.

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Women and identity: A study of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

Nanditha Shastri

Abstract

Identity may be defined as the manner in which the society views the self. When the expectations of the society are at variance with the wishes of the individual, identity crisis is inevitable. Gender identity, which is an integral part of social identity, is also mired in such crises. Each society expects women to be of a certain kind; demeanor, actions, dressing, all should conform to societal norms. Therefore, the pressure to do the right things expected of a woman is ever-present in the psyche of a woman. Societal expectations and a woman's reactions to it are documented in many novels, including Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is about the female stereotypes propagated in India, and how a normal middle-class woman has a troubled life due to this. Deshpande's protagonist Jaya faces problems that millions of Indian women, especially educated middle-class women encounter. Jaya's woes ranging from her husband's unwillingness to cook even when she is unwell, to her husband's disdain for her writing, evokes empathy in the readers. The fragmented identity of a woman is an issue dealt with in the novel. The novel is a process of self-discovery by Jaya. The lesson that Jaya learns is relevant to all of us: Take your destiny in your own hands.

Keywords: Identity, gender, stereotypes, double life, names.

As identity depends on acknowledgement from society, variance from its norms might lead to disownment and therefore, identity crisis. Identity crisis refers to 'a feeling of being uncertain about who or what you are'. People are often identified on the basis of gender, caste, race, class and other factors. As society has stereotypes for each of these categories, anyone not falling into the type is termed deviant; identity of such people then becomes

problematic. Identity is thus a complex matter, which has been discussed by philosophers and writers alike, over the years.

Gender identity is an important aspect of social identity. Gender identity refers to 'a person's private sense of, and subjective experience of, their own [gender](#). All societies have a set of gender categories that can serve as the basis of the formation of a [social identity](#) in relation to other members of society.' Therefore, every society has its own notions of how a woman should be. Meek, submissive, resourceful, caring, gentle, are some of the adjectives used to describe a woman. She is seldom looked at as someone on her own merit, asked to bask instead in the epithets of being someone's daughter, wife or mother.

Women have tried to break out of this mould, most of them branded as deviant. Novelists have portrayed women who try to redefine what female identity means. For instance, Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949) single-handedly manages her parents' farm and her husband Frank's business. These activities seem unladylike to the public in the novel, but Scarlett herself refuses to remain helpless and decides to help herself.

Indian novelists too have tried to portray the identity of women in their works. Shashi Deshpande's (b. 1938) Sahitya Academy winning novel *That Long Silence* (1988) is also about female identity in general, and Indian female identity in particular. Symbols, motifs and norms, that are specific to the Indian situation, shape a woman's identity. All these will be explored in the paper.

Shashi Deshpande was born in Dharwad, Karnataka. The daughter of dramatist Sriranga, she was educated in Bangalore and Mumbai. She has degrees in Economics and Law. She also did a journalism course and worked for the magazine 'Onlooker'. Her first collection of short stories was published in 1978 and her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in 1980. *That Long Silence*, published in 1989, won the Sahitya Academy Award in 1990. Deshpande was also awarded the Padma Sri award in 2009. Shashi Deshpande has written four children's books and nine novels including *If I Die Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *The Binding Vine* and *A Matter of Time*.

That Long Silence is about Jaya, a woman married for 17 years, who loses her sense of orientation when her husband Mohan is caught in a bribery scam. Mohan and Jaya hide in a house that is a legacy of Jaya's brother. The frustration in both of them leads to a quarrel resulting in Mohan walking out of the house. She learns that her son Rahul has also run away, when on a trip with family friends, only to find out he is with his uncle. All this is too much for Jaya, who falls seriously ill. Her convalescent period offers to Jaya, a chance to rediscover herself, to acknowledge the factors that influenced her, the nature of her life and a way of coming to terms with her memories. She realizes that she has burrowed herself into a shell, a shell that was recommended by tradition, the shell of being a passive being. She realizes the importance of her father, her brother, her husband Mohan, her children Rahul and Rati, Kamat, and even the mad woman Kusum, in her life.

The difficulty of expressing oneself and finding one's identity is expressed by Jaya when she finds it difficult to put down her experiences. She also repudiates all stereotypes.

I'm not writing of all those innocent young girls I've written about till now; girls who ultimately mated themselves with the right men, nor am I writing a story of a callous, insensitive husband and a sensitive, suffering wife. I'm writing of us. Of Mohan and me And I know this- I can never be the heroine of your own story. Self-revelation is a cruel process. The real picture, the real 'you' never emerges. Looking for it is as bewildering as trying to know how you really look. (1)

One of the main themes of *That Long Silence* is the unmasking of the subtle ways in which society, especially Indian society, gives a subordinate status to Woman. So, her identity is always that of a social inferior. For instance, the narrator Jaya feels a kinship between herself and women in Indian mythology such as Seetha and Draupadi. It is taken for granted that the wives would follow their husbands to exile.

I remember now that he [Mohan] had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in

his plans. So had I. Sita following her husband into exile, Savitri dogging death to reclaim her husband, Draupadi stoically sharing her husband's travails...(11)

Jaya also identifies herself with another mythical character, Gandhari. (61) She does not look at Gandhari as an ideal Indian wife who does not seek to see what her husband cannot. She instead thinks the act of blindfolding indicates Gandhari's unwillingness to discern Dhritarashtra's blind love for his sons.

Identity can also be looked at in a collective sense, while dealing with Indian women, as their problems are shared. *That Long Silence* is a conscious attempt to showcase the common problems of woman, and Indian women in particular. Therefore, Jaya is ruminating on not just her individual problems, but that of the collective Indian woman. The boundaries of gender are rigid due to the insecurity of the men, who think that doing household chores would reduce their masculinity in some unexplained way. Mohan is shocked when Jaya suggests that he cook in her initial months of pregnancy, when she feels nauseous. (81)

The woman has another identity too: that of bolstering the ego and identity of the man. Mohan, who hails from a poor family, wants to prove himself as a self-made man by marrying an 'English-speaking wife' who would be 'well-cultured and educated'. (pg 90) Jaya fits into the pattern that Mohan had woven. Mohan, who suffers from a colonial hangover, had long before identified the three sophisticated women speaking English with success. So, the fact that Jaya has a degree and can read English novels appeals to him. However, Jaya's education is only to give Mohan a sense of importance, and not for any other purpose. Jaya wants an identity that is not restricted to being a housewife. She is interested in creative writing and wants to be a writer. But this writing too is supposed to be limited. Mohan is miffed to learn that Jay wrote a realistic story about a couple. The fact that the story won a prize does not lessen Mohan's anxiety at being identified as the protagonists of the story. Mohan's identity is so fragile that he identifies himself with the protagonist in the story and feels angry. And to save 'the only career' (pg 144) she had, Jaya stops writing fiction, although she tries publishing stories under a false name.

What she finally ends up writing is a 'middle column', 'Seetha', in a newspaper called *Woman's World*. The name of the column is significant,

denoting the woman who followed her husband to exile and submitted herself to a test of fidelity, without as much as a word of protest. This is the 'ideal Indian wife'. The cocooned Indian woman would reassert her identity by reading the column, which speaks of trivialities and hollow things. She would feel that she need not think of the broad world, but can be content reading harmless stuff. Jaya has a double identity; one, as the docile housewife and Seeta and two, the secret writer of short stories. Jaya becomes a completely different person in the middle column, speaking of trivialities and hollow things. As Jaya is a representative of women, the author seems to suggest that most women lead a double life; doing what their spouses expect of them, along with fulfilling their dreams.

Jaya has to give in to other whims of Mohan, her husband. He wants her to cut her beautiful hair, to look like one of his officers' wives, and Jaya does that. He wants her to look just like the others, with no individuality. Jaya does not have a choice regarding how she looks.

One's identity is linked closely with the name one is given. 'Jaya' indicates the fun-loving, impulsive girl that the character was before marriage. The literal meaning is 'victory'. To her father, Jaya represents the hope that India would gain independence, and victory against the Britishers. Jaya's father tells her that she would be always victorious, just like her name. Jaya's identity is formed by her name and she agrees with her father that she is destined for greater things such as studying abroad. Kamat, Jaya's close friend tells her,

"Your name is like your face".

And I had asked him, "How?"

"Its small and sharp and clear, like your face." (14)

After marriage, Jaya is given the name 'Suhasini', (14) which literally means 'one with a pleasant laugh'. Although Jaya does not accept this name officially, its implications plague her. She is supposed to be smiling, with a pleasant façade, with all her troubles. She is not supposed to be angry. After Mohan and Jaya have their first quarrel and Mohan is disgusted with Jaya's anger, she makes sure she never shows her anger ever again. She is also told by her elders to seem happy in front of the husband.

This issue is also dealt with in novels such as Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. In the novel, Gogol can neither identify himself with his Indian parents nor

with his American friends because of his name which is a Russian surname. Even after changing his name to 'Nikhil', the name 'Gogol' haunts him and he cannot be a normal part of society.

The identity of a person also depends on the choices made. An independent choice is indicative of an independent spirit, and vice-versa. Jaya does not choose Mohan with an independent mind. Jaya only has a romantic image of her partner. She marries Mohan out of spite against her mother. There is no passionate love, only a mute acceptance and a routine. Jaya does not question her husband's rise in his official circle. She does not question him closely when he says he is in trouble, but blindly follows him.

Vanitamami, Jaya's aunt tells her, "A husband is like a sheltering tree." (32) Jaya treats this statement with disdain at the time, but acts accordingly later. She believes that her identity is only that of Mohan's wife. She thinks that her husband is her only support and marriage is her 'only career' (144). She behaves to please Mohan, not thinking about her own interests. She cuts her hair short to look like the wife of Mohan's boss. Jaya adopts ways to impress Mohan. She cannot think of being unfaithful to him; even a stirring that she experiences in Kamat's presence makes her stop visiting him altogether. She does not understand that she can have her own feelings, irrespective of what society says.

The identity of the Indian woman is restricted to waiting, according to the author.

.But for women the waiting game starts early in childhood. *Wait until you get married. Wait until your husband comes. Wait until you go to your in-laws' home. Wait until you have kids.* (30)

But Jaya, by the end of the novel, refuses to wait and decides to speak, breaking the 'long silence'. She represents the women who are cooped in a shell of silence. Jaya realizes that most of the repression is due to the women themselves and resolves to change.

While studying Sanskrit drama, I'd learnt with a sense of outrage that its rigid rules did not permit women characters to speak Sanskrit, they had to use Prakrit- a language that had sounded to my ears like a baby's lisp. The anger I'd felt then comes back to me when I realize

what I've been doing all these years. I have been speaking Prakrit myself. (193)

So the only way for women to regain identity is by taking a proactive role and deciding to carve their own identity. Rather than waiting for someone to give them freedom, women should take it themselves.

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Reinventing the '*Ballad of Mulan*'

A Socio- Political- Cultural Analysis of Cinematic Adaptations of the Folksong of Mulan

Madhurendra Kumar Jha

Abstract

Folksongs, folktales have always been open to reinterpretation according to the existing socio- political- cultural factors. This paper will use cinema as a medium to analyse how a single folksong of China the *Ballad of Mulan* has been revisited time and again since the last century till as recently as 2009 and has been reinterpreted according to the existing socio- political- cultural factors.

The "*Ballad of Mulan*" written during the Northern Wei Dynasty of north China, celebrates the heroic deed of Mulan and makes a hero out of her for joining the army in disguise to substitute her ageing father. While the ballad primarily focuses on the aspect of filial piety, it is the adaptation of the ballad in popular cultures which have interpreted various other aspects of the ballad. This paper will primarily focus on the cinematic adaptations of the popular ballad and shall delve into the various socio-political-cultural nuances that are revealed by these adaptations.

The paper will talk about the four different cinematic adaptations of the ballad, *Mulan Joins the Army* (1939), *Lady General Hua Mulan* (1964), the Disney adaptation *Mulan* (1998) and *Mulan* (2009). While *Mulan Joins the Army* (1939) replaces the theme of filial piety with the theme of nationalism and patriotism, and calls for the men and women of China to unite in their struggle against the Japanese aggression, *Lady General Hua Mulan* (1964) presents Mulan as a daughter who was brought up as a warrior and by joining the army she was only fulfilling her duty towards the nation. The Disney adaptation gives a very interesting angle to the ballad, as it sees the Chinese culture of filial piety through its own prism and mixes the concept of individualism in the ballad, thus making its audience believe that Mulan didn't join the army out of filial piety alone, but she joined it to discover the real her. The latest adaptation of the ballad was the movie *Mulan* (2009), a movie in mandarin

Chinese, which retains the original aspect of filial piety, but in due course questions the utility of war and looks for a solution for longstanding peace.

Introduction

Folksongs, folktales have always been open to reinterpretation according to the existing socio- political- cultural factors. The same is true of the Chinese folksong *Ballad of Mulan*, a folksong which is hugely popular in mainland China, Taiwan, Hongkong and thanks to the Disney's *Mulan* (1998), the story of Mulan has become global. This paper will use cinema as a medium to analyse how *Ballad of Mulan*, a folksong of China has been revisited time and again since the last century till as recently as 2009 and has been reinterpreted according to the existing socio- political- cultural factors. The paper will begin with giving a brief introduction of *Ballad of Mulan* and then will talk in detail about the four cinematic adaptations of the ballad, which are, *Mulan Joins the Army* (1939), *Lady General Hua Mulan* (1964), the Disney adaptation *Mulan* (1998) and *Mulan* (2009). Through a detailed analysis of the four movies, the paper will analyse how owing to the different socio- political- cultural conditions prevalent during the time these four movies were made, the folklore of Mulan has come to signify so many different ideologies. To understand the different cinematic interpretations of Mulan, it is imperative to first understand the *Ballad of Mulan*, the value that it represents and its reception in China.

Ballad of Mulan: The Story of a Filial Daughter

The most popular and accepted opinion about the origin of the *Ballad of Mulan* is that it was a folksong of the Northern Wei dynasty (386- 534 AD), when northern China was ruled by a non- Han nationality known as Xianbei. During this period there were frequent wars between the Northern Wei dynasty and other nomadic tribes from further north. The *Ballad of Mulan* makes one of these wars the background of its story. It is a song that tells the story of a girl called Mulan, who disguised herself as a male soldier and joined the imperial army in place of her father. The extant text of the *Ballad of Mulan* has been taken from the *Melodies of Drum, Horn and Flute from the Liang* in the *Collection of Music Bureau Poetry* compiled by Guo Maoqian in the early Song dynasty. The book attributes the ballad to Wei Yuanfu of the Tang dynasty, but, in essence it is a folksong of the Northern Wei dynasty.

To understand the song in a more comprehensive way, I have used the translation of the ballad by Han H. Frankel from his "*The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady*:"

Interpretations of Chinese Poetry”, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 68-72. The paper will keep falling back on the the translation for a comparative study of the original message of the song and subsequent addition to its theme by various cinematic adaptations of the song and their socio- political- cultural significance.

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek,
Mulan weaves, facing the door.
You don't hear the shuttle's sound,
You only hear Daughter's sighs.
They ask Daughter who's in her heart,
They ask Daughter who's on her mind.
“No one is on Daughter's heart,
No one is on Daughter's mind.
Last night I saw the draft posters,
The Khan is calling many troops,
The army list is in twelve scrolls,
On every scroll there's Father's name.
Father has no grown-up son,
Mulan has no elder brother.
I want to buy a saddle and horse,
And serve in the army in Father's place.”

In the East Market she buys a spirited horse,
In the West Market she buys a saddle,
In the South Market she buys a bridle,
In the North Market she buys a long whip.
At dawn she takes leave of Father and Mother,
In the evening camps on the Yellow River's bank.
She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
She only hears the Yellow River's flowing water cry tsien tsien.
At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,
In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.

She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
She only hears Mount Yen's nomad horses cry tsiu tsiu.
She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war,
She crosses passes and mountains like flying.
Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,
Chilly light shines on iron armor.

Generals die in a hundred battles,
Stout soldiers return after ten years.

On her return she sees the Son of Heaven,
The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.
He gives out promotions in twelve ranks
And prizes of a hundred thousand and more.
The Khan asks her what she desires.
“Mulan has no use for a minister’s post.
I wish to ride a swift mount
To take me back to my home.”

When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming
They go outside the wall to meet her, leaning on each other.
When Elder Sister hears Younger Sister is coming
She fixes her rouge, facing the door.
When Little Brother hears Elder Sister is coming
He whets the knife, quick quick, for pig and sheep.
“I open the door to my east chamber,
I sit on my couch in the west room,
I take off my wartime gown
And put on my old-time clothes.”
Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair,
Hanging up a mirror she dabs on yellow flower powder
She goes out the door and sees her comrades.
Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed.
Traveling together for twelve years
They didn’t know Mulan was a girl.
“The he-hare’s feet go hop and skip,
The she-hare’s eyes are muddled and fuddled.
Two hares running side by side close to the ground,
How can they tell if I am he or she?”

The song begins with Mulan weaving while she is lost in thoughts and is sad about something. When asked if it is her lover that she is thinking about, she answers in negative and tells us that her father has been conscripted by the Khan to join the army. Mulan further says that she is worried that since father has no grown up son, he might have to join the army, which she doesn’t want. Therefore, she declares that she will join the army in his place. The song further tells us that she takes the leave of her parents to join the army and returns to the

imperial kingdom after a war that lasted ten years. The “Son of the Heaven” (refers to the King, in the beginning he is also addressed as Khan) rewards her for her service and offers her the post of minister, which Mulan declines and expresses her desire to return to her family. The poem ends with Mulan’s happy reunion with her family and her comrades in arms finally discovering that their fellow soldier is not male, but female. They are all happily surprised with this revelation.

The song, thus, established Mulan as a filial daughter, who to save her father, risked her own life. The song also established Mulan as a brave soldier, who survived a battle which lasted for ten long years. Her bravery was also recognized by the king. However, Mulan’s primary image through this song is of a filial daughter, because she joined the army to save her father in particular and her family in general. She finally quits the army, declines the post of minister to return to her family. Therefore, it will be safe to say that Mulan was a filial daughter, who also fought bravely, not for her nation, but, for her family.

The cinematic adaptations of this song have reinvented this song according to the socio-political-cultural circumstances they were made in, it is therefore important to understand few things about the socio-political-cultural circumstances of the era to which this song belongs. The song uses two different ways of address for the king, first being “Khan” and the second being the “Son of the Heaven”, the former address “Khan” gives us the information that the poem is referring to the Northern Wei ruler, who belonged to the Xianbei nationality, a nationality which gradually got sinicized. The poem is also silent on the family name of Mulan, thus, we don’t know if Mulan belonged to the Han nationality or she belonged to the Xianbei nationality. The song has also successfully reflected the literary trend of that era. Prior to the Northern and Southern dynasties, the literature of the Wei- Jin period can be described to be influenced by Buddhism and Taoism, however, the call to return to the Confucian view of literature gained strength during the Northern and Southern dynasties. This song is one of the many examples which show that the Northern dynasty literature returned to the long held belief of the Chinese literati that literature should be used to reflect the Confucian Three Cardinal Guides (i.e. ruler guides the subject, father guides the son and husband guides the wife) and the Five Constant Virtues (i.e. benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity). Mulan, through this song, became the perfect role model who held the banner of the Three Cardinal Guides and the Five Constant Virtues high.

A filial daughter, a loyal and brave soldier, a female disguised as male, with no specific detail about her family background or nationality and the lack of details about Mulan's life in the army, left a lot to imagination for the fertile mind. These are precisely the reasons why the folksong *Ballad of Mulan* was converted into a play during the Ming era, into novels during the Qing era and since the last century we have had several adaptations of the popular folksong including cinematic and television adaptations. The adaptation of the folksong in popular culture has not only kept the folksong fresh in the memory of the people, but, has also reinvented the original ballad and added new themes and meanings to the ballad according to the circumstances in which these adaptations were made. The paper will now analyse the four films, made in four different times to analyse how they have reinvented the ballad according to their different socio- political- cultural conditions.

Mulan Joins the Army: A call to fight the enemy

The opening scene of the movie shows Mulan riding a horse and shooting down an eagle in a single shot, and there we had the new Mulan, not a girl who weaves and sobs in her backyard, but, the one who hunts, has self- confidence. As the movie proceeds we are soon informed that she is also trained in martial arts, thus firmly establishing her as a girl who was no less than a boy. The movie then proceeds to the part where her father is drafted to join the army. Mulan, when overhears her parents discuss the issue, offers to join the army since her father was already old and she had no elder son. Mulan takes proper permission from her parents to join the army in disguise though and her parents, though unwilling, allow her to do so, since they are eventually convinced that their daughter is quite capable of defending the nation against the invaders. Upon joining the army Mulan fights bravely for ten years and then finally returns to her home as a decorated army general.

The basic plot of the movie is similar to the *Ballad of Mulan*, but, owing to the time this movie was made in, it gave a whole lot of a new meaning to this folksong about a filial daughter. To understand how the folksong got reinvented through this movie and adopted new meanings, we first need to understand the China of 1939, the year this movie was released. China of 1939 was a nation that was torn between the war of resistance against Japan since 1937 (though the war started in 1931, the full scale invasion by Japan started in 1937) at the external front and internally it was fighting an ideological war at all fronts between the nationalists and the communists. The same was reflected in the art and literature of China too, and cinema was no exception. The year 1934 saw the establishment of the

Xinhua (New China) Film Company by Zhang Shangkun, whose company was inclined towards making socially progressive movies in the national interest. After Shanghai (except the foreign concessions) was occupied by Japan in 1937, most of the filmmakers shifted their base to Chongqing and Hongkong. However, Zhang Shangkun stayed put in Shanghai and made films with other progressive artists like Bu Wangcang and Ouyang Yuqian. With the Japanese occupying almost entire Shanghai, it was not possible to make films that were directly critical of the existing political scenario and hence the era of costume drama started. Xinhua's *Mulan Joins the Army* released in 1939, it was directed by Bu Wangcang and scripted by Ouyang Yuqian, a well known leftist scriptwriter.

The fact that *Mulan Joins the Army* was basically retelling a folksong about a daughter who in order to save her father had joined the army disguised as a boy, made the Japanese reject it as just another Chinese costume drama, but, it was hailed as a movie with patriotic undertones by the Chinese people. The movie, which explores the military feats of Mulan during her ten years of military expeditions (something that the ballad doesn't do), shows Mulan informing her general about the whereabouts of the enemy and asks for their permission to ambush them. However, the general is persuaded by his advisor to avoid such action to maintain peace. The general listens to his advisor and as a result they are attacked by the enemy forces and their city is looted, burnt and civilians are killed. Through this plot, the movie very subtly drew a parallel between the nomads and the Japanese army, as the Japanese army had adopted the "Three Alls" policy during the war of resistance, which was "kill all, loot all, destroy all"⁴⁸. The character of the general in the movie had resemblance with the leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party's head Jiang Jie Shi and the advisor had resemblance with Wang Jingwei, who has been seen by the Chinese people as a traitor who rallied for peaceful negotiations with Japan during the war of resistance.

The movie changed the script of the folksong to deliver a political message, but, it had a social message too. The movie was asking the Chinese people to take part in saving the nation irrespective of their gender, it was asking the women of China, who for ages were confined to the set roles given to them by the feudal ethical codes, to come out in the public domain and help the country fight the aggressors and traitors. Thus, the movie used the folksong of Mulan to arouse nationalistic feelings among the common people of China and in doing so, it elevated the status of Mulan from that of a filial daughter to that of a patriotic

⁴⁸ Fairbank, J. K.; Goldman, M. (2006). [*China: A New History*](#) (2nd ed.). Harvard University Press. p. 320.

woman, who helped her country defeat the aggressors, an image which was just appropriate considering the socio- political condition of China in 1939.

Lady General Hua Mulan: Mulan goes to the Overseas Chinese

The 1964 movie *Lady General Hua Mulan* belongs to the Huangmei opera genre, a genre which was immensely popular in the 50s' and the 60s' among the audience in Hongkong, Taiwan and Southeast Asia. Huangmei opera originated from Anqing in Anhui province of China and are musicals based on Chinese folktales and mythology and the films using the Huangmei style of storytelling, in other words, films which used Huangmei music belonged to the Huangmei opera genre. The Huangmei opera films were musicals based on Chinese folktales, mythology and were divided into three themes, heroism, moralism and love- match (Yeong- Rury Chen, *A Fantasy China:An Investigation of the Huangmei Opera Film Genre throughthe Documentary Film Medium*). The Huangmei opera genre movies were extremely popular among the Chinese diaspora and the reason for this was the nostalgia attached to these films. These films reminded the diaspora of the homeland they had left behind. It is important to mention here that owing to the numerous wars that China fought between 1840 to 1949 resulted into a large number of Chinese people leaving China and settling down in Hongkong, Taiwan, Southeast Asian nations like Singapore, Malaysia, etc. As Ronald Skeldon mentions in his article *Migration from China*, 8.5 to 9 million Chinese people were living outside China and the majority of it was in Southeast Asia. In the same article he also mentions that after the victory of the Communist party in 1949, two to three million Chinese moved to Hongkong and Taiwan. For such Chinese people, the Huangmei opera films became one of the various ways to stay connected to their tradition, music, customs and habits.

It is thus no surprise that about fifty films belonging to this genre were produced between 1950- 1970 and most of them were produced by the Shaw brothers (Yeong- Rury Chen, *A Fantasy China:An Investigation of theHuangmeiOpera Film Genre throughthe Documentary Film Medium*). Some of the famous movies belonging to this genre include *The Heavenly Match* (1955), *Diaochan* (1958) *The Kingdom and the Beauty* (1960), *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (1962), *Love Eterne* (1963) and *The Cowboy and Spinning Maid* (1963). Most of these stories have a set beginning and end, there wasn't much scope of experiment in the movies retelling these stories. However, as already mentioned the *Ballad of Mulan* had a lot of scope for improvisation, and therefore the movie *Lady General Hua Mulan* uses this

opportunity to propagate progressive ideas like gender equality and criticism of arranged marriage system, while adhering to the themes of filial piety and nationalism.

The film just like its predecessor *Mulan Joins the Army* depicts Mulan as a girl who is good at archery and is skilled in martial arts. The movie further tells us that Mulan not only decided to join the army to save her old father from joining it, but also because she has patriotic feelings for her nation. The movie thus keeps in line with the film *Mulan Joins the Army* and establishes Mulan both as a filial daughter and a loyal citizen, thus confirming to the Confucian ethics of filial Piety and loyalty. By doing so, the movie on one hand was adhering to the traditional mindset of the Chinese diaspora which attached a lot of importance to its traditional values and on the other hand it was satisfying their inner desire of giving the enemy a crushing defeat and reclaiming their motherland. In my understanding, the word “enemy” in this case may also include the Communist Party of China, as many Chinese left China after the victory of CCP over the nationalist party.

While this movie had its own appeal to the older generation of the Chinese Diaspora, it also propagated gender equality and love marriage, as if it was trying to widen its appeal to the younger generation of the Diaspora and at the same time asking the Chinese people to get rid of their feudal mindset. The movie is quite vocal in asserting that it is a false notion to believe that females are inferior to males in any aspect. The movie does this by making Mulan defeat her father in a duel disguised as a boy and then revealing her true identity to him and thus convincing him that she is as fit to join the army as any other man in the country. The movie further shows the audience that Mulan defeats many skilled warriors in a skill assessment test organized by the King. The movie is not only praising Mulan for joining the army, it is also praising those women who “while men join the army, weave their uniforms, who give up their harvests for the army, who pray for the safe return of their husbands and sons from the war.”

The movie has a progressive take on the marriage system. Till the 50s and even in the 60s, parents played a major role in choosing the spouse for their children in the Chinese Diaspora⁴⁹. Since, a female child has even a lesser say in such marriages, the message of the movie becomes even more powerful when the audience watches their legend Mulan

⁴⁹ Jones, Gavin W, Kamalini Ramadass. *(Un)tying the Knot: Ideal and Reality in Asian Marriage*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2004. Digital. pp-14

advocating to choose a partner whom you like and admire and not one arranged by parents or a matchmaker.

Thus, it can be seen that the Huangmei opera version of the *Ballad of Mulan* reinvented the folklore to evoke nostalgia among its targeted audience and helps them connect with their roots, at the same time it incorporates progressive ideas like gender equality and love marriage to help the same audience to change their feudal mindset and accept progressive ideas.

Disney's Mulan: Mulan's fight for identity

The 1998 Disney movie *Mulan* is the American version of the Chinese folksong. The fact that it is inspired from the book "The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts" by Maxine Hong Kingston becomes clear when the movie begins with the portrayal of Mulan as a girl who is supposed to bring honour to her family by getting married. The movie calls Mulan Fa Mulan instead of Hua Mulan, the latter being her popular name in mainland China is another instance that proves that the Disney version is inspired by the book of Kingston as in her book she uses the surname "Fa" for Mulan instead of "Hua" owing to her Cantonese origin where "Hua" is pronounced as "Fa". In the book, Hongston leaves her family to be trained as a warrior without informing them, in the movie too Mulan disappears in the night to join the army disguised as a boy, something totally different from the original ballad and the abovementioned Chinese films, in which Mulan leaves with the due permission of her parents.

Disney's Mulan is presented as a Mulan who is different from the rest of the girls, who is a disgrace for the family because she fails to be selected as a bride. She has been shown to have an identity of her own, but is torn between the expectations of the family and the society and her own identity. The same conflict is reflected in Kingston's book. In the first part of "White Tigers", she recalls her mother telling her story of fa Mulan and writes,

"When we Chinese girls listened to the adult talking- story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves (...). She (my mother) said I would grow up a wife, a slave, but she taught me the song of the warrior woman, Fa Mulan. I would have to grow up a warrior woman."

This becomes the basic plot of Disney's Mulan, the conflict between the self and the society. The movie begins with Mulan getting ready to be selected as a bride and memorising the qualities of a good woman and a good wife like being graceful, polite, refined, poised,

delicate, quite and demure, punctual, so that she performs well in her interview with the matchmaker and brings honour to her family by becoming a bride. She however proves to be a disaster during the interview and she is told that she is a disgrace to the Fa family. After the disaster at the interview, Mulan is shown to be looking at her reflection in a pool and asking questions like when will her reflection show who is she inside, why is she pretending to be someone she is not, why is she concealing the real her? All her questions are answered when she decides to join the army in the place of her old father. Disguised as a boy, she sneaks away from her house with her father's armour and sword.

The movie successfully establishes Mulan as a character who didn't join the army for filial piety or nationalism, she does so to prove that she could do things right, so that when she sees the mirror, she sees someone worthwhile. The movie ends with Mulan playing an important role in saving china from the Huns and she is accepted as a hero by everyone including the emperor himself in spite of the fact that her identity is revealed. Thus, Mulan wins honour for herself, for her family as a girl, something that the previous two films don't do, they don't reveal her identity till she doesn't safely get to her home.

Hence, Disney's *Mulan* is not about filial piety or about nationalism, it is about individual identity of a girl in a feudal society, a conflict that Kingston too faced. While *Mulan* was welcomed with open arms in America, the movie met with a lot of criticism in mainland China, where the movie had a rather dismal performance. *Mulan* failed to impress the Chinese because of the cultural differences between the Chinese society and the American society. To begin with the Chinese audience started calling Fa Mulan 'Yang Mulan' or 'Foreign Mulan', they complained that she looked more Korean or Japanese than Chinese, something that I too agree with. Disney *Mulan* was also criticised for not being as filial as her predecessors, she was dubbed as too 'individualistic'. The Chinese *Ballad of Mulan* was rejected by the Chinese as they couldn't identify with the American Mulan and thus they rejected a Mulan that wasn't theirs, a treatment often meted out to Maxime Hong Kingston. She has also been criticised for representing the Chinese culture to be cruel and adhering to stereotypes to conform to the American understanding of the Chinese society and culture.

This brings us to the latest version of *Mulan*, which released in 2009 in mainland China and was an attempt by the Chinese people to reclaim their *Mulan* back.

Mulan: China claims back what belongs to her

Disney's *Mulan* which released in 1998 made *Mulan* global and the world saw *Mulan* through the eyes of Disney or in other words the world saw the American version of Chinese *Mulan*. This didn't go down very well with the people of China and hence to reclaim their ideal back and after Disney announced a sequel to *Mulan*, at least three production houses in China announced three different projects of *Mulan*. The one which finally saw the light of the day was the Starlight international media group based in Beijing and the movie released in 2009. Before I talk about the movie, let me talk about the sentiment with which this movie was made. Guo Shu, executive president of the Starlight international media group had this to say to *People's Daily* when asked about their intention behind making the movie, "We commit ourselves to be a media with a sense of national responsibility. Now that foreigners can produce a popular movie out of the story Hua *Mulan*, why can't we Chinese present its own to the world?"⁵⁰ We can thus clearly see that Disney's *Mulan* evoked cultural nationalism in Chinese who decided to project to the world a *Mulan* with Chinese cultural ethics.

Did the movie accomplish what it intended to do? In my opinion, it did. It tells the story of *Mulan* the way Chinese want to hear it, it gives the character the virtues she is known for in China and also gives the legend a contemporary theme that gels well with the Chinese foreign policy.

To begin with, *Mulan* is shown as a homely girl who joins the army to save her old father. She also admits it many times that she did so because she is a filial daughter. Thus, the movie went back to the original theme of the *Ballad of Mulan*, a filial daughter joining the army to save her old father. The movie then makes her grow as a general who fights bravely in the war, a war that has been imposed on her, but, she hates the war and wants to find a solution for everlasting peace. She does so by convincing the prince to marry the princess of the rouran tribe and form a permanent alliance between the Wei kingdom and the tribes of the north. She thus helps unify China and help China find everlasting peace.

⁵⁰ Liu, Ling Woo. *China Vs. Disney: The Battle of Mulan*, 03.12.2009, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1944598,00.html>

As a researcher, I found this aspect extremely interesting. None of the three movies discussed above talk about forming alliances and find a solution for everlasting peace. It is only this movie which does this. In my understanding, this is in line with the foreign policy of China which declares “China is ready, together with other countries, to enhance coordination and cooperation and exert active efforts to establish a fair and rational new international political and economic order and achieve lasting peace and universal prosperity in the world.”⁵¹

It will be thus safe to say that the movie *Mulan* of 2009 reinvented the folklore of Mulan and presented her to the world as a flag bearer of Chinese values as an obedient daughter, as a filial daughter and as a brave general with a grand vision for her nation.

Conclusion

The analysis of these four movies was an attempt to establish the fact that popular culture reinvents the folklore to suit the existing socio- political- cultural situation and all these four movies prove so. While the original folksong of Mulan makes her a hero for her filial piety, the 1939 movie *Mulan Joins the Army* uses the folksong to propagate nationalist feelings among the Chinese people to fight against the Japanese aggression, the 1964 movie *Lady General Hua Mulan* reinvented the folksong to propagate gender equality, love marriage and the love for the homeland among the overseas Chinese for China. The Disney version of *Mulan* made the struggle for identity as its core theme and antagonised the Chinese people for distorting their idol. The 2009 version finally claimed their idol back and filled her with values cherished by the Chinese people. While these themes have clearly given the folklore of *Mulan* different meanings according to their socio- cultural- political conditions, there are two aspects of the folklore that have remained constant in all the above mentioned cinematic adaptations of the folklore, the first being *Mulan* joining the army disguised as a boy and the second being her refusal to accept the ministerial post and returning to the role of a daughter willing to serve her old parents as an obedient and filial daughter. While it may be too controversial to play with any of these two aspects, as it will mean extreme tampering with the beginning and the end of folklore of *Mulan*, however, I will end my paper with the argument that till *Mulan* has to join the army in disguise and till she refuses to accept the

⁵¹ China's Views on the Current International Situation, 18/08/ 2013,
<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/wjzc/t24882.shtml>

ministerial post offered to her, just so that she can go back to her village to be with her old parents, she will continue to be a filial daughter and will continue to prove that no matter what the most appropriate place of a woman is within the four walls of her parents or her husband.

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Filmography:

Mulan Joins the Army. Dir. Bu Wancang, 1939

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LANGUAGE and PEDAGOGY

A Brief Introduction to Dictionaries

S Mohanraj

The present article looks at the use of dictionaries and the changes that have come upon their use in the last couple of centuries. The paper begins with the birth of a new skill introduced in schools and colleges recently – the Reference Skills. The aim of introducing Reference Skills or Study Skills was to make the learner autonomous. Though there are several sources available for reference, dictionary happens to be the prime among them, particularly for learners of English as second language.

The second part of the paper looks at dictionary and its evolution both in India and the English speaking world. The dictionaries which were initially compiled for purposes of reference soon became learner friendly with several modifications brought into them, principally by A S Hornby. The learner dictionaries become more user friendly with the arrival of computers, there have further changes in our understanding of dictionaries, their structure and use. The present day dictionaries are corpus based and come in digitized form thereby increasing their efficiency.

Keywords: reference skills; dictionaries; learner dictionaries; corpus studies; digital dictionaries.

1. Introduction:

The field of education has not been new to innovative practices. Looking back at the education that was offered a few decades ago, we realize the progress we have made. It is best for some of us the senior citizens to take an objective look at today's education and compare it with what we received as children in school. If the inferences drawn are non-emotional, we certainly find the education system today is more practical and learner friendly. There are various illustrations that can be cited in support of what is said here. In the present write up we will look at one such innovation and elaborate on it with special reference to the use of dictionaries.

Reference skills were never taught a few decades ago. It is only in the last two decades that a conscious effort was made to build a course to teach Reference Skills or Study Skills to learners at the intermediate level. New syllabuses were drafted and teachers were trained to impart these skills to students. To begin with the present paper discusses some of the beliefs that led to the starting of such courses.

In the earlier days it was believed that learning could be induced. This was mainly because of the influence of the Behaviourists who maintained that learning was a process of habit formation, and manifest as 'change in behaviour' (Skinner 1953). It was also believed that this change could be controlled by regulating the process of 'habit formation' (ibid). As a result the learner was considered as a passive recipient of knowledge and the teacher as the donor of knowledge. Today with our understanding of learning, we know both these concepts are no longer valid. A learner today is more an active participant and the teacher is a facilitator or a guide to make the learner aware of the resources of learning. (Littlewood, W 1981) Learners need to depend on themselves and learn on their own – self-learning is more an in-thing than an exception. The question we need to ask is how do we develop this skill among our learners; and how do we train our teachers to handle tasks in classrooms to promote such learning? This discussion forms the last part of the write up with using a dictionary as an illustration.

Reference skills cover aspects such as referring to books, making notes while reading books; taking notes while listening to a teacher's talk in the class, representing information in a variety of ways – graphs, charts, grids, pie diagrams, maps, pictures, holograms etc. It also deals with classifying objects and other materials using a set of codes and retrieving what is required without much difficulty - the cataloguing system in a library, indices in a book, locating a place in a map, listing items of grocery to be bought in a systematic way etc. This paper does not have the scope to discuss each of these points separately in detail. We shall look at the use of dictionaries to begin with.

Dictionaries as a source of reference took a long time to make an impact on the academic world. The use of a dictionary was confined to libraries for many people could not afford to buy them. Their bulk and ignorance on the part of the users of their multiples uses have made dictionaries new entries into

the book publishing industry. In recorded history, the first dictionary to be produced systematically was compiled by Samuel Johnson in the year 1755. [*A Dictionary of the English Language*] This however does not discount the existence of dictionaries before this date. There were word lists available and attempts were made to list the words in a language (specifically English in this context) since the beginning of 16th Century. Johnson's contribution gains significance in that he was able to organize the words systematically thereby standardizing their pronunciation and also providing comprehensive information about each word entered as a headword. Seventy years later, similar efforts were put in on the other side of the Atlantic in America by Noah Webster, and the *An American Dictionary of the English Language* was produced in 1828.

It is worthwhile to take a short deviation here and see if there were any similar efforts in India. During the 4th Century a comprehensive lexicon was produced in India and this is popular even today as *Trikhandu Amara Kosha*. This lexicon is organized in three volumes (*Khandas*) and is in the form of a Thesaurus. All the entries are nouns and the nouns are organized thematically with head words and their synonyms. The three Khandas are *Swargadi Khanda* (deals with gods and heaven), *Bhuvargadi Khanda* (deals with earth, human beings, plants, animals, and environment) and *Samanyadi Khanda* (deals with grammar verbs, adjectives and other such words) In the classical system of learning Sanskrit, memorizing the entire *Amara Kosha* was obligatory. Similarly, there were lexicons for verbs with their declensions (each verb has 9 different forms given in the form of tables) which the learners had to memorize. Such memorization ensured that the learners could use nouns and verbs in their right form when required. Sanskrit being a language of inflections such learning was appropriate. The science of dictionary making or lexicography is a western contribution and this facts needs to be accepted.

A dictionary helps one understand words, know new words, learn their spelling, grammar, pronunciation, meaning, various uses, origin, equivalents and derivatives. There is a system in which the entries are made and this needs to be understood by the learners. If you look at the list of uses to which a dictionary can be put, you will find that the list corresponds to the entries given in a dictionary. In the earliest days starting from Johnson and Webster, the dictionaries included most of the words that the language possessed at the time of its production. There was no attempt to make a conscious selection of

words, and hence dictionaries were large and comprehensive. These dictionaries were called reference dictionaries. The Oxford English Dictionary in fourteen volumes is one such example. One consulted a dictionary for purposes of checking the meaning or the spelling of a word and hence the term 'reference dictionary' suited them well.

2. Birth of learner dictionaries:

Language teaching as a discipline and in particular, teaching English as second and foreign language caught the attention of Applied Linguists all over the world. The major reason for this was the increasing acceptance of English as a language of commerce and an international lingua franca. Experiments were carried out in various places to make a selection of words that are more frequently used and essential for learners of English as the other language. Initial efforts were put in by Thorndyke and Lorge in the year 1905 when they came out with a list of 5000 words chosen and listed in a systematic manner. This was the first word list to enable a learner of English as a foreign language. Subsequently in the year 1935 Ogden and Richards produced a list of words called BASIC English. BASIC is an acronym that stands for British American Scientific International Commercial, and concerted efforts were put in by both the scholars to develop a list of 800 essential words that helped using and understanding English language reasonably well. They also simplified grammar and wrote books using the 800 words chosen. They also suggested an additional 50 words that belong to the specialized fields could be used by specialists such as doctors, engineers, businessmen and others. A few years later based on the principles of frequency counts, Michael West produced a list of 2000 words which is popular as General Service List of English words (GSL for short). This list is in use to date and has helped the emergence of a new genre of dictionaries called Learner Dictionaries. (This list was used by *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* for their defining vocabulary.)

Learner Dictionaries as cited in the previous paragraph are a new genre and were produced by the meticulous work put in by A S Hornby while teaching English as a foreign language in Japan. In the year 1942 he produced the first version of his dictionary which focused on Idiomatic and Syntactic uses of English words and phrases. Subsequently with the help of two other colleagues working with him he revised it in 1948 as *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary*. This has been a great success and is regularly updated with new

entries and its eighth edition available at present. The special features of the first edition were the inclusion of 24 verb patterns and special notes on language use. The verb patterns were withdrawn from the fourth edition and additional features have been introduced since.

Though *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* is the first most famous dictionary, the credit of producing a real monolingual learner dictionary should be given to Michael West who produced the *New Method English Dictionary* in the year 1935. This dictionary receded in its importance with the publication of Hornby's dictionary.

The learner dictionaries are by nature monolingual with the sole objective of encouraging the learner to become more proficient. (Bijoint 2010) As learners we are more comfortable using bilingual dictionaries and that has remained as a habit with us to date. Monolingual dictionaries, and at that learner dictionaries provide meanings of words using simple language which can be easily understood by the learners. To achieve this objective the meanings are provided using what is termed as 'defining vocabulary' which is restricted to 2000 words. Of late, the limit of defining vocabulary is being gradually relaxed to include 3000 to 3500 words. To make a reference to the defining vocabulary easy, a comprehensive list of the words used for explaining the meanings is appended to the dictionaries.

With the success of *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* a few other dictionaries have started appearing in the market. Well known among them are *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978) and *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995).

3. Influence of ICT on Dictionaries:

Today the development in language studies has advanced immensely. Computers have aided the analysis which is based on language corpus. Corpus represents a huge body of language with samples taken from various genres of literature, discourses in science, humanities, industry, journalism, and spoken as well as written discourse. The size of the corpus is measured in terms of the number of tokens (actual words) included in it. The largest freely available corpus today is COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) with more

than 450 million words. The other corpuses are the British National Corpus (BNC), the Michigan Corpus, and the Cambridge Corpus etc.

A corpus helps us understand the frequency of use of words and their various uses besides telling us whether they are more commonly used in either spoken or written discourse. This information has started defining the entry into the dictionaries. Further attempt is made to provide information on the field of use where the word is used either frequently or in a different sense. Such discoveries have led to the identification of a class of words known as *technical words* and *semi-technical words*. This has helped in the production of specialized dictionaries such *Dictionary of Science*, *Dictionary of Linguistics*, and *Dictionary of Academic Words* to name a few.

Whatever be the type of a dictionary we use, the learners need to be systematically trained to use them properly. In order to do this, we need to familiarize them with the mapping of the dictionary or the manner in which the words are distributed. The dictionary is divided into four parts or quarters. The first quarter has words beginning with A to D. The second quarter has the next eight letters or words beginning with letters E to L. The third quarter has another six letters or words beginning with M to R. The last quarter has once again eight letters or words beginning with S to Z. This familiarity is essential to help one locate a word easily.

Once the learners are made familiar with this distribution, they should be made to understand the meaning of *guide words* and *head words*. Learners often tend to confuse one for the other. Guide words appear at the top corners of each page and help us locate the words while head words refer to the actual entries. Each head word in a dictionary is an entry and a dictionary can have 85,000 head words or 125,000 head words or more depending on its size and purpose. All head words are entered strictly in an alphabetic order. Some of the common affixes also form part of the head word entry e.g. -ise; cal; etc. These need to be looked into carefully.

The order in which a head word is treated in a dictionary is uniform. The word is immediately followed by its transcription or the way it ought to be pronounced either in British or American English. To represent this pronunciation, most learner dictionaries use International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols. Certain dictionaries develop their own systems. However, a key to pronunciation is given in all the dictionaries. The pronunciation given also indicates the number of syllables in the word along with appropriate marks on

the stressed syllables. Reading the introduction to the dictionaries greatly assists learners in exploring the dictionaries better.

The next entry in the dictionary gives us information about the grammar of the word. The part of speech is identified and the finer aspects of it are also given. If the word is a noun, we get to know what form of a noun it is, whether it is countable or uncountable, how does it form a plural, how is the plural form pronounced, and whether there are any modifications in the spelling while forming plurals. Similar treatment is given to words belonging to other parts of speech.

The fourth entry in the dictionary is the most important entry and it refers to the meaning. The meaning is given in a variety of forms. The word is explained in simpler language or its more common synonyms are given to help the learner understand the word. When a word has more than one meaning, each meaning is separated from the other using a semi-colon or a number. Besides, this, a head word may have more than one form. e.g. a word may be both a noun and a verb. In such a case, the head word is entered twice.

The fifth entry refers to the illustrations, or use of the word in sentences. In earlier dictionaries examples were chosen from classics. In the contemporary dictionaries, specifically learner dictionaries all illustrations come from everyday use of language taken from the corpus. These examples provide use of the word both in written and spoken forms. Some dictionaries also provide the frequency of use in speech and writing to facilitate a proper use of the word.

The entry in the dictionary ends with information on derivatives, origin (Latin, Greek, French, old English etc.) among others. Sometimes it becomes essential to provide references to certain words which may have their origin in proper nouns. e.g. Freudian.

With the advent of technology the need to produce hard copies of dictionaries has become redundant. They are being digitized and soft copies of dictionaries are available for use both in market and on the net. Soft copies of dictionaries provide the learners with opportunities to interact by introducing exercises for practice. Such features help learners become more proficient in their language use. To discuss the uses of soft copies of dictionaries is beyond the scope of this article.

In nearly three centuries of their existence the dictionaries have made a long journey. What further modifications they are likely to undergo is anyone's guess. One thing that can be said with certainty is their permanent place in the field of learning in general and ELT in particular.

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Cultural Diversity and the Classroom

Ruth Z Hauzel

Abstract

The social and cultural aspects of our history continue to be experienced very profoundly today and generate deep tensions that often manifest in troubling and unexpected ways in classrooms. All of us in one way or another are products of our culture, and many of our behaviours, values, and goals are culturally determined. We live in a country with an abundant array of diversity and diversity is evident in people, the environment and all forms of life. It is important that an understanding of the historical and social contexts be accompanied by an awareness of how individuals interpret this information and position themselves in relation to it. Students, teachers and academicians are constantly interpreting meaning from this history in relation to their sense of self, but the ways that they do so are often the source of classroom tensions. As a result the classroom environment can become highly charged, leaving students feel alienated, anxious, perplexed and defensive. Understanding and valuing cultural diversities is one of the keys to countering inequality in the classroom. This paper will explore the positive and humanistic aspects of culture and how it can be maximised in our education system as language, culture and identity are closely linked.

Introduction

In this paper, the term culturally diverse students will be used to refer to “students who may be distinguished (from the mainstream culture) by ethnicity, social class, and/ or language” (Perez, 1998, p.6). It will also refer to students who are from tribal minority groups and students who are from low-income or poor households. However, it is important to remember that all students are culturally diverse regardless of their ethnicity, race, or socioeconomic status. The definition has been limited along the lines of ethnicity, social class and race because of the historic and current

marginalization these groups are experiencing and how these experiences have resulted in equitable schooling practices. As humans, we can never be culture-free in teaching and evaluating our students, but we can at least attempt to be culture-fair by being sensitive to our own biases and by recognising that cultural difference do not defect deficiencies. Sensitizing teachers and students to cultural phenomena is essential and crucial as it aids both in getting to know different cultures. It will also help in minimising the distorting effect of cultural conditioning (which can result in stereotyping and in prejudice). This knowledge is necessary for understanding and respecting other cultures and their ways of life.

The totality of language learning comprises three integrated components: linguistic, cultural and attitudinal (Wilkes, 1983), of which culture is a unique force which unifies a community as well as separate it from others. When learning a second language, learners cannot completely separate themselves from their cultural context where they rely on the knowledge source constructed from their home society to interpret the meaning of linguistic information of the target language (Hinkel, 1999; Peirce, 1995; Tseng, 2002). Also, every language has a setting in which people who speak it belong to a race or races and "language doesn't exist apart from culture" (Sapir, 1970, p.207). It is important to pay attention to the fact that knowledge of the grammatical system of a language (grammatical competence) is not sufficient for successful attainment of L2 proficiency. It has to be complemented by culture-specific meanings (communicative or rather cultural competence) (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994). Kincheloe and Staley (1985) that highlight the significance of cultural awareness: first, cultural awareness makes students less fearful and prepares them to deal with different people and places. Second, it allows for the possibility of increased tolerance. Third, as students see themselves and their own cultures more objectively, feelings of ethnocentrism and self-righteousness are decreased or avoided. However, the concept of culture and its role in language learning process are not given enough consideration by most teachers and even textbook writers often try to create a mono cultural environment leading to disparity and cultural alienation among students.

Language, Culture and Identity

The relationship between language, culture and identity is an intriguing one as culture is inextricably linked to language. Without language, culture cannot be completely acquired nor can it be effectively expressed and transmitted. Language is a central feature of human identity. When we hear someone speak, we immediately make guesses about gender, education level, age, profession, and place of origin. Beyond this individual matter, a language is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity. (Spolsky, 1999). A language develops according to the particular needs of the people who live in a certain point of time, who share a way of life and culture. It is clear that language is strongly intertwined with culture and identity. A certain richness of communication and connection is lost when a person is unable to speak the language of his or her ancestors. On the other hand, knowing the language of one's ancestors provides a sense of grounding and belonging. Often in a second language classroom, little or no attention is given by the teacher or curriculum (including the Educational system) to the identity of the student.

Although there is not always a one-to-one relationship between one's language and one's cultural identity, language is perhaps the most significant key to identity. Language carries and expresses shared cultural and identity symbols, namely, what pertains to one's roots and cultural heritage, and all the distinctive features and symbolic elements which confer on a group its identity. The close connection between language and identity is due to many reasons: language is a 'taken for granted' aspect of community life, "it is such a widespread and evident feature of community life" (Strevens, 1987). Kramsch (1998:65) believes that

There is a natural connection between the language spoken by members of a social group and that group's identity. By their accent, their vocabulary, their discourse patterns, speakers identify themselves and are identified as members of this or that speech community. From this membership, they draw personal strength and pride, as well as a sense of social importance and historical unity from using the same language as the group they belong to.

Conflict often occurs as an attempt on the part of different ethnic minorities to preserve their linguistic and cultural identity. However, with no importance given to the tribal languages either by the state or by the dominant communities led to stigmatisation and invisibility of less powerful and

marginalised languages, pushing many into the inferior status of dialects (Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Gumidyala 2009). It is a known fact that, the minority language is for its people a token of identity, whereas the 'national' language is viewed as a means of communication. In spite of the significance language, culture and identity plays in a second language classroom, minority languages are considered inadequate, impoverished and underdeveloped even today. The sociocultural perspective sees education as taking place through dialogue, with interactions between students and teachers reflecting the historical development, cultural values and social practices of everyday life experiences which are completely missing in the tribal learning environment.

Language Diversity

Language can be defined as a means of communication that shapes cultural and personal identity and socializes one into a cultural group (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). Language can be nonverbal (e.g., facial expression, gestures) and verbal (e.g., actual speech used in conversations). Language also includes both oral (i.e., listening and speaking) and written (i.e., reading and writing) components. It is impossible to separate language and culture; one cannot exist without the other. Students from diverse language backgrounds such as the tribal community encounter language difficulty everyday in schools. As language and culture are intertwined, language minority students are expected to learn and use a new language which includes a new cultural disposition effectively. There are several factors related to students' first and second languages that shape their second language learning. These factors include the linguistic distance between the two languages, students' level of proficiency in the mother tongue and their knowledge of the second language, the dialect of the mother tongue spoken by the students (i.e., whether it is standard or non-standard), the relative status of the students' language in the community, and societal attitudes towards the students' mother tongue.

The sociocultural conditions of language use and the inequalities between languages propagate a misconception of some languages, including most of the tribal languages as 'substandard' languages which entail inherent disadvantages to the user as they are over shadowed by the dominant languages. This ideology of exclusion and dominance sees diversity negatively. Language situations are really complex in the tribal regions with a variety of languages being spoken even within a small geographical area along with the link or contact languages. Language, especially tribal language as mentioned is

a major feature of ethnic identity. The decline of a tribal language often represents subjugation of that community. In its 2003 position paper, *Education in a Multilingual World*, UNESCO (2003a) supports:

- 1) Mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality on the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers;
- 2) Bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of prompting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.
- 3) Language as an essential component of inter-cultural education to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.

Ramsey (1987) advocates that educators should encourage the use of home language learning while fostering the acquisition of English in order to strengthen ties between school learning programs and families. She urged further and defined multicultural education as a perspective which: “encompasses many dimensions of human difference besides culture, such as race, occupation, socioeconomic status, age, gender, sexual orientation and various physical traits and needs; is relevant to all children, even those who live in homogeneous areas; and extends beyond the boundaries of the country to beliefs and attitudes about people all over the world.”

Diverse Needs of Learners

Students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs and goals. With adolescent language learners, factors such as peer pressure, the influence of media, and the level of home support can strongly affect the desire and ability to learn a second language. A basic educational principle is that new learning should be based on prior experiences and existing skills. Although this principle is known and generally agreed upon by educators, in practice it is often overshadowed by the administrative convenience of the linear curriculum and the single textbook. Homogeneous curricula and materials are enough if all learners are from a single language and cultural background but the diversity in today's classrooms especially in the tribal regions is enormous. Such diversity requires a different conception of curricula and a different approach to materials. Differentiation and individualization are

not a luxury in this context, they are a necessity. The tribal's long isolated life, poverty, ignorance, superstition and exploitation have made them backward in many respects. Recognizing them as weaker sections of the society, the constitution has made ample provision for their upliftment. In the Indian context, the tribals learning of English is ineluctable, as education has been accepted as the main instrument for their upward mobility. Learning English is viewed as a tool for economic betterment and societal change. Learners' goals may determine how they use the language being learned, how native-like their pronunciation will be, how lexically elaborate and grammatically accurate their utterances will be. Learners' goals can vary from wholly integrative; the desire to assimilate and become a full member of the English-speaking world, to primarily instrumental; oriented toward specific goals such as academic or professional success (Gardner, 1989).

As educators working with tribal and minority English language learners one must also consider whether the communities in which the students live, work, and study accept them, support their efforts, and offer them genuine English-learning opportunities. It is observed that tribal student's disengagement from education or ineffective academic outcomes is largely a result of their lack of access to quality education, or of the irrelevance of education to their local socioeconomic situation or cultural values. Tribal learners possess a vast repertoire of knowledge about their environment, family, relationships etc, and their knowledge is built around everyday concepts rooted in their everyday practices. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of human learning also supports this as he describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. However, it is observed that in tribal classrooms, the curriculum is not designed to accord with the present physical or socioeconomic conditions of minority areas. It is also observed that the diverse needs of tribal learners are ignored to a great extent with the absence of relevance of their learning in school to their daily life experiences. This, along with the minimal existence of their own culture in the school syllabus directly contributes to their poor educational performance as they fail to connect with what is taught in the class.

Home-School Mismatch

It is widely accepted that the home environment contributes significantly to student achievement in school. The environment and the

personal characteristics of students play an important role in their academic success. The school personnel, members of the families and communities provide help and support to students for the quality of their academic performance. This social assistance has a crucial role for the accomplishment of performance goals of students at school (Goddard, 2003). Besides the social structure, parents' involvement in their child's education increases the rate of academic success of their child (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Support from home is very important for successful second language learning. In a country like India where social status of a family plays an important role in the education system, children belonging to the minority group are at a disadvantage as most of them are either, first, second or third generation learners. It is found that most tribal parents in the rural sector are either illiterate or have limited educational background where majority of them studied in regional medium schools in the village. Tribal children coming from a background where elders in the family have never gone through formal education have lesser chance to use an elaborate code in diversified circumstances. Students from such backgrounds are also most likely to have less educational support and resources to help them through school. The Maduliar Commission of 1953 rightly points out that,

Many children now seeking education come from homes where there is little of an educational atmosphere. Hence, they got little or no opportunity for supplementing the education given at school.

The language abilities of minority students required for academic success are very different from those operating in everyday conversational context (Cummins, 2009). It requires expansion of vocabulary, grammatical and discourse knowledge far beyond what is required for social communication. For tribal learners, the language barrier comes with a content barrier since the daily life experiences and culture of tribal children are hardly present in textbooks and other curricular materials in the dominant language schools (Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Gumidyala 2009). With this regard Mohanty (2009) states that:

A child's first steps into schools are steps into an alien world - a world she barely understands because, somewhere as she walks into her first classroom, the

ties are snapped. Her resources, languages, means of communication, knowledge of her world and her culture are set aside in a system that proudly calls itself human resource development. On the very first day at school she loses her resources and is left with nothing to be 'developed'. She has been pushed in, to be submersed (and pushed out later), in a system the language of which she barely understands.

To achieve academic success is not an easy task as it involves learning in a dominant and in some cases alien culture and language. Though tribal traditional education was informal in nature, it prepared each individual to attain full humanity as it was oral and oriented towards practical aspects of life. People were taught according to the needs and expectations of the community. Hence, each family and village was solely responsible for the education of its people, in the process it preserves and promotes the intellectual, social and religious heritage of the people in its own traditional way. In our endeavour to succeed, what we tend to forget is, we focus so much on the target language that we tend to neglect the importance of building competence in the mother tongue which could facilitate learning English. This is not peculiar only to the tribal population in India but also to the Indigenous people, the natives, the aboriginals; all ethnic minorities all over the world suffer a similar fate. The education system needs to go through a sea of change to include the needs of the minority learners.

Implications for Classroom

Teachers must realise that their understanding of something is prone to interpretation. The meaning is bound in cultural context. It is important that they are aware of the fact that different cultures learn things in different ways. Textbooks are directly related to policy making and the objectives and goals of education are decided by the state system which, by its very nature, belongs to and is controlled by the dominant classes (Pahru 2010). The uniformity and rigidity which is manifested in the syllabi and curricula, with the absence of cultural sensitivity eventually led to the loss of many minority cultures. It re-enforces the importance of a culturally relevant teaching to cater to the multilingual environment. Also, a culturally relevant curriculum is needed. Curriculum, in its most simple form is understood as the "what" of education.

Even the most standard curriculum decides whose history is worth of study, whose books are worthy of reading. A primary goal of culturally responsive education is to help all students become respectful of the multitudes of cultures. It is important that we provide our students with ample evidence that in spite of physical differences in our looks, we are all the same and human at the core. Most importantly, it is critical that we provide students with a culturally responsive learning environment. There are a wide variety of classroom activities that can help students recognize the value of different types of people and their culture. For instance, providing students with an opportunity to share stories of their home life, such as how they celebrate festivals, provides an opportunity to understand their peer's cultural traditions. Classroom wall spaces can be used to display posters depicting cultural groups in a non-stereotypical fashion. Also, showing students everyday photographs of people of different ethnicities, shapes, sizes and colour gives students the opportunity to see people that look different from themselves and their family. In addition, if students are taught about the positive contributions that people of various ethnicities, genders and appearances have made to a variety of fields, then, they are more likely to respect and value diverse cultural backgrounds as whole. To engage students effectively in the learning process, teachers must know their students and their academic abilities individually, rather than relying on racial or ethnic stereotypes or prior experience with other students of similar backgrounds.

It is important to understand that minority and culturally diverse children are neither culturally inferior nor cognitively less competent than the children of other groups. Instead many of their skills and abilities are highly developed and extremely sophisticated. For the betterment of society as academicians, researchers, administrators, teachers etc, one should always keep in mind the impact that language, culture and identity have on different ethnic groups, the tribals, indigenous and minority groups. Policies for language teaching must encompass and include cultural values and recognize the importance of culture. It is important to consider the cultural meanings of teaching materials used, as it is crucial to academic performance and essential to culturally responsive pedagogy.

Conclusion

As a teacher, one must be culturally aware of the student's live and backgrounds, be sensitive and considerate of the student's culture and inform

students of cultural differences thus promoting understanding. Developing cultural competence is a long process of inner growth and to gain this competence one must continuously engage in a process of self-reflection and it comes with experience and engagements which can sometimes include painful lesson that highlight our limitations and prejudices. To understand and facilitate learning in any area of the curriculum, teachers should not only know what it is that is being acquired, but how it relates to what has already been learned. Even if no immediate pedagogies arise from research, creating a cultural awareness is an important step which teachers and academicians should initiate. It is important to be aware that classroom is not a neat, self-contained mini-society isolated from the outside world but an integral part of the larger society where the reproduction of many forms of domination and resistance based on gender, ethnicity, class, race, religion and language is a daily event. Our education system needs to go through changes to include the needs of all levels including catering to the needs of the culturally diverse students. Our educational goals are not limited to instructional objectives alone, but include the socialization of children to values and expectations as well. Therefore it is crucial to understand both the medium and the content of what we are teaching, and learn to be sensitive to the differences between what we are teaching and what the student brings to the classroom, so that our teaching becomes an aid and not a hindrance to the student's potential.

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Teacher Training and Empowerment of the Tribes

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Abstract

At a time when the Indian state is buoyant with optimism about great strides to make a dent as a power to be internationally honourably reckoned, the skills development programme proposed to reap demographic dividend in due course requires to be appropriately tailored to meet the tribal development goals by ensuring empowerment of the tribes of the country through readjusting teacher training to promptly respond to the emerging challenge at the elementary education level which is the stage to prepare the tribal youth and women to harness the richer destiny that surely awaits them in the near future.

Key words: teacher , training , empowerment, skill, development, society , culture,, Freire

The role of education in effecting transformation in the tribal life universally is a well accepted measure in the context of tribal development. The need of teaching at lower levels using folktales of different tribal communities to bring students an intimate understanding of their surroundings and life, values, customs etc. in this context is also generally recommended to make small school going children remain rooted in their tradition so as not to turn victims of loss of their identity. Besides, a truer understanding of what they have to seek out to participate better in the modern ways of life would mostly be something that they would critically appreciate to cultivate and continue with care and commitment while most readily volunteering to drop from their community life what due to their evaluation of their customs and traditional practices they realise to be either

outmoded or in need of eschewal or revamping. In this framework of a continuous revaluation of life and ways on a basis of critical comparison of what in the past as a society they used to carry mostly as something of their indigenous innovations to respond to circumstances and challenges against what has come to pass because of the exposure to new and improved set of situations and also pressures and promises of modern modes of negotiating with a fast changing world. In India despite the persistent nature of the general backwardness of tribal communities, the extent of change that conscious and continued contribution the union government and state governments have made over the past six and a half decades of planned intervention to uplift the poor and deprived tribal people goes to paint a future of hope and happiness where the nature of expectation from governments and the development administration in place has to be significantly qualitatively different. The role then education will have to play is something to be seriously configured now when the already recorded stories of alienation and confrontation in retaliation to a certain order of responsibly acknowledged underperformance though not deliberate apathy demand greater transparent involvement by the government development agencies and prompter redressal of the genuine grievances of the tribal people. Honest, hard working and simple majorities inhabiting the hilly, forested, inaccessible remote and far-flung corners, the tribal people require that basic amenities of food, drinking water, health and education be available to them such that they find reason to celebrate the free democratic Indian state. When following limited success of successive intervention measures, the Panchayat Raj has come to inspire confidence and hope in the minds of the tribal people across the country, the role of education needs to be very properly delineated so that the boys and girls of the school age get much that in due course would prove to be of use to find them meaningful engagement in community as well as national life and resourceful enough to meet the needs of their family with dignity and interest. The skills development idea in currency at present may well be the guiding

spirit behind finding the tribes the education their children are in dire need now to undergo. In this context it is certainly paying to have an exercise on what should teacher training be like as we are bracing up hard to address the school education needs.

Effective tribal development programmes are in most concrete ways to lead to satisfactory arrival of the tribes on the trajectory of empowerment. Empowerment of the tribes in turn has to be realised through the empowerment of tribal youth and women. This has to be understood that “Empowerment is a continuing process which strengthens the capacity to act successfully in changing circumstances. Some writers distinguish between the empowerment process, which involves a feeling of control and of ability to act successfully, and its outcome, which is the real ability to act effectively (Staples 1990). In empowerment there is a close connection between the process and the outcome, for both the feeling of ability and real ability are parts of a single, positive and self-reinforcing whole. Yet it is possible to gauge the success of empowerment at a given point in time from a number of what may be called process outcomes, such as the existence of community activity, the quality of its decision-making, the degree of its purposiveness, the standard of organization of community activity, and the usefulness of the latter to the community’s interests (see also the four dimensions [Rubin and Rubin 1992], each of which may be seen as a community outcome).”

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Again, it needs to be accepted that “An empowerment approach is in many senses a translation of Paulo Freire’s educational theory into the social domain (Handler, 1990; Parsons et al., 1994; Rose & Black, 1985). According to Freire (1985), the need for change is an inseparable part of social life. The conditions also oppress the ability to change, i.e., they distort the social development of the oppressed people. Hence, the professional has to believe in people’s ability to learn and to change and, at the same time, to recognize that oppressed people are liable to possess a distorted consciousness due to their life

circumstances. The consciousness of a person submerged in an oppressive reality may become distorted to the point of actual reconciliation with the oppression itself. Dialogue is the core of the empowering change process. It is part of the ideology, and also of the principles of action and the methods of intervention. Dialogue is the true speech, with mutual trust, that takes place between the practitioner and the people she is helping. In the course of the dialogue, both the practitioners and their clients change. Its important components are trust and mutuality, each side relating to the other with attentiveness and equal worth. Without understanding, cooperation and trust, there can be no mutuality and no real dialogue. The human condition is complex, fluid, and constantly changing. The individual does not live for or by himself. He is part of a context and is defined by his situation. Since the right solution for relations between weak people and the public services they depend on is not known, the creation of partial communities which will respond to selected aspects of life is the answer (Handler, 1990). ” (

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Teaching is a major professional role of empowering professionals (Rose & Black, 1985). (

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professionals and teachers for empowerment goals assumes importance because the kind of role the teachers would have to undertake in the assignment to effect empowerment of tribes through a goal-specific and time-bound approach can be successfully discharged if minute details of purposes, targets, methods, monitoring, outcome-mapping etc. behind the empowerment project could be explained to them mostly as activists in the field whose clientele's levels are demanding sheerly due to geo-physical isolation, circumstantial handicaps on way to making development fruits reach them and implementation and monitoring mechanisms failing to account for bridging the attention gap in time and funding and a variety other related problems. Expediting the process to plug the existing loop-holes and ensuring

effective and speedy remedial measures thus require a dedicated task force comprising of school teachers at the elementary education level because the goal of youth and women empowerment in the tribes is poised better to be reaped by striking at the formative phase when individual personality as interdependent on and consciously imbibing the community ideals and heritage is well in its shaping.

The recent big ticket promise to tackle the all-round development goals of the tribal people under the union government's schemes need to be kept in mind as we take up the teacher training and the issues it faces. The Elementary Education, the Right to Education Bill, the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and related provisions of mid-day meals, school cleanliness, students' toilets, safe drinking water, free uniforms, stipend and hostel etc. as aspects of a variety of active involvement and responsibilities are matters the understanding of which the teachers of tribal area schools have to be given. Though admission, attendance, routine, teaching, testing on the CCE format, progress record maintenance, examination, evaluation, results sharing and feedback to students, parents and community heads are an ongoing calendar-bound series of activities with co-curricular and extra-curricular events organisation, the elementary school teachers would also have to be trained in ways of imparting joyful learning with secure and sound academic mastery to students by fully exploiting local and environmental resources with which students have acquired a natural familiarity and for which there is already an unfeigned fondness. To take forward this innate love of nature, objects in the surroundings, animals and plants would be part of the teacher's conscious responsibility as much as the sense of the students to be belonging to their family and community. A larger involvement in the life and world immediately on getting away from the patently individual surroundings is also what the teachers have to inculcate in the students with the concomitant openness to be part of the gradually expanding circle of one's awareness and interaction.

Participation in full in life as it usually unfolds with spirit, gusto, enthusiasm and vibrancy thus is what teachers have to encourage the students about as they spend time with them over a full academic session. Cultural life as socially inherited with all the rich associations that it implies is one thing teachers in tribal settings have to allow students to take part in both as audience and as active performers. Story telling traditions, songs, dances as after folk practices are among things from the students' social life that teachers have to distil out, list and groom students to be acquainted with or even adept at. When tribal habitats and hamlets in their traditional rural settings are a source to attract tourists who come for research purposes, health and natural and herbal remedy, rural and eco tourism, it remains a part of the teachers' cultivated concern that the children of the locality as custodians of the community treasure of nature, forest, rivers and streams, hills etc. be rendered aware about the great significance that those apparently inanimate world around them is abuzz with. Besides, places of limited historical value, if any, in a tribal area are to be in the reckoning of the students so that they in good time may add value to their intimate village surroundings by acting as guides to tourists to those sites of interest and legendary associations. About further the crafts and cuisine and beverages – both use value and preparation methods- students have to be made interested so that folk arts involving these things do not die away from the new generations.

Yes, **skills development** being some of the above to cover the traditional mores and modes, modern methods as are already in some very good measure in practice need also to be continued. Besides taking deserved pride in the place and the people, in geography and history, students have to be exposed to the modern technology to harness and harvest as farmers, fishermen, planters, cattle raisers to speak of more traditional occupations or to become construction agents, builders, entrepreneurs etc or even higher academics and other administrative and office personnel. The purpose is that education even at the end of the elementary school level must leave children

with certain very dependable livelihood-worthy skills – to make unique critical choice regarding course of action in life involving occupational careers or for setting up family.

In this connection, it appears relevant to follow the youth empowerment goals as after the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007–2015) and The Plan of Action that underpins the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). On the Commonwealth definition, "Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of those actions. Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others."

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_empowerment)

Teachers in their bid to bringing empowerment to tribal students – future years' youth and women - have to consider **Developing Skills**. Teacher training would need to focus on "Planning, organizational, and evaluative skills are generally developed in a group framework. The professional works in the following ways: she facilitates the participation of as many people as possible in the groups, identifies the community's resources, guides the people on how to pool these resources, makes sure activities are planned in advance, outlines a clear process of decision making that emphasizes problem definition, assessment and choice of alternatives, allocation of tasks and monitoring of their execution; she refuses to perform tasks that the people themselves have refused to perform, promotes group norms that reward the completion of tasks, devotes structured time at each meeting and after each activity to evaluation, and promotes a non-hierarchical organizational [structure in which decisions are made in a consensus and](#) tasks are divided as equally as possible (Serrano-Garcia, 1984)".

(http://www.mpow.org/elisheva_sadan_empowerment_chapter2.pdf)

Teacher training has to arrange things in ways so that “They can: teach people how to create connections between the community and other communities with similar needs; help people understand the reasons for local problems; help with research which harnesses local knowledge to planning a better future for the locale; provide specialized help in domains important to community life, such as marketing, economics, pricing and planning of transport (Couto, 1989).”

(http://www.mpow.org/elisheva_sadan_empowerment_chapter2.pdf)

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Humanistic Rationale and Technical Writing: Antagonistic?

KBS Krishna

Abstract

Critics such as R J Rees believe that the study of literature has a humanistic rationale. While looking at the reasons for this belief, the paper seeks to explain “humanism”, and whether it could be taught in a classroom. If indeed humanism can be taught in a classroom, is it only the reading and teaching of literature that can cause this? Or is it possible that humanism can also be taught using technical writing courses? According to critics such as M P Devika it is not possible, as they believe that technical writing is uninspiring and cannot impart value based learning. In contrast to this, the present paper posits that this can happen when there are slight modifications in the course content of technical writing courses. Technical writing courses, currently, focus on the mechanics of writing. While students are trained to draft proposals, letters, memos, reports, etc., attention has usually centered upon how to write, rather than why write. In fact, there is, as Caroline Miller points out, an unhealthy insistence on the tone, form, and style of the article should be to the exclusion of other aspects. The paper suggests that a slight change in the course content would encourage students to think of each situation as unique, and adapt their technical writing accordingly. Such revision of existing course content would require students to understand various situations that occur in our day-to-day lives, and empathize with people who are in such situations, and utilize their skills to come up with adequate solutions for the problems/situations. When this happens, technical writing will have a humanistic rationale.

Keywords: Humanism, Technical writing, Literature, Pedagogy, Teaching Material

Introduction

“Is technical writing antagonistic to humanism?” is a question that we need to grapple with, due to the strong belief that exist among scholars and litterateurs that technical writing lacks humanistic rationale.

However, there is a humanistic rationale for technical writing, and teaching technical writing as a course for undergraduate and postgraduate students, too, has a humanistic rationale. This paper attempts to show why this is so. But before looking at the whys and the wherefores of the statement we need to understand why there is a need to figure out whether technical writing courses have a humanistic rationale or not.

The need arises because of the criticism technical writing and the course has faced from critics who support teaching of language through literature. Literature, and teaching of literature, in the words of R. J. Rees “[...] helps us toward a better understanding of ourselves and our fellow human beings.”(15) Cleanth Brooks also points out something similar when he says that:

Literature gives a picture of life—not the picture that is actually (historically) true, but a picture that has its own kind of truth -- a 'truth' that includes important elements that science from its very nature is forced to leave out. The truth of literature takes the form, not of abstract statement, but of a concrete and dramatic presentation, which may allow us to experience imaginatively the 'lived' meanings of a piece of life. (492)

Due to such arguments, critics such as Sujatha Rana and Michael Short have argued for literature being incorporated in language courses. Sujatha Rana in her essay “Teaching Language through Literary Texts in the ESL classroom” (2009) says, “Language and literature are inseparable and their teachings should be complementary to each other.”(74)

Michael Short and Christopher Candlin also opine that, “Literature and language teaching should be linked and made mutually reinforcing.” (91)

While their arguments are justified up to a point, the problem arises when critics compare literature and technical writing courses, and conclude that the latter does not have any humanistic rationale. Some critics have even gone to the extent of suggesting that technical writing courses be done away with completely. Critics such as R. J. Rees and M. P. Devika have compared technical writing and technical writing courses with the study of literature,

and argued for supplementing, if not replacing, technical writing programmes with literature courses.

M. P. Devika argues that the technical writing programme is uninspiring (3) and therefore literature studies have to be incorporated into the engineering syllabus. She says: “There is an urgent need to balance the learning of technical skills in English with the studies in Literature. This will definitely serve the purpose of providing life-long and value-based learning.” (2) While the notion that literature would inspire students to learn the language might be true, her contention that literature is “[...] a privileged form of human activity or discourse because no other activity or discourse brings out, so fully or precisely, the variety, possibility or complexity of human life,” (4) is questionable.

She, moreover, in concluding her argument, questions whether students should be deprived of this understanding of humanity because of technical training. She says: “Should we be depriving students of all this just because they have opted to study for technical training? Should we allow them to become totally mechanical like the gadgets they work with?” (4)

Her statement that language training without literature would make technical students into machines or gadgets, without any understanding of humanity, suggests that she does not believe that technical writing courses have any humanistic rationale. Other critics too have taken a similar stance. Rees, in fact, distinguishes literature studies from technical writing courses on this point. While, as noted earlier, pointing out that literature studies have a humanistic rationale, he says: “[...] in English we use the phrase ‘the Humanities’ to describe studies of this kind and to mark them off from scientific and technical studies.” (15)

It is true that literature does help in giving one a better understanding of other cultures, and thus, of other people. By reading others’ experiences – even if they are fictional, one can learn from their mistakes or get inspired by their deeds. Moreover, as Rees points out, “Through literature he [a person] can use the experience of other people as well, so becoming what Bacon called ‘a full man’- tolerant, understanding and perhaps even wise.” (15)

Yes, all of this is true. However, is the implied argument that a course for technical writing cannot and does not have a similar rationale correct?

Before going into whether technical writing has a humanistic rationale or not, let us first define humanism and technical writing. Humanism, according to the *Enquire Dictionary* (1998), is “a moral philosophical viewpoint that emphasizes the importance of human beings and rates human values above all else.” (235)

Technical writing, meanwhile, is defined as written communications done on the job, especially in fields with specialized vocabularies, such as science, engineering, technology, and the health sciences. This definition as can be clearly seen does not exclude understanding of people, and in no way antagonizes humanism.

So, what could be the reason for such biased arguments against technical writing and technical writing courses?

The reason could be, as Caroline Miller points out in her seminal essay “A Humanistic Rationale for technical Writing” (1979), the insistence on tone in technical writing courses. This insistence along with the emphasis on form and style, the tendency to analyze technical writing in terms of “levels”(4), and lack of clarity in the technical writing courses have probably led to this belief that technical writing does not encourage humanism.

Miller argues that as technical writing has much to do with scientific writing, and scientists are empiricists and thus, are skeptical of rhetoric, technical writing is ‘dry’, and unduly dependent on the skills needed. (4) These skills chiefly comprise clarity of tone and clarity of style.

Her argument is valid, as a perusal of books on technical writing such as M Ashraf Rizvi’s *Effective Technical Communication* (2005), Prajapati Prasad’s *The Functional Aspects of Communication Skills* (2004) and Meenakshi Raman and Sangeeta Sharma’s *Technical Communication: Principles and Practice* (2004) shows that these books concentrate on how to write, rather than what to write. Technical writing courses, nowadays, are chiefly concerned about the language used, and focus on what kind of language should not be used in technical writing. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that these courses concentrate on a list of don’ts such as:

1. Don’t use difficult words;
2. Don’t use long sentences;
3. Don’t use metaphors;

4. Don't use similes;
5. Don't use jargon;
6. Don't use slang;
7. Don't use many adjectives;
8. Don't use adverbs;
9. Don't use too much of the personal pronoun; and
10. Don't use abstract nouns.

Of course, they do have a list, albeit smaller, on what to do such as:

1. Use short paragraphs;
2. Use simple sentences;
3. Use material nouns;
4. Concentrate on highlighting what might interest the reader; and
5. Concentrate on the template, or in other words the accepted format.

However, a close look at the second list shows that even this is a list of don'ts, and can be rephrased as do not deviate from the accepted format and do not use long paragraphs and so on and so forth. All this suggests that technical writing suffers due to undue importance given to form over content. Even when there are guidelines on how the content should be, it is based on, what Miller terms as, "levels", and is too often hampered by the stress on "audience analysis". (4) By this she means that technical writing, these days, tries to second-guess how much a reader would understand and, thus, categorizes readers. Such categorizing inevitably ends up being an exercise in vocabulary (Miller 4).

This is not necessarily the right way to go about it, as we cannot prejudge whether a given reader would be able to understand a word, or appreciate a sentence, without any inkling to his or her predilections. For instance, the statement, "the new scooters sold like hot cakes" would not make much sense to someone who has never seen a cake. However, that does not necessarily mean that no one can understand the term, and thereby conclude that such terms or phrases should not be used at all.

Technical writing courses, however, insist on such blanket bans, and fail to understand and appreciate the difference in various cultures. Due to this, these courses have opened themselves up to the criticism that they do not have a humanistic rationale. Technical writing, too, by extension, has to face the same criticism.

However, this need not be the case. Technical writing, and the course, should shift their focus from form to content, and try to empathize with the reader. This is not as difficult as it is in literature, where the reader can be from any continent and from any century. In other words, in literature the reader is an unknown entity. On the other hand, in technical writing, the reader, be it an employee, colleague, boss, or customer, is comparatively a known entity.

In fact, in this regard, it can be argued that technical writing has more humanistic rationale when compared to literature. This is because humanism changes from time to time, meaning what comprises humanism changes over a period of time. For instance, an African-American was called a Negro or a nigger in the nineteenth century, unquestioningly. However, the term is now branded as derogatory, offensive and against humanism.

Moreover, literature, as it is distinguished from other kinds of writing, according to R. J. Rees, by its “permanence” (3) is susceptible to being lacking in humanism, sometimes. Any literary work – be it a novel, or a poem, or a play – is judged by its permanence, and ability to appeal to generations of readers. Due to this, the meaning of a text in literature may change from time to time. For instance, when William Shakespeare (1564-1616) wrote *The Tempest* (1610-11), Caliban was portrayed as the villain. But later studies, especially Octave Mannoni’s *Prospero and Caliban: the Psychology of Colonialism* (1950), present Caliban as the oppressed colonized at the hands of the colonizer Prospero. Mannoni’s argument is possible due to the difference in living conditions in Elizabethan England and the twentieth century. Shakespeare, when he wrote *The Tempest*, did not have a twentieth century reader or audience in mind. However, being literature, it had appealed across centuries, and is prescribed in schools and colleges over the ages. But, the problem is with the humanistic principle here. Is it humanistic to portray those from other cultures as savages and the colonized as villainous? The twentieth century reader might question such stereotyping made possible due to prejudices. However, such questions would not trouble the Elizabethan audience.

This is not the case with technical writing. Technical writing is concerned with the present age and the problems of the present. However, this very lack of permanence makes technical writing more humanistic than literature – at least in theory, if not in practice. This is because, as noted earlier, in technical writing the reader is a known entity, whereas literature is written for unknown and unborn people of unknown origin.

So, it is not difficult for a writer to know the reader and analyze his or her likes, dislikes, culture, and other prejudices. By this, the writer can mold the content of his writing according to the reader, and make the language appealing to the reader, rather than follow a set pattern or template.

Such technical writing would have a humanistic rationale, and any course which teaches technical writing in this manner, too, would have a humanistic rationale. Such technical writing and course would not need any advocates to justify their cases -- and are the courses that need to be incorporated not only in technical courses but even for students of literature.

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Teaching Spelling: A Need or Wastage of time? A Survey of Teachers' Attitude

Sadananda Meher

Abstract

Unlike content/information based subjects like History, Geography, science etc., teaching of many aspects of language is involved when we talk about teaching of a language. The important components of language are the four basic skills, sub-skills of all skills, grammar and vocabulary. However, as English is still treated as a content subject in many schools in India, teachers hardly deal with important components of teaching English. Especially talking about reading skills, most of the teachers focus on making the learners remember the information in the text, rather than working on comprehension activities. This way, teaching spelling that should be done during reading comprehension activities is hardly seen in schools. Today, most of the teachers opine that teaching spelling is not required as it is generally picked up. It is further observed that memorization is widely practiced to know the spellings. In this context, the present study investigates about the practicing teachers' attitude towards teaching spelling at secondary level in a modern, advanced and smart school.

Introduction

Over the last few years, the following paragraph based on spelling has been widely circulated on the Internet, especially on social media.

“Aoccdrnig to rscheearch by the Lngiusiitc Dptanmeret at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oreldr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoeent tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. This is bcuseae; the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter of a wrod, but the wrod as a wlohe.”

The right presentation of the paragraph above is as follows:

According to research by the Linguistic Department at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters are in a word, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest

can be a total mess and you can still read it without problem. This is because; the human mind does not read every letter of a word but the word as a whole.

Teachers who choose not to teach or do not like teaching vocabulary use the logic explained above. Even the learners who are poor at spelling use the logic to defend their lack of proficiency in spelling. Actually, there was no such research to see the importance of position of letters in a word and thus, it is wrong to say that learning and teaching correct spelling is not necessary. In fact, fluent readers can figure out this highly predictable text, and the path to fluent reading includes a firm foundation in the sounds represented by letters and their spelling. Fluent readers quickly perceive whole words, but the path to fluency is through mastering the connection between letter combinations and the sounds they represent. The fact is that our letters stand for sounds, not ideas.

Spelling is an integral part of language instruction for every student. It helps students master the basics of language, especially students who struggle with reading. Teaching spelling and handwriting enables a struggling student to use different senses and strengths to learn and master the relationship between the sounds and symbols of our language, which is the backbone of reading.

Spelling is vital when a learner is trying to understand the connection between the letters and their sounds. Joshi, Treiman, Carreker and Moats say that Spelling and reading comprehension are highly correlated as both depend on a common factor that is proficiency in a language. As per them, the degree of acquaintance of a learner with the words gets pronounced in their ability to recognize, define, spell it and use it appropriately in speech and writing. They also note, “the most vital goal of the English writing system is to convey meaning, not merely to ensure accurate pronunciation of the written word. If words that sound the same (e.g., rain, rein and reign) were spelled the same way, their meanings would be harder to differentiate.”

It is a myth to say that spellings are confusing and unpredictable and thus, difficult to teach. Of course, spelling is not simple. However, it is perfectly decodable and not limited to people “blessed with word power”. For example, many people struggle with spelling of the words like “committee”, “tobacco” etc. We get confused with the letter to be doubled. Here, if we understand the English syllable types, it becomes easy to understand the pattern of doubling the letter. Often, a consonant is doubled including when

we add suffixes as can be seen in the above-mentioned examples. It is true that some people do not/would not need to know all these rules to be good at spelling. But obviously it is unfortunate on their part to claim that classroom instructions are needless to acquire spelling. Teaching may remain harmfully incomplete if people with these beliefs are in position to teach language. It is always helpful for learners to understand the rules and patterns rather than believing that spelling is generally picked up intuitively.

When we get confused with the way a word is spelled, we resort to say, “it is just how it is spelt and there is no explanation why it is spelt like this”. Here we need to know the patterns of spelling to clear up confusion instead of having to resort to saying so. Thus, it is very clear that teaching spelling at the school level is very important and it should not be neglected at any cost.

We have many people who acknowledge the value of learning to spell, but they think that learning the rules and patterns is an act of hard work and it is unnecessary. They argue that technology makes our life easy by making it unnecessary to learn spelling. They opine that *Spell Checkers* (in Microsoft Word, messaging on smart phones etc.) are wonderful tools to check our small mistakes and that is why we do not need to be perfect at spelling. However, the fact is that these software take care of common typographical errors such as typing “t e h” instead of “the.” In fact, the spell checker is a real timesaver for students with good language skills but it can actually interfere with the learning process. To depend on spell checker, a writer must rely on starting the word correctly and getting most letters right. Even after that, there is a chance that the spell checker would not suggest the required spelling as it does not correct when a misspelling is another legitimate word. Therefore, the student who spells “does” as “dose” will not see the red “correct me” line, and will continue with the misspelling. Spell checkers also cannot be expected to give the right word even when they recognize an incorrect spelling. This way, some horrible mistake can occur when a writer intends to write “definitely” and types “definantly” as Microsoft Word will suggest “defiantly.” The wrong spelling “Surpised” while writing “surprised” will yield correction like “surpassed.” The language learner will be more confused. Having observed and discussed the risks of using spell checkers, we can opine that spell checkers give us reason to teach spelling and precise word usage more thoroughly.

Background of the Study

Spelling has traditionally been considered an important component in the process of teaching and learning of English. Research investigating the development of spelling knowledge has shown that knowledge about the nature and function of spelling begins to develop with the learning of the alphabet and may continue even during and much after the higher education. But we seldom show interest in spelling instruction in higher levels. Even in the middle grades, teachers do not show interest in teaching spelling. Sometimes they say that they do not get time to have special classes for teaching spelling as they always run out of time to cover the syllabus. Some other teachers say that teaching spelling is not that much needed; children pick up spelling automatically. But, this notion is not correct. Children need to learn the spelling and for that, they need to be instructed in proper ways. Otherwise, young children resort to mug-up the spellings with no other option left and this is what is happening with almost all the students in school. Young children's explicit understanding of how the spelling system works is based on the expectation that letters represent sounds in a spatial/temporal left-to-right match-up. Later, knowledge of the interactive relationship between sound and position is acquired, and later still, knowledge of the role that meaning plays. Research evidences support the importance of engaging students in as much reading and writing as possible and in encouraging young children to apply their knowledge of the alphabet and of letter-sound relationships in their writing. However, there is lack of agreement concerning the degree and the nature of attention allocated to spelling instruction apart from ongoing reading and writing activities. Traditionally, the two common perceptions regarding how students may learn to spell have been either *rote memorization* through drilling or acquisition through more natural engagements with reading and writing. In this latter conception, the need for the skill should be apparent to learners, so that they would be motivated to acquire knowledge of conventional spellings.

Biggest noteworthy point while doing a study in spelling is that very little research is available regarding the teaching and acquisition of spelling skills. However, many teachers have developed and tried many good strategies to help their students become better spellers.

In this context, the present study would try to know the attitude of school teachers to teach spelling and make an attempt to know whether they try to give some time for spelling instruction and whether they think up and come up with new strategies to teach spelling. This kind of study is necessary at secondary level, as the spelling is an important component in the process of teaching and learning of English at school level.

Definition

Many teachers and educators define spelling as *“the knowledge and application of the conventional written representation of words in the process of writing, and the instruction necessary to develop this knowledge.”* During the last few years of the twentieth century, however, many psychologists and educators extended this definition to include spelling knowledge, meaning an understanding of how the written form of words corresponds to their spoken counterparts and underlies the ability to [decode](#) words during the process of reading and to encode words during the process of writing. Because of this insight into the role of spelling knowledge in reading as well as in writing, spelling research and instruction generated considerable interest and focus in the field of literacy at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Methods of Data Collection

Sri Chaitanya Techno School of Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh was visited for the data collection. The study involved five teachers of English who teach in classes VI to X. Out of those five teachers, two have B.Ed degree after their post graduation. Another two teachers are M.A in English and one has done B.Sc. They have not attended any training programme in English except the English workshop organized by the school.

The data collection aimed at knowing the attitude of the teachers towards teaching English spellings. Questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection. They were asked sixteen questions in the questionnaire which included questions related to the relevance of teaching spelling, the amount of importance they attach to the teaching of spelling, and the materials (text book and teacher made) used by them to teach spelling. The questionnaire also attempted to know the teachers' views on the interest, motivation and performance of the learners regarding spelling.

In addition to this, collection of data included personal informal interviews and few classroom observations as well. Informal interviews

included questions enquiring the number of English classes they teach in a section, the time they dedicate to teach the prescribed textbook and for doing activities and exercises, the types of questions they set to assess learners' spelling competence and the ways of assessment of spelling. Attempts were made to know whether they have any innovative idea or practices to teach spelling to learners of different levels.

Few classroom observations were done where focus was to see the ways of the teachers to deal with the difficult words. During observation of classes, the teachers taught the prescribed lessons. The study also involved analysis of some evaluated answer sheets of the students. Teachers' style of giving feedback and correction of spellings were observed in those answer sheets.

This way, though the questionnaire was the main tool for the data collection, the procedures like interviews, observations and answer book analysis were also used to collect and triangulate the data.

Findings and discussion

This part includes a brief discussion of the profile of the teachers who were involved in the study. This is followed by the analysis of the responses given by the teachers in the questionnaire. After the presentation of the teachers' responses, a summary of the informal interview is presented. Finally, the presentation of the analysis of the answer books of the students is done.

The present study involved five teachers of Sri Chaitanya Techno School, a school of a private group of schools, Rajahmundry, Hyderabad. Out of five teachers, two have more than ten years of experience and two have five years of experience while another has only one year of experience as teacher of English but he is a trained graduate. There are only two B.Ed degree holders out of five teachers. One of them is female.

Teachers' responses to the questionnaire

Part-A of the questionnaire collected their personal information. Part- B was concerned with teaching English and materials available to them to teach English, and their attitude towards those materials. Part-C included questions related to the ways/methods of teaching English spellings. Most of the questions were objective asking them to respond by choosing an option among given choices. However, some questions demanded justifications, examples and their views. Tabular presentation of the collected data is done for convenience

of presentation and responses to the open-ended questions are analyzed in detail wherever necessary.

1. How far learning of English is necessary to the learners?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not necessary
No. of teachers	5	0	0

All the five teachers say that learning of English is very necessary. They express its importance in communication and in career.

2. How far the teaching of English spelling is required?

	Highly required	To some extent required	Not at all required
No. of teachers	2	1	2

Two teachers say that teaching English spelling is highly required and they justify their responses saying that language-learning remains incomplete without good knowledge of spelling. They add that it should be learnt for the accuracy in writing and pronunciation. While one teacher feels that it is required to some extent, another two of them do not feel any need to teach spelling.

3. Is there enough support from the textbook to teach spelling?

	Yes	no
No. of teachers	1	4

While one teacher recognizes crossword puzzles as resources in textbook to teach spelling, another four teachers say that the textbook does not have any component to teach spelling. However, there are some activities like gap filling for getting a word, and some crossword puzzles after each lesson in the textbook. Therefore, it shows that either they do not recognize those activities to be spelling activities or they do not bother to look at the exercises after dealing with a text.

4. Do you use any materials other than the textbook to teach spelling?

	Yes	No
No. of teachers	4	1

One teacher denied using additional material for teaching spelling. On the other hand, four of them say that they use some. Asked to mention the kind of materials they use, only two of the four hinted about using some pictures, storybooks and jumbled-words game.

Here, noteworthy point is that the learners, during a semi-formal interview, denied the use of any additional storybook other than the prescribed books in the classroom.

5. Given a chance, what kind of modifications would you suggest making the textbook a good aid to teach spelling?

Respond to this question, two teachers expressed their desire to incorporate some activities like *missing letters*, *activities of rhyming words*, *homonyms and synonyms*. It shows that they are aware of some patterns of teaching spellings. On the other hand, two teachers said that difficult words should be underlined in the textbook. One teacher did not respond.

6. What techniques do you use to teach spelling?

Two teachers said that they use techniques like repetition, cross word puzzle and pictures. Another two teachers said that they use only crossword puzzle for teaching spelling. One did not respond. This means, almost all of them depend on the spelling activities given in the textbook. They, during personal interview, expressed the need of repetition or oral drill for the memorization of the spellings to prepare the learners for tests.

7. How far are the techniques used by you useful for teaching spelling? Justify.

	To a great extent	To some extent	Not at all useful
No. of teachers	0	5	0

All the teachers admit that techniques used by them are helpful only to some extent but they do not use any other better activity to help the learners

learn spellings better. It signifies that either they might not have knowledge about better ways of teaching spelling, or they do not bother about that.

8. How do you give feed back to make the learners good at spelling?

It was learnt that three teachers underline the wrong spellings and sometimes even write the correct spellings in their notebook or answer sheet. One teacher conducts spelling test frequently. Another teacher uses a good and effective technique like making notes of their mistakes and rectifying those mistakes by using those words in different context.

If the teachers write the correct spelling directly on the copy of learners, it does not seem to help the learners to rectify those mistakes. Sometimes the learners do not even go back to their notebook to see the correction. A teacher needs to know the types/patterns of mistakes they make and he should get back to the mistakes again to see whether those are corrected.

9. Do you get back to them to check whether they have corrected the particular spelling?

	Yes	No
No. of teachers	5	0

All the teachers said that they get back to the mistakes of the learners to see whether they are corrected. In fact, the teachers should always be careful about this. They should always try to find time to get back to the learners' mistakes.

10. How far are the techniques like 'giving feedback and getting back for a checkout' helpful for the improvement of spelling of learners?

	Very helpful	Helpful to some extent	Not helpful
No. of teachers	3	2	0

Three teachers say that it is very helpful to give feedback and to get back to them. They justify their responses by saying that it gives them repeated practice and thus, helps them to remember the spelling well. Their justification shows that they are always inclined to repetition and rote

learning. So far, they have not talked about any special trick or the spelling rules they use in teaching of spelling.

11. How good are your learners at English spelling as per their level?

	Very good	Good	Poor
No. of teachers	0	5	0

All the five teachers said that their learners are good at spelling in their respective levels. One teacher says that they are able to self-correct. In one way, it shows the positive confidence of teachers towards the learners. At the same time, it can be said they might not be worried about teaching.

12. How far are your learners motivated to learn spelling?

	Highly motivated	Motivated to some extent	Not at all motivated
No. of teachers	1	3	1

When one trained teacher says that learners are highly motivated, to another, the learners are not at all motivated to learn spelling. This difference in opinion might be because of probable difference in approach and the materials they use to teach spelling. Three teachers say that learners are motivated to some extent. It means they may be paying less attention and using the only activities given in the textbook.

13. What are the reasons accountable for the learners' poor spelling in English?

	Lack of Parents' support	Lack of interest	Lack of appropriate activities	Any other
No. of teachers	1	4	4	(2) 1. Wrong pronunciation of teachers 2. Lack of teachers' interest

One teacher feels that lack of parents' support is accountable for the poor spelling of the learners. While rest four teachers indicate at a reason like lack of learners' interest and lack of proper activities as major reasons accountable for the poor spelling of the learners.

Two teachers admit that bad pronunciation of the teachers and lack of interest in teaching spelling result in learners' poor performance in spelling.

Asked about the importance of different important components of English, four teachers rated reading, writing and speaking more important than spelling. However, in true sense, spelling is one of the primary needs while learning English especially when a learner is trying to learn reading and it has been established that good reading skills leads good performance in other skills. Thus, learning spelling is very essential for reading and writing correctly.

Finally, the questionnaire asked the teachers to share some of their special tricks and experiences of teaching spelling. Two teachers did not respond to this question. It means they do not have any special way to teach spelling. One teacher said that he encourages those learners who are good at spelling. This is more of a feedback rather than a trick to teach spelling.

While sharing their experiences of teaching spelling, the teachers gave very interesting opinions. Two teachers said that teaching spelling seems to be easy but it is really a very difficult task and only repetition can help the learners. It means they are not aware of the interesting ways of teaching spelling. One teacher said that discussion of homonyms and synonyms help the students to get the spelling better. This technique is good as it makes the learners realize a pattern in spelling. Another teacher said that games, slide presentation and use of difficult spelling in different contexts help the learners to get the correct spellings of the words.

While responding to the questions in the questionnaire, some teachers contradicted themselves. In response to question no.11, all of them said that their learners are good at their own level at spelling but in question no. 12; four teachers said that their learners are motivated to some extent or not motivated to learn spelling. On the other hand, answering question no.13, they cited many reasons for the poor performance of the learners in spelling.

Responding to the question that asked about their own special ways of teaching spelling, nobody, except one advocating practice of syllable division,

talked about any good way of teaching. They said that the textbook does not provide good scope for teaching spelling but it is clear from their responses that the teachers do not go for any teacher designed activities or exercises.

For a triangulation, some classes were observed and the teachers were interviewed. While observing the class, it was found that the teachers write down the new/difficult words and the meanings on the blackboard and ask some students to spell it.

In the personal and informal interview, they were asked about the way they manage time for the teaching of lessons, doing exercises of the book, and doing some other activities for teaching of grammar and spelling. Then the teachers said that they hardly get time to teach anything other than the prescribed text and doing the exercises following those. They make the students drill the important words those are expected to come as questions in the unit tests, mid-term and final tests. They do these drilling exercises during revision classes before each test.

Suggestions

They want the students to remember those words only in the examination point of view. It would be good for the learners if the teachers give some time for teaching spelling.

The teachers can have some small but innovative ideas like having a word wall and providing spelling lists that meet the weekly/monthly needs. They should focus on the spelling rules and patterns with the help of nice activities to get the learners motivated to learn spelling. They should focus on the [forty-four sounds](#) throughout the year and they should always try to give the learners good strategies to help them spell better.

Some examples of Spelling Formula

Instead of saying that spelling is only to memorise, the teachers need to be informed that spellings follow certain formula and the teaching of those formula would be very helpful for the learners to perform smartly in spellings.

For example, learners can be taught that:

- The nouns that end with a consonant followed by 'y' take 'ies' to be plural
As in:

Berry: Berries

Activity: Activities

- If the noun ends with *-ch*, *-s*, *-sh*, *-x*, or *-z*, we add ‘-es’ to make the plural:

As in:

Church: Churches

Bus: Buses

Fox: Foxes

(Exception to this rule is that we add ‘s’ rather than ‘es’ for plural form in case the ‘ch’ in word-end is pronounced as “k”)

- In the spelling of English words, the letter *q* is always followed by the vowel *u*, *for example:*

Queue, squash, tranquil, frequent, quiz

- To form comparative and superlative degrees,

- if the adjective has one syllable, then we add the letters ‘-er’ or ‘-est’

as in:

Warm: warmer: warmest

tall: taller: tallest

- If the adjective has one syllable and ends in a silent *e*, drop the *e* and add *-er* or *-est*:

As in:

large: larger; largest

Late: later: latest

- Adjectives with two syllables vary.

Some words take *-er/-est*:

As in:

Feeble: feebler: feeblest

Some words take ‘more’ to be comparative and ‘most’ to be superlative:

As in:

Famous: more famous: most famous

- If an adjective has three syllables or more, then the words ‘more’ and ‘most’ are used to make it comparative or superlative:

As in:

Interesting: more interesting: most interesting

- In some cases, we need to change their spelling to form the comparative and superlative:

We generally double the last consonant before adding *-er* or *-est* when a one-syllable adjective ends with a single consonant (e.g. *big, wet, sad, fat*)

As in:

Big: bigger: biggest, sad: sadder: saddest.

This way, there are many significant spelling rules those are essential and helpful to learners. In fact, knowledge about these rules can make the learning interesting.

Another significant point is that the use of dictionary, electronic or print, in the classroom is essential.

Conclusion

The above discussion brings-in a conclusion that spelling cannot be simply understood as a topic confined to being a mere skill in the writing process or an aspect of attention to the conventions of print. Rather, the range and focus of spelling instruction now affects a broader territory than it had in the past.

It is highly required that teachers are knowledgeable about this system/pattern of spelling when we are hopeful about making our learners good at spelling. In this regard, Hughes and Searle, in 1997, observed, “If we teachers do not believe that spelling has logical, negotiable patterns, how can we hope to help children develop that insight?” Therefore, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there should be a renewed emphasis on developing teachers’ knowledge about the nature and structure of spoken and written language and the relationships between the two. Such a foundation may help teachers to develop a conscious attitude in their students and it can instill in them the idea that the nature and occurrence of sound and meaning patterns in spelling are logical, decodable and negotiable rather than confusing, abstract and illogical.

Advances in the assessment of spelling knowledge allow teachers to determine the range of spelling ability among the students in their classroom more effectively and efficiently, and thus to plan instruction accordingly. Such assessment may include spelling inventories and analysis of students’ writing. Selection and organization of words for examination should be based on the

developmental appropriateness of the words, the types of spelling pattern they represent, and their familiarity in reading. In the primary grades, exploration should be directed towards the discovery of commonalities at the alphabetic, within-syllable pattern, and later between-syllable patterns and [morphological](#) level (i.e., simple affixes and base words). In the intermediate grades and beyond, exploration should be directed primarily towards extending between-syllable pattern knowledge, and then toward developing spelling knowledge in the context of more advanced morphological, or meaning, relationships. Older students may thus examine the spelling and meaning relationships and apply this knowledge in newer contexts.

For all these, a teacher needs to develop good attitude and interest towards the teaching of spelling and he should pay interest to learn the spelling patterns first. Then, it can be expected from a learner to be good at spellings in English.

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Teachers' Attitude and Belief on Use of L1 in ESL Classroom

Subhasis Nanda

Abstract

Monolingual approach may not necessarily be the most appropriate, especially when the teacher and the students share the same first language (L1). The present study looks into the possibility of using L1 in L2 classroom and teachers perspective on it. It was conducted with 8 trained secondary school language teachers. Though the primary focus of the study is to know the perception of teachers' on use of L1, sequential study is done by observing some of the classes of the sample teachers to bring in a comparison between their teaching practices and their stated beliefs.

Introduction

This paper focuses on exploring teacher beliefs on use of learners' home language (L1) in L2 classroom to strengthen classroom communication and foster L2 learning in an ESL context given the fact that learners and the teacher share one home language.

“To advocate the judicious use of mother tongue is to swim with the irresistible flow of common sense but against the tide of 30 years of Western, Direct Method orthodoxy” (Deller & Rinvoluturi, 2002, p. 93).

This excerpt represents one of the current voices that advocate re-examining the role of mother tongue, or learners' first language (L1) , in English language (L2) classrooms. It is in line with many other recent voices that call for re-instating L1 in L2 classrooms as for much of the past century, L2 education has been dominated by the idea that second languages are best learned and taught through the language itself (Howatt 1984 cited in Richards and Rodgers 2001). First language has been largely regarded as a negative influence and L2 is seen as the optimal medium for the classroom, with theorists and methodologists advising teachers to avoid or minimize the use of L1. The monolingual approach to L2 teaching can be traced back to the Reform Movement, around the end of the 19th century, and since the 1980s

the English-only approach has become the norm in ESL classrooms in America. Although there has always been opposition and debate (Auerbach 1993), the English-only approach has also had an enormous influence in ESL classrooms worldwide.

Recently, however, researchers have begun to question the validity of the monolingual approach in L2 education from various perspectives. These include political discussions about the implications of L2 dominance in supporting inequities in the social order (Auerbach 1993) and educational debates over the role of L1 in L2 education. For example, Cummins (1980) discusses the transfer of cognitive abilities across languages, with a high level of L1 proficiency promoting the acquisition of L2 cognitive skills. Odlin (1989) examines the cross-linguistic influence in different areas of language learning, such as discourse, semantics, phonology and syntax, and implies both positive and negative transfer from L1 to L2. According to his multi-competence theory, Cook (2002) argues that L2 learners are multi-competent because of the compound state of a mind with two languages. In the process of L2 learning, changes have been made in L2 learners with respect to their L1 knowledge, L2 knowledge and their minds. The multi-competence theory has argued for the positive involvement of the L1 in L2 learning, and the characteristics of L2 learners are said to justify the reconsideration of the role of the L1. Cook (2001) argues for learner rights in the use of L1 in L2 learning because of the characteristics of L2 users who have two languages in their minds. The study outlined here examined the L1 issue in L2 teaching from the perspective of teachers, with a focus on how teachers themselves perceive the monolingual approach in their teaching.

Cook (2001) identifies three main areas where L1 may be used positively in the classroom.

- 1- Teachers can use L1 to convey meaning, for example, checking the meaning of words or sentences or explaining grammar.
- 2- Teachers can use L1 for classroom organization purposes such as organizing tasks, maintaining discipline or communicating with individual students.
- 3- Students can use L1 in their group work or pair work learning activities to provide scaffolding for each other.

Atkinson (1987) lists the ways in which he has exploited L1 use in his own L2 teaching: eliciting language, checking comprehension, giving

instructions and promoting cooperation among learners. Liu et al (2004) group the uses of L1 into a number of categories, such as explaining difficult vocabulary and grammar, giving background information, overcoming communicative difficulties and saving time. Kim and Elder (2005) employ a more complicated system of analysis, categorizing teaching acts into dozens of pedagogic functions, and examine how language choices relate to different teaching functions. However, they have not found a systematic relationship between teachers' language choices and particular functions. They employ a more complicated system of analysis and reveal how language choices relate to different areas of teaching. While most of these studies focus on the functions for which teachers use L1, few have investigated how teachers perceive L1 in their language teaching.

This research originally set out to explore the uses of Home language (L1) in English language (L2) classrooms. In particular, it aimed to address the following questions:

1. What goes on in the English language classrooms? Do teachers actually use Home language (L1) in their teaching?
2. What are the situations that prompt teachers to use Home language (L1) in their teaching English (L2)?
3. What are the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and students toward the use of Home language in their English classrooms? Do attitudes match classroom practice?

Research Design

Research design is often confused with choice of research method – the decision to use qualitative or quantitative methods, for example, or to use face-to-face interviews rather than telephone, or an omnibus survey rather than a tailor-made one. All these decisions are part of the research design process. This study is focused on understanding and finding second language teachers' belief on use of learners' L1 in classroom and the consequent impact of their beliefs on their classroom practice. Three tools are used for collecting data. They are;

- Observation
- Questionnaire
- Interviews

This study is qualitative in nature and employs a sequential design for data collection. The classroom observation is done first. 4 classes are observed initially from the same 4 teachers who are later to be interviewed. Such design is followed as a matter of convenience because these 4 teachers are working in one school. Other 4 teachers work in another school nearby.

Also, one more rational for opting classroom observation ahead of questionnaire and interview is that to bring in authentic data from classroom observation. Had the other two tools been employed first, there is a chance that teachers will be aware of the focus of the study and may start teaching accordingly, to yield positive data for the study. So, to have neutral and authentic data, classroom observation is followed by administration of questionnaires and interviews with the teachers.

Presentation of Data

Data from Classroom Observation

More dependency on L1 than the teachers expressed during interviews was observed. Also, it was seen that learners are more comfortable to answer a question in Odia (L1), than those were asked in English. Even, the teacher has developed a practice of citing the Odia cognates of English words occurring in the textbook or in the discussion (mostly produced by the teacher himself/herself). There are words of which the learners are expected to know the meaning e.g. behavior, pregnant, decision, wise etc. As a deviation from the traditional use (rather, misuse) of L1, most of the teachers are not translating each sentence they read in the textbook to L1 though take an explicit help of L1 while discussing key points. Almost all the teachers keep simplifying the rubrics for each activity in L1. Though it brought clarity straightaway to the learners and saved a lot of time, there was a visible over-dependency on use of L1.

4.2 Data from Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire had two parts. Part 1 included questions from 1 to 4 which elicited biographical data such as name, years of experience in teaching as well as type of educational institute they teach in. In addition, Part 2 included questions from 5 to 12, which dealt with whether or not Odia should be used in the English language classrooms and how much percentage

it should occupy in L2 teaching. Also the questions elicited teachers' attitudes concerning when and why they thought L1 was useful. Finally, questions 9 to 12 attempted to find out teachers' beliefs about best teaching practices to teach L2, and whether L1 prohibition affected their teaching. The last question attempted to find out which teaching techniques were mostly preferred by teachers without recourse to L1.

Interview Data

Interviews provided insight into the beliefs teachers held about the use of the L1. Teachers' answers were analyzed and common categories were identified which these answers referred to. Four common ideas emerged, which are discussed below.

Efficiency

Four of the teachers said that the use of the L1 is efficient - they said that asking difficult questions, explaining abstract words, and explaining grammar rules in the L1 saved time and it helps the learners, who are mostly average in proficiency, to comprehend the vital points or cues in a text and understand all the questions (rubrics) clearly. It not only saves time, but it also keeps the momentum up lowering the anxiety level.

Creating a Good Atmosphere

Two teachers said that the use of the L1 could reduce the tension in class and help learners enjoy the experience of learning a foreign language. These teachers like to have good relationships with their learners by joking with them or asking personal questions in the L1. The L1 is thus used to create a positive classroom environment. It also helps to lower the affective factors like stage-fear, shyness to speak in L2, reluctance to take part in activities, anxiety level etc.

Use the L1 Wisely

Three teachers commented on the dangers associated with over-use of the L1 in teaching English. Firstly, learners might depend mostly on translation if the meaning was offered in the L1 most of the time. Second, giving instructions or providing feedback in the L1 will make learners reliant on the teacher's use of the mother tongue. These teachers were not completely against the use of the L1 but felt it should be used 'wisely' – i.e. when

absolutely necessary such as in order to explain vocabulary when other means have failed.

Avoid the L1

Two teachers felt that more L2 should be used in English lessons and use of L1 should be as minimal as possible. Though these teachers didn't rule out the use of L1 completely, still they feel that learners should be surrounded with the L2 in order to develop proficiency in it. Using the L1 might hinder the process of learning the target language.

Discussion

Teachers' Use of L1

The observations showed varying degrees of L1 use during the English lessons of five teachers. Two teachers used the L1 much more than the others, while two avoided it altogether in the lessons I observed. Lessons taught to Grades 5 and 6 were those where the L1 was used least, which suggests that the level of the learners may have been a factor; Polio & Duff (1994) have pointed out that teachers' use of the L1 may be due to the learners' lack of confidence (which may be associated with limited ability) in the target language. In terms of reasons for using the L1, my observations suggested that these were mainly giving instructions, joking and explaining word meanings.

Teachers' Beliefs about the Use of the L1

Overall, the teachers accepted that using the L1 had some benefits. In particular, all but one of the teachers felt that using the L1 allowed teachers to be more efficient; efficiency was defined in different ways, though the belief that using the L1 saved time was common. Similar views were reported by Kouritzin (2000), who point out that many teachers who share learners' mother tongue may use the L1 because of time constraints. It is worth appreciating looking at the time pressures teachers are under and can see how it can encourage the use of the L1. Teachers are required to finish the curriculum in a predetermined time. Their progress is monitored by the headmaster and inspectors. Such circumstances may force teachers to shift to the L1 to avoid falling behind.

However, saving time should not always be a reason for L1 use. Harbord (1992: 335) believes that the L1 is a source of support in L2 teaching but he states that it should not be seen only as "a device to be used to save time for

more useful activities, nor to make life easier for the teacher of the students". He argues that teachers should resort to L1 strategies after exploiting L2 strategies. Only one teacher rejected the idea of using the L1 in English classes. His view was based on a belief that it was important to create a rich English environment in order to support learning. Ellis (1984) made a similar point about the importance of exposure in L2 learning. This teacher's belief was also based on the observation that learners had limited access to English outside school.

Factors Influencing Teachers' Beliefs

Teaching experience is the factor that emerged as the most common influence on teachers' decisions about using the L1. This finding reflects the view that beliefs are shaped by teachers' experience of being in the classroom (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Reading was the second most influential factor. Two teachers mentioned the influence of their inspectors/head masters. Teacher E, in particular, although he believed in the value of the L1 and did use it frequently when I observed him, said that he avoided it when his inspector observed him because this individual disagreed with L1 use in English lessons. This example illustrates how teachers' beliefs may sometimes not be implemented because of other factors.

Relationship between Beliefs and Practices

The evidence from this study suggests that teachers' beliefs about the use of the L1 and their classroom practices were generally in agreement. Both Teachers A and E said in the interviews that they valued the use of the L1; they were also the teachers who used it most frequently in their lessons. Teacher B was against the use of the L1, and did not use it in his lesson. Teacher D, who said he believed in the facilitating role of the L1, did not use it, but this was for the simple reason that he did not share a mother tongue with the learners.

Limitations

This study also has some limitations. The number of teachers studied and the number of lessons observed for each teacher were both small; there is therefore a danger that at least in some cases teachers' behavior in the observed lessons were not typical. Additionally, the interviews did not generate as much data as I had expected; this may have been due to my own inexperience as an interviewer as well as to teachers' being nervous because

they were being recorded. Consequently, the information I collected about the origins of teachers' beliefs was not detailed.

Conclusion

This research suggests that examining teachers' use of the L1 is more productive when both their behaviours and their beliefs are studied. Behaviours on their own tell us what teachers do; insights into their beliefs help us to understand teachers' practices. Both kinds of understandings are needed. While there has been much research into teachers' behaviours in using the L1, we know relatively little about their beliefs about this aspect of their work.

Further, larger-scale and more detailed research into these issues are therefore to be recommended. For example, a survey, using a questionnaire, could be done of the beliefs of teachers from different regions in Odisha. Case studies of teachers' practices and beliefs would also be interesting. Further studies could also look at the relationship between teachers' practices in using the L1 and learners' proficiency; an analysis of learners' perspectives on L1 use would also further develop our understandings of the issues I have examined here.

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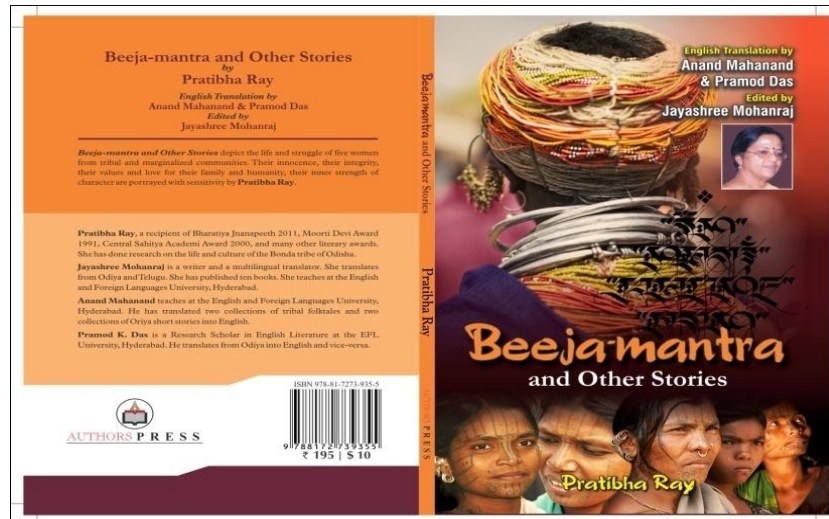


Book Review

BEEJA-MANTRA AND OTHER STORIES (2014): A Review

Reviewed by

Soumya Sangita Sahoo



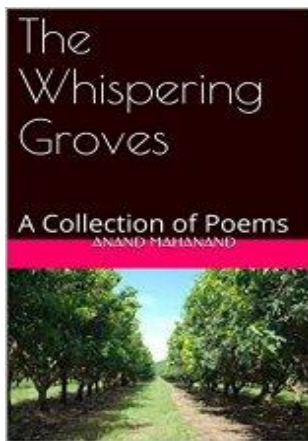
This collection of short stories written by Pratibha Ray elevates women of marginalized communities in Odisha to a position of power. This beautiful rendering of translation by Dr Anand Mahanand and Pramod Kumar Das aptly catches the spirit of the undaunting spirit of the warrior in a woman across the ages. The stories not only depict the courage of women of marginalized sections in the mundane activities but acknowledge their role being superior to their male counterparts which makes this fictional work parallel to the realistic situations in many marginalized sections. This unusual collection has not tried to elevate women by epitomizing their unrealistic virtues rather have depicted the very human being components emanating from flesh and blood. These women with their quiet and determined ways open up a Pandora box of women's strength. Rani in the titular story *Beeja Mantra* whose concern for woman kind overshadows the virtual concepts of sin and legitimacy, undoubtedly emerges from being an untouchable woman to savior of daughter and daughters-in-laws caught in unwanted and distressed pregnancies. Jhumati emerges as the Debaki of the Hindu mythological story in the story *Debaki* who goes one step ahead of the mythological character in the depth of motherhood and selflessness. The stories *Flesh* and *Sanki* both

reveal the dominant and assertive spirit of Bonda women who not only take responsibility of the entire household in their marriage to young Bonda boys but nurture their husband as their children in their transition from boyhood to manhood. The story *One Lakh Rupess* depicts the desperate wait of a mother for her dead son and the betrayal in the compensation amount which make her believe “one lakh rupees is a myth”. This collection with its emphasis on the yet unacknowledged alluring beauty of the tribal woman with their warrior spirit makes a good read for anyone who has a taste for marginalized portrayals of realistic situations.

Book Review 2

Review of Dr Anand Mahanand's *The Whispering Groves*

KBS Krishna



Many consider reading poetry as an indulgence that can only be afforded by well-fed literate classes. The reason for this is obvious as it is fashionable to think of poetry as celebrating aestheticism eschewing social responsibility. Moreover, the few writers who condemn Paterism in favour of crafting literature for a purpose, more often than not, turn out to be petty propagandists or insincere wits paying lip service to a cause they neither know anything about nor care a hoot for.

However, it cannot be denied that there exist a few artists who beautifully marry aestheticism and social responsibility. Dr Anand Mahanand's *The Whispering Groves*, an anthology on the spirit of village life, belongs to this category. In these sixty poems, Mahanand's appreciation of beauty, his command over language, his understanding of the poetic art, and most importantly, his sincere love for the rapidly disappearing Indian countryside shines through.

But what constitutes the Indian countryside? Do images of swaying trees, green grass, flowing rivers, chirping birds, grazing cattle, strong men toiling in fields, buxom women monotonously cooking and washing, rumbustious

children gamboling, and lithe youth frolicking in the hay suffice to understand Indian village life?

Yes, these are the stereotypes that form our ken of rustic life, not just of India, but worldwide. However, the countryside is far more complex than this. It constitutes not just these pleasant images, but also ill-effects of urbanization and deadwood, corruption in insecticides and famines, lack of medical facilities and disease, illiteracy and teenage pregnancy, and so on. An honest representation of village life should thus show both these sides.

Mahanand in his collection does this, and these poems serve as testimony to the authenticity of his experience and emotion. As he states in his "Introduction" to the volume, the lives of these villagers which are inexorably linked with nature and with the ancestors of the land is the focus of the poems, and they become in essence vignettes of village history. Of course, he can hardly do otherwise as he is a product of the beautiful place that he describes, something that he points out in "Descendants of Mahanadi":

You are descendant of the Mahanadi

Born brought up and nourished by her sweet water

Hence Mahanadia, Mahanand and Mahananda you are.

While there are a few poems in the collection such as "Rivers, Mountains and Sweet Breezes" which simply celebrate nature, several poems in the volume bring to life the myriad customs and traditions of the village, such as "First Day of Sowing Crops". The various activities in the process of sowing crops are presented vividly, with expressive metaphors.

The grains sprout strong and green

As they have withstood the Sun

Like the flat dark back of my grandfather

Which has suffered many summers and rains.

Poems such as "Dharti Mata", "Valley of Vibrancy", and "The Village Fair" too give the readers a vivid picture of rural life; but Mahanand never depicts nature for its own sake. Often, in his poems, nature becomes a symbol of the plight of humankind. For instance, "River" makes an effective comparison between the river that is no longer glorious and Sarabau Saonta, the once mighty man of the village, now literally reduced to a ragged state. The poem that gives the collection its title, "The Whispering Groves" beautifully fuses the twin themes of nurture of nature and respect for ancestors. The poem is an

ode to the trees that have been planted by the poet's ancestors and still stand there -- providing not just shade and solace, but also a feeling of home and belonging. This is in contrast to the poet himself who had left his village, and thus, in a sense, is just a guest to the village and the trees. Mahanand, while speaking about this, could not help striking a pensive note as he almost envies the groves for having a stability that he can only dream of.

I wandered looking for greener pastures

But they remain rooted there

As they belong to the soil.

However, it has to be said that migrating from the village helped Mahanand, as it gave him the perspective that is necessary to view, understand, analyse, and critique the situation prevalent in his erstwhile home. It is true that a few poems describe the countryside as viewed through rose tinted glasses of nostalgia, but more often Mahanand dissects the problems of the village with surgeon-like precision.

One problem that he speaks about in particular is the malevolent nature of the city and its effect on the village. "Don't Pollute my Village" is an appeal to the city-dwellers to take the environment hazards of the village seriously. Similarly, "Listen you Birds of the Jungle" is about the ill-effects of industrialization. The concluding lines of the poem, while seemingly wry, hardly mask his bitterness -- as he strongly feels that most hospitals are necessary only because of the ill-effects of industrialization:

The river will carry drain water

The air will be full of fumes.

You will be given a park to dwell

You can come when you are sick

There will be a 108 bed hospital to treat you all.

"Cost of Development" is a similar poem, while "Plucking Kendu Leaves" shows how the *kendu* leaves picked by the villagers come back to haunt them as noxious *beedis*.

The poet also feels strongly about commercialisation of customs. "From Ganda Baja to Sambhalpuri Album" is a comment on how traditional village songs have metamorphosised into music albums. However, Mahanand is equivocal as to what he prefers: the original rustic beats, as he points out that the beauty of the song is lost in translation.

The best poems in the collection, however, are those that voice the poet's anguish at the oppression faced by his people and his message to them, to wake up and fight. Mahanand provides a moving picture of the conditioning of the lower classes, who are ashamed of their origins, through his "Sankoch", which is an apology for the diffidence of the lower classes. "People of No Culture" questions the society that brands the indigenous people as culture-less although the villagers represent the root of all civilization. The poem "Social Hurdles" questions the very existence of social norms that hinder the growth of society.

In the poem "Constrictors", the poet depicts the restrictive hold of the system on socially backward people through the metaphor of a snake gripping a frog. In "If you are Silent", he urges his people to make themselves heard, without which their voices would be appropriated by others. The poet also reminds the oppressive class that oppression can only last till the oppressed decide to fight back. His lines from "If you are Silent" stay with the reader --

Speak now or you will remain
A mute spectator
Of your own drama
Acted by some one
On your script.

The message that Mahanand tries to convey is timely and powerful -- and is not just a clarion call to the slumbering villagers but also a warning to the exploiters. In "Villagers surrounding Elephants", the poet warns the oppressors that the downtrodden will soon rebel and destroy them, much like elephants captured by villagers rampage the village.

Mahanand also displays his ire against the hollow discourse on the problems of the subaltern by upper class urban pseudo-intellectuals. In "Does it really Help?", the poet challenges the intellectuals who speak at length about subaltern problems in conferences, to experience subaltern life in order to understand the problems first-hand.

The poet also criticises the hypocrisy of the educated upper class, who try to curb the efforts of the lower classes to be educated. In "Double Speak", the poet gives the example of a rich man laughing at the efforts of his driver to learn English, while sending his own son to an English-medium school. A similar situation is dealt with in "Forward and Backward", where he expresses his displeasure at the efforts made to stop the indigenous people modernize, in

the name of preserving culture. High-sounding terms are used to prevent the mobility of the lower classes, but it is futile, says the poet:

You call it identity affirmation
But what is the use of it
When it generates hate and aggression.

[...]

We will move ahead with the sway of tide.

In all this, what stands out is Mahanand's belief in individuality. He conveys this sentiment in "Diversity is Life", where he stresses upon the fact that uniformity would only make the world boring. As he says,

If everyone thinks alike
Feels alike and speaks alike
Will life itself be life like?

And this is the variation that makes the reading of the poems such a rewarding experience. The unity in diversity that is on display in this anthology is truly enthralling. Of course, it is true that all the poems do not possess equal lustre, as a few do shine more brilliantly than others, but the underlying theme of the mystery of progress is never ignored.

Mahanand might state otherwise, as he does in "Past, Present and Future": that his intention in writing the poems is to bring a smile on the faces of his villagers, but by terming them as "his villagers" he had owned and shared their problems. Hence, the anthology becomes an elegy for the passing of an age, as every page in the book screams out: "Where are we progressing in the name of progress?"

Where, indeed.

Interview

A Little More than Sex, Scotch and Scholarship: My Reminiscences of the Man Called Khushwant Singh

Amitendu Bhattacharya



Sardar Khushwant Singh who passed away on 20 March 2014 in New Delhi at the age of 99 was undoubtedly an institution. Journalists, authors, socialites, diplomats and politicians flocked to his Sujan Singh Park residence everyday for a *darshan*. Lesser mortals like me who read his joke books on train journeys and his weekly columns in English-language newspapers also hoped to meet him. But meeting him was not so easy, especially for those who were not insiders in the literary and journalistic circles of Delhi.

After the death of his wife, Kaval, Khushwant Singh had become a bit of a recluse. He was also extremely fussy about the kind of people he now met. He only met those he liked and that too for brief spells. Although he previously used to welcome the visits of utter non-entities to his house in the hope of harvesting their life-stories to liven up his literary and journalistic writings, he did not encourage that sort of thing anymore.

And if at all anybody wished to see him, that person had to fix up an appointment with him. For he never met anybody, no matter how important or mighty, without an appointment. A wooden signboard placed next to his doorbell cautioned a casual visitor: “Do Not Ring the Bell Unless You Are Expected.”

Nothing ventured, nothing gained, I said to myself. From the Delhi Telephone Directory I got Khushwant Singh’s number. To my great surprise and excitement, the great man answered the phone himself. I told him I was in Delhi for a few days and would very much like to call on him. Before he could react, I added that I knew it very well that he would prefer to read books or listen to music rather than waste time in meeting people. That trick seemed to work. At least I had some acquaintance with his writings! He thanked me graciously for thinking of him and asked me to check again after a couple of days: he was giving finishing touches to a few of his writing projects. Now that I think about it, I am certain that he had expected me to never call again. But the year was 2003 and I was young, and persistent! I rang him up three days later and he agreed to receive me in his house the next day. Then he asked something which both thrilled and shocked me: “Are you a drinking man?” He was the first person who treated me like an adult and I will be eternally grateful to him for that. As I was lodging with my relatives, I thought it unwise to attend any of Singh’s evening *mehfils*. So I said no. “Well, then come at four.”

When flanked by my cousin I was entering the English-style redbrick block of apartments where Khushwant Singh lived in Lutyen’s Delhi, a security guard in a khaki uniform materialized from nowhere and sharply interrogated us on the purpose of our visit. I then remembered that the Khalistani terrorists had sworn to finish Khushwant Singh off for not supporting their cause. He had spent many years of his life under police protection. I had imagined that that phase was over. When the door opened a petite lady sweetly questioned if we had an appointment. She turned out to be his granddaughter Naina. Her father was the publisher Ravi Dayal. They lived next door and it was obvious that she had dropped in to find out how her grandpa was doing.

Khushwant Singh sat reading the latest issue of the *Outlook* magazine in a sofa-chair by the fireplace. He was wearing a silk awami suit and his legs rested on an upturned wicker stool. A sports skull cap adorned his head. The scene reminded me of the photograph of the exiled poet-emperor Bahadur

Shah Zafar reclining on a chair in Rangoon. Only Khushwant did not look bogged down by grief. In numerous newspapers and magazines I had seen photographs of him in that room and in that particular sitting position. It did not feel I was entering his drawing room for the very first time. Everything that surrounded him—the books, the furniture, the paintings, the window curtains, the memorabilia—was expensive looking and appeared to possess vintage quality.

As he saw us approaching he put aside the magazine on a side table and greeted us effusively. “Hullo... hullo... welcome... welcome... please be seated.” He did not get up from his seat. Not quite knowing what to do in between shaking hands with the icon and sitting down in a chair by his side, my cousin stooped to touch Khushwant Singh’s feet. Singh ignored that gesture of obeisance and asked if we would care for a cup of tea. I glanced sorrowfully at the half-filled bottle of Black Label on the mantelpiece, turned to Singh and said yes. He called out to his domestic help to fix tea for all of us—throughout the meeting that man seemed to lurk at the other end of the room. Presently, Naina reappeared with a huge papaya in her hand. “*Nanaji*, are you going to eat this? Or I’ll take it home.” “What? Papaya? I’m not going to eat it. Take it away!” She departed and we resumed our conversation. He had a smile on his lips when he was being spoken to and when he spoke himself he laughed between the sentences. His laughter was like the roar of a lion that reverberated in the sitting room. I noticed that he had the habit of taking out a pinch of paan masala from a small container every now and then and putting it in his mouth. It was not an academic or a professional interview, so we were all in a relaxed mood and chatted away for about forty minutes.



Khushwant Singh: So you have come from Hyderabad! Do you know Urdu?

Amitendu Bhattacharya: I'd say my comprehension of Urdu is better than that of most of my peers, but I wouldn't say that I *know* the language. I can't read the script.

KS: Even in Pakistan where Urdu is the state language, there are very few connoisseurs of the language left. In India there has been a systematic attempt to bury the language. It's dying a slow death. After Independence Allama Iqbal's "*SareJahan Se Achha*" should have become the national anthem. It's more comprehensible than Tagore's "*Jana Mana Gana*". Urdu is seen as the language of the Muslims. That's not true. Many good poets and writers of Urdu were Hindus and Sikhs: Firaq Gorakhpuri, Premchand, Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Bedi. It's a misconception [that Urdu is the language of Muslims]. Everybody wants to quote Urdu [verses]. But no one wants to learn the language. It's a rich language. "*Ab Urdu kya hai ekko they keetarwaif hai/ Mazaahar ekle tahai mohabbat kaun karta hai.*" [The couplet is by KhurshidAfsarBisrani.]

AB: Your familiarity with Urdu language and literature is remarkable and it reflects in your writings. Some of the great Urdu poets, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Sahir Ludhianvi, were your close friends.

KS: Faiz was two years my senior at college in Lahore. He was a man free of racial or religious prejudices. He was a humanist. Although he championed the

cause of the downtrodden, he lived like an aristocrat. He drank premium brand of Scotch and smoked imported cigarettes. He was a communist who was at ease among the capitalists. He was an atheist, but was God-fearing. But he could easily forgo these luxuries when he was serving sentences in prison. He was in and out of prison many times. Once when I was in Islamabad, he came from Lahore to spend a couple of days with me. In the hotel he took a room opposite mine. He drank from breakfast time throughout the day till the early hours of the morning. Urdu poets are mostly Muslims for whom wine is *haraam*. But they knew and wrote about the joys of drinking. Sahir was also the hardest of drinkers. Apart from Scotch, the only other thing he thirsted for was appreciation. I used to meet him in Bombay in the houses of common friends. He was once invited to a party and the hosts weren't expected to serve drinks to the guests. So he was taking swigs of neat Scotch all the way from Juhu to Malabar Hill. He, along with Shakeel Badayuni and Majrooh Sultanpuri, played a great role in popularizing Urdu poetry through films. Amrita Pritam professed to be passionately in love with Sahir. Their love affair was never consummated. Ahmed Faraz too is a friend of mine. Whenever he comes to India from Pakistan, he spends a couple evenings with me. He drinks a lot. These poets drink a lot! Ghalib was a very heavy drinker too. The biggest name in Urdu literature, Ghalib loved wine, women and gambling. At his wedding he fell in love with a dancing girl. He used to admire fair-complexioned, uninhibited *memsahibs*. He had a hand-to-mouth existence. He was ever short of cash, ever living on credit. He lived beyond his means. He was jailed for three months on charges of gambling. But his wit and humour stayed intact right till the end. I am reviewing a book on Ghalib. It's a thick one! [Picks up the book from the side table and holds it up for us to see: *The Oxford India Ghalib: Life, Letters and Ghazals*, edited by Ralph Russell.]

AB: After having lived the life of a celebrity, how does it feel now when you look back at the past?

KS: When I look back at it, I feel I have wasted my life. Practising Law, the stint with the Foreign Ministry, UNESCO, it was all a waste of time. I was on the hit-list of the Khalistani terrorists. For more than a decade armed security men used to guard me. But all these experiences helped me a great deal to write. I think I could have contributed more by writing.

AB: When did you start writing?

KS: I was in my mid-thirties when I started writing. I was practising as a lawyer in Lahore. My legal practice did not take off. So I had enough time to read and write. Then came Partition. It gave me the opportunity to get out of the legal profession and I resolved to never go back to it. After coming to India I got into the Foreign Service. India was opening embassies all across the world and the government needed personnel to man those embassies. I had a degree in Law from England. So I got into the Foreign Service easily. Without as much as an interview! I was posted in London, Ottawa and Paris. I didn't have much work to do. So I started writing, and fortunately my stories were published in the literary journals [of those countries]. That gave me the idea that perhaps I could choose writing as a career. I had flopped as a lawyer and diplomacy was not my cup of tea. My collection of short stories *The Mark of Vishnu* received good reviews and my novel *Train to Pakistan* won the Grove Press Award for the best work of fiction. I decided to take the plunge.

AB: How do you always manage to write in such a simple and lucid way?

KS: I take great pains to keep my language as simple as possible. I go through the sentences again and again and bring changes if necessary to make my work more reader-friendly. I know the art of communicating with the readers. Writing is all about communicating.

AB: And how are you so witty in your writings?

KS: Because I'm a born joker! My English teacher at school wrote in my report card that I could become a writer. Even at that age I was a good storyteller. I was the family jester. I could narrate events with a punch line which my brothers couldn't. And I write light stuff. It goes down well with the readers. I'm not a scholar. I've never taken myself too seriously.

AB: What does writing mean to you?

KS: Writing becomes a passion. My first novel, *Train to Pakistan*, was born out of my experiences during the Partition. How cruelly people behaved towards one another! So it became an obsession for me, to raise my voice against this kind of inhumanity. Now my mission is to write against religious fundamentalism and belief in the occult. Writing is therapeutic for a troubled soul.

AB: Being a Sikh yourself, you have played a major role in shaping the notion that Sardars are light-headed, funny people.

KS: Yes, I have added my share. India has produced great humourists like Birbal, Tenali Raman, Gopal Bhar. India has a long tradition of humour. Right from the times of Kalidas and other Sanskrit writers. That tradition is still alive. We [the Sikhs] are a hard-working and enterprising community. *Hum log chori kar lenge, daka dal lenge, par kisike samney haath nahin phaeylaenge. Tum kisi bhi Sardarko bheek mangtey huey nahin dekhoge.* It is easier to get a laugh out of other people than being able to laugh at oneself. You need self-confidence to be able to laugh at yourself. It is the Sikhs who manufacture the best of Sardarji jokes. The Parsees are another community that I know of which has the self-confidence to poke fun at itself. Bawaji jokes are more effective when they are related in Parsee Gujarati.

AB: Being a former Member of Parliament and having witnessed from close quarters most of the important political milestones of both pre- and post-Independence Indian history in the past century, what is your opinion about the present political situation in India?

KS: It depresses me. When we got Freedom we said we will prove to the world that we are capable of doing great things. And now we are counted among the top ten nations of the world in illiteracy and corruption. It's something we should be ashamed of. We don't have a leader now whom we can call *rehnuma*. A *rehnuma* in the true sense of the term. After Nehru we haven't got a true *rehnuma*. Nehru was a visionary statesman. The modern India of today is the outcome of his right planning and devoted thinking. At least on paper we can say that women have got equal rights as men. Even Rajen Babu [Dr. Rajendra Prasad] disagreed with Nehru on the issue. [Singh was probably referring to the Hindu Code Bill.] He should be the role model for everybody who aspires to occupy the office of the Prime Minister of India. He did not have racial, religious or caste prejudices. He was an agnostic. He was aware of the negative role that religion played in Indian society. He never wavered in his secular beliefs. He laid a solid foundation for secularism in this country. Constitutional democracy, universal adult franchise, the five-year plans, giving equal rights to women and much else are results of his precise thinking on the India of the future. His successors openly exploited religious sentiments to gain political mileage. I admired Indira Gandhi very much but it was she who brought god men and god women into the arena of politics. Her father would never have allowed such a thing to happen. Coming from Allahabad, the Ganga meant a lot to Nehru. But at the Kumbh Mela he refused to bathe at the Sangam. If ever he visited temples, he went to admire their architecture, not to worship

the deities inside. Mrs. Gandhi undermined democratic institutions, had dictatorial tendencies, overlooked corruption, set up dynastic succession and indulged in favouritism.

AB: How did you develop this interest towards politics?

KS: In my college days in Lahore I was inclined towards left-wing politics.

AB: Is this the reason why you effected the entry of the character named Iqbal Singh in your novel *Train to Pakistan*?

KS: Well, that was me.

AB: If one were to ask my opinion on the character of Iqbal Singh, I'd describe him as an educated hypocrite and a self-preserved.

KS: But my only politics now is against the fundos [religious fundamentalists]. I was at first worried about the rise of fundamentalism in my own community, the Sikhs. I wrote strongly against Bhindranwale and the demand for Khalistan. They sent their men to eliminate me but the assassin was captured before he could get to me. There has been an upsurge of fundamentalism among the Muslims. But I consider Hindu fundamentalism as a far more serious threat to the country because it can destroy Gandhi and Nehru's legacy. The Sikhs and the Muslims cannot do as much damage as the Hindu fundamentalists, because they are less in number. When eighty per cent of the population are Hindus, the situation is far more serious. Especially when you have people who spread poison.

AB: How do you usually spend your time these days?

KS: I'm eighty-eight. I have many health problems. But I read and write from dawn to dusk. I've taught myself how to be disciplined. I get up at four in the morning, have my breakfast at half past six, lunch at noon, two large pegs of Scotch at seven in the evening, and supper at eight. Nine o'clock is bedtime for me. What do you want to do in the future?

AB: I will be completing my Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences in about a year's time. Then I plan to do my Master's in English or any other field which has a deep connection with it.

KS: I see. Have you read the Bible?

AB: Only the portions that were taught to us in school. I went for my primary education to a school run by Protestant missionaries.

KS: Well, no, not for any religious or moral purposes. To have a sound knowledge of English Literature, you must read the Bible. Many sections are so tightly written that there's hardly a word you can change. That's the best example of good literature. The two years I studied at St. Stephen's College, I attended Bible classes which were optional. The Old Testament became my favourite reading. I savoured its sonorous language.

AB: Yes, certainly. I'll read the Bible carefully. It was wonderful to meet you and talk to you. Thank you very much for sparing some time for us.

KS: Do keep in touch and drop in whenever you visit Delhi again.

While bidding adieu he rose and shook our hands. I interpreted his polite invitation to pay him another visit literally. One freezing morning in January 2005 I found myself sitting and chatting with Khushwant Singh again. This time he was sitting in an armchair in his bedroom and I was ushered into his presence. A hot air blower kept the room pleasantly warm. I had taken with me a small bronze replica of the Charminar to gift him. He fiddled with it for a moment before asking me to put it on his marble-topped study table.

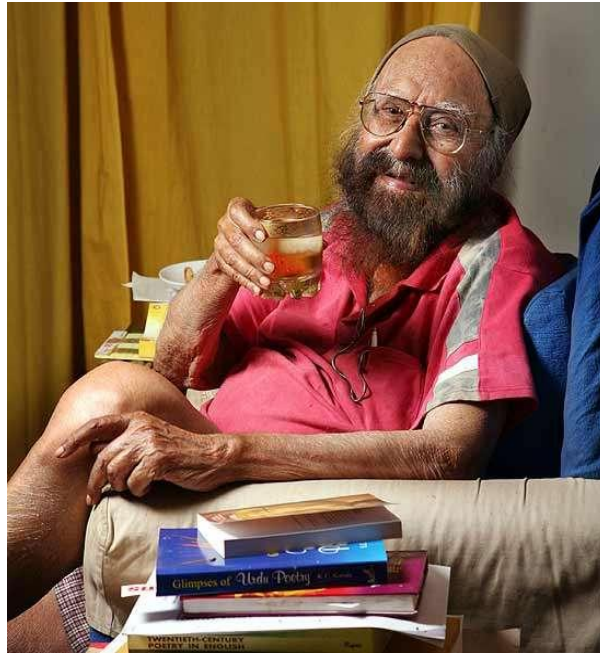
On a ledge above the table I saw some framed portraits. A solo picture of Khushwant Singh in a red turban, a depiction of Guru Nanak (I think!), and a photograph of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh receiving a guard of honour from a contingent of Sikh soldiers. Dr. Singh's photograph as a display piece on his study desk baffled me. Khushwant Singh was elated at the new turn of events in the nation's life. The photograph signified the re-entry of the Sikhs into the Indian political and cultural mainstream, he explained to me. After the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and the bout of Khalistani terrorism, nobody thought that the Sikhs would be able to stand on their feet once again or be accepted by the rest of the Indians. Dr. Singh's elevation as the prime minister of the country marked an end to that phase of apartheid in Indian society. The Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. J.J. Singh, was also a Sikh. So was the Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia. "*Raj karega Khalsa*," he declared chauvinistically. The President of the country, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, was a Muslim. The Vice-President, Bhairon Singh

Shekhawat, was a Hindu. And the Chairperson of the ruling political alliance (UPA), Sonia Gandhi, was a Roman Catholic. The minority communities could heave a sigh of relief that after six long years, the conservative right-wing government at the centre had been voted out of power and replaced by a secular alliance comprising both centrist and leftist political parties. He read that development as a rejection of the fundamentalist agendas of the right wing and an affirmation of the fact that the common masses of India had not forgotten the secular principles of the founding fathers of the nation. He devoted some time to denounce the Gujarat Government for failing to control the post-Godhra riots. He then began to talk about the programmes he tended to watch on the television. To my utter dismay, he said he liked watching channels in which Hindu religious leaders harangued and *maulvis* ranted. He did not name the channels for my benefit. “*Yeh kya dekhte rehtey ho?*” my daughter asked me. “I said to her that this might be stupid but the TV was my only window to the world.” He shared with me the high moment of what he had watched: “The *maulvi* was discoursing on the proper way to say Salam Alaikum. He told the ladies that the words have to be properly enunciated and chastely delivered to the men folk. They shouldn’t address unknown men in a coquettish way.” Next, he fished out a postcard from inside a book. One would have thought that he was using it as a bookmark. He handed it to me. It was addressed to him, and written in Hindi. I could not read Hindi effortlessly but realized that the sender had punctuated it with the choicest of abuses. To make the abuses stand out in the text of the letter, the sender had used ink of different colours. As though that was not enough s/he had underlined the relevant words. Rather than feeling dejected, Singh gloated over it. He boasted that some years ago somebody had written a letter addressed to “Khushwant Singh, Bastard, India” and it actually reached him. To emphasize the fact that the postcard he was now showing me had arrived recently, he remarked: “*Mujhe khat mein roz maa behen ki gaaliyan bhi haasil hoti hai.*” He reluctantly posed for a photograph. “I am not very photogenic.” My forty minutes’ quota was over and it was time to leave.



I met him again in May 2008. He was wearing a t-shirt and Jockey shorts (the exact combination as in Image 5). I was writing an M.Phil. dissertation on his nonfictional works at the University of Hyderabad. He asked me if it was the same as Osmania University. Since I was interested in Indian Poetry in English, it occurred to me that he might know Professor Shiv K. Kumar. Kumar succeeded Nissim Ezekiel as the Poetry Editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India* of which Khushwant Singh was the Editor. I told him that in the mid-1970s Kumar had left Osmania University to join the University of Hyderabad as the founder Head of the Department of English and the first Dean of the School of Humanities. Of course, they hadn't met in a long time but Khushwant Singh instantly recognized him. "I know him. I know him very well. How old is he now?" This, I thought, was a common trait among authors who had crossed their seventieth year to enquire about the age of their famous contemporaries. When I first spoke to the London-based writer Sasthi Brataon the telephone in 2009, he too asked, rather indelicately I thought, but in a perfectly cultivated English accent, about Khushwant Singh: "Is he dead or not? If he's alive, he must be a hundred years old now!"

To return to my third meeting with Khushwant Singh. I had a questionnaire with me and he patiently answered whatever I asked him. As soon as the recording device was turned off he vent his spleen on the fundamentalists of Hyderabad for propagating communal hatred. Unlike many Indians who profess to be secularists but are really uncomfortable when it comes to condemning the inexcusable actions of certain individuals belonging to non-Hindu communities, Khushwant Singh spared nobody if he was convinced that that person was communal.



I then reminded him of his review of the two-volume *Oxford India Anthology of Modern Urdu Literature*, edited by MehrAfshanFarooqi, that was published in the *Outlook* earlier that year. He was undoubtedly harsh on the editor and her selections. He was a lover of Urdu and was disappointed to find many of its literary giants like Zauq, Zafar and Ghalib not figuring in the book. About the omission of Ghalib, he told me: “It’s like talking about English Literature without mentioning Shakespeare.” In the review he also complained that the translations into English did not carry the musical property of the original compositions. He had his reservations about the theory of the origins and the evolution of the Urdu language that was expressed in the book. A stung Farooqi wrote a caustic response to that review in the next issue of the magazine. She charged that Khushwant Singh had completely ignored the fact that it was an anthology of *Modern Urdu Literature* and that some of the authors he referred to as being overlooked in the anthology actually did not fit that sensibility. She was right, I felt. But what I did not like about Farooqi’s rejoinder was the tone and the manner in which she advised Singh to update his knowledge about Urdu language, literature and history by reading this and reading that. What was strange was that her friends and colleagues in American universities, such as, C.M. Naim and Frances W. Pritchett, jumped into the scene to defend Farooqi and deflate Khushwant Singh’s high opinion of himself as a connoisseur of Urdu literature. To my mind, it reflected the lofty disdain of hard-boiled academicians towards those who simply relish literature but oftentimes entertain erroneous notions about it. In any case, Singh did not retaliate. He was above that kind of bickering. If he wasted time

and energy in reacting to the abusive postcards sent to him from all over India and abroad every day or to the pompous arguments advanced by university professors discrediting him every once in a while, he would not be able to write anything. It was a good thing for an author not to be sucked into the cesspool of arguments and counter-arguments.

The last time I saw Khushwant Singh was six months before his death, in August 2013. I was stopping in Delhi for a couple of days on my return journey to Hyderabad from Rajasthan. Rahul Singh, his son, welcomed me into the house. In the sitting room the throne of the king was empty. A stifling silence reigned instead. For me the sitting hall of E-49 Sujan Singh Park was incomplete without the Grand Old Sardar sitting there by the fireplace. His father was indisposed and was in no position to receive visitors, Rahul explained. He sat me down and started talking to me. A bulky middle-aged man scrutinized me with one eye from the head of the corridor that led to the inner rooms. The other eye was engaged in keeping a watch over the bedroom. I understood that he must be the attendant taking care of the incontinent Khushwant Singh. When I gave Rahul a copy of the book I had written on Khushwant Singh (a revised version of my M.Phil. dissertation), he said something that stoked my ego: "You have already written so much more about my father than I have!" He talked about the annual Khushwant Singh Literary Festival organized in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, and noted down my address and mobile number in a diary. I thought he was doing it with the view of inviting me to the festival but I am still waiting to be invited! I asked if his father still stuck to the same old routine. "Now he sleeps most of the time. In the evening he enjoys his single malt, though." Our conversation was interrupted by some sounds emanating from the bedroom inside, sounds that seemed like cries of a trapped lion. The bulky man dashed towards the source of the sound. What I then saw will forever stay in my memory.



Holding Khushwant Singh by his left arm, the bulky man re-emerged into the corridor. He was helping Singh to reach the bathroom. Separated by the narrow corridor, the bathroom was bang opposite the bedroom. From where I was made to sit, everything could be clearly seen. Singh grunted his way to the bathroom and back. It seemed he was loudly blabbering to himself. Age had besieged his brow and dug deep trenches in his face. His eyes were sunken deep—he wasn't wearing his glasses. He was wobbling on his feet. No cap or turban covered his head: the silvery white hair fell to his shoulders, like that of an elderly lady. His beard had not been dyed in a long time either. It was snowy white in colour and brushed his emaciated chest. He had no clothes on him. A white diaper hid the grossest parts of his body. Truly, the youth's proud livery was now a tattered weed of small worth held. He appeared like a shadow of his old self. A woman in white! It was a perfect tear-jerking moment. He did not bother to look in our direction. That means that this time I only *saw* him, and not *met* him. Rahul Singh had averted his eyes from the spectacle. He was too used to it. After a few seconds he looked at me and said: "You know, I come here from Mumbai to help him finish writing his columns. While writing his hand shakes."

After a couple of months my father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. I was depressed for a while but pulled myself together and got on with life. By the end of 2013 I was living in Goa and teaching there. One sticky day in March 2014 I returned home from college for lunch. I got a call on my cell

phone from my father. It was around half past twelve. He first told me that he had just returned from the hospital after his fourth round of chemotherapy. All was well, he assured me. Then he said mournfully, “Son, Khushwant Singh expired half an hour ago. It’s on all the news channels.” I did not have a television in my house. I was stunned in spite of the fact that when I saw Khushwant Singh six months back I realized he would not last very long. It was sad that he missed a century by about four months (his birthday was on August 15). And on 4th August it was my father’s turn to go.

Image 5:

Photographer: T. Narayan (www.outlookindia.com)

Image 6:

Photographer: Dayanita Singh (www.indianquarterly.com)

Lokaratna Khazana



A Treasure Trove of Folktales, Folk Songs and Riddles

Folktale

Story of the Blind Old Man

Once there lived a blind old man called Budhia. He lived with his wife. Budhia's wife worked in others' fields and earned for both of them. But her husband was not able to work. So his wife asked him once, "Dear old man, why don't you do some job and earn." The old man replied, "See dear, I have so much talent but it is not recognized. Even the king of our kingdom who seems to be a wise man is not able to utilize my talent. What can I do?" The king was walking that way. He overheard what the blind old man said and called him near and asked him about his talent. The king enquired, "What is your talent? What can you do for me?" Budhia replied, "Sir, I can help you in the time of need. You could just call me and I will be there to render my service."

Many days passed on. Once a horse- man brought horses to sell to the king. The king was in a dilemma as to which horse he should buy. So he sent for Budhia. Budhia came and said, "Sir even if the owner offers the horse that stands on the right free, don't buy it. If at all you want to buy, buy the horse, that is on the left, it would be good for you." The king said, "Let us make them run and see what you say it right or wrong." Then they made a race between the two horses. As Budhia said the horse on the left side ran faster and reached first when the horse of the right side was slow and tired by the time it reached near the post. So the king bought the horse which ran faster and which was stronger.

After some days, a diamond seller came to sell diamond. The king was not able to distinguish between pure and impure diamond. So he remembered Budhia. He sent for him. When Budhia came he asked him to tell which among the diamonds would be pure. Budhia took each of them to his hands and examined their weight. He said, "Maharaj, the diamond in my left hand is lighter. So it is pure. I suggest you buy it. Whereas the diamond in the right hand is heavy. That means it is impure. Even if he gives you free don't take it." The king was happy and bought the diamond suggested by Budhia and it turned out to be the pure one.

After a few days the king thought “I should know about myself.” He sent for Budia. When Budia came the king asked him, “ Tell me Budhia, whether I am a real king?” Budia said with certain hesitation,” Sir forgive me for saying this, but you are not the actual son of the king. You were the minister’s son, but you have been adopted by the king who was childless.” The king did not believe it. He asked his mother about it. His mother confirmed that he was really adopted by the king and made a king later.

Then the king asked Budhia, “ Tell me how did you know about all these? How did you recognize real and unreal.” Budhia replied:

I could identify the horse by its breath

I could identify diamond by its weight

I could identify the king by faith.

The king was happy and made him his regular counsellor. Then, Budhia and his wife lived happily.

(Retold by : Anand Mahanand)

Riddles

1. Ek sakhi do lahnga pahire

Chah latkave nare,

Chut ke upar chut biraje,

Zako arth lagao pyare.

Translation:

A woman wearing skirts two

And also hangs strings six

On top, sports she a bun

Know her and have fun.

Answer: Tarazu/Pair of scales

2. Chounri choupari si

Gahri andhkuan si;

Karai kunen si

Mithi maalpua si.

Translation:

Tell us what is:

As wide as field

As deep as dark well

As sour as quinine

As sweet as sweetmeats.

Answer: Gyan ki pustaken/Books of wisdom

3. Chand sa mukhda, sab tan jarta

Bina pair ke chalta, saalon saal badhta.

Translation:

It has moon face

Whom all wants to possess

Look, it walks without legs!

And grows night and days.

Answer: Paisa/Coin

4. Baithe me char angul,
Chalet me aath angul !

Translation:

Four inch worm while sitting
Spreads doubled while moving.

Answer: Zonk/Leech

5. Bhouji bhagti jaye,
Bhaiya pakarta jaye.

Translation:

Bhaiya follows to catch
But bhabhi slips away.

Answer: Dhup-chaun/Sun-shadow

**(Collected by Dr Phool Singh Narvaria and Translated from Hindi by
Bhavesh Kumar and Anand Mahanand)**

Folk Song

ODIA TRANSCRIPT

Sei Bate Jaa

Asila bandhu bhala kala basibaku nahin thaa
Pidha khande dianti bandhu badhei ghare baha
Pani dhale dianti bandhu dadara mathia

Torani mande dianti bandhu bapa ghare Maa
Chuda gunde dianti bandhu keuntinikire
Paida punje dianti bandhu bauri khauchhi mada
Tela tikie dianti bandhu mundare nahin bala
Ghasaghasi kari dianti bandhu bahi jauchhi jhala
Batei nei jaanti bandhu godare hoichhi ghaa
Jou batara aila bandhu sei batara jaa.

FRIEND, GO BACK THE WAY YOU HAVE COME

Oh Friend, nice you came but no place to sit,
I would have given you a wooden plank
But today my Carpenter friend is getting married.

Would have given you water friend
A hole in the pitcher .
I would have given you some gruel to drink, my friend
But my mother is away to see her mother.

I would have given some beaten rice friend
But the woman who prepares it is running fever.
Would have given some green coconut water
But the woman who would pluck the coconut is being punished by her master.

Would have given you some oil for massage my friend.

But you have no hair on your head!

I would have massaged your body my friend

But you are sweating throughout.

I would have walked you along my friend, your legs have bruises
So you could go back the way you had come friend there is no other way!

(Collected and translated by Suchismita Barik)

Humo Boili Geeta

(Humo Bouli game is accompanied by song. It is by young girls in the
country side of Western Odisha)

Humo ki humai sare boulire

Humoki humai sare

Jeun dina humo khelima pare

Gudare nepura sare boulire

Gudare nupura sare

Humo and Humai are a pair

Whenever we play humo my dear

Must wear a nupur pair.

Thali dui bunda ghia boulire -2

Bapago mu tumo Paruan jhia-2

Naka jani suna dia.

Two drops of ghee on the plates

Oh dear father, I am your elder daughter

Gift me gold so as to fit my nose.

Karate dhaili methi

Mo dada jaichhhe dalama kati

Ani deba suna kanthi

I carried methi in a little the box on waist

Brother has gone to cut a wooden trunk

Will get me a golden chain.

Gahama peta padichhi

Mo bhai pithier khara padichhi

Bhandari chhata dharichhi.

Bunches of wheat hays have been laid

The sun falls on my brother's back.

The barber's umbrella is there to protect.

Tali bandhe lala koin

To pari sanga paibi kain

Arana ruchai nahin

The lower tank has red lilies

Where shall I find friend of your kind?

I don't feel like at all to eat.

Thalire rakhili pana

Najaipare mui Brundabana

Eithane darashana

I kept a piece of pan on the plate

I will not be able to go Brundabana

Here I will have his darshana.

Nadi arapare janha

Uduthare janha pandara dina

Padiba hasta bandhana

On the other side of the river appears the moon

Be there dear moon a fort-night more

For I am going to be married soon.

(Collected and Translated by Anand Mahanand)

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Call for Papers

We invite unpublished papers and research article for IX volume of *Lokaratna* which will be out in November 2015. The broad theme of the volume is Culture and Pedagogy. Contributions should be in the recent M.L.A format with an abstract of 150 words and about five key words. They should reach the following by 15th July 2015.

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The End

