



CONCEPT OF NATIVISM: THEORETICAL PREMISES

Dr . Sanjay Thorat

Associate Professor, M. V. P. Kanya College, Islampur , Tal. Walwa, Dist. Sangli.

ABSTRACT

British rule produced lasting changes in Indian society and culture. It resulted in fundamental changes in the old institutions, in the name of modern civilization. Consequently, in India, western modernization ignoring one's tradition, perpetuated colonization and intellectual slavery. For example, in India, the political system was adopted on the model of British Parliamentary system (Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj* called it a sterile woman and a prostitute). On the other hand, it has overlooked and suppressed our traditional structure of autonomy and decentralization. That is to say, being slaves we were not in a position to decide for ourselves, which native elements need to be modernized, or which western elements need to be borrowed and nativised for the efficient functioning of traditional systems.

KEYWORDS: Nativism, Indian society and culture, modern civilization, traditional systems.

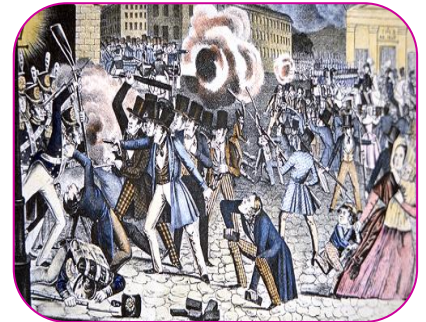
INDIAN LITERARY THEORY

Gandhi advocated the process of nativisation by emphasizing: 'It is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become indianized, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilization, there is no room for them' (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* 56). Immediately after independence, we went in foolishly for westernization.

What is generally true is probably true also for a specific cultural practice such as literature. During the first eight centuries, the exchange and opposition between *Margi* (Sanskrit, Mainstream) and *Desi* (Marathi, regional, local) traditions occupied a central place in cultural transactions. After India had come into contact with the British culture, one more focal point was added to the cultural transaction namely *Videshi* (English, foreign). Furthermore, during the colonial period, the *margi* (Sanskrit) and the *Videshi* (English) aspects of India's cultural personality came into a greater prominence, and the *Desi* aspect remained largely neglected. Hence, the situation in the field of literary theory became problematic. By that time different Western and Brahmanical schools of thought dominated the Indian critical thinking.

Some approaches to the study of Indian Literature are in vogue today – the Marxist, the Feminist, the Orientalist, the Postcolonial, the Subaltern, to mention a few. However, innovation requires the adoption of western ideas, but one should adopt them only on his terms, on condition that they could be integrated within an Indian intellectual framework.

One of the consequences of this adoption of western literary theories was the emergence of modern Indian Literary theory. But one should be aware of the fact that the contact with the West produced two distinct genres of literary theory. One is a literary theory in India and the other is Indian Literary theory. What distinguishes the two is their respective intellectual framework. Literary theory in India does not have an Indian intellectual framework in their attempt to modernize Indian literary theory. A recently published book in Marathi entitled *Aadhunik Samiksha Siddhant* (Modern Critical Theories) written by Milind Malashe



and Ashok Joshi is an example of literary theory in India for the title of the book itself is misleading for Indian readers in general and Marathi readers in particular. In fact, the title of the book would have been *Aadhunik Pashchyatya Samiksha Siddhant* (Modern Western Critical Theories). In sum, the book is not about Indian literary theory.

NATIVISM

Nativism is an assertive form of native principles; which values realism and social morality. In fact, it is a sincere effort to investigate native literary traditions. The 1971 edition of Oxford English Dictionary gives a racist meaning to the term native: The original or usual habitant of a country, as distinguished from strangers and foreigners, now especially belonging to a non-European and imperfectly civilized or savage race; a coloured person, a black. In his book *Nativistic Movements* Ralph Linton, an American Anthropologist, defines: "Nativism is a reaction against colonialism, and generally it begins to appear in the later half of the colonial period. Nativism, in its perfect sense, achieves a symbolic value that stands for 'certain current or remembered elements of culture selected for emphases'".

In his article, Nativism in Modern Kannada Fiction, M. M. Shanbhag says, "Nativism may mean an attempt by writers to shed the stance that made them look writing on themes that were alien to the soil. Nativism is a new realization of socio-cultural fact" (XII). In his welcome speech in the seminar on Nativism, Indra Nath Choudhuri says, "*Desivad*, therefore, is not a search for *Swadeshi* but *Swarajya*, a search for the creation of categories of modernism. *Desivad* is a search for qualities or principles which can explain our modernity" (Nemade, *Nativism in Literature*, 4). In his article, 'Nativism: An Area of Introspection' Rajeev Seth defines nativism as; "Nativism means a return to the roots. This is the call of the self-awareness of a country that remained a colony for a long time. The histories of civilizations tell us that the human race has a tendency to go far away from its societal and cultural axes and return to its centers again. It is an emotional need of the human race".

LITERATURE AND PARA-LITERATURE

In India, there are not one but several literary traditions. They exist in literature simultaneously, but one of them represents the canonized crest. The others are not canonized. Ganesh Devy conceptualized the 'other, obscure, suppressed or sub-cultural literary phenomena by using the term 'para-literature' (*Of Many Heroes*134). Para-literature is not literature because it is not accepted in literary canons and it is also not non-literature, because it has the formal attributes of literature. Devy has deduced from the anthropological observations about the nature of canon formation in literary studies that the distinction between literature and para-literature is guided by the systems of totems and taboos of the society that creates and preserves a given literary tradition. Exclusions of authors, texts, styles in a given history of literature, or inclusion of certain other authors, texts, forms, and styles are determined by extra-literary considerations (*Of Many Heroes* 138). When new literary traditions emerge, or branch off from an established literary tradition, the new literature is initially treated as taboo/para-literatures. Soon after being published in Kannada in 1965 *Samskara* by U.R. Anantha Murthy became the centre of a controversy, which was non-literary in nature, because of taboos. But the taboos can turn into totems in a course of time. When A. K. Ramanujan called *Samskara* 'an allegory-rich in realistic detail' in the translator's note, the fluctuation occurred. Today *Samskara* has a totemic importance.

INDIAN LITERATURE

In fact, every book was written by an Indian, inside the country or abroad, is part of a thing called *Indian Literature* (Ahmad, *In Theory* 272). But the very first question anyone faces while attempting to introduce Indian literature to a foreign readership, or even an Indian readership, is whether to speak of it in the singular or the plural that is either *Indian literature* or *Indian literatures*. However, the hypothesis of the present study is doubtless the undisputed idea that an *Indian literature* exists, whether definable and

quantifiable or not in generic or any other terms, one whose unity resides in the common national origins of its authors and the common civilizational ethos of the Indian people.

The very first question anyone faces while attempting to introduce Indian literature as a national literature is: can this subcontinent be regarded as a nation at all? Even the limited area of *Sapta Sindhu* was divided into a some of small and independent kingdoms. There was a loose imperial unity under Asoka. Otherwise, even the various empires that grew up in India never really extended their domain over the whole of India. It has been argued that it was only after the Indian war of Independence of 1857 AD that India came under British rule and had a single central administration, though some princely states were allowed to continue here and there as before.

INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND INDIAN LITERATURE

Parliamentary democracy has held its ground in India for nearly 60 years since independence. India has organized and governed herself as a federal republic, and no stronger proof is required for her political unity. It has come to stay as one nation, with Pakistan and Bangladesh flanking its borders in the north, and the world will have to reckon with it as such. We, the people of India, have solemnly resolved to constitute India into Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic and to secure to all its citizens – justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity; and have adopted, enacted and gave ourselves this constitution. Indian constitution gives us values: liberty, equality and fraternity. These values are Indian literary values, because literature is highly valued writing. In other words, we can also say if there is one particular Indian constitution for all Indians then why not Indian literature.

The purpose of literature

As the question, what is literature? is important; the question, what is the purpose of literature, is also very significant. Nemade in his essay 'Marathi Novel' says, "a novelist selects the theme as a verbal action with a specific moral angle in the context of the multi-faceted relation between the individual and the community. And, in keeping with the theme, style organizes the form through the medium of language using various techniques. Such type of verbal action can be seen in *Yamunaparyatan*". The action oriented literature accepts the native tradition which believes in realistic themes and moral devotedness. In short, literature is a verbal action.

INDIAN OR WESTERN

The different Western and Brahmanical schools of thought dominated the Indian critical thinking; hence it has indeed been excessively in-group and obscurantist. The Brahmins have propagated their views on many issues : of castes, varna, linguistic states, Hinduism, etc., and their views have been reinforced by a good many of the European scholars, however, Ambedkar has attempted to show that their views are not in accord with facts, and proved himself an indigenous thinker. Regarding India Arnold Toynbee wrote in 1915 that 'British statesmanship in the nineteenth century regarded India as a 'sleeping beauty', whom Britain had a perspective right to woo when she awoke'; Ambedkar agrees with Toynbee and reinforces his indigenous thinking while saying that the 'sleeping beauty is awake... She is a mad maiden having a dual personality, half human, half animal always in convulsions because of her two natures in perpetual conflict: Hindu and Muslim' (Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches* 9). Edward Said's *Orientalism* is one of the seminal works of our generation which has been noticed in prestigious books in India, but Ambedkar's work remained unnoticed, in this regard, as a critique of Orientalism.

BUDDHISM OR MARXISM

Unlike Karl Marx, Ambedkar recounts the salient facts of Indian History and argues that 'Indian history is nothing but the history of the struggle for supremacy between Brahmanism and Buddhism' (Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches* 267). In one of the 'forewords', Marx said that he took England as the 'chief illustration' since his aim in writing *Capital* has been to examine the Capitalist Mode of Production and

England is the 'classic ground' for such an economic system. In a similar vein, Ambedkar's aim has been to examine caste system which is exclusively Indian socio-political and economic system. In his essay *Buddha or Karl Marx*, Ambedkar discards Marx's theory – class struggle based on economic interpretation of history – to apply to India because it does not have an Indian intellectual framework. In other words, Karl Marx deals with class consciousness; on the contrary, Ambedkar with caste consciousness.

INDIAN NATIVISTIC LITERARY VALUES

While stating the need for native standards for evaluation of literature, Nemade says, 'Cultural differences are also attributed to psychological differences between people, which in turn are attributed to geographical and environmental causes. Population groups have been geographically and genetically isolated for millions of years. Different ethnic groups thus acquired characteristics designated by our location and lifestyle. Both environment and choice are active in strengthening a variety of tradition which makes a culture distinct from another. Each population group evolves out of such compulsions and acquires its characteristic sets of gene frequencies. Thus psychologists and geneticists explain how environmental conditions, chance survival of neutral or hormonal mutation and reproductive isolation created distinct native styles of living' (Nemade, *Nativism* 46-47). He further adds that 'since all cultures are self-justifying, we should be prepared for an oblivious antagonism between the others' standards and our own about the evaluation of culture'.

METHODOLOGY

The formalists define literature that uses language in peculiar ways. According to formalists, literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech; and under the pressure of literary devices familiar world is suddenly made unfamiliar. The distinction, here, between ordinary language and literary language is, also, questionable because if literature includes much literary language, it also includes quite a lot ordinary language.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, in the subsequent article, the proposed research work aims at studying and analyzing nativistic values in the select biographies of Bhaurao Patil Written in English. The present researcher seeks to present nativistic perspectives in the select biographies of Bhaurao Patil.

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