



BHALCHANDRA NEMADE'S KOSLA: A NARRATIVE OF NATIVE TRADITION

Rupali Sahebrao Dakhore

Research student,

S. R. T. M. University, Nanded.

ABSTRACT

Jnanpith awardee Bhalchandra nemade's Kosla is a turn-taking novel in the history of Marathi literature. Since its publication (1963) it has invited vibrant discussions on the norms and the aspects of Marathi novel. It is an avant-garde novel in Marathi for its experiments with language, subject matter and every other aspect of novel as a form. "The present generation must have unfailing native tradition awareness that the novel in Marathi is a creation of Marathi Writers, who, in turn, are the product of the Marathi society." (Devy, p. 193) This statement is confirming a intention of Nemade about the importance of native culture, language and the traditional practices and moral tradition. The philosophy of native tradition is expressed and become a trend to all aspects of life. Present research paper will discuss the basic tents of the native tradition movement.

Keywords: *Tradition, Native (Nativism), Native Tradition, Culture,*

INTRODUCTION

Kosla (Cocoon) is the story of a young man Pandurang Sandavikar. All the incidents in the novel revolve into and around Pandurang either physically or mentally. The novel traces a phase of his life from adolescence to youth. In this sense he is the protagonist of the novel. Structurally, the novel is divided into six sections, each one focusing the chronological development of Pandurang's character. The novel uses first-person narrative. Pandurang's story starts by summarising his childhood experiences concerning his family and small-town life. The largest part of the novel describes his student life in Pune. This is dominated by descriptions of his college mates, teachers and others. The narrative is peppered by his wry observations about life and human civilization, which turn somber and even philosophical as the novel's mood changes. The last part of the novel describes Pandurang's life after he is back in his hometown as a dejected good-for-nothing.

TRADITION

Tradition, generally defined as the handing down of customs or beliefs from one



generation to the next, is a well-established concept in society and one that is often explored in communications and cultural studies. Tradition provides the basis for which we understand our socio-cultural environment, be it our society, our community or our families.

The definition of Tradition is a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. The word tradition comes from the Latin verb *tradere* which means to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping. Sometimes tradition can include socially meaningful clothing and is often found in traditional music, dance, and athletic games. Traditions are thought to be ancient and deeply important to a group or society and transmitted through time; taught by one generation to the next. It is said that it takes two transmissions to happen over three generations for a practice, belief, or object to be considered traditional.

NATIVE (NATIVISM)

The term "native" has its source in ancient European languages. During the nineteenth century, intellectual and cultural movements for safeguarding the rights of people emerged in the European countries and the U.S. It was through these movements that the term "native" acquired the ideological form "Nativism". Recently, " Nativism" has become a part of a worldwide phenomenon of cultural relativism and self-assertion. Nativism is primarily regarded as a social, political, psychological and linguistic term also. That's why it has other facades of religious, moral, cultural, racial, ethnic, anthropological, scientific and medical connotations too. For many writers nativism is an approach to life. It expresses the attitude of the people living in particular geographic region. It is an ethnocentric and doctrine of innate ideas existing in the society. It is also a social, cultural and political issue of the people living in particular geographic land. Some thinkers regard "nativism" as a philosophical idea.

NATIVE TRADITION IN KOSLA

Namade through this literary movement wanted to underline the importance of desi or indigenous cultures, values and languages in the literary production. He declares that literary production is possible in mother tongue with traditional and cultural values of the past. For such a literary production, he denies vehemently international influence and parameters as nonessential entities. He strongly believes that the importance of any literary artifact, literary movement and worth of literary personality is not decided by international standards and parameters. Moreover, it is decided by spiritual evolution in content and linguistic innovations. He regards Shakespeare and Dante as Nativist or desi writers who became famous due to process of colonialism and imperialism.



Bhalchandra Nemade in his criticism on 'Deshivad' brings out a comprehensive approach considering all the views as reflected in Marathi literature. His novels like 'Kosala', 'Bidhar', and 'Dekhani' are written in the same views. In "Rathchakra", S.N. Pendsase uses some Konkani words and phrases and shows different type of life style of people living in Konkani area. Dr. Anand Yadav, in his "Zombi" an autobiographical novel shows different life-style of the people living in rural area of Kagal and the surrounding of Kolhapur. Bahinabai Choudhri in "Bahinabaichya Kavita" uses 'Ahirani words, and the dialect makes a special imprint in Marathi literature.

Nemade admits the fact that the genre of novel in Indian literature has emerged only after the colonial contact. In the primary phases of this contact there was healthy mutual exchange of ideas between the two cultures. The genre of novel in India was willingly adopted rather than being intentionally imposed by the colonial powers. Nemade feels that it was the necessity of the rising middle classes to have an elaborate and naive form of expression. In his article in Teekaswayamwara (1990) "Marathi Kadambari: Sanskriti Sanyogache Spasht Udaharan" (Marathi Novel: A Clear Case of Acculturation) he says:

"Howsoever the nature of acculturation is, its fruition is always creative, but both the cultures involved in the process must have that might to exchange their values. We can now, after a hundred and fifty years of acculturation, firmly say that Indian society had that might. We can look at the Marathi novel, with its elements like style, plots, events, characters etc. as a part of this complex process of acculturation".
(trans. 283).

Thus, the first important observation of Nemade is that the emergence of novel in Marathi was the result of the contact between two distinct cultures and the adoption of the novel as a genre was an inevitable lot of Indian culture.

The novel portrays the protagonist's "mute revolt" against the traditional patriarchal value system of Indian life, represented by his estranged father. It also implicitly challenged the then-dominant Marathi literary styles that were heavily influenced by Western literature, offering a new, distinctly indigenous form and voice. The novel is a key text in understanding Nemade's concept of *Deshivad* or nativism, a critical theory he later formally proposed. This philosophy emphasizes the importance of indigenous literary forms, regional identity, and the "code of the land" against cultural hegemony and the blind imitation of Western models.

Pandurang feels a deep sense of estrangement and meaninglessness, both in the urban high-brow society of Pune and in his home village. His search for meaning in local traditions



and village life, despite finding disillusionment there as well, reflects the broader identity crisis of post-independence Indian youth grappling with rapid social change and the tension between tradition and modernity. Nemade made varied use of language, incorporating standard and archaic Marathi, urban and non-urban dialects, slang, and Indian folk narratives. This focus on the authenticity of the local language is central to his emphasis on cultural identity.

In contrast with this, it is his own sensitive, incorruptible nature that drives Pandurang's rage and makes him cynical but, ultimately impotent. A key incident in the initial section of the novel shows Pandurang hunting and killing rats in his attic after some rats kill a baby rabbit that he has brought home as a pet. Pandurang hunts like a madman, in a frenzy driven by the brutal death of his cuddly pet; but it is also obvious that the rats (like the prize bull) are not unlike his father. Throughout the novel, Nemade shows Pandurang's tenderness in many forms. Weak people, such as Ramee a spirited but sickly girl or a student who gets ragged by mean hostel mates, get kindness and empathy from Pandurang. He even feels empathy towards Ramappa - the person in charge of the college canteen who has most likely misused the canteen funds, putting Pandurang. the acting canteen manager for the year, in a spot by forcing him to beg his father for money: 'I always felt sorry for this pitch-black Ramappa. Love, of a sort. It is my habitude. Immense love for anything. [p. 75]. This rings quite true, since Pandurang seems at his most natural when he is with such people. Going on long walks with friends, and getting lost in the hills surrounding his college find him at his happiest; it is the artificial world made by selfish humans where he is a misfit.

Nemade in his Nativism argues that, "every place has its own "code of the land", ... If the code is not felt in our intellectual activities our literary activities will be of no consequence". Not understand one's own literature or culture or history with the eyes of the others, nativism is needed. Because of the code of the land the scientific method of reading literature or Junderstanding culture or history should be emerged from one's own culture, heritage and knowledge. Modernity and Globalisation is the forces which kills the nativity, therefore na-tivism here perceives as a force to rediscover the pre-modern, pre-globalisation culture and history. Modernity appears to him as a universal commodity and it is 'not a culture specific phase in history'. In this context he focuses on two questions, one is "how to decolonize the native understanding of the West?" and "How to de-colonize our own understanding of India?"

As far as the Videshi tradition is concerned, the novelist shows his displeasure of the encroaching influences of Videshi tradition. It is evident in Pandurang's arguments with a



writer who visits Prof. Gune. He makes him speechless over his baseless anglophile opinions. In a declamatory fashion that writer says: "Of late English poets have made greater progress than poets in other languages." Pandurang makes him silent by asking him- "What are the means by which we might know whether they have progressed in comparison to Chinese or Japanese poets.

CONCLUSION

Nemade through this literary movement wanted to underline the importance of desi or indigenous cultures, values and languages in the literary production. He declares that literary production is possible in mother tongue with traditional and cultural values of the past. For such a literary production, he denies vehemently international influence and parameters as nonessential entities. He strongly believes that the importance of any literary artifact, literary movement and worth of literary personality is not decided by international standards and parameters. Moreover, it is decided by spiritual evolution in content and linguistic innovations. He regards Shakespeare and Dante as Nativist or desi writers who became famous due to process of colonialism and imperialism.

Thus, it is evident in Kosla (Cocoon) how from the beginning of his literary career, the novelist is aware of his ideological stance, which is later manifested in Native Tradition.

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