



Nativism As A Quest For An Alternative Tradition & Morality in Nemade's Novels

Rupali Sahebrao Dakhore

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

ABSTRACT

Bhalchandra Nemade's novels are a critical works in contemporary Marathi literature, as it encapsulates a profound examination of existential themes. The paper examines the novel's treatment of the fundamental theme of nativism as a quest for an alternative tradition and modernity. 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 modern 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.

Keywords: Tradition, Nativism, Modernity, Culture, Elite.

INTRODUCTION

Nativism as a literary movement in Maharashtra State, India was shaped by Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade in an article entitled 'Sahityatil Desivad' published in his book Teekasvayamvara in 1990. The scholars and admirers of Nemade's Nativism claim that the movement was originated around 1982. He defends that nativistic sense and sensibility; cultural values should be the part and parcel of literature produced in the country. This process has been hampered by colonialism and imperialism that was meeting point of East-West contact. Western influence shaped literary production in India that Nemade detests staunchly. He argues that many scholars and authors in Marathi language were highly influenced by internationalism during the post-Independence period. He openly blames Nehru who emerged as a dominant political leader at international level who changed socio-political atmosphere in the country to suit his internationalism. He blames the spread of English language in India that marred the regional languages, especially Marathi language. He also blames Rabindranath



Tagore, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka who became famous at international level through depiction of indigenous culture in alien tongue under Western influence.

Nativism: Concept and Meaning:

Nativism is primarily a social, political, psychological and linguistic term. The genealogy of term 'Nativism' is borrowed from social sciences and anthropology. The term 'nativism' was first used in the year 1844:

"Thousands were Naturalized expressly to oppose nativism, and voted the Polk ticket mainly to the end." (1998, p. 1, A. Adeleke)

Louis Dow Scisco (1901) coined the term 'nativism' in the nineteenth century. He described the principles advanced by the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic American party, known as the Know Nothing Party in the USA in 1850s. Nativism has its philosophical, anthropological, scientific, and medical connotations. However, it is an ethnocentric term. Nativism is perceived as a person's attitude, a movement, an urge, or an outlook. Nativism is a doctrine that innate ideas exist in a person and person's knowledge or behavior is inborn. It is a type of policy dealing with social, cultural, and political issues. It is a superior attitude of natives towards the new comers. Nativism is also a puritan urge and an anti-pagan philosophy. Nativism is a multi-centric, descriptive and first hand concept. There are at least three major meanings of nativism: xenophobic majority movements against immigrants, biological concepts of innate characteristics rather than acquired ones, and finally, as a concept in literary and cultural criticism.

Tradition and Modernity:

The concept of tradition and modernity is central to my dissertation on Shashi Tharoor's fiction. The term 'tradition, refers to the past, tradition is how we interpret the past. A tradition is a faith or activity 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 'traditio' means to transmit, to handover, and to give for safe keeping. The term tradition refers to beliefs, objects or customs performed or believed in the past, originating in it, imparted through time by being taught by one generation to the next, and are performed or believed in the present.

The term modernity used in humanities and social sciences to assign both a historical period, as well as the compilation of particular socio-cultural norms, outlooks and practises that arose in post-medieval age in Europe and have developed since, various ways and at various times around the world. The word modern comes from the Latin 'modo', means now, in opposition to the past tradition, modern has generally described as innovation, experimentation



and certain kinds of distancing from the past.

The word modernization comes to describe the swift rise in Europe and America of powerful tendencies manifesting advances in technology as well as the development of democratic political system and the expansion of capitalist modes of production. The word modernism however is used to describe certain trends in art, writing, criticism and philosophy that have had a powerful influence on the development and experience of the twentieth century. Conventionally we can date these trends from the last decade of the nineteenth century (1890) to about the beginning of the Second World War in 1940.

Nativism As A Quest For An Alternative Tradition And Morality:

Bhalchandra Nemade (2009) has also cited an example of how the term 'native' is used by 1971 edition of Oxford English Dictionary (OED) to give a racist meaning. The term native is referred as a non-European and imperfectly civilized or savage race; a colored person, a black. Nemade looked nativism as a reaction of colonialism. He emphasized nativism as living, surviving, and maintaining our self-identity against the destructive force of globalization. He assumed that a person could survive through nativism. He divided nativism as 1) aristocratic/elite nativism and 2) populace nativism. Nemade's essay emphasize the defensive character of nativism which is depicted through the words, such as alien, imported values, language, and cultures coming from outside, obstructive, imperialistic, hedonistic, and capitalistic.

Nemade's fiction challenges the "Eurocentric modernism" that often defines Indian literary standards, proposing that Indian literature must derive its aesthetic, linguistic, and cultural norms from its own tradition. Nemade's concept of *desivad* introduces a new moral framework that prioritizes the "code of the land" (the specific cultural, environmental, and social context of a region) over foreign or urban-centric moral standards.

Nemade assumes the tripartite division of traditions in the culture of Indian sub-continent. They are *Desi*, *Margi* and *Videshi*. However, he regards *Desi* as the pure one and the other two are corrupt or corrupting honesty of literary expressions. Nemade's very act of writing a novel itself is an act of protest against the *Margi*-strained conventional novels of Phadke, Khandekar and Madkholkar was a *Desi* action. The novels which were appreciated on the basis of the critical canon before Kosla were the combinations of the *Margi* and *Videshi* discourses yoked together.

Acculturation, nativisation and native modernity are the cardinal characteristics of Nativism. Nemade's thoughts on acculturation, nativisation and native modernity were



transmitted in Pandurang's attitudes which are reflected in *Kosla* (Cocoon). Assuming the autobiographical tinge of the novel, Pandurang is considered here as pro-native modernist.

At first, the authors' concept of tradition has been elaborated with the specific analysis of the novels. It reveals that in *Bidhar On the Move* the author expresses his strong protest against the established system of publication of the times which was under the impact of the Margi people in the cities like Mumbai and Pune. The printing press owner Ramrao, the editor of *Govardhan* magazine Patel and the notorious Kulkarni publisher from Pune are the representatives of this tradition. They are targets of satire in *Bidhar* (On the Move). *Hool* (Rumours) is also full of caustic comments and conversations that point out the flaws and the discriminating mentality of upper class Brahmins. The misjudgments and misbehavior of the fat Auyurvedic doctor and the Brahmin professors in the college are cross-examined by the author with the protesting attitude of his protagonist Changdeo Patil. In *Hool* (Rumours) the Christian education institute and the people associated with it are ridiculed for their non-native stances.

The novels *Jarila* (The Castrato) and *Zool* (Caparison) seem to be the campus novels. But they also comment broadly on the social life of the time. The novels comment on the achievements and pitfalls of social life during the span of twenty five years after the independence. The post-independent period Indian political system, in spite of an ideal constitution, was grappling with many problems. The very next generation after the independence was seen dissatisfied with the things going on in the country. Nehru's non-alignments movement was caught in the whirlwind of American capitalism and Russian communism. After the colonial disaster, the once glorified and culturally rich India was heading towards becoming the so-called developing and modernized country like other newly independent colonies.

It is quite clear that Nemade's concept of tradition comprises three different streams- Margi, Desi and Videshi. There is a tussle between these three streams of traditions going on throughout the recent socio-cultural history of the sub-continent. As Nemade is an advocate and a staunch ally of the Desi (Native) way of life, he is obviously critical of both the Margi (elite) and Videshi (foreign) ways of thinking. In the novels. under discussion the characters and events disclose Nemade's vehemence against both the streams which constantly try to curb the innocent and natural Desi (Native) sensibilities of the inhabitants of the land. Brahmanism, which vigorously represents the Margi (Elite) discourse, is especially the target of Nemade's contempt and satire along with the pretentious and pseudo tendencies of educated people



CONCLUSION

Hence, the present researcher would explore cultural, traditional, and modernity with the nativistic structure in Maharashtra. Nativism (Desivad) in Bhalchandra Nemade's novels functions as a deliberate intellectual and artistic project to counter the "debilitating Westernism" and colonial hangover in Indian literature. It is not a nostalgic return to the past, but a quest for an alternative, self-sustaining tradition and a new morality rooted in the native soil, folklore, and everyday experiences of the marginalized. Nemade argues that this "native modernity" is essential for cultural survival against the pressures of globalized, Western-centric standardization.

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