

Tracing the Imprint of Romanticism In Early 20th Century Bhasha Literature: A Case Study of Oriya Poetry

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Abstract:

In this paper, a modest attempt is made to explore the relationship between major literary movements of Indian Bhasha¹ poetry of early 20th century and English Romanticism and the issues concerning the essentially Romantic character of their views on Nature and Man, their ideas of Reform and Revolution. The effort is to show the fundamental affinity of spirit in their belief in, what Coleridge calls, the 'one life of the universe.' In order to be focused, a case study of Sabuja Dhara in Oriya literature is pursued with care. Incidentally, East and West are each other's complements in the world of the great poets who present and represent a vision of synthesis and permanence in the life of the spirit. In fact, the poetry of the English Romantics and that of the Indian poets ultimately appeal for a reawakening, 'a lasting inspiration, sanctified by reason' (Wordsworth) and 'that most firm assurance ... to reassume/An empire o'er the disentangled doom...' (Shelley).

Key Words: Romanticism. Chhayavad, Ravikiran, Mandal, Kallol, Sabuja etc.

The early part of the 20th century in India is a critical period – a period out of joint. There was mass-craving across the length and breadth of the country for a change. The spiritual heritage of the East was appreciated by the West, but the material prosperity of the West was aspired for by the East. The diverse opinions crisscrossed one another and some of our great thinkers asserted that people may adapt the learning of the West, but retain the ideals of the East (Sen 2). Two distinct ideas evolved out of the conflict: (i) Re-discovering the past heritage of India and enlightening the present and the future in its frame with the best that was there in Indian philosophy, art, literature, history and religious beliefs; (ii) Casting aside the superficial, superstitious elements of the past and re-building the future in the light of the Western liberal thoughts.

Both these ideals were time and again challenged, but the search was on. Literature being a mirror of society, subtle in its working, also reflected such a quest. As a matter of fact, for about thirty years from the mid-twenties till about the mid-fifties Oriya poetry directed its genius towards the aforesaid directions. But these directions were not always exclusive of the other; in several respects could be seen side by side as integrating factors in the total poetical achievement of the time.

The first direction was towards a romantic assertion of life, with the poets concentrating on such things as nature, love, adoration of beauty, transcendental and visionary dreams. This created a body of poetry which brought freshness and vigour to the contemporary literary climate by emphasizing the individual's imaginative faculties and emotional richness. Occasionally, however, this degenerated into Romantic mellifluousness and incomplete, inchoate apprehension of emotion. The second direction was towards a socio-political awareness, a direct product of nationalist consciousness of the *Satyabadi* group². It was close to reality, particularly to the

changing concerns of the socio-political life of the thirties and forties. The poetical overtones were generally satirical and, in many cases, it exhibited a tone of resentment and anger. To the first group belong poets like Padma Charan Pattnaik, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Baikuntha Nath Patnaik, Mayadhara Mansinha and Radha Mohan Gadanayak. The second group includes Laxmikant Mohapatra, Godabarisha Mahapatra, Ananta Pattanayaka and Sachidananda Routray.

II

Like the earlier *Satyabadi* poetry, the new Romantic poetry was also the creation of the egocentric poetic movement that was founded during the end of the twenties. This was mainly worked out in the works of Kalindi Charan Panigrahi and Baikuntha Nath Patnaik and some of their friends, most prominent among whom was Annada Shankar Ray, who later switched over to Bengali literature. They brought out a manifesto and called themselves as *Sabuja* (The Green) and their poetic movement *Sabuja Andolan* (The Movement of the Green). In conformity with this, they published a poetry anthology entitled *Sabuja Kabita* (The Poetry of the Green) in 1931. Two poems in it by Annada Shankar, 'Pralaya Prerana' (The Drive for Deluge) (1924) and 'Srujana Swapna' (The Dream to Generate) (also in 1924) set a new note of high rhetoric and youthful exuberance which the subsequent poets tried to follow. And this surely broke a new ground in Oriya literature and this turning of new leaf is replete with the greenness of the romantic dream of the radical youth. It will be worthwhile to go back a little through the corridors of time and briefly touch the contributions of the predecessors of this romantic break in Oriya literature and also see, in passing, how the Romantic Movement in England had influenced them.

III

Radhanath Ray (1848 – 1908) was the forerunner in the initial modernity era in Oriya poetry during the later part of nineteenth century and he created a distinct poetic awareness tuned by the Western ways. He could collect rich ideas from Western life and literature and expressed them in native Oriya language, thereby causing a significant departure from the obscure, impractical and value-based expressions of *Riti Yuga*.³ The first sign of the break-through was seen in *Kabitabali* (Poems), a joint venture of Radhanath and Madhusudan Rao (1853 – 1912), which is often accepted as 'the Lyrical Ballads of Oriya literature' (Dash 59).

It may be noted here that the early phase of Radhanath's writings include *Meghaduta* (The Cloud as Messenger), *Bibekii* (The Conscientious), *Italia Yuba* (The Italian Youth) and *Pabana* (The Wind) {all these were published in *Utkal Darpana*, the leading Oriya periodical of the time}, which bear testimony to the romantic influence. Shelley looks at the West Wind as 'the wild spirit', but Radhanath takes the wind as a lustful force:

Kaamaacaariatutupabamaana

Sarbasthaletorasamaanajnaana.

(Radhanath, *Pabana*)⁴

Lustful you are, O' Wind, in all places you have the same ways.

(Radhanath, *The Wind*)

For Radhanath, Nature (in Words worthian sense) is a perennial presence; it is as old as eternity. His *Chilika* (published in September, 1819 in *Utkal Prava*, a periodical of the time) gives a caressing treatment to the natural setting of the lake of the same name. Like Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, he had shown his love for lake Chilika and is often termed as 'Lake Poet of Orissa' (Nayak 7). He has taken Chilika as a lady and through her description; he has shown the history and culture of Orissa. It also carries the impression of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, when it refers to 'thousand battles of yester years' (Mansinha 266). In other poetry anthologies like *Nandikeshari* (written in the light of Byron's *Siege of Corinth* and Ovid's *The King Minos and Scylla*) (Nayak 11), *Chandrbhaga* and *Parbati*; the reader discovers significant echoes of Greek mythological themes and characters. In Byron's *The Vision of Judgement*, one comes across the satiric picture of a judgement scene in the heaven in respect to human deeds on the earth; similar scene is recreated in *Darbar*, wherein the poet presents an objective assessment of the whole situation. Hence a close scrutiny of Radhanath's oeuvre shows his occidental leanings.

The other significant partner of the 'poet-duo' was Madhusudan Rao, who was not only the disciple of Radhanath but was also his true successor. A leading *Brahmo* of his time, he was delving deep into spiritual consciousness and he is often accepted as the first proponent of restrained vision and philosophic approach in Oriya literature. His *Basanta Gatha*, *Kusumanjali*, *Sahitya Kusum* and *Chhandamala* bear perceptible romantic overtones. His translation of Cowper's 'The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk' was published in *Utkal Darpana* (1873) with the caption '*Nirjana Dwipe Nirbaasitara Bilaapa.*' Another poem, named '*Smasaana*' (The Burial Ground) carries the awful awareness of death and the uncanny note of grave-yard scene of *Hamlet* and Gray's 'Elegy Written in Country Churchyard.' In a sense, he may be called a precursor of Romanticism in Oriya poetry. His '*Nisitha Cintaa*' (Thoughts in the Night) describes a cool but awesome silence of the evening, similar to that of the scenes in Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight' and Shelley's 'To the Night.' His '*Jaubanara Swapna*' (The Dream of Youth) is surcharged with the elements of adventure and curiosity. He was romantic enough to fulfill his wish in the realms of dream, similar to that of Keatsian knight-at-arms in 'La Bella Dame Sans Merci.' However, he took the venture, like his teacher Radhanath, toward a synthesis of oriental and occidental ideas.

Nanda Kishore Bal, the famous 'Poet of the Rural Folk', gave a new direction to the East-West synthesis. His artistic perception concentrated on the rural life within its natural setting, lush green vegetation and romantically pastoral festive ways. The neglected lifestyle of the rural artisans and farmers, their dreams and aspirations, failings and achievements, the natural setting

of Indian countryside, the cool and tranquil mornings; the sedate and serene evenings; and the dreary and dreadful nights receive a loving treatment from him. The source of *Pallicitra* (Picture of the Village) was Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village.' (Nayak 188) *Banapriya* (The Mistress of the Green), *Byartha Pranaya* (The Futile Love) and *Bisaadini* (The Sad Girl) were written in direct imitation of Shelley's 'To a Skylark' (Nayak 189). The poem *Jananiinka Smruti* (Remembering the Mother) was written in the light of two stanzas of Cowper's 'On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture' (Nayak 189). He had also translated Wordsworth's 'To the Cuckoo' and tried his hand with many poems of Shakespeare, Keats, Southey and Burns. Basically a poet on his own right, Nanda Kishore was trying to bring in a fusion of the ideas of the past and the present, of the East and the West.

IV

In the neighbouring Bengal, the trends of the time were pro-British. "Everything English was good – even the drinking of brandy was a virtue, everything not English was viewed with suspicion" (Banerjea 363-374). The Western world appeared before the public with all the glamour and romance of a new and ground-breaking world.

But on these counts the Oriyas were divided. In the last decade of 19th century, Oriya intelligentsia became the victims of the popular *Indradhanu–Bijuli* feud.⁵ The *Indradhanu* group rejected the modern values and championed the cause of Upendra Bhanja and early Oriya poetry, whereas the *Bijuli* group tried to justify their drift in favour of the application of Western ideas and literary perceptions to Oriya life and literature. The crisis deepened. Discontent, disgust and ill-feeling prevailed. There was seen an anti-climactic decline in the creative pursuits and modernizing ventures. A nauseating disinterest prevailed.

In the meanwhile, the spirit of nationalism remained the prevailing norm. A sense of belonging to 'Mother India' was in the air. Everywhere there were commitments to get the motherland free from British imperialism. Patriotism was spelt unequivocally. The partition of Bengal (1905) and Morley-Minto-Reforms (1909) produced a note of unrest in the minds of common mass and the sentiments of general public were turned against the alien rulers. The formation of *Utkal Sammilani*⁶ was the evidence of such an Indian commitment. Major events of the period like addition of Sambalpur region into Oriya speaking tract (1905), the extremists' questioning the Partition of Bengal (1905-1909), the Swadeshi Movement (1906) and the formation of a separate Bihar State (1912) might appear to be stray affairs, but such incidents were instrumental in producing mass uprising in Orissa.

The man of the hour was Pandit Gopabandhu Das who controlled, planned and directed the mass movement in Orissa. His influence was basically educative in nature. He set up a modern school amidst the natural setting of Satyabadi (a nondescript village in Puri district) and thus he stood committed to educate a generation of dedicated youths to spread Gandhian message in nook and cranny of the Oriya-speaking tract.

Some patriots who joined Gopabandhu in this sacred mission were Nilakantha Das, Godabarish Mishra, Krupasindhu and Acharya Harihar. The *Satyabadi Group*, as they were popularly known (we have discussed it earlier), aimed at reforming the society, serving the common man and spreading the spirit of patriotism. They not only extended help to the common man during flood and epidemics, but also created a literary trend attuned to their goals. Their literature was a sincere attempt at the search of a landscape free from all shackles, divine or man-made. Gopabandhu's philanthropic zeal, Nilakantha's philosophic speculations, Godabarish's meaningful visions and Krupasindhu's love for the past were singular initiatives though, almost everyone was dreaming in terms of a prosperous *Utkal*(Orissa) under a free India. Since the commitment was more political than literary, the *Satyabadi Group* joined the Non-Cooperation Movement at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Though their participation was brief, they not only saved Oriya literature from the anarchic grip (on account of *Indradhanu-Bijulifeud*, discussed earlier), but also added a new dimension to it.

V

After the untimely departure (though it was ordained by the call of the time) of the *Satyabadi Group* from the literary scene of Orissa, a group of youngsters emerged. They uttered a note of protest against their predecessors and stood distinct in their characteristically individual way. From an honest beginning (as the members of a 'Nonsense Club' of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack) they could rise to the occasion for setting a new trend in the realm of Oriya literature, which was popularly known as *Sabuja Dhaaraa*.

The *Sabuja Group* in Oriya literature included Annada Shankar Ray, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Baikuntha Nath Patnaik, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Harihar Mohapatra. "The common link, amongst these members of the 'Nonsense Club', was not any faith in any 'ism' or any common commitment, but just a friendly attachment"(Panigrahi 3). The leader of the group, Annada Shankar, confessed in the 'preface' to *Sabuja Akshyara* (The Green Letter): "What was the mantra which could sustain this trend? That was, of course, a friendly attachment" (Ray 1). The friendship was further strengthened by the formation of '*Sabuja Sahitya Samitee*' (1929), a forum for the collective attempt at writing a novel named *Basanti* (1931) and publishing journals named *Abakashand Jugabina* (1933).

At that critical moment, the competent editor of *Utkal Sahitya* (the leading journal of the time), the reformist and fearless critic, Brahma Biswanath Kar, came to their rescue and inspired them to keep their flag flying (Panigrahi 5). As a progressive litterateur of the time, Kar discovered a living link with these youths, directed them in all possible ways (Mohanty 13). Annada Shankar admitted such a link in his *Sahitya Smruti* (Some Reminiscences of Literature): "In due course of time *Utkal Sahitya* became our journal. People at large could recognize a group called *Sabuja Dala* ... I was also in close touch with the Bengali *Sabuja Patra*...Rabindranath's verse '*Ore Sabuj, aare Kaanchaa / Adhmoraaderghaa mere tuibaancaa*' was my raison d'etre" (Ray 131).

Annada Shankar's *Pari Mahal* (The Fairy-Palace) was published in *Utkal Sahitya* (1926). In this long poem he was imagining a land with numerous fairies and one of them, that he came across, was *SabujaPari* (The Green Fairy). After three months, in the third issue of the same journal, *Sabuja Bandhura Prati* (To a Green Friend) of Baikuntha Nath was published. In this poem the youth revolted against the tradition-torn world order. All this confirms our impression that henceforward the seeds of Romanticism were strengthened and made the Oriya literary scene fertile. The Romantic agony and longing are not far to find and we have reason to believe that Byron's and Shelley's influence has worked deeply here.

The poems mentioned above present the avant-garde trends of the time. *Sabuja*, therefore, can be taken as the symbol of youth, a revolt against the tradition.

E bishwajadi mate napaarebujhi

Mo bishwaracibi mu nayanabuji

Niratenishidinamothaaremuhinlina

Gopanapuraregoswapanasruji.

(Baikuntha Nath, *Sabuja Bandhura Prati*)

If the world fails to understand me, I will close my eyes and will recreate my world. I would sit lost in myself, all days and night, creating my own dreams in my secret world.

(Baikuntha Nath, *To a Green Friend*)

Sabuja was indeed a mediating force between the finite and the infinite, the East and the West, 'the memory and desire': it stood for 'an emblem of life' – the curious revelation of the innocent and unbiased heart (Panigrahi 7). This revolutionary trend in favour of a new world order was also seen in the contemporary Indian literature. In Bengali it was known as *Kallol*, in Hindi *Chaayavad* and in Marathi *Ravikiran Mandal.*,

The *Kallol* group, known as the new 'progressive school', was represented by Kazi Nazrul Islam, Jibanananda Das, Premendra Mitra, Achintya Sengupta, Buddhadeb Basu, Gokul Chandra Nag and Pramatha Choudhuri. The works of these young writers of *Kallol* were considered improper, according to the accepted literary canons of the time. Dr. Sukumar Senin his *History of Bengali Literature* writes thus: "The new progressive writers had all received their sustenance from Tagore, but, as some of them confessed, they could not fully gauge the depth of Tagore's poetry"(Sen354). The periodicals like *Kali Kalam* (1927) published from Calcutta and *Pragati* (1928) from Dhaka expressed their note of disgust and revolt against the doyen (Rabindranath) and his works. We must remember that all these revolts, whether in Oriya or in Bengali literature, amounted to a kind of romantic radicalism as we find in the early 19th century English literature. When Tagore was approached for a comment on the issue between 'traditional' and 'progressive' literatures, he analysed the 'modern-ness' of the contemporary European literature and denied its validity for the contemporary literature in Bengal. Tagore's analysis and

judgement did not satisfy the progressive school, yet in a typical 'Rabindra way' they pursued a curious search for truth and beauty. Their essential approach was centering around, the 'eerie landscape of a fairy land, mere dream and emotional outburst like Persian Gajal' (Satpathy 11). But all this ultimately sounded romantic, although the advocates of the new literature claimed to have belonged to an age of reason.

The *Chaayavad Yuga* in Hindi literature was very effective and the pioneers were Jayashankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathy 'Nirala', Sumitra Nandan Pantand Mahadevi Verma. This poetic movement was a personal revolt against the formalism and didacticism of the contemporary Hindi poetry (Vaatsyaayana 85). We may note that the term *Chayabad* has, to a great extent, close affinity to what we mean by Romanticism. These new poets questioned the previous verse forms, the metres and the techniques. Their immediate models were the English Romantics and preferably, Shelley and Byron. They turned not only dreamy and detached, but they also sang against economic exploitation, favouritism and nepotism.

The *Ravikiran Mandal* in Marathi literature attempted at working out superficial compromises, leaving the deeper questions unanswered. The pioneers like Y. D.Pendharkar, Shridhar Ranade, Madhav Julian Patwardhan, Manorama Ranade, Shankar Kanetkar, G. T.Madarkolkar, V. D. Ghate and D. L.Gokhale fashioned poetry as a medium of delicious make-belief, largely isolated from life, as an English Romantic was thought to be. The stress was on colloquial diction and response to it called forth no intellectual effort from the reader. This softened the poet too and arrested normal development. That was the tragedy with some young poets of the generation and those early promises were not fulfilled (Rajadhakya 159).

VI

Coming back to the *Sabuja Poets* of Oriya literature, we can discern the same story. Their dreams of the future got shattered and they could not survive for more that fifteen years. KalindiCharan's outcry on *Aagaamii*('The Coming Future') speaks of his leaning towards Marxism:

Kahibaapaainkathaasaburidaabiiachi,

Mu sehisamaajarakabitaa base raci.

(Kalindicharan, *Aagaamii*)

Everybody has the right to speak and I write the poems of such a social-orbit.(Kalindi Charan, *The Coming Future*)

Annada Shankar wrote a few poems, numbering twelve, and he left the group and Oriya literature and joined the Bengali mainstream. His masterpiece in Oriya, as mentioned earlier, was *SrujanSwapna* (The Dream to Generate), which gave expression to his aching heart:

Jibipalaaiduuresuduure

*Swapanalokegopanapure**Grahataarakaedaai.**Jaubanarajharanaakuule**Malaya jahinniyatabule**Kusumaketuudaai.*(Annada Shankar, *SrujanaSwapna*)

I would run away to a very distant land, to the secret land of dreams, beyond the planets and stars, to the banks of the spring of youth, where there blows the fragrant breeze flaunting the banner of flowers. (Annada Shankar, *The Dream to Generate*)

The Shelleyan and Keatsian strain in him is revealed here. Let us remember here Keats's desire for escaping into 'a fairy lands forlorn' where "Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam/Of perilous seas", or Shelley's "desire of the moth for the star and the night for the morrow... from the sphere of our sorrow." The most effective of the *Sabuja* trio was KalindiCharan, who showed the romantic longing in his very first poem *ByarthaSwapna* (The Unrequited Dream) in 1920. We feel his emotion in the poems like *KabiraGatha* (The Story of a Poet) and *LohitaByatha* (The Agony of the Blood):

*Duuraatitarashubhuthilaabhasaa**Ki gahanabyathaaduurantaduurashaa,**Sandhyaasundariiswarnameghararathe**Sajalanayanecainthilaabanapathe.*(KalindiCharan, *LohitaByathaa*)

One could hear the words from the remote past: how painful indeed is the force of futile hopes! The beautiful evening on the chariot of golden clouds, with tear in eyes, had been looking towards the woodland ride.

(KalindiCharan, *The Agony of the Blood*)

These lines admit the fusion of the elements of remorse and hope. The poet longs for the far-off as the English Romantics did, the *Faguna Banshi* (The Flute of Spring) is the means of redemption. It is like Shelley's 'West Wind', it must relieve the poet of his woes. In *Kuhupraasa* (Thus Sings the Cuckoo) the poet prefers to taste the 'easeful death' in a typical Keatsian way:

*Dharaniihelaakomalatamaaakashakamaniya,**Marana helaamadhuratarajiibanahelaapriya.*(Kalindi Charan, *Kuhupraasa*)

The earth got softened, the sky graceful; death proved pleasant, life endearing.
(Kalindi Charan, Thus Sings the Cuckoo)

In *Bishwara Aahwaan* (The Call of the Universe) the poet prefers the insensate reality in a metaphysical way:

Sabukolaahalabhedishunibimun

Sabdahiinaniirabataadaaka.

(KalindiCharan, *BishwaraAahwaan*)

Getting across all the noisy confusion, I would listen to the call of the calm and silence.
(KalindiCharan, The Call of the Universe)

In *Pausa Malaya* (The Breeze of Pausa) the poet seems to have a grip on his self. Shelley took his West Wind as a means of creation and destruction at the same time, but KalindiCharan, with a bit of modification, accepts the breeze of *Pausa*⁷ as the symbol of rebirth:

Jiibanarasuucanaaneiaase

Mrutapuninuaa hoi janmanie.

(KalindiCharan, *Pausa Malaya*)

It comes with the message of life and the dead is reborn again in a new form.

(KalindiCharan, 'The Breeze of Pausa')

Towards the end of his career, KalindiCharan lost his track. He preferred the hard realities of life. His Marxist leanings became obvious by the year 1942. His *Agaami* (The Coming Future) and *Kia Shalaa Saitaan?* (Who Was that Bloody Satan?) bear testimony to his change of taste and perception.

The most obscure of the trio was Baikuntha Nath, who failed often to communicate his message with ease. His poems were replete with a romantic melancholy and disgust due to his life-weariness. In fact, the poet was a victim of the feelings of loneliness and a sense of alienation. Mayadhara Mansinha in his *History of Oriya Literature* was eloquent about the poet: "Young Baikuntha Nath reminds us of Shelley on account of his warmth and lyricism. But it is a pity that the fire in him got extinguished very soon" (Mansinha 370-372). Again, Baikuntha Nath's poem *Usha* (The Dawn) exposed the romantic sorrow in clear and distinct terms:

Hataashamunmojiibanasaaraajanamamorabyartha,

Jiibanaekaashrudhaaranabujhekichiartha.

UshaKhaalirahichiashrudhaara

Hataashapraanabhagnahaahaakaara

Mauligalaaroilejetegandhaphulasara

Hasna, hena, bakul-malli, champakarahaara.

(Baikunthanath, *Usha*)

I was born for nothing: my life is a serious despair, an incessant flow of tears. I do not understand its meaning. Usha! Only the tears are left, and the wailings, and the broken heart. All the scented flowers, I plucked and the garland of hasna, hena, bakul, jasmine and champak got wilted.

(Baikunthanath, *The Dawn*)

Baikuntha Nath's *Jauban Pujaa* (The Worship of Youth), *Chilikaare Raatrii* (A Night at Chilka), *Nirjana* (The Solitude), *Upabana* (The Park), *Pausa Pabana* (The Breeze of Pausa), *Raajajemaa* (The Princess) are written in the same vein and all of them harp on loneliness and disgust. In *Pranayeera Swapna* (The Dreams of the Beloved) the poet wants to escape:

Kalpanaacaalapabana Sahite

Ehimrutadeshe

Jiibananaahin go, jiibananaahin.

(Baikuntha Nath, *Pranayeera Swapna*)

Oh Imagination! Let us leave this dead land, and move along with the wind. Here there is no life; there is no life here.

(Baikuntha Nath, *The Dreams of the Beloved*)

The disgust with life led the poet to surrender before God and towards the later part of his career, he turned a mystic. All his romantic dreams collapsed and the elements of awe and surprise trespassed into his poetic world. (Here we are reminded of Keats's reawakening to the sense of reality near the end of his *Ode to a Nightingale*). Like Blake, he wanted 'to see the world in a grain of sand'. His poems: *Maanasa Hansa Mun*, *Maanase Jibi Udi* (The Swan of Manas), *Kaaraabaasii Kabira Swapna* (The Dreams of an Imprisoned Poet), *Patha Chaaya* (The Shades on the Road), *Paanthashaala* (The Inn) reflect his typical God-consciousness. In *Jaatraa Sangiita* (The Song of the Journey), he appears to have imitated Rabindranath's "Tora Shunishkishunishitar payer dhwani / Se je aaseaaseaase":

Paranakunjemotaaramuraliidhwani

Paraanapabanemotaashubhaaagamanii

Jiibardebaanebaasabubhianaataara.

(Baikuntha Nath, *Jaatraa Sangiita*)

In the power of my heart, there is the music of His flute, in the wind of my heart; there is the echo of auspicious footsteps. It is the work of His playful-mystery to endow us with life, or death.

(BaikunthaNath, The Song of the Journey)

Thus a new poet was born, who, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, looked with awe and wonder at the manifestations of the divine.

VIII

To put it briefly, the *Sabujas* either left the scene or changed their poetic tone. They could not spell out in clear terms their real aims as they lacked clarity and neatness. The tendency to escape from reality made their poetry incomprehensible. The common reader could not reach their high-flown soaring towards the remote and far-fetched possibilities. The greatest charge against the group was their blind imitation of Bengali literature which was greatly influenced by English Romantics, even at that point of time. Baikuntha Nath denounced such a charge in his essay *Sabuja Sahitya* (The Green Literature), published in *Yugabina* (March 1933): “When any Utkalia denies his reading of *Gitanjali* because of the fear of being guilty of Bengali influence, he should be taken to the laboratory of Freud or Jung for treatment. ... We have no right to comment on anybody who is preoccupied with the myopic impression – the motherland is worshipped only by the pale flowers of the traditional past and fresh flowers are not fit for such an occasion. ... So, when that universal inspiration touched the boundary of Utkal, the youth accepted it with grace and reverence”(free translation) (Patnaik 12). Further, in a recorded interview broadcast over All India Radio, Cuttack on Sept. 24, 1965, Baikuntha Nath admitted thus: “... the chief aim and objective of our *Sabuja* group was to keep the youth ever-awake and to impart through literature the new ideas to the people. For this, what is needed is emotion and imagination, rather than chaotic revolution” (Free translation) (Panigrahi 26).

IX

However, it should be admitted that the *Sabujas* could set a trend in Oriya literature in the early 20th century. Their experiments on diction, rhyme and lyricism are their significant contributions. Kalindi Charan’s experiments with blank verse, Baikuntha Nath’s experiments with sonnet-making and Annada Shankar’s lyrical initiation of the language of common man could help sustaining the poetic zeal of Gangadhar Meher, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Radhamohan Garnaik and Mayadhara Mansinha. Even Kaindi Charan includes these successors in *Sabuja Group*, because, with minor differences, they tried their hands in their own respective individual ways. They followed the trends and fashion of their predecessors.

Thus the *Sabujas* may be called the representative rays of the rainbow in the early 20th century literary horizon of Orissa. They are, in fact, the true harbingers of Romanticism on Oriya literature. They are essentially the innovators, because of the pronounced influence of the English Romantics in their writings (Patnaik D P 119). The real achievement of these poets lies

in introducing international awareness in Oriya literature and they, in a much significant way, introduced a new way of looking at things and saying them in a novel fashion (Mansinha: *History of Literature* 251).

Notes

¹Bhasha literature refers to numerous literatures written in South-Asian, especially Indian languages, exploring the aesthetic and cultural parameters, divergent traditions and varied ritualistic patterns of a milieu belonging to this region.

²Satyabadi is a village in Puri district (Orissa), 9kms away from the district headquarters. Because of its natural setting and lush green vegetation, Gopabandhu Das (the leading freedom fighter during the Gandhian era) chose it as the centre for his Ashram school, set in the light of Rabindranath's Santiniketan. Thus both Rabindranath and Gopabandhu meet here as Romantic educationists. The group of litterateurs led by Gopabandhu is known as Satyabadi Group.

³The period during 1650-1880 in Oriya literature, led by UpendraBhanja, was stressing on literary jargons, alliteration, euphemism and the Kavic style.

⁴This quotation and all subsequent quotations from Mansinha's Oriya poetry are from *MansinhaGranthabali-I* (Cuttack, 1962) and *MansinhaGranthabali-II* (Cuttack, 1964) and the translations of these quotations are done freely in prose by the author.

⁵Two contrasting opinions were presented by 'Indradhanu-Bijuli' feud. *Indradhanu* was published from Cuttack and the group belonging to *indradhanu* literary circle protested against Radhanath's writings and his modern outlook. *Bijuli* was published from Bamanda and Radhanath defended himself through it.

⁶Utkal Sammilani (1903) was a socio-cultural forum championing the cause of a separate identity for Orissa and Oriyas.

⁷The ninth month in the Hindu calendar, often falls in the month of January, is mostly known as the month of harvesting.

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