



PARALLEL THEMES AND RESEMBLANCE IN THE MODUS OPERANDI: ULYSSES AND KOLAMBASACHE GARVAGEET

Ninad R. Vitekar*
Department of English,
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada
University,
Aurangabad. 431005

Dr. Pradnyashailee B. Sawai
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Government College of Arts and Science,
Aurangabad, Maharashtra

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Marathi is one of the most prosperous languages in India in terms of literature. Marathi poetry dates back to the 13th century and owes a lot to the saint poets like Dnyandev, Tukaram, Ramdas, etc. Their poetry was mostly didactic considering the challenges of the time. In the early 19th century, with the advent of the British Raj, Marathi literature was bound to come under the purview of English influence. The time period under consideration is the Romantic and Victorian period. Many Marathi poets like T.B. Thombare (Baalkavi), Ram Ganesh Gadkari (Govindagraj), Keshavsut, N.V. Tilak, Dattatray Kondo Ghate, Kashinath Hari Modak, V.D. Karandikar, were primarily romantic. As a descendant of these mighty poets, Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar assumed the pen name 'Kusumagraj' and surfaced in the first half of the 20th century with his collection of poems, "Vishakha", a literary milestone in Maharashtra. All the poems in 'Vishakha' are full of romantic imagery and many cultural and historical references can be seen in the poems; a trait shared by Lord Tennyson.

This paper aims at analyzing Tennyson's "Ulysses" and Kusumagraj's "Kolambasache Garvageet" in order to address the similarity between the themes, attitude, and execution of the subject matter in the poems.

While it is evident that Kusumagraj (Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar) drew heavily on William Shakespeare as far as his dramas are concerned, little has been accounted about Tennyson being one of his influences. Thus, the paper eyes the poems and their similarities as mere "resemblances" and not "inspirations". It is however a contribution to hypothesize Tennyson's influence on Kusumagraj, the poet.

DISCUSSION

Similarities in the background of the poems

Ulysses is a depiction of the Trojan war-hero and Greek king of Ithaca, Odysseus (Ulysses). Homer introduced Ulysses in his epic Iliad in which he was a key character. Following the events of Iliad, Ulysses, along with his companions, undergo a ten year long adventurous voyage in order to reach home and establish himself as the rightful king of Ithaca. These adventures have been penned by Homer in his Odyssey, another Grecian epic. Tennyson has tried to envisage Ulysses' thoughts after he made it back to his home safely. The old voyager has been portrayed as a man who yearns for his past sea adventures as he is quite dissatisfied with his uneventful life in Ithaca.

Kusumagraj handles the much explored theme of Christopher Columbus's voyages to the Americas in 'Kolambasache Garvageet' (The song of Columbus's Pride). Although, Columbus wasn't the first European sailor to have discovered the Americas, his explorations were crucial as far as European settlements and the eventual colonization of the continent is concerned. Columbus undertook four different expeditions, where the first two led him to the island of Cuba and the latter two to the main continents. It wasn't "smooth sailing" for Columbus and



company. The crew had to face a lot of physical challenges due to starvation, dehydration, scurvy, malnutrition etc. The vast Atlantic Ocean made the crew witness adverse weather conditions like rough tides and stormy winds; causing the vessels to drift and lose their intended trajectories on multiple occasions. It was a leadership challenge for the captain as he had to talk the crew out of their diffidence and at times, mutinies.

The poems

Ulysses

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—



That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

कोलंबसाचे गर्वगीत

हजार जिव्हा तुझ्या गर्जु दे प्रतिध्वनीने त्या
समुद्रा, डळमळुदे तारे!
विराट वादळ हेलकावुदे पर्वत पाण्याचे
ढळुदे दिशाकोन सारे!

ताम्रसुरा प्राश्न मातुदे दैत्य नभामधले
दडुद्या पाताळी सविता
आणि त्यांची ही अधिराणी दुभंग धरणीला
कराया पाजळुदे पळिता!

की स्वर्गातून कोसळलेला, सूड समाधान
मिळाया प्रमत्त सैतान
जमवुनि मेळा वेताळांचा या दर्यावरती
करी हे तांडव थैमान!

पदच्युता, तव भीषण नर्तन असेच चालू दे
फुटूदे नभ माथ्यावरती
आणि तुटूदे अखंड उल्का वर्षावत अग्नी
नाविका ना कुठली भीती!



सहकान्यांनो, का ही खंत जन्म खलाशांचा
झुंजण्या अखंड संग्राम
नक्षत्रापरि असीम नीलांमधे संचरावे
दिशांचे आम्हाला धाम!

काय सागरी तारू लोटले परताया मागे
असे का हा अपुला बाणा
त्याहुन घेऊ जळी समाधी सुखे, कशासाठी
जपावे पराभूत प्राणा!

कोट्यवधी जगतात जीवाणू जगती अन् मरती
जशी ती गवताची पाती
नाविक आम्ही परंतु फिरतो सात नभांखाली
निर्मितो नव क्षितिजे पुढती!

मार्ग ना आमुचा रोधू शकती ना धन, ना दारा
घराची वा वितभर कारा
मानवतेचे निशाण मिरवू महासागरात
जिंकुनी खंड खंड सारा!

चला उभारा शुभ्र शिडे ती गर्वाने वरती
कथा या खुळ्या सागराला
"अनंत अमुची ध्येयासक्ती अनंत अन् आशा
किनारा तुला पामराला!"

Similarities

The two poems under consideration here do not share many similarities as far as the phrasing and background is concerned (which was quite the case in the earlier poems). However, the poems share a lot of thematic commonalities. For starters, the theme of voyages is common in both the poems.

Apart from the part where Ulysses ruminates about his old age, idleness in life, and his son Telemachus, rest of the poem is similar in theme with 'Kolambasache Garvageet'. Both the poems have their protagonists as the narrators. There are patches where both these protagonists, i.e. Christopher Columbus and Ulysses are encouraging their companions to follow them in their respective adventures. Both are trying to convince their followers by emphasizing on the futility of the common life. They are also trying to trigger the ambitiousness of their followers.

The followers are being made aware of the possible adversities by the protagonists. But while doing so, they are also trying to imbibe a positive outlook and confidence, so much so that at times Kusumagraj's Kolumbus goes on to challenge the mighty ocean to unleash its extreme fury upon them.

Here are some lines from the poems that echo each other:

- a) How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life



काय सागरी तारू लोटले परताया मागे
असे का हा अपुला बाणा
त्याहुन घेऊ जळी समाधी सुखे, कशासाठी
जपावे पराभूत प्राणा!
कोट्यवधी जगतात जीवाणू जगती अन् मरती
जशी ती गवताची पाती
नाविक आम्ही परंतु फिरतो सात नभांखाली
निर्मितो नव क्षितिजे पुढती!

(We should happily let the mighty ocean consume us than to give up and fall back. Millions of beings live and die in the world as if they're blades of grass. But we are sailors, we roam under the seven heavens, we create new horizons.)

b) Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

नक्षत्रापरि असीम नीलांमधे संचरावे
दिशांचे आम्हाला धाम!

(We are keen on exploring all directions, we wish to roam the endless blue ocean like stars in the sky.)

नाविक आम्ही परंतु फिरतो सात नभांखाली
निर्मितो नव क्षितिजे पुढती!

(But we are sailors, we roam under the seven heavens, we create new horizons.)

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE STUDY

'Kolambasache Garvageet' is based on events which do not have anything in common with Kusumagraj's cultural heritage. So, it can be stated that the poet might have gone out of the way to emulate 'Ulysses'. However, the treatment of the topic is quite different than 'Ulysses' in the case of 'Kolambasache Garvageet'. Where both the protagonists are brimming with the urge of embarking on adventures, Kusumagraj's 'Kolumbus' comes of as an over the top daredevil who's charming audacity is in contrast with Ulysses' ambitious yet wise demeanor.

While attempting to hypothesize that Kusumagraj was inspired by Tennyson, the paper does not intend to demean Kusumagraj's innovation or penmanship. Despite being inspired by Tennyson, in the hands of the great Marathi poet, the themes look fresh even to someone who follows both English and Marathi poetry.

There are many Marathi poets who found their inspiration in English poetry, especially in the romantic period. Further studies can be conducted in order to acknowledge the possible parallel between English and Marathi literature.

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