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Essence against the Tyranny of Unconscious: Psycho Drama in Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's Selected Lyrics

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Abstract:

This paper examines the role of unconscious over the conscious mind in the lyrics of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. The dominance of the former against the later evokes a crisis of essence, and in most of his songs, he attempts to preserve that identity. The paper investigates the nature of linguistic arrangements and argues that they are a hidden symbol for the repressed desire. The paper further argues about the disguises that have been made by the celebrated lyricist in his pursuit for individual essence.

Keywords: *Essence, conscious, memory, space, trauma, psycho drama*

1. Introduction

Preservation of essence was one of the central motives in the works of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. To achieve this goal, he avoided disparate arrangement of words in composing lyrics; he was deliberate in his choice, highly conscious and logical. Economy of words, precision in painting the images calls for an examination of the language- as language is the only medium to project the unconscious in conscious mind. Again, unconscious is not a 'chaotic mass of disparate material' but a carefully woven network. Driven by sexual intonation in some of his celebrated songs, some contemporary reviews published in Assamese print media accuse the lyrics as manifestation of desire for female body. The concern of this paper is to discard such views and investigate the 'covert' objects that lay hidden under the surface level of deliberative language and relate it to the 'essence'. An evidence of psycho-drama to present the self and individuate the essence could then be established.

Essence has been a central paradigm in metaphysical philosophy or religion. With context to Dr. Hazarika, it is not known whether he devoted himself to draw out a framework within the fundamentals of Essentialism.¹ Yet, most of his lyrics postulate a self that is being petrified by an unspecified agency; and surprisingly, no attempts have been made to assure salvation to that jeopardized object. The persona or the object in his lyrics is an individual with a supreme 'moral entity', and most of his songs are about the experience of this entity which we shall argue as the 'essence.'

The song *Kinu Pokhiye Khuwoti Gale* subscribes to the impulse to extract out the essence that has been deeply groveled somewhere in the unconscious structure of mind or the memory. The sweet singing bird awakens the self and calls him to step out into the spatial construct. He opens the window and looks into the outer world. He lets escape his essence from memory with a heartfelt energy received from a divine entity; he is ready to explore the space. This movement from memory to space or from the temporal order to spatial dimension opens up the dynamism of detachment from the tabooed unconscious. However, this is a conscious motive and it evidently relates a repressed desire to escape into the world. Classical Freudian views defend such type of escapism in following terms.

"Linked with this is the idea of *repression*, which is the 'forgetting' or ignoring of unresolved conflicts, unadmitted desires, or traumatic past events, so that they are forced out of conscious awareness and into the realm of the unconscious. A similar process is that of *sublimation*, whereby the repressed material is 'promoted' into something grander or is disguised as something 'noble.'" (Berry,70)

¹ To be essentialist is to treat objects as if they "have essences or underlying natures that make them the thing that they are", and to treat them as if they have properties that result from these essences. (Barrett,3)

The context of this song has been brought here to point out Dr. Hazarika's irresistible advocacy for essentialism. We need not delve deeper into the song to extract out the meaning; as the meaning floats in the surface level itself. The song approves that his pursuit for the individual essence has to go through personal trauma, and in due course of composition, this particular desire that is being repressed takes a 'nobler' form in songs like *Bimurto Mur Nikhati*.

The dissolution of the self from morbid structures of the unconscious opens up another possibility to realize the fundamentals of human existence. He relates the abstract dark night with a blue shroud woven by silence. The powerful reference very well suggests to the disturbance of the unconscious upon the conscious mind and the consequent experience of melancholia in succeeding stages. He feels his essence is at stake and ties up with an unspecified female figure to survive the neurosis. *Niswakhore Umm* or the living warm breath is an assurance of solace for the jeopardized essence rather than being an evidence for sexual linkage between two bodies. The second stanza with the phrase *Ajir Gorbhote* points out to the immediate reality, a centralized point of conscious mind where the individual essence can repose while at the struggle for existence. In this context, the red hued desire (*Kamonare Tej Ronga*) turns out to be a desire for existence rather than a typical symbol for romantic impulses, since 'blood' represents life as well. The third stanza speaks about the association of the two essences, conforming to the classical idea of a mutual space where every identity is preserved without facing the danger of extinction. However, there are no suggestions in the succeeding stanzas to show that he have survived the neurosis. Rather than surrendering to the trauma fostered by the unconscious mind, he cherishes the moment; keeps himself away from the tyranny of memory. Paying least concern to the wounded cries is a deliberate strategy to ignore the whiplashes of memory over the immediate reality. The river of cries coming from far (*Duroit Aartonador Nodi*) does not have any surreal existence as suggested by the lines, but it comes from his own conscience.

The evidence of the disturbance over conscious mind is again referred in the song *Maj Nixha Mur Endhar Ghorot*. He makes desperate attempt to identify the intruder that stole into his conscious mind. He questions the intruder if it will snatch everything from him (*Aji Nibane Hkhorbo Mur*) and expose him to a barren space. He confesses the crisis that he has been experiencing; he fails to link the disjointed memory (*Ki dhon ase moi nijei napau dhor*); he is disturbed by the trauma of being exploited. The crisis to the existence of essence is occasioned by clashing sound of cymbals. The effect indicates to the collision between the two stages of the mind, one overpowering the other.

Having finally set the stage for the aforementioned psycho-drama, Bhupen Hazarika's lyrics exhibit two kinds of contradictory agent each in constant collision against the other. The repercussion upon the conscious mind is determinative of the repressed desires that lay hidden in the deepest level of the unconscious. Absence of nightmarish images and consistent struggle to sustain the essence through the disguise of sexual intonation points out to the passive role of conscious mind in his lyrics. The covert object, or the tyranny of the unconscious that defined the being is put forward in its truest of colour. To quote Lacan;

"The content of the unconscious with all its disappointing ambiguities gives us no reality in the subject more consistent than the immediate; its force comes from the truth and in the dimension of being". (Lacan, 97)

The psycho drama with all its roles; ambiguities, frustration and repressed desire to establish the individual essence gives him enough scope to make insight into his life. Dr. Hazarika never sought a 'cosmic' nor a bounteous space, all he wanted was a warm solace where his entity can rest for a while. (*Akashi Ganga Bisora Nai*)

2. References

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