



SYED MUJTABA ALI LIFE AND LITERATURE

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Abstract:

Both Syed Mujtaba Ali and Alexander Pope are famous figures in Bengali and English literature, respectively. Their names and the word "satire" are sometimes believed to be two aspects of the same concept. Alexander Pope is credited with coining the term "satire." By utilising satire, they have been able to navigate both the realm of prose writing and poetry writing with relative ease. The diction that they have used, their stylistic view, presentation of the social and personal issues, use of allegory and mythology, presentation of important issues in a comic but witty manner, and such other features can be compared from different angles; and the present study has been developed taking into consideration the satiric style of both of the authors. In addition, considering that mock epic is one of the most effective types of satire, an attempt has been made in this article to provide a detailed comparison and analysis of Alexander Pope's mock epic "The Rape of the Lock" and a brief mock epic poem written by William Shakespeare. Syed Mujtaba Ali Marjar Nidhon Kabya (মার্জার নিধন কাব্য). Along with this, some other compositions of both the authors have been analyzed to reach the paper's objectives as well.

keywords: Syed Mujtaba , Life, Literature

INTRODUCTION

Syed Mujtaba Ali (Bengali: সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী; 13 September 1904 – 11 February 1974) was a Bengali writer, journalist, travel enthusiast, academic, scholar and linguist. He lived in Bangladesh, India, Germany, Afghanistan and Egypt.

Early life and education

Ali was born on September 13th, 1904 in Karimganj, which was located in the Sylhet division of the British Raj. His parents were Bengali Muslims. Khan Bahadur Syed Sikander Ali, his father, worked in the government as a sub-registrar. He was able to trace his paternal genealogy back to Shah Ahmed Mutawakkil, a local holy figure who was also a Syed of Taraf. However, it appears that he is not linked to the Syed dynasty that currently rules Taraf. Amtul Mannan Khatun, Ali's mother, was a member of the Chowdhury family of Bahadurpur. The Chowdhury family is an Islamized offshoot of the Pal family of Panchakhanda. Mujtaba was the youngest of three brothers, one of which being the author Syed Murtaza Ali. Mujtaba himself was the youngest of the three.

Although it was reported that Mujtaba Ali did not pass his intermediate test from MC College, he was successful in passing the matriculation exam at Sylhet Government Pilot High School. When Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Sylhet in 1919, Mujtaba Ali had the opportunity to see him. This encounter with Tagore had

a significant impact on Mujtaba Ali's literature. After some time, in 1921, Mujtaba decided to join the fight for Indian independence and dropped out of school in Sylhet. In the same year, 1921, he enrolled in Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, from which he received a Bachelor of Arts degree four years later. He was one of the very first students to graduate from Visva-Bharati. He attended classes at Aligarh Muslim University for a limited amount of time. After that, he made the trip to Kabul and began working as a lecturer in the education department there from 1927 till 1929. He received a scholarship from the Wilhelm Humboldt Foundation and used it to fund his education at institutions in Berlin and, subsequently, Bonn, Germany, from 1929 until 1932. In 1932, he completed his dissertation on the subject of comparative religious studies pertaining to Khojas in order to acquire his doctoral degree from the University of Bonn.

Career

After that, Ali attended classes at Al-Azhar University in Cairo for the 1934–1935 academic year. Between the years 1936 and 1944, he was a professor at institutions in Baroda and Bogra (1949). After spending a short time there, he moved back to India in 1949. He had been in East Pakistan. After attending Calcutta University for a short period of time in 1950, he went on to take the position of Secretary of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and editor of the council's Arabic newspaper, *Thaqafatul Hind*. Between the years of 1952 and 1956, he was employed by All India Radio in the cities of New Delhi, Cuttack, and Patna. After that, he became a member of the teaching staff at Visva-Bharati University, where he taught German language for four years (1956–1964) and afterwards taught Islamic culture. Up until the beginning of 1972, he called Calcutta home. After the country of Bangladesh was liberated, he relocated to Dhaka with his family and remained there till the year 1974, the year he passed away.

Language activism

After the Partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947, Ali went from India to the then East Pakistan. He was one of the first to call for Bangla as East Pakistan's state language on 30 November 1947, at the Sylhet Kendriya Muslim Sahitya Samsad.[7] He was a prominent activist and supporter of Bengali as the national language of East Pakistan.[7] In 1948, being the principal of Azizul Huq College, Bogra, he wrote an essay, 'The State Language of East Pakistan', which was printed in *Chaturanga* of Kolkata. During that time, the West Pakistan Rulers tried to impose Urdu as the only state language of East Pakistan while Bengali was spoken by most of the people. The government of Pakistan demanded an explanation. But Ali resigned and moved to India.

Linguistic abilities and literary works

Ali was able to speak 14 different languages, including his native Bengali as well as English, French, German, Italian, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit, Marathi, Gujarati, Pashtu, and Greek. Bengali was his mother tongue. Ali, along with other notable authors like as Natya Guru Nurul Momen and Jajabar (Binay Mukhopadhyay), was a pioneer in his own particular subgenre of Bengali literature. In the Bengali language, "Ramya Rachana" is a form of anecdotal story-telling that became incredibly famous due, in large part, to Ali's engaging writing style. These stories are frequently based on the author's own life experiences. Ali's tale of his voyage to and experiences in Kabul during his brief tenure as a lecturer in a college there is told in the book *Deshe Bideshe*, which is considered to be one of Ali's greatest works. *Panchatantra* is a compilation of

his ideas and short tales that he wrote throughout his time spent in Europe, Cairo, and Baroda (some of which were previously published in the journal 'Desh').

Objectives

1. To show the similarities and dissimilarities between Alexander Pope and Syed Mujtaba Ali in their use of satire;
2. To determine the common features of satire through mock epics by Alexander Pope and Syed Mujtaba Ali.

Literature Review

Books, articles, essays and research works on Syed Mujtaba Ali and Alexander pope have been studied with keen attention to develop this research work. In this concern, the book like Mujtaba Kotha O Annanya Proshongo (মুজতবা কথা ও অন্যান্য প্রসঙ্গ) written by Mujtaba Ali's own brother Syed Murtaja Ali was very helpful, where the author has discussed thoroughly about Mujtaba Ali's life, writing style and works. This book can be considered highly authentic as he (Murtaja Ali) saw Mujtaba Ali at a very close quarter. Another book Mujtaba Shahityer Rupabaichitro O Rachanashaili (মুজতবা সাহিত্যের রূপচরিত্র ও রচনশৈলী) a research work on him by a senior Professor and Chairman of department of Bangla of Dhaka University, helped to know about the writing style and some other related features of Syed Mujtaba Ali. Besides, some other books on Mujtaba Ali also contributed to get ideas about this legendary Bengali satirist.

Alexander Pope, who is also a focus of this research, is a well-known writer in the field of English literature, and there are a great number of books written about him. For the purpose of this investigation, a selection of those books that are relevant to the question that is being investigated was made. The first section of the primary text, titled "The Rape of the Lock," had a significant role in this instance. In addition, Alexander Pope's series entitled The Rape of the Lock of Monarch as well as some other critical observations proved to be beneficial. Additionally helpful for the investigation were a number of other historical texts. Conversations held on a variety of websites pertaining to Alexander Pope and The Rape of the Lock also helped to the completion of this work. In addition to this, a number of pieces that were published in newspapers provided significant support for the claims made in this study.

Methodology

Because this article is about literature, the observation technique has been employed the majority of the time. The relevant sources for the article were gathered together and analysed in order to generate the hypotheses as well as the objectives for the study. Due to the fact that Syed Mujtaba Ali is a writer from Bengal, critical notes made about him in Bangla were compiled, even though there were not many of them due to the fact that they were only found in a few different places online and in the market. In order to collect information on the two writers whose writing styles have been evaluated and compared, several senior instructors in Bangla and English literature were also interviewed for this purpose and asked questions about their works. Also, in the case of the English texts, any associated remarks or critiques were gathered together and taken into consideration. In order to construct the comparison between these two great satirists, different internet information about each of them was also taken into consideration.

Examples of Satire through Mock Epic by Alexander Pope and Syed Mujtaba Ali

Mock Epic

A literary work that parodies or satirically imitates the structure and style of an epic by addressing a minor subject in an epic-like way and imitating its form and style. The tropes of epics are often imitated in mock epics. These include the formal exposition of the topic, the invocation of the muses, inventories of soldiers and their equipment, the employment of stock epithets and Homeric similes, grandiloquent speech, and the participation of gods in human affairs. (From the NTC Dictionary) In addition to these, several other typical epic elements, such as the division of the poem into books or cantos, descriptions of heroic actions, accounts of huge sea voyages, and presentations of events in the underworld, may be found in a mock epic. These themes are possible. (The Rape of the Lock, Cummings Study Guides)

The Rape of the Lock and Marjar Nidhon Kabya

Mock epic is an atypical arena both in Bangla and English literature. In Bangla literature epics are very rare where we find only the analytical works on Meghnad Badh Kabya (মগ্ননাথ বধ কাব্য), a work of epic proportions written by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. And mock epic is nearly an unvisited branch in Bengali literature, where Syed Mujtaba Ali's poem Marjar Nidhon Kabya may be considered as having various traits of a mock epic due to the fact that it has several mock epic characteristics. Only the 18th century is specifically considered as the time for mock epics in English literature. During this time period, significant mock epic writers such as John Dryden and Alexander Pope were active. During this time period, Alexander Pope rose to prominence as a writer with the publication of works such as "The Rape of the Lock" (1714), "An Essay on Criticism" (1711), "Essay on Man" (1734), and many more. In this article, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the mock epic qualities present in Mujtaba Ali's poem Marjar Nidhon Kabya by contrasting it with Alexander Pope's mock epic The Rape of the Lock. The primary objective of this article is to examine the similarities and differences between the satirical writing styles of these two authors, and mock epics are a type of writing that can serve as an effective illustration of satire. The primary idea behind Marjar Nidhon Kabya originates from an Iranian fable that tells the story of two beautiful and wealthy bachelorette twin sisters who refuse to get married because they would rather live a life of perpetual independence. After that, they made the decision to be married, but they did so on the peculiar condition that their husbands would be flogged with their shoes each morning. The two wretched brothers, Firoz and Motin, who were born into poverty and accepted the conditions in order to wed the two sisters. After some time has passed, the brothers finally get together, and it is revealed that Motin's wife does not dare beat the husband because Motin, on the first night of their marriage, takes control over his wife by showing his enraged behaviour by cutting off the head of his wife's beloved cat; on the other hand, Firoz appears very pale and bald as a result of his wife beating him on a regular basis. After hearing this from Motin, Firoz heads back to his house, where he follows in Motin's footsteps and kills his wife's cat on that same night. On the other hand, this causes the opposite effect: his wife becomes even more enraged and escalates the severity of the beatings she administers on a daily basis as a kind of punishment. These incidents teach us that everything should be managed from the very beginning; else, correct results would not come about. And they teach us this by causing us to murder cats. Lord Petre, a member of one aristocratic family, cuts off a lock of hair of Arabella Fermor, a lady from another aristocratic family, giving birth to a severe clash between two families. The Rape of the Lock is

written on the basis of an incident that happened in Pope's time where Lord Petre, a member of one aristocratic family, cuts off a lock of hair of Arabella Fermor. John Caryll, a friend of Pope's, asked Pope to write something about this occurrence after John Caryll told Pope about the request. In response, Pope composes the satirical work *The Rape of the Lock*, in which he takes aim at those individuals who exaggerate the significance of a rather unimportant thing. Belinda plays the role of the protagonist in the poem, while Baron takes on the role of the hero. Baron is the one who removes a strand of hair from Belinda's head, which results in an uproar over a little matter. This narrative poem by Pope is both delightful and unique in terms of its place in the history of English literature since it makes use of practically all of the epic themes and techniques while maintaining a sarcastic tone. In the following section of this investigation, the satirical mock epic elements present in both of the poems, *The Rape of the Lock* and *Marjar Nidhon Kabya*, will be dissected, compared, and discussed.

Invocation

The invocation is an important component of the fake epic that comes first. In the beginning, ancient epic poets would call upon the Muse of poetry; Pope, following in the footsteps of these ancient writers, does the same, calling upon both the Muse and Caryll:

What dire offence from amorous causes springs, What mighty contests rise from trivial things' I sign-This verse to Caryll, Muse! Is due:” (Line 1- 3)

Like this, in *Marjar Nidhon Kabya*, the narrator Situ Miah (সিতু মিয়া) invokes by recalling the names of different masters and sources of power:

কোন দেবে পূজা করি কোন শীর্ষী ধরি?
গণপতি, মৌলা-আলী, ধূর্জটি, শ্রীহরি?
মুশকিল- আসান আর মুশীদ মস্তান
কোম্পানি কি মহারানী, ইংরেজ শয়তান?
হিন্দুস্তান, পাকিস্তান, যেবা আছ যথা
ইস্পাহানি, ডালমিগ্রা – কলির দেবতা।
সবারে সুরণ করি সিতুমিগ্রা ভনে
বেদরদ বেধড়ক, ভয় নাহি মনে।।

Formal Statement of the Theme

Another characteristic of mock epics that can be seen in the lines above from *Marjar Nidhon Kabya* and *The Rape of the Lock* is referred to as the "formal declaration of the topic," and it provides us with a sense of the tone of the poems as well as a notion of the impending problems. Then we read the first one, we get the impression that something untoward has occurred, and when we read the Bangla poetry, we notice that the narrator expresses his bewilderment, which gives the reader the impression that there are some uncomfortable things going on here.

Grand and Elevated Manner

The mock epics make fun of epic features like grand speech and exalted manner by presenting them in a humorous context. Pope makes use of this form in a very deliberate manner throughout the entirety of the poem *The Rape of the Lock*. Be an illustration, the protagonist of the poem, Belinda, is referred to as "the prettiest of mortals":

Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air! (Line 27-28)

Likewise, in *Marjar Nidhon Kabya* the poet uses elevated style of using different Bangla and foreign words, especially adjectives and adverbs, in the whole poem:

হরান দেশের কেচ্ছা শোনো সাধুজন
বেহদ রঞ্জিন কেচ্ছা, বহুত বরণ।
এস্তার এলেম পাবে করিলে খেয়াল
রোশনী আসিবে দিলে ভাঙিয়া দেয়াল।

Again the narrator says about the young ladies:

ইরান দেশেতে ছিল যমজ তরুণী
ইয়া রঙ, ইয়া ঢং, নানান গুনে গুণী।

Moral

The moral of a mock epic is an essential component, and while it may be expressed explicitly in certain phrases within a poem, more often than not, the moral is implicit in the monologues that make up the poem. The moral provides information about the purpose of the poetry. It may talk about the teaching that the poem is intended to communicate, or it may also send some messages to the audience. Alexander Pope conveys this message in *The Rape of the Lock* through the words of a female character named Clarissa; at this particular juncture, Clarissa acts as Pope's spokesperson. In her lecture, she questions why it is that beauty is valued the most and continues by noting that if you don't have excellent sense, beauty loses all of its significance.

Say why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most, How vain are all these glories, all our pains, Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains: 'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'" (Pope: 1969, canto v, 2nd & 3rd stanza)

Besides, she says that beauty must decay..

But since, alas! frail beauty must decay, Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey; Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul." (Pope: 1969, canto v, 2nd & 3rd stanza)

After these lines an interesting mock we find that here nobody applauds her for her speech which is a also mock epic quality

So spoke the Dame, but no applause ensu'd; (Pope: 1969, canto v, 4th stanza)

As a result of this, it is now abundantly evident that Pope makes fun of the ridiculous behaviour of the aristocratic ladies in his society inside the poem, and via the moral, he elucidates his perspective, which he intends for the audience to take away from the work. In the same way, Syed Mujtaba Ali uses a mouthpiece called Situ Miah who narrates the poem in Marjar Nidhon Kabya. At the end of the poem, we get a speech that is similar to a moral, and in it, it is stated that first steps are extremely important no matter where you are, particularly when you are attempting to take authoritative power and supremacy:

স্বরাজ লাভের সাথে কালোবাজারীয়ে
মারনি এখন তাই কর হানো শিরে!
শাদীর পয়লা রাতে মারিবে বিড়াল
না হলে বর্বাদ সব তাবৎ পয়মাল।।

Muitaba Ali's Novels & Stories

It is not an easy effort to categorise certain of Mujtaba Ali's writings into a correct and distinct literary type. Furthermore, it does not appear to be an easy task to describe these writings in accordance with the principles of literature. This is a challenging task. As a result of this, it's possible that the critics will have differing points of view. In this regard, it is possible to use four different novels of Mujtaba as examples. Even though these four publications include the word "novel" in their titles, there is some debate as to whether or not they can truly be classified as novels when other factors are taken into account. 1 These four novels are referred to as:

1. Abisvasya : Published in 'Des*' from 7"* November 1953 - 3rc April, 1954.
2. Sabnam : Published in 'D es' from 14th May 1960 to 27,f August 1960.Published in the form of book in 1960.
3. Sahar-iar:Published in 'Des'from 8th February 1969 to 2m August 1969.Published in the form of book in 1969,
4. Tulanahma : Directly published in the form of book in 1974

Before delving into an analysis of these four books, it would be beneficial to first have a few words to discuss novels. Out of all the other literary movements, the novel is most closely associated with the age in which we currently live. The term "novel" has a shifting meaning as it moves through different stages of its evolution. The term "novel" cannot be confined to any one particular field or category of classification. The progression of time is mirrored in the appearance of fresh analytic investigations on literary works. As a consequence of this, it is without a doubt a more difficult work to decide upon an exhaustive definition of novel that may be acceptable to everyone. In spite of this, we may make an attempt to roughly ascertain the genuine nature of novei. The work was written by the renowned author Sommerset Maughm, who is known all over the world.

"The story the author has to tell should be coherent and persuasive; it should have a beginning, middle and an end; and the end should be the natural consequence o f the beginning. The episodes should have probability and should not only develop the 2 theme, but grow out o f the story. "

An English critic has given alongside a methodical definition of novel It is cited here :

“ Novel is a narration in prose, based on a story in which the author may portray character and the life of an age and analyse sentiments and passions and the reactions of men and women in their environment.”

Some of the features of novel come to our notice from this very definition:

- a. A novel should have a plot of its own.
- b. A novel is to be written mainly in prose form.
- c. Particular characters as a particular age are to be delineated in it
- d. Some men and women from the world of fancy and the analysis of their sentiment, emotion and reaction are also to be portrayed in it.

That example, the characters in a book that honours a certain kind of realism will talk and act in a way that is representative of a specific era in history. To continue, the term "environment" in this context refers to a certain era of time. Thirdly, psychological analysis is the most important topic when discussing the nature and conduct of the characters in the book, both male and female. Keeping all of these criteria in mind, it may be claimed for the nonce that a novel is a piece of prose-fiction that has the following five elements: plot, character, dialogue, environment, and critique of life. 4 In this context, we think of the renowned English author Henry James (1843-1926), who lived throughout this time period. In the 1884 edition of his book titled "THE ART OF FICTION," he wrote:

“A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life.”

The purpose of a book is to provide a "direct sense of life," as the expression goes. Noct are a reflection of a life. It examines the positives and negatives of living a normal life. Henry James advised people to "attempt to grasp the hue of life itself" in his writings. The storyline of a contemporary novel progresses via the development of the characters and by the elucidation of the more nuanced facets of those characters' inner psychological worlds. Because of this, we are going to need some assistance from a "internal monologue" or a "stream of consciousness." After this point, the central motif of a work will no longer be found in the straightforward reporting of the plot.

From the very beginning of the 20th century onward, conventional wisdom surrounding novels has been subject to a continuous process of transformation. Even if the practise of reflecting human existence and of making a peek into the mind of man in novels had been there before the 20th century, up to date appraisal of the new thoughts and conceptions of human nature had not been as prevalent as it is now. Since there has been a quake felt all over the world as a result of the investigative studies conducted on human nature in the early part of the 20th century, it is only logical that there has been a dramatic shift in the writing style and the progression of the book. Because at this point in the story, the novel has developed into a portrayal of life in the form of narration and dialogue of those human people who have been raised in a specific culture and environment. During that period of time, a significant event took place in the annals of world history. 1909 was the year when Sigmund Freud and his pupil Young first presented their psychoanalytic theory. The

practise and theory of psychoanalysis have been instrumental in making significant contributions to the plot development of subsequent novels.

It is actually to our great good fortune that the Bengali novel was never restricted to only the recounting of stories from the very beginning of its history. In addition to this, the practise of looking into one's own mental interior was also present. Right from the publication of 'Bisabriksa,' 'Krisna Kanter Will,' 'Cokher Bali,' and 'Caturanga,' Bengali novels progressively took on a steady tradition as a result of the efforts of Saratchandra, Tarasankar, Manik, and Bibhutibhusan, amongst others. Since the release of the first novel by Mujtaba Ali twenty to twenty-five years ago, the plots of Bengali novels have been evolving in new directions. It is essential to keep in mind that the period of time being discussed is a critically relevant one since it takes place in between the two world wars. At this point in history, the theories of Freud and Karl Marx have, all over the world, raised an important question about the realm of consciousness that human beings inhabit. Both before and during the Second World War, the social, national, economic, moral, and fundamental aspects of man's life underwent profound shifts. A fluctuating sense of values is always present. These aspects have also had several kind of an impact on Bengali literature throughout its history. Following one another in rapid succession are the novels 'Pather Pancali,' 'Padmanadir Majhi,' 'Putul Nacer Itikatha,' 'cSeer Kabita,' and a great number of other books. To immerse oneself in the process of book writing at this particular period requires a significant amount of bravery on the side of the one doing so. This audacity was demonstrated by Mujtaba. Even in the choosing of subject matter, he had a particular kind of taste. In the realm of creations, he remained true to his own unique style. However, it is quite evident that Mujtaba has not restricted all of his creative endeavours to the realm of his work alone. It went against his nature to put him in a box labelled "creative works," and it was against his nature. Because of this, he did not master novel writing or poetry to the fullest extent possible, but rather, he rather entirely developed a new tradition based on the experiences he had gained. Nobody started such a custom, and nobody continued it after them, either. This is the primary reason, according to Mujtaba, for limiting him to a total of only four works.

Conclusion

Sayed Mujtaba Ali is a personality in the world of Bengali literature whose presence cannot be ignored and cannot be discounted. During the course of this academic endeavour, His unintentional presence in practically all of the subgenres of modern Bengali literature has been analysed and analysed in great depth. It is a reality that the required review and study on him were not done adequately in any of the earlier research works, and it is also a fact that Mujtaba is essentially neglected in the academic realm. These are both facts that cannot be disputed. In the course of our growth, we came to realise that Mujtaba possesses a distinctive writing style in addition to being a brilliant essayist, novelist, story-writer, travelogue-writer, child-literateur, translator, and so on and so forth. This was something that we came to realise over the course of our journey. Even yet, his familiarity with that person was incomplete at that point in time. After examining his adventurous life and reading his writings, we came to the realisation that he was a genuine artist in all of Bengali literature. This led us to the conclusion that he was born in Bengal. For example, the results of our research indicate that he is one of the most complicated and significant writers in Bengali travelogue. Alexander Pope's sarcastic style is one that has been passed down through the centuries of English literature readers and been regarded in extremely high respect. In a similar vein, the name Syed Mujtaba Ali is mentioned with a great deal of reverence in Bengali literature. This is especially the case due to his most distinctively original sarcastic style,

which is highly out of the usual in Bengali literature. Whatever it was that they both wrote, they presented it with an original blend of satire and mockery that does not make us feel repulsed, but rather shows the people their mistakes so that they can become aware of them and correct themselves; and hopefully, it would not be a wrong if we referred to these two legendary figures as "the classics."

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