Chapter – VI

STYLE AND EXPRESSION OF
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Style is as essential to a prose writer as passion is for a poet. Style in prose not only depends upon matter, it is a form of matter - the most ethereal imponderable form. It is one of the most important and integral component of a novel like plot, character, their technique etc.

In simple words, style is the way the novelist expresses his feelings and ideas through the use of language. Hence, it is most pleasant. The most important thing that the writer has to say, the part of his meaning which is inexpressible in words, he expresses in his style. The writer exposes his own personality through his style, as F.C. Lucas observed that “Style is personality clothed in words”\(^1\). The style is a wonderful manifestation of the writers mind.\(^2\)

Style is nothing but the use of language by a writer in a particular and peculiar way. It is naturally connected with the novelist’s philosophy and vision of life. “The writers attitude towards life is noticeable even in his sentence-constructions, choice of words and narration of the story.”\(^3\) The writer’s use of words, sentences and his particular use of idiom is generally known as style. Hence, style varies in case of different writers, as the language undergoes a change with changing thoughts and ideas of the respective writer. It is obvious that the language of a writer determined his style. As per the observation of Prof. Umesh Deka “The language, in fact, is not different from the style; they are

1. Lucas, F.C.: Style, p. 49
3. Deka, Umesh : Post War Assamese Novel, p. 100
reciprocal and inseparable from each other. The language decides the style. The style is a special method used by the writer for the expression of his thoughts.\textsuperscript{4} Marry Middleton also had confirmed, “Style is the technique of expression.”\textsuperscript{5} In other words the regulated use of language is style. It is one such factor by which the greatness of a writer can be evaluated. It is style which brings out the true splendour of any literary composition.

Hardy’s strange individuality does contrive to imprint itself on his actual use of language. Even though he uses clichés, the final effect of his writing is never commonplace. ‘His very clumsiness and roughness differentiate it from the leading article, and reveal a characteristic idiosyncrasy in the use of language. One could never mistake a paragraph by Hardy for a paragraph by anybody else.’\textsuperscript{6}

Hardy’s style is essentially of the philosophic type, an emanation of his mind. Hardy may or may not be a pessimist but it is undeniable that his outlook on the visible world is gray. And his style is gray, gray as November skies.\textsuperscript{7} His style is not conspicuously beautiful; it is not luxuriant or alluringly harmonies. There is simplicity in style. It is in the main, a bare, significant narrative style, of easy but not obstructive balance. His thought falls into phrases and paragraphs of massiveness. ‘Rarely can it be called supple, agile, brilliant: the sentences do not flash out with a bright play of wit and fancy, in the manner of some delightful modern writers. Rather, Mr. Hardy cultivates a sustained equability’.\textsuperscript{8} The keen epigrams, the swift brilliant saying, are rare. He prefers to build up his speech upon a statelier plan, and cultivate a sustained equality. He gives comfortable

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} Deka, Umesh : Post War Assamese Novel, p. 100
\item \textsuperscript{5} Murry, Middleton J. : The Problem of Style, p. 5
\item \textsuperscript{6} Cecil, David : Hardy the Novelist, p.138
\item \textsuperscript{7} Duffin, H.C.: Thomas Hardy- A Study of the Wessex Novels, p.79
\item \textsuperscript{8} Johnson, Lionel Pigot : The Art of Thomas Hardy, p.72
\end{itemize}
sense of dealing with realities. His economy in the use of words helps towards a general effect of gravity and deliberation. Of each page, and paragraph, and sentence, we can say, that we know the reason of its existence: the measured expressions, one with another, each contributing its just service, compose an organic whole. There is integrity and balanced progress in his prose. It is a deliberate and grave style and the accent of stateliness and of solemnity is maintained throughout, unsoftened by and unrelieved by the gentler spirit of sympathy.

Moreover, it is a leisurely style, so to say. There is no hurry none of that haste to be concise and tense, which makes a cluster of exited epigrams do the work of many rich and thoughtful pages. The readers, therefore, accepts everything without any immediate sensation of wonder or surprise. The sensation is felt when the story is over; then comes the flush of emotion, as the accumulated truth and beauty last come home to the reader in their unity and entirety. In his own style Hardy expresses his thoughts clearly and effectively. 'Thus it satisfies the first demand that all styles are called upon to fill – it perfectly corresponds with and expresses the profoundest intention of the writer'.\(^9\) One thing should be noted particularly that the grave atmosphere in Hardy's novels is chiefly due to his style, it breathes in every paragraph, and is as recognizable and characteristics as the scent of the salt ocean. It carries with it an impression of stern and sad eyes, gazing steadily and unflinchingly over the world's wrong. Whatever there may be in it of bitterness is generally suppressed. His great masculine strength appears not least in his style. It is iron-cold with the stillness of dead passion. What opportunities for raving, shrieking, meaning are offered by such scenes as Yoebright's accusation of Eustacia, the Christening of Sorrow, the undesired, the finale of the Woodlanders, the death of the children of Jude, the Sue, and dozen

\(^9\) {Duffin, Henry Charles : Thomas Hardy- A Study of the Wessex Novels, p.80}
others. Yet nowhere is there a suspicion of rent, of sensationalism, of noise of any sort. Jude the most agonizingly, desperately, tragic of all the novels is the coldest of all in narration.

Duffin noticed three characteristics of Hardy’s style, first being the tragic one. Tragic style predominates in his The Mayor of Casterbridge and Jude the Obscure. There it is in Tess as well. Purple patches written in his tragic style, however, are legitimate objects of admiration, provided they are the outcome of spontaneous rise in feeling. Many passages of a somber beauty are written in this style. In this, he maintains the accent of stateliness and of solemnity, unsoftened by and unrelieved by the gentler spirit of sympathy.

For the general progress of narration Hardy employs a style that is undistinguished almost to baldness; the statement about the revealing quality of short extracts must not be taken to cover this quite considerable portion of his writing. It is capable of taking on an almost shocking degree of triteness, banality at times. 10 Hardy’s Jude the Obscure goes in a very plain narrative manner, however, ultimately rises to the greatest heights of the tragic style.

His third variety is on a scarcely lower level than the first tragic kind, it is used when Hardy gets thoroughly absorbed in the details of Wessex life. 11 Mostly humour in Hardy’s novel arises from his rustic characters. It is created out of ignorance. It is racy of the soil, humorous, perfect without self-consciousness, and dialect flows into and out of it without disturbance.

“We ought to put her in a wagon; we’ll get a hearse.”

“There will hardly be time, ma’am, well there?”

10. Duffin, H.C.: Thomas Hardy- A Study of the Wessex Novels, the Poems and the Dynasts, p.160
11. Ibid, p.160
“Perhaps not”. She said, musingly, “When did you say we must be at the door—three o’clock?”

“Three o’clock this afternoon, ma’am, so to speak it. A pretty wagon is better than an ugly hearse, after all. Joseph, have the new spring wagon with the blue body and the red wheels, and wash it very clean. And, Joseph—”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Carry with you some evergreens and flowers to put upon her coffin—indeed, gather a great many, and completely bury her in them. Get some boughs of laurustinus, and variegated box, and yew, and boy’s-love; ay, and some bunches of chrysanthemum. And let old Pleasant draw her, because she knew him so well.”

Another domain of his style may be named safely and correctly as “the pastoral style”. In this style, Hardy the poet is reflected. This type of style predominates in his Far from the Madding Crowd, The Woodlanders, Tess of D’Urbervilles and The Return of the Native. A single specimen of pastoral style is enough to justify Hardy’s mastery in his art.

“You know, mistress, that I love you, and shall love you always. I only mention this to bring your mind that at any rate I would wish to do you no harm; beyond that I put it aside. I have lost in the race for money and good things, and I am not such a fool as to pretend to ‘ee now I am poor, and you have got altogether above me. But Bathshba, dear mistress—this I beg you to consider, that, both to keep yourself well honoured among the workfolk, and

12. Hardy, Thomas: Far From the Madding Crowd, p.326
in common generosity to an honourable man who loves you as well as I, you should be more discreet in your bearing towards this soldier”.  

The poetic style of Hardy is beautifully observed and discussed by Trevor Johnson. He commented, “many novelists begin as poets, but Hardy never ceased to be one”.  

He brought into discussion Hardy’s concluding lines of chapter “Fury” in *Far From the Madding Crowd* analyzing that Hardy wrote as prose without line division which could actually compose a blank verse. Hardy is so involved in creating the scene here that he broke into verse without realizing it.

“Above the dark margin of the earth appeared
Foreshores and promontories of coppery cloud,
Bounding a green and pellucid expanses
In the western sky.
Amaranthine glosses came over them then,
And the unresting world wheeled her round to
A contrasting prospect eastward, in the shape
Of indecisive and palpitating stars.
She gazed upon their silent throes amid
The shades of space, but realized none at all.
Her troubled spirit was far away with Troy.”

The pastoral style helps Hardy’s writing “remain the prose of a poet in close contact with the objects of nature, a creature of tangibility, even in the imaginative handling of abstract ideas. There is indeed a Keats like quality in Hardy”. One can think of Keats’ description of Madeline unclasping her warmed

13. Hardy, Thomas: *Far From The Madding Crowd*, p.219
14. Johnson, Trevor: *Thomas Hardy*, p.93
15. Hardy, Thomas: *Far From the Madding Crowd*, p.237
jewels one by one, when one read of Hardy’s picture of Tess coming down, on a hot summer afternoon, from her nap, to the silent kitchen, and yawning “like a sunned cat”. Hardy’s power of visualization can be felt. His creative power shows itself most continuously and most characteristically in its capacity to embody its inspiration in visible form.

This power he achieves first by his sheer ability to picture his scene completely and secondly by his extensive use of arresting similes. Hardy works predominantly with similes, which he clusters around moments of fantasizing or intense emotion. ‘Hardy’s Gothic fancy does always run to strangeness, and it is the strangeness that makes it so vivid’.17 A few examples from Tess of D’Urbervilles will justify this point:

‘The evening sun was now ugly to her, like a great inflamed wound in the sky’ (chapter 21, p.173)

‘Who had been caught during her days of immaturity like a bird in a springe’ (chapter 31, p.251)

‘A dawn that was ashy and furtive, as though associated with crime’ (chapter 36, p.302)

‘An immense rope of hair like a ship’s cable’ (chapter 39, p.335)

‘Two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies’ (chapter 43, p.364)18

The startling similes of Hardy can also be regarded a conceit, which he learnt from metaphysical school, which is a significant poetic tool in modern age.

17. Cecil, David: Hardy the Novelist, p.59
18. Hardy, Thomas: Tess of D’Urbervilles, p.aa
Hardy knows how much strength and beauty springs from the simplest words, well-chosen and well-arranged by a scholarly taste. Hence his words are the simplest, appropriate well-chosen and well consorted by the scholar’s discrimination. They are expressive and effective in producing a sense of strangeness and wonder. It is also true that at times Hardy writes swiftly, even dully, and little pompously. But a wider view shows him declining to owe to beauty of language any effect which is not inherent in the story. Harold Child says, “His object is to say what exactly he means to say. If the subject is in itself, great, or moving, or beautiful, then his prose will convey to you the impression of greatness, or will touch you to tears or uplift you with beauty. But he will never rely upon ornament, nor even upon subtlety of sound or cadence, for an affect which the situation cannot produce of itself.”

Hardy is fond of using a cluster of words. He repeats a word- noun, adjective or verb- several times and employs a pair of synonymous words to convey the impression. “He has learnt it from Shakespeare who also gives us a pair of two synonymous words- one of Anglo-Saxon root and another of Latin/Greek root. The pair of three has been a favourite structural device in prose; in antithetical sentences as in Bacon’s famous ‘Some books are to be tasted…….” Hardy usually uses the pair of three, but sometimes he exceeds the number. A few examples from the Tess of D’Urbervilles below here:

“…Who are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely”

*(chapter 31, p.250)*

“doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame” *(chapter 31, p.249)*

“I have been hoping, longing, praying” *(chapter 35, p.293)*

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20. Saxena, Alka & Dixit, Sudhir: *Hardy’s Tess of Durbervilles*, p.196
"O Tess-you are too, too—childish-unformed-crude." (chapter 37, p.305)

"It would anger him, grieve him, stultify him" (chapter 37, p.320)

Examples of Hardy’s repetition of words and phrase are:

“No, no, no!”

“Dead, dead, dead”

“too late too late”,

“Yes- O; yes, yes!”

“Why didn’t you stay and love me....why didn’t you, why didn’t you?" (chapter 31, p.250)

“He was becoming ill with thinking, eaten out with thinking, withered by thinking” (chapter 36, p.310)

His terms and phrases may not startle us disproportionately to their importance, but they fill us with a continual pleasure. He has not the delicate and discriminating ear of the supreme artist. He has natural eloquence of language. Against his vocabulary, here and there, has been brought a charge of undue parade and being pedantic. This is true; especially in his constant reference to art. Many of his illusions would be unintelligible to his readers without a competent knowledge of Dutch and Italian picture. The same criticism applies to his introduction of scientific terms from architecture, geology, astronomy, botany, optics, etc. He uses expressions like ‘monochromatic’, ‘photosphere’, ‘redemptive theolatry’, ‘isometric’, ‘pink nebulousity’, ‘cimarecta’, ‘diaphragms’; some of

21. Hardy, Thomas: Tess of D’Urbervilles, p.aa
these words have been lately absorbed in literature while some are yet not accepted.

When Hardy uses dialect, however he uses it with the touch of a master hand. He makes but a sparing use of the local words of Wessex dialect because he rightly understands that a phonograph of Wessex dialect will spoil the dialogues. He successfully contrives to reconcile the demands of truth with those of are in a way which brings Wessex before our eyes and the echo of its speech into our ears.

Mrs. Durbeyfield habitually spoke the dialect; her daughter, who had passed the Sixth Standard in the National School under a London-trained mistress, spoke two languages; the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality.²²

Hardy did not consider the dialect of his native Wessex to be inferior to Standard English and he did not consider that representing the speech of his characters in dialect form was simply an entertaining embellishment for his readers.²³ Unlike several nineteenth-century writers, he did not employ dialect-speaking characters who were idiosyncratic, lacked education, or who were exaggeratedly 'low' in society; Hardy took local dialects seriously. Hardy took a positive attitude towards the dialect of his native country. For him it was neither a debased form of standard English nor an embellishment to give 'local colour' to his writing, but an ancient tongue with characteristics which existed in their own right and as deviations. In his obituary for the poet William Barnes he wrote:

"In the systematic study of his native dialect....he has shown the world that far from being....a corruption of correct English, it is a

²². Hardy, Thomas: Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p.17
²³. Carter, Roland & McRae, John: The Routledge history of literature in English: Britain and Ireland, p.289
distinct branch of Teutonic speech, regular in declension and conjugation, and richer in many classes of words than any other tongue known to him".24

Of course, Hardy knew that to transcribe local speech too accurately would cause problems for his readers, but he believed it was important to retain the spirit of the talk of certain of his characters. He was, however, primarily interested in using speech differences to distinguish between his characters, particularly with references to their social position and to the social and psychological contexts in which they find themselves. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles Tess's ability to move between different speech forms—for example, the dialect of her home and the more standard dialect of Alec D'Urberville—illustrates the linguistic and social dualities and clashes in values produced by new culture processes. Hardy was also aware that speaking the dialect of the speech community of which you are a part is a natural act embodying who you really are.

For example, Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge moves towards more standard speech when he belongs to achieve material success and a successful position within the community, but when his status changes he begins increasingly to use dialect forms. Here he comments on a man who aspires to his former position as mayor:

“A fellow of his age going to be Mayor, indeed!....But 'tis her money that floats en upward. Ha-ha-how cust odd it is. Here be I, his former master, working for him as man. and he the man standing as master, with my house and my furniture and my what-you-may-call wife all his own.”25

24. Chapman, Raymond: The Language of Thomas Hardy, p.112
25. Hardy, Thomas: The Mayor of Casterbridge, p.223
More commonly, however, characters speak in the local Wessex dialect when under the pressure of emotion. For example, Gabriel Oak in *Far From the Madding Crowd* is moved to speak to Bathsheba:

“If wild heat had to do wi’ it, making ye long to overcome the awkwardness about your husband’s vanishing, it mid be wrong. The real sin, ma’am, in my mind, lies in thinking of ever wedding wi’ a man you don’t love honest and true.”

Although Hardy was among the first English novelists who understood the social and personal significance of dialects in relation to Standard English, he remained for the most part constrained by the Victorian convention that main characters in a novel, especially those characters who are meant to engage the sympathy of the reader, should consistently speak Standard English. Paradoxically, therefore, major characters such as Tess and Jude (the Obscure) only rarely speak in local dialects, in spite of their social positions. What is important, however, is that Hardy represents his characters as speaking in a way which would be normal both for other characters and readers. He wanted to capture the spirit of independence in his characters but could not risk underlining this by an over-reliance on dialect speech.

A minor matter is the question of the names of Hardy’s characters. Few novelists like him have cared to label their characters with names distinctive of the qualities the reader is to find in them. For example Jude and Tess travel freely under designations that carry no element of descriptive meaning. Angle Clare and Sue Bridehead are marvelously and subtly symbolized by their names. Fawley is geographical, being the real name of Jude’s native village of Marygreen, and

26. Hardy, Thomas: *Far From the Madding Crowd*, p.409
Wessex is full of Winter-bones, though the name with its suggestion of bright stainlessness, is an exquisite choice for Giles.²⁷

Hardy sometimes makes use of quotations as well and an apt and un­forced quotation gives great pleasure, partly intellectual and largely emotional. “Occasionally we are presented with a complete and most thankworthy poem, like the altogether admirable ‘ancient and time-worn hymn’ sung by the Mellstock choir – Remember Adam’s fall,/ O thou Man – or the very charming ‘Point du jour’ that Clym Yeobright sings, so much to the distress of the rebellious Eustacia.”²⁸

Hardy has also made use of the epistolary form. His letters are much less ambitious; perfectly appropriate and varied and much detached pleasure can be derived from them. Some of his letters are profoundly revealing. And a letter ought to be revealing. After all epistolary form is only a special kind of dramatic expression or projection that is required in a novel. Some of the best specimens of his letters are in the novel Tess.

Hardy does not make much use of ‘satire’. But whatever use he makes of it, it seems wasted on an impersonal Cause of Things i.e. fate. Furthermore although the whole Hardy world is founded on irony, irony as a figure is rare in his style.

He seems to be incompetent in the ordinary mechanics of his trade. He often cannot manage the ordinary syntax and grammar of the English language. He finds it hard to make a plain statement plainly.

²⁷. Duffin, H.C.: Thomas Hardy- A Study of Wessex Novels, the Poems and the Dynasts, p.180
²⁸. Duffin, H.C.: Thomas Hardy- A Study of Wessex Novels, p.88
The truth is, two elements go to make a good style. First, which Hardy is noticeably lacking, is the grasp of the nature of the English language which enables a writer to write it clearly, accurately and economically; second, which Hardy has in the highest degree, is the feeling for a flavour of a word and the flow of a rhythm which enables him to write it eloquently and expressively. In fact, “Hardy was not a born master of style like Thackeray, nor a made one like Stevenson. But when his theme makes demands, as it does more than half the time he is writing, he is inspired by it to heights and splendours not easily excelled.”

Considering Assamese Regional novels from this viewpoint, certain special characteristics can be noticed in its style. However, the discussed Assamese Novels are taken from different writers; from various period of time. Hence, a kind of variegated style and expression can be found in this study.

Rajanikanta Bordoloi’s Mirijiori was the first Assamese Regional novel, written in the dawn in the history of Assamese literature. Hence, naturally the style and expression used by the novelist was very simple and traditional, without any newness. Bordoloi used the most simple words and plain language. His sentences were short and lucid. For example, we can examine the words of Janki, when both Janki and Panei were tied up by Gachi-Miri:


29. Duffin, H.C.: Thomas Hardy study of the Wessex Novels, the Poems, and The Dynasts, p.182
30. Bordoloi, Rajanikanta : Miri Jiori, p. 78
The main reason of Rajanikanta Bordoloi’s success and popularity was his lucid and life-like expressions. There was no unrealistic presentation in his narrative style. “There was no exaggeration in his use of language. Precise and meticulous expressions made his style simple.”

Bordoloi’s style was very much realistic. Use of Assamese idioms, phrases, proverbs and the daily used language brought the realistic expression. He also used the Assamese as it was spoken by the Miri People. Example:

“Etia nika tayatar gar chapilu kijani ei dukar ñgvartu moi epera
nika chaidar jirabolo pau, yen jani bage kauk, baluke kauk moi jaugoi”

Nabakanta Baruah has essentially employed the pastoral style in his Kapiliparia Sadhu which Hardy was the master of. The poet Nabakanta Baruah can be seen in almost all the pages of the novel. His sentences are small and brief. Simplicity and preciseness became a mention-worthy trait of this novel, which reduced and restricted it into a small volume. The use of symbols, metaphors and other devices made this short novel essentially poetic. The opening line of the novel may be reproduced here as an example:

“Krandasi, Akasaru nam. Akase kande. Khasia paharat barasun
juri dhour sapar negurchiga beg. Paharar dhuwa pani, jhum kheti
sarua kara pani, Kilingar bukwedi ring mari nami ahe gaon bhun
mahatiyai.”

32. Bordoloi, Rajanikanta : Miri Jiori, p. 79.
The novelist used accurate style and expression for each of the characters. Sometimes his language is very plain and simple while at some other point it is extremely rhythmic and beautiful. The variety of the language and the dialogue served aptly for their specific character. The dialogue of Bhangura Bhakat was an beautiful example of this point.

"Bhakate sar pai uthi bahe. Madhav- Madhav! Piche ki hol nu? lem-chem, lanthan-chanthan, ariya-chariya loi korpara ulalahi?" 34

"Nabakanta Baruah was very subtle in using local language along with the standard Assamese. To maintain the authenticity of the Assamese conversation, feeling and thinking of uneducated lower class people who do not know standard Assamese (exact words), he sometimes uses mispronounced form of Assamese words." 35 One may see many rural words in Baruah’s novel because of his intimate familiarity with rural life, its manners and conversations. The use of local dialect, which draws our attention can be illustrated with the following example:

"Tok biri anbahe kaichlu, Hicapat likhba kuni kaichil? Machar damto badi diba narli." 36

Baruah also used the colloquial language of the non-Assamese speakers. The language of Assamese at the mouth of Hindi and Bengali speaking people was beautifully incorporated in the novel. As these people were a part of the region, as they became characters of his novel, the novelist justified their conversational skills to bring the successful portrayal of the region. Example:

34. Baruah, Nabakanta : Kapiliparia Sadhu, p. 25
35. Deka, Umesh : Post War Assamese Novel, p. 111
36. Baruah, Nabakanta : Kapiliparia Sadhu, p. 36
“Abhi kun pakaega, rat me kam tab pakake khayega.”

“O, tumaluk mach bechega- hamlog mach nai bechega. Pathar me mach marta aru paita bhat ka lagat purpur ke khata hai. Kacha pane se bhuj dega” 37

Nabakanta Baruah used ample phrase and idioms, proverbs etc. which are the integral part of rural speaking. Examples:

‘Saparnegurchigabeg’ (p.1), ‘chedeli-bhedeli’ (p.2), ‘bheti uchan hal’ (p.4), ‘hat-bat kara’ (p.6), ‘ethengiya bagali’ (p.6), ‘Asoi mata’ (p.7), ‘kalapani huwa’ (p.33), ‘bidhi-pathali diya’ (p.54), ‘guri-gach’ (p.79) etc.

The Novelist has presented beautifully the mispronounced English and other words in the mouth of the simple village people. For example—

*eschol (school), contector (contractor), farak (frock), karchin (kerosene), kongrej (congress), istation (station), high cut (high court) etc.*

Kapiliparia Sadhu basically revealed the mysterious relation between human and nature; between Rupai and Kapili. This mysticism and the mysterious atmosphere are created by the novelist’s language and its expression. The poetic expression of Nabakanta Baruah helped in achieving its mysterious aim. He used a number of symbols, metaphors, imageries, marvelous, expressions etc. that made it essentially a stylish novel. Observing this stylish nature of the novel, Hem Baruah commented Kapiliparia Sadhu as a “poetry based on extremely assimilation of reality”. 38

37. Baruah, Nabakanta: Kapiliparia Sadhu, p.19
38. Baruah, Hem: Assamese Literature (Quoted in Esa Bacharar Asamiya Upanyas, p.462)
Nirupama Borgohain’s novels Sei Nadi Nirabadhi and Iparar Ghar Siparar Ghar employ expressive and lucid language. The novelist used simple style, devoid of any complexity in its expressions.

Sei Nadi Nirabadhi was the first novel by Borgohain. She used simple, short and informative sentences in the novel. The expressions were very realistic and lifelike in this novel. The beautiful lucid language gave a clear and accurate picture of the scene and the activities.

"Soob kam bahal noi khan. Sipare kichu bali, ipare thio gara. Siparar bali ahi ketiaba panit milisehi....

...... iparar ukha gara. Tar pach phale bahar jarani. Tar maje maje kaitiya gach bur. Gaonar lara-chuwali bure kaitar achur khaiu betguti chingiboloi sumai.........

.....ukha garate hetaniakoi pani juwaliloi nami juwa battu, gaonor adhibasi sakale aha-juwa kara bat. Tatei ghattu." 39

The above description is very simple, but informative. Apart from giving a brief idea of the river, it also gives a beautiful picture of the life and living of the people and their relation with the river. The novelist succeeded in giving a microscopic detail of the region and all the incidents that took place in it.

Being realistic in nature, the language of the novel does not carry music in it. Usage of symbol, image or metaphors are very rare. The novelist did not use any dialect in the novel. Instead, it was mostly written in standard Assamese. However, Borgohain used many rural and colloquial words that are used in the region of Nalbari district where the novel was set. Example of such words are-

39. Borgohain, Nirupama: Sei Nadi Nirabadhi, p. 1
The novelist also used some local sentence pattern and some mispronounced words like miliktery (military), kalendar (calendar) etc.

Iparar Ghar Siparar Ghar has installed the dialect of Nalbari region. Using this dialect form for all dialogues and conversation in the novel, the novelist successfully created a masterpiece in regional novel. A small example would justify the observation:

"Dibatu parluehoi, kintu Pagladia par hoi ghatut Chayar makak palu. Makmaka kal kita dekhi tairu lubh lagil, muk khujalakei. Mainu nedi kenaike paru?...........",\(^{40}\)

The novelist made sufficient use of local words, proverbs, idioms etc. to incorporate with her dialect. For example

'boinere', 'khok', 'dadi', 'akla', 'chadi', 'sidha', 'dima', 'sakmaka', 'dhemni', 'chali', 'jakhe', 'dhahi-muhi', 'jamur gharur para ghure ana' etc.

Borgohain used simple language for her Iparar Ghar Siparar Ghar. However she had shifted the intensity of it in accordance to the nature of character or situation, she had used for. The language has become very soft sometimes whereas at other time it is quite tough. For example:

"Diganta bistrita hoi thaka gaonr seujia dharani pathar, upar antahin akasar byapti, Bananir shyamalina, saru saru noi aru tar parar nirjanata, sei nirjanata gabhitar kari tula daukar karun mat,\(^{40}\)\)

\(^{40}\) Borgohain, Nirupama : Iparar Ghar Siparar Ghar, p. 11
This beautiful lucid language is used to describe the romantic feeling of Anjali who has not seen the hardship of real life. But the one who faced it must have understood that life is not a bed of roses. For Pateswari, surviving in this world is a struggle. Naturally she lost all her romanticism. Hence the novelist used rough language in her description:

"Aji abashesat sei sakalure mul tair aparup soundarjya sachakoie mrityu ghatil. Etia aru ei Pateswarir rupak loi kunu durbhabana nai, etia tai nichita manere purusar rajyat chala-phura kariba pariba....o’ eituwe tente karan, ei karanei tente haspatalar dacktor jane taik agar dare hahin mukhe mat katha nidia hal, agardare pet tipibaloi goi oin thait nitipa hol....o’ challa shagun hot, tahate mara xa khuti khuti khabak lagi aru mangkha napawa hali nahay-challa tirir mangkhare luibha khagun hat. 42

The style and expression of Silabhadra is very unique. He is said to be the discoverer of a new prose style in Assamese literature. Silabhadra was not fond of the standard Assamese language. Neither he was absorbed in totally in the dialect of his region. He used the local language, the language of daily use, modified it and given it a standard acceptable form.

Hence his language was very simple - the language of the common man. In this regard his style is similar to that of Hardy.

Silabhadra’s style was simple. His language was precise, without unnecessary expressions. He was the master of expressing a great idea with a

41. Borgohain, Nirupama: Iparar Ghar Siparar Ghar, p. 5
42. Ibid, pp. 81-82
few words. All of his novels ‘Madhupur’, ‘Ahatguri’ and ‘Agamanir Ghat’ justify Silabhadra’s style of writing.

Madhupur was the writer’s reaction to vain convention and acceptance of modern and progressive ideology. Silabhadra himself witnessed the changes that took place in front of his eyes. His own vision of life and ideology was reflected through his style of writing:

“Galpa sunisilu! Jamindarar ki duranta pratap! Ain, adalat, bichar-byabastha samasta asil jamindarar hatat...” 43


These expression clearly expose the writers own ideology. That the landlords were very powerful; and that their injustice was not welcome by the author was obvious in his writing. With his beautifully informative language, Silabhadra projected the situations and the characters therein of his region.

Silabhadra followed preciseness not only in his ideas, but also in his language. He used small sentences in all of his novels. Using simple and short sentences, he wanted to bring realism into his expression. His description of Ahatguri upholds this view:


43. Silabhadra: Madhupur, p.18
44. Silabhadra : Madhupur, pp. 12-13
Silabhadra sometimes repeated his words or phrase or sometimes a sentence again and again to intensify a certain concept or idea. In *Ahatguri*, many a times he had repeated that ‘the National Highway-32 moved through Perperia village’. This is done to emphasise that a change has taken place in Perperia which has affected and shattered the region. Similarly in *Agamanir Ghat* he had repeated the idea “Sakalu Sapun, Sakalu asthayee” (All dream, all momentary).

Nevertheless, like most other regional novelist Silabhadra also made use of Goalparia dialect- the language of his region. For example:

‘*Na jaim, mui mari geliu najaim. Ati geile mui dam phali mari jaim.*’\(^{46}\)

‘*Ure bapre, marlure bapre marlu*’\(^{47}\)

Moreover the novelist used some local words and which were resulted from the mixture of more than a language. Ichara, khali jami utha, jamjamati etc. are the examples of these type of expression that made Silabhadra’s style more expressive, stronger and unique.

Mentioning about the style of Silabhadra, Homen Borgohain once said that he had never found another writer who could present a character (and a situation) hardly in a few words with intellectually matured language.\(^{48}\)

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45. *Silabhadra : Ahatguri*, p. 46
46. Ibid, p. 23
47. Ibid, p. 23
Mamoni Raisom Goswami is one of the greatest modern Assamese novelists. Preciseness of language and selection of typical words helped her develop her own unique style. Her description was not objective; rather it was subjective and poetic. Dr. Hiren Gohain observed that “Her language combines remarkable economy with passion and sensuous vigor, realised with telling details. There can’t be any doubt that she is a major author from whom great things can be expected.”

Like Thomas Hardy and Nabakanta Baruah, Mamoni Raisom Goswami’s writings were essentially pastoral. Her selection of words, use of devices and lucidity of thoughts made her style a pastoral one. Goswami did not write poetry. She was not a poet. But her poetry could be seen in her prose itself. Dr. Gobinda Prasad Sarma, in this matter, wrote the following words:

“Mamoni Raisom Goswami never writes poetry. Nevertheless, just as Anita Desai’s novels are always poetic especially because of their language though she never write poetry. So also Mamoni Raisom Goswami’s novels always appeal like poetry especially because of their language.”

The novelist, unlike Nirupama Borgohain, instead of giving a physical description of Jagalia, provided a beautiful poetic description.


Goswami employed her style and expression in accordance to the situation and character. Sometimes she used very simple language while in some other occasion her language is complex, illusionary and mysterious. For example:

"Eiya Agust mahar brindaban, etiya iat jhulan, radha astami ityadi anek utsavar bhir. Alibatat sanyasi sakalar ekuta bichitra jak dekha gol......eibar nadir duyupine kichuman bhagnaprasadar smritichihna dekha gol. Kabuli ramanar sakha-prasakhai seiburak makara jalar dare sabati dharise."

"Chih chih! Damudaria Gosani! Kajinemur gundha nuhuwa hol. Patar kapurat mukh lukuwai thaka juntu jen bhangi thanban hoi ainar tukura hoi paril."

Apart from this, the novelist employed dramatic expressions in the novels. She used the local language of South Kamrup region. Befitting dialogues were used for each character according to their nature, status and position. This use of dialect and expressions helped the novelist to reveal the psycho-analysis of her character. Moreover the language used for the labourers in Dantal Hatir Unye Khowa Howda, like ‘atah’, ‘pag’, ‘maichana’, ‘gatala kathi’ etc. provided a more realistic approach to the theme and background of the novel. A specimen of such use of language will reveal this truth:

_Pala pala, bhathi khuli pagala howa hathiye chatki bundayar kari diba. pala, pala._

51. Goswami, Mamoni Raisom : Dantal Hatir Uniye Khowa Howda, p. 21
52. Goswami, Mamoni Raisom : Nilakanthi Braza, p.82
53. Goswami, Mamoni Raisom : Dantal Hatir Uniye Khowa Howda, p. 245
Hari Hari! Ranir forester offichat khabur nedili maratmak katha haba. Bhathi khula hathi pagla hoi gaont sumaba lagili sarbanas haba.54

Goswami was expert in using figure of speech and other devices in her style. She used various imagery like 'pretatma' (ghost or spirits), 'kukurnechiya' (wolf), 'chameli phul' (the flower Chameli) etc. Various symbols were incorporated in form of human skin, tiger skin, snake, crocodile etc.

Mamoni Raisom Goswami always stood against injustice; especially that was done towards women. This feminist writer beautifully portrayed the tragedy of womanhood in a male dominated society. While portraying these tragic characters, her writings naturally took to a tragic style. She even tried to rebel against this tragedy through her character like Giribala, Saudamini etc. but at last submitted to a tragic end of committing suicide. This tragic style of Mamoni Raisom Goswami elevated her writings to the level of that of Hardy.

The above discussion discloses the fact that though style is private to a writer, there are some common factors that can be noticed in case of all regional novelist - be it be English or Assamese.

The language of Thomas Hardy and Assamese regional novelists is simple and lucid. Simple word and short construction marked almost all the novels.

The most important aspect of all regional novels is the use of local language and dialect of the region that has been picked up for the background of the novels.

54. Ibid, p. 94
Apart from use of the local dialect the novelists has also used mixed words and mispronounced words used by the folk. These words are not a form of the dialect neither they are the standard form. For example, Hardy used some mispronounced English words spoken by the Wessex rustics. In Assamese novels, they occur due to the mixture of Assamese with Hindi or Assamese with English etc.

Nevertheless, the beauty of the language is maintained by each of the novelist in terms of the use of various literary devices. Poetic expressions are very obvious in the novels of Hardy as well as Assamese novelists. In other words the pastoral style predominates all the discussed regional novels.

Whatsoever is the style of the novelists, it is evident that they had employed those style only to intensify the regional nature of their novels. These style used by the respective novelists denote their familiarity with the region-its geography, topography, people and their ways of life; and this necessarily reveal the writers love for the region and the people therein.