Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of our survey. It contains five chapters. The introduction, which is, strictly speaking, not a part of the survey, contains (i) plan of the work, (ii) a note on the western ideas of humour and satire as comic types of expression and the art-form of comedy, their natural vehicle, along with the relationship it bears to other lesser forms like farce and satire, and (iii) a brief preliminary discussion on the similarity between āsya rasa and humour, and between Sanskrit and western comic art-forms. The parts (ii) and (iii) of the introduction are merely exploratory and intended to provide us with necessary minimum ideas for proceeding with the survey. No finality or originality is claimed for these ideas. We are further aware that abstract theories are not always helpful in judging the true worth of any comedy or comic elements. Emphasis is therefore equally laid on sensitive literary experience of each work investigated and due weight is given to the total effect it creates in the reader's mind.

In the second part of the introduction, we give the well-known ideas of humour and satire, which need not be repeated here. Humour is kindly, while satire is meroiless. Note is here taken of the two forms of word-humour, wit and the absurd. Wit is conscious and intellectual, while the absurd is unconscious. These types of comic expression occur in a comic work either singly or in conjunction. Comedy is the natural vehicle of wit and humour and a distinct art-form. Satire is a form of verse and prose-writing, but
its nature is not so distinct, and it is, despite its well-known practitioners and claimants, marked by a lack of inherent and constitutional lack of balance. It lacks a sense of proportion. Farce, which in the Aristophanic age, was a broad comic form, is now regarded as an inferior form, the aim of it being merely to evoke mirth. The aim of comedy is not merely to evoke laughter; laughter is merely a means to an end. It is however not always easy to distinguish one form from the other in practice. Every work has therefore to be judged properly. Comedy, as a distinct art-form, has its own characteristic subject-matter, style, mode of characterisation and plotting. These characteristic literary elements can be generally recognised, but in each individual work, these elements may appear in a distinct manner. The sources of laughter are degradation, incongruity and automatism; of these, the greatest is incongruity. The end of comedy is to present its particular viewpoint of the world; if tragedy is an expression of natural pride of man, defending himself as a sentient being with a will and convictions of his own against all forces, human and superhuman, comedy is an expression of natural modesty of man, mixing with its kind, and defending himself against megalomania, egoism, misanthropy and other forces of disintegration within human nature. Comedy reminds us of our human limitations. Satire, on the other hand, sometimes in its cynical feat does not hesitate to attack human nature itself. Comedy always judges human eccentricity against a norm; but in satire, the norm is often difficult to identify.

This is, in a nutshell, what is being said in the Part II of the introduction. The Part III points out that the Indian literary thinkers correctly identified the sources of laughter, but did
not recognise comedy or tragedy as distinct modes of literary thinking. The rasa theory envisages a supra-normal process of relishing the highest state of aesthetic pleasure akin to brahmānanda. While hāṣya rasa is a recognised sentiment, the only form of drama recognised to be its vehicle is an inferior type of farce, called Prahasana. In other types of dramas, it occurs as a subsidiary sentiment. The idealistic aesthetical view thus puts serious limitations on the development of dramatical thinking in the European manner. The Sanskrit comedies, if they can be so-called, approximate in form to the Menanderian type. It is a far cry from the broad farce or old comedy of Aristophanes. The satiric elements that we find in farces are polite and impersonal. The comic elements in the classical Sanskrit works, as in Kālidāsa's works, are often of high quality and these are synonymous with humour. Theoretically, the word hāṣya rasa too conveys very much the same meaning as the word humour.

As we have already noted, the introduction is intended to provide us with some general ideas on humour and satire as guidelines for the survey.

As earlier planned, the Chapters I and II deal with the ancient literature, and the Chapters III, IV and V, with the modern literature.

The bulk of ancient literature was religious. The major writers aimed at creating a literature of bhakti rasa. The poetic sentiments were introduced occasionally, and apologetically. Śankaradeva raised objection to a work of Ananta Kandali for neglecting bhakti rasa, and allowing his poem to be dominated by the heroic
sentiment. Rāma Sarasvati was an exception, and his Bhīm-carit seems to be the only work of hasya rasa. But the poem, looked as a whole, is farcical with some comic and satirical elements embedded in it. He showed comic imagination in conceiving Bhīma, the epical hero, as a servant of Śiva; Dr Śashibhūsan Dāsgupta points out that this illustrious servant was Rāma Sarasvati's invention. In this poem, the gods, the sage and the epical hero enter the human world in the spirit of farce. Here Śiva is an oddly dressed peasant, Kubera a money-lender, Viśvāmitra an orchard-owner, Pārvatī a housewife and Bhīma a naughty servant. All of them behave ludicrously. There is a satiric element in it. Kubera, the money-lender, is subjected to ridicule. There is comedy in Bhīma's humorous comments on Śiva's poverty. The Viśvāmitra episode may contain an indirect criticism of the contemporary judicial process. But the poem, as a whole, is farcical.

The laughter in ancient literature was mainly farcical or low comedy. Sex was the most popular subject-matter. The farcical love of the humpbacked maid for Bharata in Rāma-yāna, Śiva's amours in Manasa-kāvya, his infatuation for Lakṣmī and Mohini in Bhāgavata, Kīcaka's lust for Draupadī and other comic episodes are all described in the ludicrous light. Some of these incidents are presented meaningly and therefore comic in the true sense. The scenes of

1. Śāṅkardeva said that Kandali's translation of (the tenth book of) Bhāgavata was defective, because it laid more stress on the heroic than on the devotional sentiment. The description of war was long, while that of bhakti was short. (ASR, p.163; Kathāguru oarit, p.208). The aim of Vaisnava literature was to arouse bhakti rasa in the heart of hearers' (AKKB, p.4).

Siva's amorous behaviour in *R̄hāgavata* provide us with instances of real comic interludes in a narrative epic. The writers displayed power of comic characterisation. The oddly dressed Siva in *Manasā Kāvya* and other poems, the sagely back-biter in *Manasā-kāvya* and the gluttonous Bhima in *Bhim-carit* are viable comic characters. The writers knew that the sources of the risible lie in defect, degradation and incongruity. In *Kathāguru-carit*, there is humour based on incongruity of words. The pun on the word ajagar-brtti in the Hari-gati episode illustrates this principle. The writers also showed capacity to use contemporary social conventions or beliefs as a subject-matter of laughter, though these elements were marginal. The Parāśānanda incident and the story of Taming the Bull in *Kathāguru-carit* illustrate this tendency. The Hindu taboo of killing a cow is used in these incidents as a source of fun; the same tendency is noticeable in the Visvāmitra episode in *Bhim-carit*. Verbal misunderstanding is used as a source of laughter in Khagesāvar incident in *Kathāguru-carit*. Child psychology is used with dexterity in drama by Mādhavdeva to create genial laughter. Sāṅkardeva's *Pārijāt-haran* provides us with instances of wit. Nārada here is really witty. The low farce in the scene of exchange of verbal sallies between Śacī and Satyabhāmā in the drama displays the power of the writer to create laughter out of comic imitation of real life.

The laughter in ancient literature was occasional and rare. It was used mainly to offer comic or farcical relief. Comedy was not cultivated as an art-form or as a mode of literary thinking. The major writers were preoccupied with the literary ideal of bhakti rasa. There was no formulation of specifically comic attitude. The literature was derivative. Contemporary life and society did not
figure as a source of subject-matters. However, the above instances show that the method of comic creation was known and the writers seemed to have realised its value as a literary element. True humour is however rare in the ancient literature.

The modern period, which has been dealt with in Chapters III, IV and V, yields better and varied materials for study. The transference of western culture into India was a major factor in the growth of modern literature in Assamese. In the introduction as well as in the beginning of the Chapter III, the factors that led to the birth of the modern spirit in literature have been briefly enumerated. Both physical and human agencies promoted the change.

The manifestation of the modern spirit in comic literature was, to begin with, satirical. The satirical reaction to conservatism of the traditional society was felt both in poetry and fiction. The satiric verse emerged as a new form in Assamese literature. The writers of this form were Balinārāyaṇ Barā, L. N. Bezbaruva, Candradhar Baruva and Daṇḍināth Kalitā. Bezbaruva was the first writer of parody in Assamese. Balinārāyaṇ has only two light poems to his credit. His polite satire was directed against type characters and was ironic in tone. Barā's satire was directed against well-recognised types of society of his day; he attacked symbols rather than persons and made special targets of obsequiousness and surliness. The other two writers dealt with human follies of their age. Their satire too was mild. Both of them took particular delight in caricaturing. In Baruva's gallery of fools, we meet the dishonest patriot, the ape, the mean, the humbug, the dilettante, the selfish and the avaricious. Gagan in Epheri Rhol is an ape, who is an European in style and manners; only mistake he did was to be born in India. Gopināth is both
mean and humbug; he deserts his parents without the least qualm of conscience. Harnath is selfish and avaricious, and prays that God should make him the richest man on earth and the rest of mankind his slave. The character-sketches are mildly satiric.

Kalitā's poems were more or less modelled on Baruva's poetry, but his interests were limited/had a slightly different range. His special target was the caste system and the custom of child-marriage. His epigrams were a new satiric form in Assamese literature. The epigrams on child-marriage, on Brahminical superiority complex and caste pride are interesting. His satire is informed with moral indignation.

The satiric reaction was however short-lived and the art of satiric poetry did not develop.

In fiction too, the first reaction was satiric. In Chapter IV, we have dealt with five prose writers who mainly introduced and popularised the new satiric and comic trends. Hem Candra's Kovābhāturi is the first satiric fiction in Assamese. Korkhanīya's hypocritical character is the target of his moral indignation. The degraded clergy is mercilessly exposed, and his style is ironic and effective. He tells us that something is seriously wrong with contemporary religion which is reduced to mere externals. The pattern of his narrative is too satiric; it is a collection of eccentricities that are set against one another. It is a significant achievement in Assamese satiric prose literature.

Gunābhirām's burlesque dictionary is hardly a viable comic form. It is, at best, a collection of word-humours, remotely connected with each other and not harmonised by imagination. Humour is
genial, but patchy, and does not create a durable effect. The same thing can be said of Lambodar’s burlesque dictionary.

A contemporary reviewer, commenting on Kovā-bhāturi, rightly said that Hem Candra’s work is really a faithful picture of religious hypocrisy. The title signifies that Kovā-bhāturi is a fruit which is bright outside, but black inside (Momordica Monodelpha). That is what Korkhaniya is. The same reviewer compared Gunābhīrām’s Kathin Sabdara Rasasya Rūkhyā to a dry bamboo peg which was devoid of juice. According to him, only a few word-humours are effective. The word-humours are presented in the form of etymological puns, that create fun out social follies.

Lambodar’s reputation rests on his satiric epistle, Sadānandar Kalāghumati. It is a mild satire on contemporary social follies written in an impressive style. His standpoint was often not in tune with the historical and progressive trends of thought. This is best seen in his satire on female education. Like Gunābhīrām, he also resorted to etymological puns to create laughter.

Satyanāth Barā’s essays are serious and contain only incidental irony or wit. The comic element is thus patchy in his essays and his style is too serious to fit in with the comic mode.

Let us now take a fresh look at the dramas examined in Chapter V. The trend introduced through Bhramaraṅga in 1888 became very popular with the writers of the age and continued till the end of the twenties of this century almost unabated. Although farce is not regarded as a species of fine comedy, it had a historical role to play in the introduction of the comic spirit in modern Assamese literature. There is no evidence to show that farce was distinguished

from comedy or satire; on the contrary, Satyanāth's Bara's comment on 
Bhramarāṅga shows that farce was conceived in a wider framework and its 
effect was identified with the comic sentiment. We have also no evidence 
to show that the Sanskrit comic model or Prahasana was consciously 
cultivated. Shakespeare was of course read, but it was the adaptation of 
his farce, The Comedy Of Errors, rather than his romantic poetic 
comedies, that seemed to have inspired the early writers of comic drama 
in Assamese. The farce was preferred, because it had a better audience 
appeal; but it was conceived as a broad form. The early comic dramas 
were stage oriented and therefore attention was paid more to the outer 
conflicts and hence farcical incidents. The conception of inner comedy 
was not there. The exclusive stress on the outward laughter tended to 
make the dramas farcical.

Hem Chandra Baruva is a satirist, but he combines satire and 
farce in Kaniyar Kirtan. However here the satiric intention is transcended 
by the farcical spirit in which he conceives the setting and depicts the 
characters. The mocking tone is subdued and neutralised by the 
instinct for laughter. The laughter is not only external but dependent on 
physical situation. A large number of dramas discussed in the chapter V 
use different types of comic expression. The word-humour, both conscious 
and unconscious, is the most conspicuous among them; but except in 
Mimantran, this type of comic expression is not used in a balanced manner. 
Teton Tāmulī, is an example of how word-humour can be put to most 
indifferent use. The farce lacks a balanced structure. A balanced use of 
word-humour makes the literary elements in the fine farce approximate 
the form of comedy of humour, but the farcical form predominates, 
because the setting is improbable and the end is mere mirth. Mitradev
Mahanta's *Kukuri Kanar Athmaagala* is a merry farce, but for a is complex in *Biyā-biparjaya*. The satirical elements in the main plot are tangible, but a farcical twist is given to almost every scene, and a farcical sub-plot is added to increase the effect. Perhaps the needs of theatre and its audience were always uppermost in the minds of the writers. And the audience of the age probably relished farce more than any other type of comedy. Durgaprasad's *Mahārī* contains amusing caricature of the European tea planter and his Indian concubine. Here also the intention is to create mirth through much physical sensationalism rather than to develop the satirical possibilities of the drama. His mixture of satire and farce resembles the dramatic method of Baruvā, but in *Mahārī*, the situation is improbable and based on the rudest and coarsest types of incongruities.

Benudhar Rajkhovā's drama *Kuri Satikār Sabhyatā* is interesting as an experimental piece. The main character Niladhvaj uses internal comedy to express the duality of his mind and behaviour. But it is an unsuccessful drama; it could have been comic, for he had a comic theme. The character is undeveloped. *Kaliyuga* has also a similar disparate structure; the last act bears little relation to the preceding acts. The farce therefore creates a jarring effect. The use of internal comedy in characterisation is an innovation in Assamese comic drama, but due to loose structure of the drama *Kuri-Satikār Sabhyatā*, the drama fails to create an effect. It is even difficult to call these two dramas farces. *Darbār* is also an unimpressive drama. From *Tini Ghoinī*, we notice a change in him and decidedly this and other two dramas *Yampuri* and *Corar Srṣṭi* are good farces. *Corar Srṣṭi* is decidedly a jovial and neat farce. He had an uncanny instinct for selection of right materials, but his art in the earlier dramas seems deficient.
Of Padmanāth's dramas, Gāōbudhā is particularly notable because it is a light comedy. Other two dramas are ordinary farces. Gāōbudhā, as our analysis in Chapter V shows, contains satiric scenes directed against the injustices of early British rule in Assam and very minor farcical elements. But interest is concentrated mainly on the character of Bhogman, who is quixotic enough to seek to salvage tottering feudal values; he is honest and realistically portrayed. He fulfils his ambition of being a headman, but this only increases his misery and humiliation. In the end, he gives up the post in comic disgust. The trial scene and the scene at the Muslim village has a farcical touch, but on the whole, most of the main characters behave realistically. Mr Young, the Magistrate, realises towards the end that Bhogman's humiliation is undeserving, for the fault lies with the administration which does not pay its employees and expects rations for touring officers to be collected gratis. The plot is comic and the effect of the drama is a mixed feeling of sympathy and laughter.

We have seen that Candradhar's Bhāgya Pārīksā is a pure farce. He creates a fantastic atmosphere where supernatural characters descend to earth to meddle in human affairs. It is a pleasant farce.

All the farces were written for stage. The contemporary audience also wanted farce. Mitra-dev Mahanta is a very successful stage dramatist and an actor of repute. In his hand, the comic dialogue becomes homely and effective. It is racy and colloquial. His Biya Bīparjyaya has a neat plot; the characters are men of society, though highly ludicrous. There is an undercurrent of satire here in the manner of Baruvā, but it is outstripped by his instinct for fun and laughter. Padmadhar was also an actor, but in Nimantrap, his
aim, it seems, was partially literary. There is an element of inner comedy there; the scenes of incongruity caused by verbal misunderstandings and malapropism, and the comic distress of the fools mark the development of inner comedy elements in farce.

Bezbaruva is an irregular comic genius; at least there is hardly any one to rival him in Assamese comic prose. Even in his earliest works, i.e., in his farces or in his only novel, Padum Kuñari, he impresses us with his vitality of mind, his power of observation and his ability to adapt his mind to what he observes. In his serious writings, he uses his comic style sometimes with surprising effectiveness. His extravagant fancy, his apparent lack of restraint, and his readiness to use any material at hand to make his description or narrative comic, without allowing us to become antipathetic to the object of caricature or unattentive to the creator, are not weaknesses of his style, but a power.

We have already seen that even in farces, Bezbaruva displays this creative power. His style is a harmonising force. It harmonises the farcical elements with the satiric elements in these works. Without it, the absurd farcical scenes of Nomal could not have been effectively harmonised with satirical scenes (Scene III). His comic tact is displayed in Pācani. He contrasts the maniac Pācani with his shrewd wife in admirable balance. The power of his comic style is revealed even in these incipient creations. In the field of comic poetry, his experiments are equally illustrative of his developing comic power. He is the first writer of parody in Assamese; the parodies of bargūts give proof of his capacity to express the spirit of his age and his comic sensibility through literary modes. In his light didactic poems, he offers us comic criticism of social follies, infantile modernism, misuse of journa-

4. BG. pp.552-578
llism and unbalanced critical judgements. He takes delight in taking resort to self-parody.

In some of his short-stories, we find mild satire. Bhokondi is a would-be poet and patriot. Nāṅgalu also wants to enter the elegant circle; but his first poetio efforts proving hazardous, he disgracefully retires in a mood of comic distress. Dambaru and Jagarā court love to their wives in the farcical manner, and become ridiculous. Satire is never bitter in these short-stories, and farce not entirely inane. No work of Bezbaruvā is however merely satirical or farcical. Even in Bhokendra Baruvā, the conversation between Bhokondi and Jetuki, his kind-hearted mother, or the meeting scene contain comic elements which tend to subdue the tone of satire. His norm to judge eccentricity is so clear that it never allows satire to be cynical or farce to be entirely empty. Jetuki, Jāparī and Kārirām are quite normal figures; they have enough common sense to make the caricatured character look at times comic. Jagarā has a foil in his wife who is a normal woman of the world, and she does bring Jagarā to sense. The farcical overtone of the story is therefore tempered by the comic spirit. He has good sense.

Milārāmar Ātmajīvānī has an undertone of satire against the fashion of writing autobiography. Milārām's life-story is also satiric; but here Bezbaruvā uses his imagination and power of his style to keep the undertone of satire subdued. Satire cannot even be detected under the mask of laughter. Milārām is a classic fool whose basic activities in life consists of eating, sleeping and getting intoxicated. Happily, he is a celibate. In his inverted world, he daydreams about the girl whom his father forbids to marry, boasts about his ignoble lineage, joins a campaign against prohibition of
opium and takes wine and opium to his heart's content. The whole piece is comic and his style is, like a running river, flowing.
Satire here merges into comedy.

We have already taken a close look at the writings of Kṛpābar. The quantity is large and varied. A substantial part is autobiographical writing which reveals not only actions but also thoughts. Some pieces are just essays. The rest are his own creative works: narrative, dramatic, poetic, descriptive, and analytical. Viewed as a whole, this large body of writings cannot be categorised into any known literary form. It will be an uneasy novel, if we call it a novel. Kamalā Kānter Daptar, a work smaller in size and less varied, may be called an one-character novel, as Pramatha Nāth Bisi calls it; it has the pattern of a comic novel, where there is no march of events and interest lies in grouping of characters or in a single complex character. Bezbaruva's writings do not have the pattern of a novel, and as we have noted, his resemblance with Dickens is only facile. However, Bezbaruva's exuberant and highly individual style, his talent for creating characters and his rich imagination are elements of an art that novelist would prize. The appeal of his writings primarily rests in his humour, which he frequently mixes with satire and farce and balances evenly by the power of his style. This humour is found not only in Kṛpābar's autobiographical narrative, but also in his essays and burlesque comic works. Humour is therefore centred round the comic character of Kṛpābar, and his created

5. Bāmkim Sahityer Bhumikā, p.54. Bisi compares the character of Kamalā Santa with Don Quixote, Falstaff and Pickwick, and calls them birds of the same feather (p.53). G.K. Chesterton calls Pickwick Papers 'a fairy tale', 'a romance of adventure' and 'a supernatural tale'; Charles Dickens, pp.73-78).
world. This artificial world has the appeal of work of fiction, for the reader's attention is focussed on it. The character symbolises the created world.

Bezbaruva created a great comic character in Krpabar. It is not rounded and whole, but as R. J. Rees points out, a comic character need not be round and whole. The character tells us his life-story which is the very antithesis of ideal life, good manners and genuine intellectual or literary activities. The foil is society itself, its knowledge, ethics, activities and mental pursuits. We have thus a norm to judge his eccentricity. There is an undertone of mild satire in caricatured characters (or objects) whether it is politician (or politics), researcher (or research), literary man (or literary creation), fake (or false manners), journalist (or journalism) or immoral man (or immorality). At places, the account has the arbitrariness of farce. His art is a curious mixture of fantasy and realism, irony and sober description, witticism and play on words, jest and earnest, trivial and grave. The admixture of farce with comedy and satire is explained by the need for appealing to audiences at different levels. The farcical elements introduced in the comic narrative often create the fantastic atmosphere which serves his basic comic purpose. This purpose is to create an effect which helps the reader in becoming aware of follies in social and individual life. This social and human concern is often expressed in mild satire, but it is never allowed to affect the comic tone of the narrative. The satiric undertone of Krpabar's burlesques is clear, but it gets submerged under a mask of laughter. Whether he burlesques epic, biography, poem, fiction or research work, he is never irreverent or

6. AIEL, p.121
malicious. It is no particular work or particular writer that he imitated, but the general form. Therefore the effect eventually becomes comic rather than satiric. On the whole, he therefore maintains a sense of proportion and his norm is rarely allowed to be violated. His temperament is humorous; the natural propensity to laugh and to view life with a comic vision is expressed in his writing everywhere. It is embodied in Krpābar's character. His eccentricity may not be as pure and highly significant as Don Quixote's, but it is viable and genuine. It arises out of his desire to reject certain forms of Assamese society, which he feels are not in tune with human civilisation. He cannot approve of false manners, puerility in literature, dilettantism in criticism, frivolity in research, corruptions in public life, ignorance and hedonism among clergy, human indifference for progress, toleration of social evils, injustices in sex-relationship and foreign rule in the country. He imitates these human follies and even ironically pleads for their retention. He uses all the power of his style to create comic effect.

We have already seen that Bezbaruva's style is vigorous. He uses some verbal devices to create comic effect. These verbal devices are based on incongruity of words. Wit is an important ingredient of his style. Bezbaruva's wit is not a dazzle-disguise of malignity of satire, but a display of quite innocent dexterity; it merely shows with what ease he can move his ideas. It is a sparkle of style. With this, he mixes mild irony, raillery and drollery. We have shown his love for playing on words which at times become farcical. But it is not entirely meaningless. Deformity or incongruity of words is a valid device of laughter. He is also adept in use of expression and phrases of power, and takes inexhaustible delight in
word-patterns. His style has its characteristic tone and rhythm. Whenever the occasion arises, he expresses Kṛpābar's thoughts in monologue, dialogue, oration, epistle and various other forms. This is clearly intended to create effect. The fundamental quality of his style is, however, its comic spirit which expresses the author's soul. It has a harmonising power that balances any excessive effect created by satire or farce.

His patriotism is a broad principle of humanity which enables him as a writer to merge himself in the community to which he was born and adapt himself to its needs. He has a kindly vision of life and human nature. He laughs because he sees himself and his compatriots going off the high road of life. We have seen that his God is also smiling; he believes that laughter is always preferable to lamentation or sorrow in life. And he laughs at times out of helplessness, not because he has no intention to instil life into dead bodies, but there is not enough opportunity for it. Kṛpābar is Bezbaruvā's alter-ego; Kṛpābar is a mirror in which he sees the world from the reverse side. Kṛpābar is a caricature of the world as well as a self-caricature. He reminds us of human limitations and our predicament. He is a synthetic image of ourselves. There is thus a comic vision in him. In him, we see a remarkable manifestation of the comic spirit in Assamese literature.

The strict notion of comedy or farce does not always seem to be applicable in case of modern Assamese literature. In the late 19th century, the sensitive writers of Jonākī period avidly read Shakespeare, and partly through him became acquainted with the rich tragic and comic heritage of English literature. The influence of Shakespeare on Assamese drama was first noticeable in writing of
Farce, however, was then as a large comic form which made room for every sort of effect. This is best seen in comic dramas like Biyā Biparjyaya and Kāniyār Kirtana, where satire is freely mixed with farce. In Bezbaruvā's Nomaļ too, satire enters surreptitiously. This is also true of Rājkhowā's early dramas. The farcical substructure of Bezbaruvā's comic prose works is also significant. It will thus be seen that Bezbaruvā did not conceive of farce as a sort of clumsy country cousin whose table manners are notoriously coarse. Bezbaruvā is not wrong in accommodating farce in comedy; greater writers like Aristophanes, Moliere and even gentle Shakespeare did not exclude it from their comedies.

Before we conclude, it will be better to summarise our findings briefly:

(1) The ancient period yields us very little comic elements. In some rare passages of Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, we get some meaningful laughter. The ludicrous Śiva in Bhāgavata and juvenile Kṛṣṇa in Madhavdeva's dramas are presented in the comical light. Śiva in Manasā-kāvyā is however farcically depicted; so is Nārada in the same work. In Pārijāt-haran, Nārada is witty, while comic incidents of Kāthāguru-carit provide with some visible elements based on incongruity of words. Bhīma is mainly depicted farcically in only farcical poem, Bhīm-carit. That the ancient writers understood the principle of comic characterisation is obvious in the treatment of these

7. Tragedy And Comedy, p.309
8. ibid., pp.310-11.
three puranic or epical characters. In the other works, laughter was mainly farcical. Hāsyā rasa is an occasional or secondary element in the ancient literature.

(2) Faroes, humorous and satiric prose as well as light or satirical poems are products of the modern period. The manifestation of the comic spirit is due mainly to the western impact on Assamese literature. The light poems of Candradhar Baruva and Dandināth are mildly satiric.

(3) One of the remarkable satiric products of the modern period is Hem Candra Baruva's Kovā-bhāturi. Gunābhīram, his contemporary, is less impressive as a satirist. His burlesque dictionary has a weak form; it is a work of patchy humour with an undercurrent of pale satire in it. Lambodar Bara's Sadānandar Kalāghumati is a work of gentle satire, but its norm is not clear and as a work, inferior to Kovābhāturi.

(4) Bezbaruva's comic writings bear witness to the best manifestation of the comic spirit in Assamese literature. Kṛpābar is a unique creation, and comparable to other comic characters of world literature. Bezbaruva's Kṛpābar series are, by far, the best comic work in Assamese literature.

(5) One of the visible impacts of the western dramatic tradition on Assamese literature is the writing of light dramas, of which faroes form the main bulk.
These were mainly written for the stage. Some farces like Biyā-biparjyaya are mixed with satire, while Nimāntrana approximates in spirit to the comedy of humour. Gāobudhā is a pleasant light comedy. Benudhar Rājkhoṭā's Kuri-satikār Sabhyatā is a poor drama, but he showed some insight in comic characterisation, specially in conceiving Nilaṁbar as a hypocritical modern. The light dramas testify to the extension of the comic spirit to dramatic literature, but we do not get high comedies. The majority of the light dramas are pure farces.