CHAPTER IV

HITESWAR BOR BORUHAR'S 'KĀVYAS' (LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS) WRITTEN IN THE EPIC STYLE:

(1) Ābhāś Kāvya
(ii) Birahini Bilāp Kāvya
(iii) Deshmonā Kāvya
(iv) Aṅgilā Kāvya
Hiteswar Bor Boraah's 'Kāvya' (Longer Narrative Poems)
Written in the Epic Style:

(i) Abhās Kāvya.
(ii) Birahini Bilāp Kāvya.
(iii) Desdemona Kāvya.
(iv) Angilī Kāvya.

It has become customary on the part of some romantic poets to write longer narrative poems and lyrics and ascribe them as 'Kāvya' or Epic, which, though in the style of the literary epic, is not really so. Virgil and Milton set the model of the literary epic, and their successors in their field have followed them up as their preceptors, and have discovered in them certain characteristics as their guide. Coming to the Indian scene we find that Michael Madhusudan Datta, with his versatile genius and deep knowledge of European literature including English, has come to set before the Indian poets a model of a pure literary epic with his Meshnadbadh Kāvya, a model which has become very popular with the promising poets of Bengal and Assam. Besides this model Madhusudan has also set before the younger poets some other models with his Brajānganā and Birānganā Kāvya, models which have deviated from the epic model of Meshnadbadh Kāvya. But the word Kāvya does not have any connotative similarity with the English word 'epic' and it has been used ruthlessly both for serious epics like Meshnadbadh Kāvya and for lyrical epics or longer narrative poems like the Brajānganā Kāvya and the Birānganā Kāvya. The connotative confusion of the term Kāvya has come to stay, and it has become a fashion to write a long poem on any topic in blank verse and to call it a 'Kāvya'. Following the models
of Madhusudan both serious epics of the Meghnadbdh type and lyrical narrative poems of Birangana and Brajangan type have appeared in Assamese. We have discussed in the Chapter III three Kavyas of Hiteswar Bor Boruah written after the model of the former type. And in this chapter we propose to discuss four Kavyas of Bor Boruah, two of which are after the model of the latter type. These two are: Abhäs Kavya and Birahpi Bilan Kavya. The former has followed the steps of Madhusudan's Birangana Kavya while the latter the steps of Madhusudan's Brajangan Kavya. The models remaining the same, Bor Boruah has been able to show his distinct originality in the choice of subject-matters. Besides these two, Bor Boruah has given us two other longer narrative poems based on the sources of the English literature. And they are: the Desdemona Kavya written on the tragic end of Shakespeare's heroine 'Desdemona' as appears in the play 'Othello' and the Angila Kavya written after a 'Ballad of Love' that appears in Oliver Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield. We take up these four for a critical discussion in this chapter:

(1) **THE ABHÄŚ KÄVYA:**  
(A Longer narrative poem dealing with Women's Heroism)  
Hiteswar Bor Boruah's Abhäs Kavya, a lyric epic written in a new model for the first time in the Assamese literature saw the light of the day in 1914. Claiming the uniqueness of the Kavya in Assamese, Bor Boruah makes the following observation: "Though the subject-matters described in the Abhäs
are not new to the readers, the technique of writing this kāvya, it must not be denied, is completely new. Following this new technique how far we have succeeded, the readers alone will judge."¹ This 'new technique' is nothing but the model of the Bīrānganā Kāvya by Michael Madhusudan Datta. It is again interesting to note how the model came to Bengali through Madhusudan. The original model with which Madhusudan was acquainted was the Heroides (Heroines) of Ovid, an immortal Italian Poet who had his birth in a middle-class family in 43 B.C. The Heroides is a series of heroic epistles written by the select heroines. The number of the heroic epistles is twenty-one, of which the last six are supposed, by the experts, not to be the writings of Ovid. Imitating this model of heroic epistles Madhusudan wrote his Bīrānganā Kāvya in Bengali. Though Madhusudan had the plan after Ovid to include twenty-one heroic epistles in his narrative poem, he could not go beyond the completion of eleven. But Hiteswar Bor Boruah, while maintaining his distinct originality in bringing about some innovations in the Italian model succeeded in depicting exactly twenty-one heroines all aglow in his Ābhās Kāvya. The innovations' that have been made by Bor Boruah constitute his claim for the uniqueness of the technique that has been employed in the Ābhās Kāvya. Like Ovid or Madhusudan, Bor Boruah has not written any heroic epistles. In Madhusudan the heroines - Sakuntalā, Rukmīṇī, Jahnabī, Bhānumatī, Tārā, Sūrpanakha, Duhsalī, Draupadī, Kaikeyī and Janī are writing epistles to

¹ The Preface to the Ābhās Kāvya: The extract is translated into English from the original in Assamese.
their husbands or beloveds, stating their individual feelings, emotions, claims and situations. The epistelic narratives act like dramatic monologues: the heroines that write and the heroes to whom they write appear before us in vivid colours. But Bor Boruah, instead of writing heroic epistles, presents the heroines before us in all facets of their heroic virtues and goes on describing them in his own dramatic way which is quite nearer to the dramatic monologue. It may be said that Bor Boruah has taken up the pen to write out the narratives, if not the epistles, on behalf of the heroines themselves. And the model as innovated by Bor Boruah helps him to give proper lyric touches in glorifying the virtues of his heroines as well as to weave a thread of his own philosophy of life in and through all the sketches of the heroines.

Many a critic is of opinion that Madhusudan's poetic genius has its highest attainment in his Bhārāngana Kāvya as regards his language, metre and literary style. According to Jogindranath Basu: "His (Madhusudan's) genius has prepared itself to accumulate in one place the high seriousness of Meghnād and the lyric beauty of Brajāngana; and its result is the Bhārāngana Kāvya". This observation on poetic achievement is equally applicable in the case of Hitāswar Bor Boruah. Through trial and error that appeared in the earlier historical Kāvyas, discussed in the previous Chapter, Bor Boruah has come to the perfection of his poetic art in his Abhās Kāvya which is endowed with fluidity of verse, lucidity of expression and a magic
of pure poetry. This is the only reason why this narrative poem was highly acclaimed by the press and the public immediately after its publication. 3

Having thus introduced the Kāvya, let us have the flavour of a critique of its text.

In the 'Dedicatory Note' of the Abhās Kāvya we have a glimpse of the poet's life which is heavy with the world's miseries and his own servitude:

"Saṁsārar sokāpe
Mite dahiche hrdhay
'Dāsatva dolar cepe'
Tāte, parāne nahay l"

(My heart is burning with the sorrows and sufferings of the world. Besides these, the heart is also bearing the tortures of the bondage of servitude.)

Following the style of Ovid's Heroides Madhusudan names his narrative poem on the heroines as Bīrānunā (Heroines).

3. The Banbi in its 4th issue of the 6th year observes: "It is a small book of poetry. It is composed of twenty-one national and foreign woman-characters. The writer's language is simple, sweet and expressive of the natural poetic power in narratives. The characters described in the book are glittering in perfect form. The writer has even nationalised the foreign characters. Generally it is difficult to express a foreign event in the sweet and natural form of one's own language; some shadows of unnaturalness fall upon the narratives. But the writer of the Abhās is completely free from it."
But Bor Boruah comes astray from this general trend of his predecessors, not only in the narrative method, but also in naming his Kāvya. He calls it Ābhās (Glimpse) that includes twenty-one heroines who are presented by the poet in their peculiar light and shade. In a prefatorial sonnet that is pinned to the Kāvya the poet clarifies his objectives behind its creation:

'Ābhās' ābhās māthe bir ramanir
'Ābhās' ābhās māthe satī jivanar,
Punyavatī patibrata nisvārtha premikā,
Tirotār svārtha-tyāg des bidesar ī
Kata yūg hai gal napare manat
Tiyāgile sabe prāṇ, kintu kirti jār
Jagatar nare gāi kāvyarūpī sure
'Ābhāsat' dīle āji ābhā mātra tār ī
'Ābhās' māthon ābhā lāhari phular, —
Saṃsār-banat jār apurba sābhāi
Mehichile nara-nārī, jagatar prāṇī,
Gandhe jār, dāsodiā kīye gondhāi īl
Āni tār ābhā mātra cin daraśālo
'Ābhāsat' māho tār ābhās baramāle īl

(The Ābhās contains hints on heroic women, chaste women, virtuous women - devoted to husbands, selflessly beloved women, and self-sacrificing women of the country and outside. All these women sacrificed their lives in so many ages beyond our memory, but their glories are sung in the epic tone by the people of the world, and only some hints of these glories...
I have given in the Abhās. The Abhās is the glow of the bright flowers that charmed the people in the forest of the world, the sweet smell of which still enraptures all sides. I have described only a little of that in the Abhās.

It is, therefore, crystal clear that the poet wants to paint the heroic virtues of twenty-one immortal heroines of India and outside, placing himself thereby in the epic-tradition of Ovid and Madhusudan. Of the twenty-one heroines seventeen belong to the Purāṇas and two great Indian Epics — the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, and the rest four belong to the foreign countries. Rādhā, Brindā, Daivakī, Jasodā, Rohiṇī, Subhadra, Uttara, Sāvitrī, Ahalyā, Draupadī, Kuntī, Tārā, Mandodari, Janī, Tilottama, Arajā and Baidehī belong to the broad Indian epic traditions. The foreign heroines that have been elevated in the Kāvyā with a peculiarly native touch are Joshephine, Joan D’Ark., Beadecea and Lāilā. Through the poetic narration of the deeds and qualities of these twenty-one women, both national and foreign, Bor Boruah wants to glorify the heroism of women in the world.

The heroines that belong to the age-old Indian traditions are painted in various colours according to their peculiar human virtues that have earned for them immortal fame. The virtues of Rādhā, Brindā, Daivakī and Jasoda centre round the spiritual cult and love of Lord Kṛṣṇa that constitute the basis of the broad Indian culture and tradition. Rādhā, by virtue of her eternal love, could even win and bind the heart of God— Kṛṣṇa. And in the process of her eternal love Rādhā had to
pass through many a worldly blemish; but by her relentless pursuit of spiritual devotion she even succeeded in winning the heart of God:

"Īśvar premikā tumī, ananta premere
Bāndhichilā Īśvarak dolere bhaktir 1
Lāhāri hīyāt kāta sahilā ganjanā
Mutilār, — āru, devi! Gokul bāsīr 11
Michā kalankar bojā kāta bāla tumī,
Kāta apabād dile nanade tomār;
Si sabat tumī kintu kātākṣyo nakari
Fūjichilā Śri Kṛṇak, muktir ēdhrār 11"  
(Rādhā)

(You are the lover of God, and with the tie of eternal love you bound God. You bear many an ill treatment of Mutilā and the people of Gokul — in your endearing heart. You had to bear many false rumours, particularly from your husband’s younger sister (nanad). Without caring a fig for all these you worshipped Śri Kṛṇa, who is the repository of human salvation.)

Brndā, another woman of the land of Braja, was instrumental in the fruition of the eternal love between Rādhā and Śri Kṛṇa. While glorifying the noble and spiritual sacrifice of Brndā the poet sings:

"Nohēva heten, devi! janam tomār
'Sri Kṛṇar Barja Līlā' pabitra nirman,
Nahaleheten purna ei jagatat,
Narale heten chabī Rādhār ujjwal 11"  
(Brndā)
(Oh! Devi, had you not been born, the supernatural deeds of Sri Krsna done in Braja would not have been possible in the world and there would not have remained the bright picture of Rādhā.)

Here we have a touch of the poet’s peculiar renaissance outlook which glorifies the position of men and women. In the verse quoted above the poet sings the glory of Brndā’s human efforts in the fulfilment of the eternal love between God Krsna and Rādhā.

The two other women that win the heart of Lord Krsna through filial affections were Daivakī and Jasodā. Daivakī had to suffer a lot before having Sri Krsna as her son. The heroic sufferings of this woman appear vividly before our eyes in the following lines:

"Kosal tīrī hīyā, mātrā parān,
Eti santānār ūk sahib novāre;
Sātētir ūk kintu sahīchīlā tumī.
Birale tiyāi buku cakulā dudhāre 11
Bidhir nirbandha, devi! āstām garbhat
Tomār, janam lale baikunthar pati,
Dānav-dalan hetu, badhib Kaṃsak
Durācār bhrātri taju dārun durmātī 11
(Daivakī)

(The soft heart of a mother cannot bear the sorrow for the loss of a son. But you bore sorrows for the losses of seven, shedding bitter tears silently. Oh Devi! according to the will of the Destiny, God of Heaven was born of you as your
eight child in order to kill villains and also to kill your notorious brother Kamsa.)

Jasodā was also equally successful in her spiritual devotion as she had the blessings of rearing up Sri Kṛṣṇa as her son.

Rehina, the mother of Balarāma, was a woman of rare virtues. But the poet repents that the picture of this woman was not properly drawn by the Indian poets in the past.

Baidēhī or Sītā, the wife of Lord Rāma Chandra, is a symbol of woman's devotion to and sacrifice for her husband. It was the will of Destiny that inspite of all her virtues Baidēhī should suffer from tragedies, one after another. But her sufferings glitter like gold in her devotional role for the pleasure of her husband:

"Sukh sambhogat uthā kacuvāre parā,
Aranyar dukh kintu dukh nābhābilā;
Patipad sevā kari, patibratā tumī
Aranyate svarga sukh bhog karichilā 11"

(Baidēhī)

(You had been reared up in comforts since your childhood. Yet you did not care for the sufferings of the exile in forest. But servicing at the feet of your husband you got the pleasures of Heaven in the forest itself.)

Ber Boruah draws the picture of Subhadra, the sister of Lord Kṛṣṇa with rare virtues. In Subhadra a woman's heroism and
humanism are combined into one. While Subhadra was eloping with Arjuna, she demonstrated her superb skill in driving the chariot of Arjuna in the sky. And without her heroic role, there would have been a sure defeat for Arjuna at the hands of the Jadau army.

"Sikalat tumi devi! parthar sarathi, 
Bijuli sanare rath kataje calalal;
Birangan rup dhari, Yadav senare
Arjunak tumi sei yudha karovala ll
Nahalaheten yadi sarathi Parthar;
Nidila tomar yadi sahas Parthak,
Novarile hay jame labhib tomar
Samarat haruvai yadav sabak ll" (Subhadra)

(At that time, O Devi! you were the charioteer of PArtha. Displaying the role of a heroine, you drove the chariot with a lightning speed, facilitating Arjuna to fight against the Yadavas. Had you not been there as the Charioteer of PArtha to encourage him, PArtha would have failed to gain your hand by defeating the Yadavas in battle.)

Besides heroism in the art of battle, Subhadra was endowed with heroic qualities of head and heart. As the mother of a hero, Subhadra did not shed tears when she had the fatal news of her young son Abhimanyu's death in the battle of Kuruksetra. And to the heroic vision of Subhadra there was no distinction between the friend and the foe;
(As the mother of a hero you did not shed tears in sorrow, when all the Pándavas were weeping bitter tears at the killing of Abhimanyu. Hearing of the heroic achievements of your son in the battle, you, as the mother of a hero, got delighted. You were highly wise and well-versed in religion. With your fair knowledge of the religion of the Bhāgavata, you could get rid of the distinction between the friend and the foe, appertaining equal treatments to all.)

The poet paints the pictures of Uttarā, the beloved wife of Abhimanyu, and Ahalyā, the accursed wife of Sage Gautama in true colours, presenting them as helpless toys at the pulls of the Destiny.

Draupadī, the wife of the Pándavas, is described as the symbol of idealism that glittered through various trials to which she was subject. And she could stand all trials through her spiritual devotion.
Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, was also subject to untold sufferings of life. The poet salutes her motherhood that brought up the Pāṇḍavas, the heroic sons, to rescue the earth from tyranny. The Pāṇḍavas won immortal glory by fighting heroically the Battle of Kurukṣetra:

"Sei jei hak, devi! pranāme tomāk
Bhagyavatī tumī ati, devī svarūpinī ēl
Tumiyete sei devī, putra sabe jār
Bhūbhār saāhār kari Kurukṣetra rane
Rākhile aksay kīrti atul martyat 1
Jār kīrti mālā gāthi kāvyarūpī sute
Vedaavyāsa mahākāvyā Sri Mahābhārata
Biracila, — Bhāratar amrt pukhurī ēl"  
(Kuntī)

(Whatever that might be, O Devi! I salute you. You were as lucky as a goddess. You were the woman, whose sons, by fighting the Battle of Kurukṣetra for the safety of the Earth, attained on earth immortal glory, on the theme of which Vedaavyāsa wrote the Great Epic — Sri Mahābhārata, which is like a pond of nectar in India.)

Sāvitrī, the princess of King Madra and wife of Satyavān, the prince of the kingdom of Avanti, is a symbol of heroic devotion and determination, with the help of which she could even win the heart of Yama, the God of Death and bring to life her deceased husband. The poet sings the glory of Sāvitrī in the following verse:

...
"Dhanya dhanya tumi, Devi! sujas' tomar
Ananta aksay ei mara jagatat;
Sati agraganya tumi, mrtapati taju
Päle oletäi präŋ tomar balat il
Tumar balat, taju satitva tejat, ---
Pitrikul, patikul duyu uddhärilä;
Aputrak pätä taju päle putradän,
Andharajä ealu äru sährajya labhilä il
Asambhab kända, Devi! mara jagatat
Satitvar bale tumi karilä sädhan;
Jagatat nare gäi tomar sujas'
Punyavati tumi, taju särthak jävan il" (Säviträ)

[Thanks to you, O Devi! your glory has become immortal in the world. You are a Sati (a Chaste woman) of the top rank. Your deceased husband got life back by virtue of your power. You raised up both your father's clan and your husband's clan by virtue of your heroic chastity. Your father, who was without a son, was blessed with a son and your father-in-law, who was without eye-sight, was gifted with the eye-sight. He also got back his lost kingdom. You could make an earth the impossible possible with the help of your power of chastity. The people of the world sing your glory. You were virtuous and your life was really worthy.]

Tārā and Mändedāri are two women-characters where the strength of woman's conscience is pictured pleasantly against the evil forces in men. Tārā, the wife of the mighty here-Bëli
tried to prevent her husband from fighting against his own brother Sugrīva. She was conscientious enough to say that Bālī should not fight with Sugrīva who might have been assisted by some gods. And, moreover, Sugrīva was his own brother. As a matter of fact, it was Sri Rām Chandra who came to the assistance of Sugrīva and killed Bālī from a secret place when the two brothers were engaged in the battle. Tārā, who failed to prevent her husband from the fight, was horrified to see the role played by Rāma in killing her husband in an unjust manner:

"Suniche Tārāi, Prabhu! Purna-Brahma tumi,
Purna-avatar Hari pātakf-tārāk il
Satya mīṣtha, nyāyavān, kintu ki kārane
Nāśīlā svāmik mor kapat yuddhat?
Tumi yadi karā ene nindaniya kām,
Tente Prabhu! Kat ēru dharma jagatat?"

(Tārā)

(Tārā heard, O Lord! you are Brahma Himself. You have come to the earth as full Incarnation of God for the redemption of the sinners. Being truthful and just, why have you killed my husband in an unjust fight? If you do such hateful works, O Lord! how can there be virtue on the earth?)

Mandedarf, the wife of Rāvana, is equally conscientious to advise her husband to repent for his misdeed of kidnapping Sītā, the wife of Rāma and to return her back apologetically for the sake of his Lankā’s welfare. But her husband – Rāvana did not care a fig for her advice and led his country to ruination. It was because of Mandedarf’s tactfulness Sītā could
keep her chastity in tact. Mandodari's character is a fine contrast to the predominating evil force in Rāvana. The poet sings her glory in the following lines:

"Satī tumī; jānichila satīva ki dhan
Si buli satitva tumī rakhāla ātār;
Natu — asahā ātā, ki kari rākhība
Rāvanar hāte Satī-dharma āponār?
Tumi, Satī! jānāvatā! musuni tomār
Nītī purṇa upades Lankā nās pāle;
Ek laksya bīr putra, cavā laksya nāti
Samar-kṣetrat prān tyāgile akale !!"

(Mandodari)

(As a chaste woman you knew what chastity was. And you, therefore, safeguarded the chastity of Sītā. Otherwise, how could have helpless Sītā protected her chastity from Rāvana? You were wise; but, for not listening to your moral advice Lankā was ruined. One lakh heroic sons and a quarter lakh grand-sons got killed in the battle-field.)

Janā is depicted as a symbol of woman’s heroism as a contrast to man’s cowardice. Janā was the wife of King Nilaśwaj, whose son-Pravīr was killed by Arjuna for capturing the latter’s horse that was let loose for an 'Asvamedha Yajna' (Horse-Sacrifice). King Nilaśwaj, instead of being furious for the killing of his son, was going to compromise with Arjuna, accepting thereby the latter’s suserainty. Janā could not tolerate her husband’s cowardice and, addressing him, said s
"Ki kalā, ki kalā, nāth! ki karilā tumī
d Bipakaar neki hāi! pasilā saran?
Pārtha putrā hantā mor bairī nīdārun;
Karilā kīrupā tāre mitra śacara?
Janam tomār, rājā! ksatriya kulat
Bir mahātejā tumī, Māhesvarī pati
Putrār mṛtyut yadi nakarā samar,
Kīrupā rākhībā nāth, ksatriyar rīti?
Puruś janam lai tūriro nindit
Karībā kīrupā karma? pavitra baṁsat
Kalankan pānī kiya dhālā prāṇanāth?
Durjaś tomār bar thākīb mṛtyat 11
(Janā)

(O Lord! what have you said? Have you been subdued to
the opposing enemy? Pārtha (Arjuna), the killer of my son,
is my bitterest enemy; and how have you received him well?
Being born in the ksatriya clan you are a great hero and the
master of Māhesvarī. And if you do not go to the battle-field
at the death of your son, how can you be true to the customs
of the ksatriya? Being born as a man, will you do an action
which is hated by a woman? Oh! my Lord, should you pollute
your pure clan? And if you do so, you will be subject to
hatred on earth.)

On the same theme Madhusudan also prepares the epistle
from Ān to Niladwaj where the heroism of Janā is vividly
expressed. And this epistle comes at the end of the Bīrānāna
Kāvyā as the epistle no. 11 (eleven).
Tilottamā is presented before us as a symbol of eternal beauty which can make everything possible. What the gods in Heaven failed to do, Tilottamā could do with her heavenly beauty.

Joshephine, the wife of Emperor Napoleon, is a symbol of a wife's heroic sacrifice for the pleasure and prosperity of her husband. Joshephine came to know that her beloved husband was willing to marry Augusta Maria, the daughter of the King of Austria. But, according to the custom of the country, Napoleon could not marry another woman when his wife Joshephine was alive. So Joshephine took farewell from her husband smilingly for ever and set sail towards America, leaving thereby the noblest of examples of a wife's sacrifice for her husband.

Bor Boruah depicts another French heroine - Joan d'Are, the maid of Orleans in true colours. Jean was a heroine in the real sense of the term and she was divinely inspired to protect her father-land, France from the invasion of the British. And she could defend her father-land by virtue of her heroic determination and skill in battle. But due to mischance this French heroine was captured by the British and burnt alive in England. In a fluid and inspiring verse the poet sings the glory of Joan:

"Kṣakar kanyā tumī, ājanma dukhini, -
Parbbatar māje bherī phurute carāi
Kone jen dile koi dibabānī eṭī
Kānat tomār, Jonā! muruli bajāi 11
Blrangani tumi, Jona! svargar pari,
Janam tomar matr-bhumir karane,
Faracir svadhinata raksai kara tumi
Orlean avarodh kariche Britone ll

(Joan d'Arc)

(You were the poor daughter of a peasant. While you were looking after sheep in the midst of mountains, you seemed to have heard some heavenly pronouncement: "You are a heroine, O Jona! You are a heavenly angel. You are born for the sake of your mother-land. You should protect the freedom of your country, as Orleans has been besieged by the Britons."

Another foreign heroine that comes to life in the pen of Bor Boruah is Boadecce, the British Warrior Queen. During the invasion of Britain by Julius Caesar, Boadecce demonstrated rare courage and heroism against the Romans:

"Blrangani rupdhi yuddha saj pindhi
Nagarar baij tumi halai, Boadecce!
Ghor samarat yog dilai tumi range,
Atul sahase bandhi apnonar hiya ll
...
...
...
Satrur majat hai akalsari
Akale akale yuddha karilai bahut,
Bipaksa senare sate birangana dare,
Atul sahas lai lahari bukut ll"

(Boadecce)
(Putting on war-dresses as a heroine, Boadecea, you came out of the city. You jumped into the battle with indomitable courage in your heart ................. Being alone among the enemies you fought incessantly with enemy-soldiers like a heroine with indomitable courage in your endearing heart.)

Last but not the least is the picture of Lālā, who was the daughter of Kāchem, a merchant of Arab. She was madly in love with Majnu, the son of an Arabian Bādshah. Lālā and Majnu had to face all sorts of hurdles in the fulfilment of their eternal love, but no hurdles could stand on their way. But 'fulfilment' in real sense was not possible on earth, so Lālā left her perishable body and went to Heaven, which is the abode of eternal peace and eternal love:

"Ei buli tumi, Sati! mudilā ducaaku;
Antarat kari dhyān mūrti Kāyecar;
Nasvar jivan eri, pālā svargalok
Ananta sukhar thāi, ananta premar lār

(Lālā)

[Saying so, O Sati, (Chaste-woman) you shut your eyes. You worshipped the image of Kāyec in heart and left your perishable body. You reached Heaven which is the abode of eternal peace and love.]

As in the historical epics of Bor Boruah the tragic view of life becomes prominent in this narrative poem also. All the heroic women described here happen to be subject to untold sufferings and trials due to destiny. But their heroic virtues lead them to overcome all sorts of sufferings, and there is a
note of compromise through the achievement of goals. A few instances from the justify the point.

The sufferings of the heroines were due to destiny:

**Destiny on Sītā:**

"Bidhir nirvandha kintu nakhandile taju
Tomār haran kari nile Dāsānane -
Pathiyāl Māricak māyā marga kari
Ātārāi duṭi bhāi budhir chalere ll"

(Baidéhi)

(You could not escape the dispensation of destiny. Dāsānan kidnapped you by sending Māricch in the shape of an illusory
deer that led the two brothers away deceitfully.)

**Destiny on Kuntī:**

"Kintu karma dose tumī gotei jīvan
Kāndichilā saṁsārar bhisān kshetra
Dekhi biṣamay phal kuru samarata."

(Kuntī)

(But due to the effect of past misdeeds you shed tears in the
world by seeing the serious consequences of the battle of
Kurukṣetra.)

**Destiny on Draupādi:**

"Devi svarūpinī devi prātah smaraniā
Kuntīr snehar tumī eketi bovāri;
Bhāgyar doṣat kintu-kāndi uthe hiyā -
Jivanat pālā tumī bahu apamān ll"

(Draupādi)
(You are like a goddess to be worshipped in the morning. You are the only beloved daughter-in-law of Kunti. But due to bad luck (Destiny) you had to pass through a series of insults.)

**Destiny on Ahalyā:**

"Tumi satī patibratā, kintu karmaphale, —
Rūpet tomār mohi Deva Purandar
Gautomar rūp dhari harile tomāk,"

(Ahalyā)

(You are a chaste woman devoted to husband. But due to destiny you were seduced by God Purandar in the guise of Gautom (your husband) as he was enraptured by your beauty.)

Besides the play of destiny there is the touch of religiosity on the characters of Bor Boruah. Though we hear the tone of mild protest in Janā, the predominant note is that of resignation to fate and acceptance of the will of God. But in Madhusudan there is no touch of religiosity and there is no note of compromise. In some of the epistles his heroines try to justify their claims of love before their lovers or husbands (Saukuntalā; Tārā, Rukmīṇī, Surpanāśā, Draupadī, Urvaśī), and some accuse their husbands of their weaknesses or try to justify their ends (Kekāyī, Bhanumati, Duhashā, Jāhnabī, Janā). The renaissance impact is very strong in Madhusudan, while in Hiteswar Bor Boruah it appears in flashes and mingle into traditions. But in establishing the tragedy of life and in upholding the heroic virtues of women both the poets come to the same fold.
(11) BiRAHINĪ BILĀP KĀVYA:

(A Longer Narrative Poem dealing with the pathos of a Love-lorn Woman)

Hiteswar Bor Boruah's another longer narrative poem

Birahinī Bilāp Kāvya was published in 1912, the year in which the poet's beloved wife passed away. It is significant to note that the kāvya was dedicated to his beloved wife who was no longer with him. The dedicatory sonnet that appears in the poem is really touchy and it amply shows the depth of the poet’s love for his wife:

"Āchil ji ghare pare sangīnī prānar
Ardhāṅgīnī, ardhabhāgī dukh bipadat,
Phule sate phul madhu saurabh madhur,
Āsīt jirūpe latā tarur dehat,
' Scoote khāete, kimō karote bhraman
Chāyārūpe ji āchil Hites' sangīnī,
Maru-samanā eil sansār mājat
Hitesar, jār mūrti prafullā nalīnī l
Sok dukh biśādar kālā meghkhani
Ābari jetiyā dhare hiyā durbhāgār
Si-kālāt jār sei mau-sanā hāhi
Karichil antarar dūr andhakār
Sei priyā prān priyā prān sakhi nāme
Uchargilo 'Birahinī' eka citta prāne lī

(The 'Birahinī' is dedicated in the name of my heart's beloved wife who was my heart's companion both at home and outside; who was my better-half and co-sharer of my sorrows and sufferings; who was like the sweet honey in a flower, like a creeper
on a tree; who was the shadow of Hites in sleeping, eating, and travelling; whose pleasant image acted like a solace in Hites's world of desert; and whose honey-sweet smile removed the dark clouds from his heart.)

A study of the narrative in the light of the dedicatory sonnet mentioned above brings out the passionate aspect of love that the poet's wife might cherish for him.

Hiteswar Bor Boruah derived inspiration to write this poem after the model of Madhusudan's *Brajāṅana Kavya*, which was published in book-form in July, 1861. The *Brajāṅana* that contains eighteen sections under one Canto only, (the First Canto) deals with the pangs of Rādhā at her separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa. Madhusudan calls the poems of the narrative, containing the emotional outbursts of love-lorn Rādhā as 'Odes' which remind us of the famous odes in English e.g. 'Ode to Nightingale' by Keats, 'Ode to the Westwind' by Shelley and 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality' by Wordsworth. In the case of the English odes the poets use to address some animals, natural objects or abstract ideas as the medium of their poetic thoughts. But in this narrative the poet's place is occupied by the heroine Rādhā to address the various objects. Madhusudan got the inspiration to write the poem on the pangs of Rādhā from his study of Joydev's *Gīta Govinda* and the religious verses of Vidyāpati. But the inspiration was "purely humanitarian and literary, and the Vaishnavite religious thought had no connection with it." 4 Madhusudan takes up the

love between Rādhā and Sri Kṛṣṇa on the human plane, ridding it off from the Vaishnavite religiosity and the touch of the divinity. With a heart, burning in the fire of separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā addresses all the objects — such as the tune of the lute, the cloud, the river Jamuna, the Peacock; the Earth, the Echo, the Morning, the Flower, the Mountain, the Evening, the Gobardhan Mountain, the Śārikā bird, the Kṛṣṇacudā Tree, the Friend, and the Spring, — the objects which were associated with her love with Sri Kṛṣṇa. All these objects with their presence make the pangs of Rādhā more and more intense, and they look blank without the presence of Sri Kṛṣṇa. A note of optimism that rings all throughout the lyric poem gets its fulfilment in the Ode on 'Spring' (Basanta) that appears in the end. Seeing the flowers like 'bakul' in bloom Rādhā tries to ensure if the Spring has come, and she then comes to the conclusion that if the Spring has come, Mādhab (Sri Kṛṣṇa) will also come:

"Phulil bakul phul kena lo Gokule āji,
Kaha tā, svajñāni?
Āila ki ṛṭurāj? dharilā ki phul sāj,
Bilāse dharanī?
Muchiya nayan-jal, cala lo sakale cal,
Suniba tamāl tale benur surab;
Āila basanta yadi, āsibe Mādhabā?
(Basanta)"

(Oh my Dear, why have the bakul flowers bloomed? Has the Spring, the King of Seasons, come? Has the earth put on the

5. Madhusudan Dutta: Brajāṅganā Kāvyā: Section 17, Sub-section 1.
dress of flowers? Wiping the tears of eyes let us all go
under the 'tamāl' tree to hear the tune of the lute. If the
Spring has come, Madhab will also come."

Of all the kāvyas of Madhusudan the Brajāngana kāvya has
its mark of peculiarity for the variety of versification —
in its rhythm and metre. Dr. Sukumar Sen opines: "The Brajān-
gana kāvya has its historical value as the first Ode or
lyric poem with varied versification in Bengali." 6

The few hints on Madhusudan's Brajāngana kāvya as given
above will help us in our study of Hiteswar Bor Boruah's
Birahim Bilāp kāvya. Bor Boruah is not a blind imitator of
Madhusudan, whose impact on his poetry is immensely felt. With-
in the frame work of Madhusudan, Bor Boruah has his own inno-
vations which go to establish his distinct originality as a
pure poet. In the selection of the heroine of his kāvya Bor
Boruah shows his modernity of approach and the universality
of theme. At the time of taking Rādhā of the Vaishnavite ver-
ses as the heroine of his lyric poem Madhusudan had a good
deal of hesitation. But Bor Boruah, while accepting the theme
of the pang of separation in love, has changed the heroine
from one being endowed with superhuman or religious emotions
to one who is purely human endowed with purely human emotions.
In other words, Bor Boruah's heroine is 'ANY WOMAN' who has
been suffering from the pang, being separated from her beloved
husband for some time. The love-lorn woman, being burnt in

6. Dr. Sukumar Sen: Bāṅglā Sāhityer Itihās: (Second Part: Nineteenth Century) p. 156. (Translated into English from the original in Bengali)
the fire of separation, addresses various objects — e.g. the Friend, the natural objects, the birds, the Spring, the Abstract, Ideas, the Heavenly Bodies, the Dream etc. The love-lorn woman of the Birahini Bilēp gets a wider scope to address various objects and to tell of her experiences than Rādhā of the Brajāngana Kāvya as Bor Boruah's poem consists of six Cantos with various sections and sub-sections under them, while Madhusudan's poem consists of only one Canto with eighteen sections.

Like the lyrics of Brajāngana the lyrics of Birahini Bilēp may be called the specimens of 'Odes' in Assamese from the variety of versification and the outbursts of emotions through the medium of some objects. The objects addressed by the love-lorn woman appear to be present only to make her more and more conscious of her loneliness as well as to intensify her pang of separation from her beloved husband. To make the point of intensity of emotional outbursts at once real and vivid the poet quotes a Sanskrit verse from Kalidās's Meghadūta.

In the First Canto, the love-lorn woman addresses her friend in a series of odes and tells her how seriously she suffers from the pang of separation from her beloved. She is alone at home and the rainy season is approaching, and her heart is stricken with fear. When she was young without any experience of love from her beloved, she was busy with innocent thoughts. When the lotus of her heart did not bloom, she had no experience of the humble bee. But when it had bloomed in time, it was enraptured by the bee-like mind of her lover.
But the pining woman cannot rely on the premises of her beloved whom she compares to an humble bee:

"Laturā bhomorā jātei cancel!
Padumar madhu padume thai,
Keteki phulat madhu āśā kari
Paril bhomorā pagalā hai ll"

(Canto I, Sec. 7)

(The humble bee is fickle by nature. It leaves the lotus after sucking honey and then goes to the Ketaki flower searching madly for honey.)

The more she tries to forget the face and the name of her beloved, the more she becomes engrossed in his thoughts, finding no incentive to work at all. When the nature wears a pleasing atmosphere with the humming of bees, and the blowing of wind, she does not know who can capture the lord of her heart. Being tortured in the pang of love the pining woman accuses the entire man-folk as heartless. She knows no way out:

"Kirūpe bā rākho prān!
Jvaliche birah jui,
Puriche hriday mor sukān banani 1
Prem sāgarat sakhi!
Uthicche birah dhau
Kariche akul mok nāpao tarāṇī ll"

[I do not know) how to protect my heart which is being burnt in the fire of separation. My heart is burning like a dry field of grass. In the sea of love, O Friend, waves of pining thoughts are rising, and they are making me restless, and I do not know how to protect myself.]
In Canto II the pining woman, addresses the heavenly bodies i.e. the Sun, the Moon, the Star, the Flash of Lightning, the Setting Sun, and also the Clouds and expresses her pang to them. These are a few of the finest odes in Assamese in which the poet records the best of emotional outbursts of a pining woman. In 'the Ode to the Sun', the woman says that the Sun disappears in the evening behind the western mountains only to reappear in the morning. But the lover of the woman disappears, and the woman does not know why he has not reappeared before her. In the 'Ode to the Moon' the woman says that the moon is the harbinger of peace that brings joy to the hearts of the lover and the loved. But the moon has failed to pacify her burning heart. Seeing the glittering smiles of the stars (Ode to Stars) the sorrowing woman accuses them (the stars) as wicked for being pleased at her misfortune. Addressing the 'Flash of Lightning' in the dark clouds of the rainy season the love-lorn woman puts the following questions:

"Swami birahat kandicho bagari,
Hahichha mathon tai?
Baritha kalor kali meghe sate
Bhumukh-bhumuki kai?"

Iman kandile inai binai
Nalagile beya tor?
Hiyakhani nek-i Silere bandhova
Antar bandhova lor?"

(Canto II)
(I am weeping bitter tears at my separation from my husband. But are you only laughing at it by playing hide and seek with the dark clouds of the rainy season? Have you not felt for my weeping so bitterly? Have your heart been made of stone or iron?)

Addressing the Cloud the woman asks him to be her messenger to carry the message of love to her husband:

"Megh! tai kabi gai
Swāmir ēgat gai, -
Yugamik kari prān
Tecte arpicho moi l
Kabi gai mor kathā
(Suni jāno lāge bethā)
Akale kāndicho mai
Cakule dudhāri lai 11"
(Canto II)

[O Cloud! go and tell my husband that I have dedicated my heart to him for ever. Also tell him (so that he may get pain in hearing) that I am weeping alone, tears rolling down from both the eyes.]

It shows the impact of Kalidāś's Meghadūtam on Bor Boruah's lyrics.

In the Canto III Hiteswar Bor Boruah includes five Odes to birds as against only two by Madhusudan in his Brajāngana. The five odes are to the 'Muli' (The Cuckoo), 'Sakhīyatī' (A Song bird), 'Ketekī' (The Indian Nightingale), 'Sālikī' (A kind of bird that is generally caught and domesticated);
and 'Kāuri' (the Crow). Madhusudan's birds are 'Mayūrī' (the Peacock) and 'Sārikā' (A kind of bird that is generally caught and domesticated). So the only common bird on which the two epic poets wrote Odes is 'Salikī' or 'Sārikā'.

Madhusudan's Rādhikā observes the pitiable condition of the encaged 'Sārikā' and finds harmony between the condition of the bird and her own:

"Aji o pākhīr manah buji āmi bilakan -
Amio bandī le āji braja-kārāgāre !
Sārikā adhīr bhābī kusum-kānan,
Rādhikā adhīr bhābī Rādhā-binodan!"7

(I understand to-day the mind of that bird! I am also a captive to-day in the prison of Braja! The 'Sārikā' is restless after the garden of flowers, while Rādhikā is restless after Rādhā-binodan (Śrī Kṛṣṇa).

Bor Boruah's 'Salikī' is also a captive. The bird is getting all sorts of artificial love and kindred treatments from no less a person than the King (Cakravartī Rājā).

"Nite nite anī, diche tok pakhi !
Natun natun phal !
Devaro-bāndit khāicha pāyas,
Sondā, cenicampā kal 11

(3)
Āpo-hātêre Chakravartī Rājā
Kariche īdar tok;
Imān sukhatō tathāpi, 'saliki !
Kiya kari thāka sok ?" (Canto III : vv 2-3).

"O Bird, you are given every day fresh fruits. You are eating 'pāyas' (sweet boiled rice), 'sondā', 'cenicampa kal' (varieties of banana). Chakravarti Raja (King) is endearing you with his own hands. Why should you be repining amidst so much of comforts?

As in the historical epics, so also in this particular Ode to Salikr Bor Boruah's intense patriotism appears feelingly before us. The poet's lyrical concern in this ode is: what may be the cause of the bird's lamentations? Some poets attribute the cause to be the loss of freedom on the part of the bird. But Bor Boruah refutes this assumption as he does not find any such lamentations among the Assamese who have also lost their independence. The poet then comes to the lyrical conclusion that the 'Salikr', an Assamese bird, cannot be different from the Assamese people. Inspite of the lyrical freedom which the poet can easily exercise, Bor Boruah is cautious enough not to confuse himself with the pining woman, and he serves his lyrical purpose through the heroine herself who ultimately establishes a bond of relationship with the bird, assigning the cause of lamentations, not to the loss of freedom, but to the loss of her association with the beloved.

It is rather tempting to quote the lines that form the subject-matter of our discussion:

(9)

"Kay kono kabi, heruwāli tay
'Svādhinatā' mahādhan 1
Si dukhate tay kāndi thāka nite,
Sadā biyākul man 11"
(10)
Ki kathā pakhi! jiṭo kabi kay,
Ekoke nājāne teō l
Saṁsār-kṣetrar palasat pari
Nāi levā teō leō līl

(11)
Jī dinā avadhi Assam Mātrye
Herāle svādhin dhan l
Si dinā avadhi Assam-bāsīr
Parar adhin man līl

(12)
Si dinā avadhi Assamiyā jāti
Ānar golām hal!
Khovā, pindhā, levā, uthā, bāhā, sovā,
Lokar hātat gal līl

(13)
Tathāpie pakhi! etāro mukhat
Nāi biśādar cin!
Teito, sālik! — Assamare pakhi?
Tayo habi parādhīn līl

(14)
Swādhīnata gal, sei buli tor,
Jānicho, — nākānde man l
Nilā parbbatar kāthani-mājat
Grili svāmi dhan līl
[Some poets say as you have lost the great treasure of your independence, you weep for it always in sorrow. — The poets who say so are quite inexperienced of earthly life. — Since the time Mother Assam has lost her Independence, the mind of the Assamese is devoid of free thinking. — Since then the Assamese have become servants of others in eating, in wearing, in taking, in standing, in sitting, in sleeping (and what not) — Yet, O Bird, there is no sign of sorrow in any one's face! You are but a 'Sālikī'! (Are you not) an Assamese bird? You also prefer to be a servant. — I know your mind does not repine at the loss of Independence. It repines because you have left your husband in the shady wood behind the green mountains. — If you have really left your husband, and if it is really so, don't we (you and I) have similar miserable conditions? And I am repining for my husband!]

The lovelorn woman cannot bear to hear the happy note of the 'Kuli' (Cuckoo) in the Spring as the bird does not have any feelings for the sorrow-ridden ones in love. When the bird will be caught by man, she will then realise the pang of separation. With the song of 'Sakhīyatī' (A song Bird) the lovelorn woman finds some similarity of thought as the bird also
seems to be haunting after her beloved. In the song of
'Kotok' (the Indian Nightingale) the pining woman appears to
have some consolation as the bird seems to be searching for
her mate:

(3)

"Nāthākil bhāl pēvā teer manat,
Tiyāgi tomāk, pakhī! lukāl banat?

(4)

Sacāne, kevācho, tumī bicārichā tāk?
Parānar prān buli bhābichilā jāk?

(5)

Sacā yadi, āhā-pakhī! kare kolākoli,
Tomār-mor eke dasā ekei samūlī ll

(6)

Herāle tomār svāmī, prāṃṣati mor ll
Duyotir eke dukh jātanā dorghor ll

(Canto III)

(Is it, O Bird! that your beloved has absconded in forest,
forsaking you in love? — Is it true that you are searching
for him whom you thought to be the master of your heart? —
If it is true, O Bird, come and let us embrace as our fates
are the same! — You have lost your mate and I have lost
the husband of my heart, and our sufferings are intense.)

Approaching the 'Kūrī' (the Crow) the pining woman hopes
that the bird, which is traditionally believed to be a messen-
ger, will certainly give her the information of the arrival of
her beloved. The woman wants her to do so. If the Bird fails in giving any information, there will be sure death for the pining woman. Poet Bor Boruah expresses these thoughts enchantingly in the following verses:

(5)

"Nakava kiyano,  
Kalfya kāurf ! —  
Moro ocharat gachat pari  
'Nākāndā ēiti ! —  
Ahiba tomār  
Śvāmi-ratan etiyā lari'?  
... ... ...  
... ... ...  

(7)

Yadihe nakabi  
Bātari kāurf !—  
Jānibī, abhāgi mariba ēji !—  
Birah juṭre  
Dehā khari-diba  
Pronay-kharire citāti sāji II  
(Canto III)

[Why don't you say, sitting on a tree near me, O Black Crow!  
— 'Don't weep, O Lass!, your husband, who is your jem, will come running to you'? ... ... ... If you don't give, O Crow, the message (of his coming), you should take it for granted that the wretched woman will die to-day. Love will constitute her funeral pyre, while the pang of separation will be the fire to burn her lifeless body.]
In Canto IV the love-lorn young woman accuses 'Basanta' (the Spring) for being heartless as it has come with all its accompanying virtues, but it has not brought her beloved husband. The Spring is meaningless to her without the presence of her beloved. Addressing the Spring the young woman, therefore, says:

"Guci jā, Basanta! tay,
Ki asamay,
Stīyā nāhibi tay, āhibi pāchat l
Āhibi jetiā mor
Parānār prān,
Hṛday rājyar raja svāmik lagat l"

(Canto IV)

(Spring, go away. It is not time for you to come. Come afterwards, when you bring my husband who is the soul of my soul, and king of my heart.)

The love-lorn young woman also does not welcome 'Malaya' (the Breeze) without the accompaniment of her beloved. She is ready to welcome the breeze only when:

"Saubhāgya uday yadi
Ketiyābā hay
Sukhar beliṭi yadi hāhe ākāsāt;
Birah sāgar sici,
Yadi ketiyābā
Svāmik lai bahe phulanī mājat;"

(If fortune becomes favourable someday, if the sun of happiness smiles in the sky, and if by bailing the sea of sorrows someday,
I sit with my beloved husband in a garden of flowers (you should come at that time.)

Similar ideas are expressed in the Odes to the 'Mind', to the 'Eye', to the 'Hope', and to the 'Wind'. The young woman in search of 'Peace' comes at last to the following conclusion:

"Bisham kathor samsārar māje
Nāthāka alapo rai!
Birah dhaur gājaniye sate
Jāva je mihali hai l"

(Canto IV)

(In the world of deep distress you do not stay for a moment. You get mixed up with the waves of sorrow.)

Unlike that of Madhusudan in the Brajāṅgana Kāvyā a sorrowful note seems to pervade the lyrics of the Birahini Bilān. The pessimistic note in love merges ultimately into a tragic philosophy of life.

In Canto V the love-lorn woman observes the dew-drops falling from a creeping plant (Mādhai-lātār parā niyarar topā sari thakā dekhi) called Mādhai-malati and thinks that the creeping plant is as sorrow-stricken as she is, and tries to get some consolation from nature. The woman also observes that the River ('Nai') flows on restlessly to meet the Sea, and she is similarly restless to get united with her beloved. Taking the craving for union as a way of nature, the woman questions the river if she will have the pleasure of union on earth. The love-lorn woman does not find any utility of a beautifully decorated bed-room (Suanī kothāt somāi) meant
for her without the pleasing presence of her dear husband. She does not have the pleasure to put on a beautiful rose (Golāp) on her cheek as her husband is not with her to enjoy its beauty. She approaches the mountains (Parbbat) which appears to be as heartless as stone, of which it is made. Then she goes to the river-side (Nair Dātit) and makes to her the following appeal:

(5)

"Badh lāge nadi'! rabācho kante
Cakulo edhari nibā 1
Yadi karbāt povā svāmik
Teor pāvate dibā 11"

(6)

Nāri janamar ses upahār
Cakur cakulo dhāri 1
Lai jovā nadi! dibā sovāmik
Māticho kākuti kari 11"

(Canto V)

(You will be accursed, O River, if you do not stop for a moment. Carry with you my tears and offer the same at the feet of my husband if you happen to meet him somewhere. —— The last reward of a woman's life is her tears; and I appeal to you fervently, O River, to offer it to my husband.)

Thus the pining woman falls back upon the various objects of nature for some consolation.

In Canto VI the love-lorn woman takes the help of introspection to know the situation in which she is placed. In 'Dream' she sees the face of her beloved and becomes much
more conscious of her lonely situation and unfulfilled passion. And it is very nicely narrated in the following lines:

"Ji darun hepahat
Sāgar sāhiba khoje,
Guche ki piyāh tār etopa pānīt?
Pūrṇimar rangā jon
Gāba khoje prāne jār,
Tār ki hṛday sāt hai jonākīt?"

(Canto VI)

(How can one's awful thirst for drinking the sea be quenched with a drop of water? How can one's desire of heart to see the red full-moon be fulfilled with the sight of a glow-worm?)

With the impact of the dream the woman approaches her beloved 'husband (Svāmi) through imagination and comes to the conclusion that love is like a play of dream which is not everlasting. In her 'introspection' (Akale-akale) the pining woman observes that the objects of nature move in a cyclic order, but her love is away from it. To her happiness (Sukh) is not a practical experience. Looking around her (Cārie-phāle cāi) she notices the eternity of love and beauty in nature, but she has the saddest realisation of the fact that love and beauty in human form are subject to change and declination. In the ode to the 'Pond' (Pukhūrī) a contrast between the love in nature and the love in man is vividly presented; the former is eternal, while the latter is short-lived. Continuing the process of introspection (Mīr. Manate) the love-lean woman comes to a compromise that she will accept her lot and
go on worshipping her beloved till the end of her life:

"Anta hale bhavalīlā,
Teer pāvar dhūlā
Kpon sīrat tuli kari lam thāpanā l
Dekhōte dekhōte jen
Prānpakhi ury jēl,
Āru je nālāge eko, eye māthō kāmanā l"

(Canto VI)

(When the play of the earthly life comes to an end, I shall take the dust of his (beloved's) feet on my head as an object of worship. Looking at it I want that my soul will fly away; and beyond that I have no other prayer to make)

This longer lyric poem of Bor Boruah without having any specific character or any specific theme whatsoever may be called a lyric par excellence merging into universality. The poem develops the eternal longing of a woman's heart for the consummate union with her beloved, taking different facets of her pathos as the theme in the context of the situations in which she is placed. And this kāvya, if translated into other languages of the world, will ascertain the pride of place of Hiteswar Bor Boruah as a lyric poet.

(111) DESDEMONA KĀVYA:

(A Longer Narrative Poem, delineating the Tragedy of Desdemona)

Hiteswar Bor Boruah's another work Desdemona Kāvya, based on the source-material of Shakespeare's Othello, establishes his originality and poetic capability. The kāvya that was published in 1917 clearly proves how deeply poet Bor Boruah
was acquainted with the immortal writings of Shakespeare. The following four lines quoted in the Kāvyā from Gerald Massey make this point crystal clear:

"And for all time he (Shakespeare) wears the crown of lasting, limitless renown; He reigns, whatever monarchs fall; His throne is in the heart of all."

While going to present Desdemona, the heroine of Shakespeare's tragedy - 'Othello' in lyric form in Assamese, Bor Boruah seems to have fallen in a helpless situation, as if he has fallen in the clutch of the witch: his inordinate ambition (durā Śā dākinī). In the Preface to the Desdeonā Kāvyā the poet writes: "There is no end of our inordinate ambition. Where is Shakespeare, the greatest poet of the world, and where is the most worthless creature like me? Yet the witch-like inordinate ambition is leading me to do whatever it likes. This Desdeonā Kāvyā is the product of that inordinate ambition. It is written in the light of the main heroine, Desdenoā of Shakespeare's Othello. I appeal to all kind readers to forgive the author for his inordinate ambition."

The dedication of the Kāvyā which is made in the name of his dear sister Jayadā has its special literary value as it contains the hints of all the important literary epics of Bor Boruah.

8. Hiteswar Bor Boruah: Desdemonā Kāvyā: The extract is translated into English from the original Preface in Assamese.
Just after the Dedication appears the Sonnet - 'Mahakabi Shakespeare' (Master-poet Shakespeare) which is included in the poet's book of sonnets entitled Malac. With this sonnet Bor Boruah salutes the world poet who has attained immortality on earth. From this sonnet another point also becomes crystal clear. Bor Boruah's eyes are fixed on the heroines of Shakespeare, — not on his heroes. In his lucid 'Introduction' Bor Boruah mentions the four great Shakespearean tragedies — Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello and King Lear, of which he takes up Othello for a critical estimate. He gives in brief the story of Desdemona with special reference to his lyric approach to it. By adding six lines from his sonnet entitled 'Bhrânti' (Error) the poet seems to have explained the cause behind the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona:

"Bhrânti !
Nirmal jonar tumi kalankar cin !
Ajnân abodh, hâi' bhrânti kalankini !
Ki je bhâl ki je beyâ, nâi eke bhin !?"

(Error, you are the spot in the moon. You are insensible and impure. To you there is no difference between good and evil.)

While bringing about a lyric version on the dramatised theme of Desdemona, Bor Boruah has come away to a considerable extent, from the original. As mentioned in the 'Preface' Bor Boruah's Desdemona is not the prototype of Shakespeare's; it is only its Shadow. Taking it for granted that the story of Shakespeare's Desdemona is known to all, we shall chiefly concentrate on the originality and thought of Bor Boruah in making the lyric mould in Assamese.
The technique of the 'Desmondā Kāvyā' is purely an innovating one. It consists of twenty-two sonnets in a sequence, being woven in the same thread of the narrative. From the architectonical point of view this kāvyā may be called a 'Sonnetised narrative' which is rare not only in Assamese, but also, perhaps, in other literatures. The Sonnets in sequence, modelled on the Shakespearean type, contain three quatrains with or without uniformity in rhyming that end with a coplet. To have a taste of the nature of the sonnets let us at least quote the first of the series:

"Brebāntir kānya tumi, janma Venicat,
Sarbbarūp gunjukā, atiba sundarī;
Aisarya dhanar kīntu āsā parihari

Mān prān sapichilā tumī Othelloṭ 11
Krishnabarna 'Moor' bāmse janma Othellel,
Āchile Othelle nījē ati kadaṅktī,
Kīntu sunī galpachale bīrocit kīrtī

Othellet dile sapī jīvan nījar 11
Othelle tomar pāi svargadhuki pāle,
Othellek pāi tumī bhāhila sukhat;
Kīntu, hā! kande prān! kapāl-dosat
Dusta Īagove pāche biyad ghatāle 11
Antar kumbhābe bharā dusta Īagor
Īagor nīc prakṛti, papiṣṭha derghor 11"

Here the quatrains are rhyming as a bba, c dd c, e aa e, etc. But this uniformity in rhyme-scheme is not maintained all throughout the sonnet-sequence of the kāvyā.
The *Desdemonā Kāvyā* is based on the source-material of Act. V, Se. II of Shakespeare's *Othello*. In arranging the dialogues of the hero and the heroine in the poem Bor Boruah appears to have the role of a chorus. The poet goes on letting loose the thread of the tragic tale by addressing the heroine Desdemona with a homely and dear name - 'Dee'. The stage-directions of the original play: (A bed-chamber in the castle: Desdemona in bed: asleep: Enter Othello with a light) are presented in the Assamese narrative poem without any less of the dramatic suspense. The narrative starts while Desdemonā is asleep and ends when she is dead. The scene is described in the Kāvyā in the following lines:

"Kāndi uthe prān, satī! nacale lekhanī,
Kapi kapi uthe hiyā parile manat,
Gabhīr dupar nisā, ki manat bhābi
Āhile Othello jave tomār kāsat lī
Unmādar dare, hā! (topani tomar)
Tomār mukhani cāi man-prān harā
Bulile Othello, — "jāno, eyei kāraṇ ĵ"
Cāi jēvā āhi, herā ākāsar tarā l"

(Sonnet No. 3)

(The heart weeps, O chaste woman! and the pen jolts; the heart trembles to remember - why in the dead of night and with what thought in mind Othello has come near you - like a lunatic. (You are in sleep). Looking at your charming face Othello says: '(I) know, this is the cause. O Stars in heaven, come and see.)
The dialogues of the hero and the heroine in the narrative are kept within inverted commas. Some of the dialogues have similarity with that of the original, while some others are the poet's own creations. While proceeding with its own peculiar way of narration the kavya turns to be purely dramatic in sections 12, 13, 15 and 16 with the dialogues of the hero and the heroine, devoid of any chieric interpretation of the poet.

In Sections One and Two the poet introduces the hero Othello and the heroine Desdemona with hints of their tragic tale. In a very short compass of the Section Two the poet succeeds in giving the core of the tragic episode in a pathetically poetic way:

"Kata saṣajantra kari, kāndi uthe prān!
Keciere sate, satī! dile apabād
Dustamati ṭagove, — sandeh janmāi
Otheller antarat, ghatāle pramād!!
Satītvat kari, satī! bīsam sandeh
Unmādār dare hal sovāmī tomar
Bīṣād dāvare āhi beli Otheller
Dhākile hathāt, hai! kari andhakār ll
Kata je hepāh kari hridoi-kṣetrat
Ji lāharī aśālatā rūle Othellei
Bīsamāi kālmurti rade
Sei latā aśālat pelāle sukāi ll
Sandehar sāgarat bhāhile Othelle, —
Unmād Othello āji Sānti heruvāi ll

(Sonnet No. 2)
The heart weeps (to recall) how through a deep-seated conspiracy the wicked Iago has brought about a tale of illicit connection between you and Cassio, how by causing suspicion in the heart of Othello, madness has been created. O Chaste lady! your husband has appeared to be a lunatic suspecting severely your chastity, and a cloud of sorrow has enveloped Othello's sun, all of a sudden, throwing darkness everywhere. With so much of hope Othello has planted the creeper of desire on the soil of his heart, but the severe sun of suspicion has caused that creeping plant to wither quite untimely. Othello has floated on the sea of suspicion,— and Othello has turned mad by losing to-day the peace of mind.]

The poem is replete with superb similes. The heart of Othello is compared to a field, his desire of life to a creeping plant and his suspicion to the severe sun. In a subordinate simile the 'suspicion' is compared to a sea. The entire 'Desdemona Kavya' may be called a store of many such similes that go to establish the excellence of this sonnetised lyric poem.

Having partial similarities with the dramatised version of the original episode the kavya has the beginning of its narrative in Section Three and comes to an end in Section Twenty-second.

Let us have a glimpse of the narrative through the dialogues of the hero and the heroine:
Othello: "Pranayar upahár, bhâlpovâ cin
Dichilo tomâk, priye rumâl pâtarp
Si rumâlkhani tumî dilâ Cassiek
Gopânyâ bhâve cin gupta pranayar II

(Sonnet No. 13)

(Othello: O dear wife, I gave you a
Silken handkerchief as a token
of my love, and you have given
that handkerchief to Cassio
secretly as a token of illicit love)

This is there in the original in the following words:
(Othello: That handkerchief which I so lov’d and gave thee
Thou gav’st to Cassio.)

Desdemona tries to refute the false charge of unchastity
with the following words:

Kândi kândi kalâ, Decî ! "Nahae niscay
Bîsvâsghâtînî mai tirotâ tomâr,
Pavitra Cassie, nâth ! kalankî nahay I
Cassiore more prem bhâî-bhânî-prem,
Si premat pâp-bhâb lese, nâth ! nâî; "

(Sonnet No. 13)

(0 Decî ! you have told in weeping:

"Surely I am not a faithless wife of yours. O husband,
Cassie is not polluted. The love between Cassio and
myself is that of a brother and a sister which is with­
out any sinful amour)

This is described in the original in the following words:

(Desdemona: And have you mercy too! I never did offend you in my life; never lov’d Cassio. But with such general warranty of heaven—As I might love; I never gave him token)\textsuperscript{10}

Bor Boruah shows his distinct originality of thought in the lyric version of the Othello—Desdemona episode both in the manner of the murder of Desdemona perpetrated by Othello and the ideal behind the tragic catastrophe. In the original, Othello, being unable to shed blood of his beloved, smothers her to death. But in the Assamese kāvyā Othello takes up his sword on two occasions and throws it away. But in the third attempt he penetrates the sword into the breast of his beloved Desdemona.

Othello: "Sāju hovā, priye! tumi mṛtyur nimitte
Pramāṇat āru mor nāi praṣojan!"
"Kantek apekṣā karā tente, prāṇāth!"
Bulilā, Sundarī! sūnī svāmir bacak 11
"Ji pāpinī kalankini" bulile Othelole
"Jvalāle agani mor hiyar mājat
Kanteke thākiba diyā sei pāpiṭhāk
Ucit nahay āru ei jagatat 1"
\ldots
\ldots
\ldots
\ldots
\ldots
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\ldots
\ldots
\ldots
\ldots
Ei buli kaiye, Satī! hiyat tomar
Tarovala sate ghāp marile dubār 11

\textsuperscript{(Sonnet No. 16)}

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid: Lines 62-64
Bor Boruah seems to be more cautious as to the ideal than in the manner of the murder. In the original, Desdemona, in order to get rid of the devilish grip of Othello, says: 'O banish me, my Lord, but kill me not.'

It shows clearly that Shakespeare's Desdemona retains a last hope to live even without Othello. Consequent on this utterance of Desdemona, Othello seems to have lost the last particle of love that he harbours in his heart for his wife and with a lion-like anger cries out: "Down, strumpet!" But in the Desdemona kāvya Bor Boruah places Desdemona in the line of the ideal Hindu women: Sītā, Śāvitrī and Draupadi. In the Hindu ideal a wife may appeal to her husband not to kill her, but she never expresses her will to live alone from her husband. To worship the husband is the be-all and end-all of the Hindu wife. Bor Boruah tries to uphold this ideal vividly in the kāvya. So Desdemona of the kāvya, instead of praying for banishment, wants to reinstate her womanly virtues as a wife and also tries to hit hard on the conscience of her husband - Othello:

Desdemona: "Strībadh kariba khojā ki kāraṇe tumī?
Kone dilē enekvā prabrṭi, he nāth?
Bisvāsghātinī māī nahao tomār,
Dvīcārinī patnī mok nābhābā hāthāt 11
Deciś svāmī tumī, tumī Deśī-prān
Khaote scōte mor tumiyēi dhyān 11"
(Sonnet No. 11)

11. Ibid: Act V. Sc. II. L-82
(Why do you want to kill a woman? O Lord! who has brought about such a mental tendency in you? I am not your faithless wife. Don't take me as an unchaste woman all of a sudden. You are the husband and the soul of Desh, and you constitute the worship of Desh in her eating and sleeping)

Again, Desdemona says:

"Nābhātītā āji, nāth! yadi ichā thāke, 
Kātā mārā yai karā, karibā dinat il
Nakaro mṛtyur bhay, bhāgyavatī buhi
Bhābim ni-jāke, nāth! tomār hātāt
Prān yadi jāi mor, yadi mṛtyu hay
Tomār mukhāni dekhā antinā kālāt il
Svāmī param guru tirīj janājār,
Gurur hātāt mṛtyu phal saubhāgyār il"

(Sonnet No. 14)

(O Lord! don't kill me to-day if you wish to. Do whatever you like during the day-time. I have no fear of death. I will think myself fortunate, O Lord, if I am to be dead by your hands and if I can see your face at the last moments of my life. The husband is the greatest preceptor of a woman in life, and the death in the hands of the preceptor is the outcome of a good fortune.)

In the 'Desdemonā Kāvya' we have some more original thoughts of the poet. In the original, Desdemonā fails to know before death the mystery leading to the loss of her handkerchief given by her Othello. Emilia, the wife of Iago, who has stolen the handkerchief enters the bed-chamber of Othello
just at the time when the murder is done by Othello, and she wants to know the cause of the murder. Emilia in a moment's time hears the words flowing out from the dying lips of Desdemôna: 'O falsely, falsely murdered!' Without the loss of a minute Emilia comes near Desdemôna and wants to know who has perpetrated the murder. In reply Desdemôna, heaping all faults on herself, tells Emilia that she herself is the cause of her death, and then dies:

Emil: O, who hath done this deed?
Des: No body! I myself: Farewell!

Command me to my kind lord (Dies)\(^{12}\)

But in the Assamese version of the episode Amîli (Emilia) divulges the secret to Desdemôna, saying:

"Bujiba novâri, sakhi! svâmir chalanâ
Mane mane dile âni rumâl tomâr!
Hâ! Sakhi! Äji dekho sei rumâlei
Agani jwalâi pore tomâr sansâr!!

(Sonnet No. 18)

(O Friend! not knowing the trickery of my husband I gave him secretly your handkerchief. Ah! that handkerchief has to-day burnt down your world!)

Amîli succeeds in removing the erroneous thinking of Othello before Deci's death:

Äi buli kündi sakhi kale Othellek, —
"Senâpati! sakhi mor asati nahay ll
Kausal jâlat pari dûsta manuhar
Bisvâsghatini bhabâ sakhi k prâpar ll" (Sonnet No. 18)

\(^{12}\) Ibid: Act V. Sc. II. Lines 126-128.
[Thus, weeping, the friend (Amilf) tells Othello: "General! my friend is not unchaste. Being subject to the machination of the wicked, you think my dear friend to be faithless.] The mystery has, by now, been divulged to Othello, Decif and Amilf. And Decif is bidding farewell to both with self-confidence:

"Kodi eti humnyiyaka caku duti meli
Bulil sahik, Decif ! "Sakhi maramar !
Ane kat nai mok, katile nief,
Nief karile ses ei jivanar !
Nakandiba tumi, sakhi ! mer bojarat
Nutikibi cakupani, sakale marim,
Aru Nath : nakandiba tumie sokat,
Mrtiyur pachato mai iyake cintim;
Jivane marane jen tumiyei svami
Si jannato svami jen tomakei pao
Ananta premere bhar svargar majate
Tomar pivate jen dehati bikhe 11"
Ei buli caku duti mudil, Sundari !
Svaragat galai pache deha parihari 11

(Sonnet No. 19)

(Having a sigh and opening her eyes Decif thus says: "My dear Friend, no body has killed me; I have killed myself, and I myself have put an end to my life. Don't weep, 0 Friend, don't shed tears in sorrow for me as all are mortal. And, 0 Lord! you also should not be agrieved. Even after my death I cherish the hope to have you as my husband in the other life. I want to submit myself at your feet even in the heaven, full of eternal love." Saying so, the beautiful woman shuts her eyes, and goes to heaven, leaving her mortal body.)
In the Sections 20 and 22 there are altogether three killings. At the death of Desdemona Amilit commits suicide. Being burnt in the fire of revenge at the murder of his dear wife, Othello murders Iago, the devil-incarnate.

"Nedehilā tumī, Decī! Othello tomār
Prānar svāmiye, Satī! dārun himsāt
Samhārile dūstamati Iāgor prān!"

(Sonnet No. 20)

(You have not seen, O Decī! how your dear husband - Othello has killed Iago in vile revenge.)

But these two killings as described in the Kāvya are completely different from those of the original. In Shakespeare's play Iago kills Emilia, while Othello does not kill Iago. At the fag end of the play there is only a hint as to the probable persecution to be meted out to the villain - Iago.

The Assamese narrative, which has borne some apparent dissimilarities from the original version of Shakespeare, has at last been assimilated in the last scene of the original. Othello, in the original, stabs himself and falls on the bed and dies, kissing the lips of his dead wife:

"I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee:
no way but this, killing myself,
to die upon a kiss."13 This scene has been feelingly described in the Kāvya:

"Nedekhilâ tum, Decâ! ei buli kaiye
Tarovâle sate repi dingi âponâr,
Tomâr birah tâp sahib novâri
Dhâl khâi pari gal Othello tomâr lî
Dingit sâbâti dhari khâî etî cumâ
Sokere bulile, - "Decâ! bidariche hiyâ
Mrtiyur âgeye mai khâichile cumâ
Antimato châb etî, - cumâ etî diyâ l"
Ei buli duyu gâle khâle duît cumâ,
Unmâd Othelle āji dorghor unmâd !
"Prânpriya Decâ !" buli mudilâ ducaku,
Parihari, prân, pêche, bhulile bisâd !!
Bhrântî chalat pari āji hâhâkâr
Bhassibhût hal yuri senar sâsâr lî"

(Sonnet No. 22)

[You have not seen Decâ! how your Othelle, being unable to
bear your sorrow, has cut his throat with the sword and fallen
down. Embracing your neck and kissing you, he starts speaking
in agony: "Decâ! my heart is broken! I kissed you before
death, and I want to kiss you at my death also, and give me
a kiss." Saying so Othello lays two kisses on the cheeks of
his beloved wife. Mad Othello has turned extremely mad. "O
Decâ, Queen of my heart!" he says and shuts his eyes for ever.
When his soul has forsaken his body, he has forgotten all
pangs. It is because of the Error that the golden world (Of
Othello and Desdemona) has been burnt to ashes.]
Thus, a distinct vision based on Hindu idealism has given a transformed shape to the Assamese version of the Shakespearean tragic tale. At least, two things appear to be distinct in the tragic vision of Bor Boruah:

(i) the devotion of a wife to her husband must be kept intact, come what may. And this 'devotion' has been the theme of Bor Boruah's other epics - *Tirotār Ātmādān, Puddhakestrat Ahem Ramapā and Kamatānur Dhwānā Kāvya*, (ii) The crime must not go unpunished. So the poetic justice has its full play in the body of the Assamese narrative, though in the Shakespearean episode it has been partially relegated to the background. Only with a few hints to the governor Ledavice in the Shakespearean tragedy says: "To you, Governor,

Remains the censure of this hellish villain;
The time, the play, the torture ...........",\(^\text{14}\) While in the *Desdentā Kāvya* Othello is said to have killed Iago before he cuts his own throat.

It may be questioned how far the Indian ideal of womanhood imposed on an European story enhances the beauty of the Kāvya. Our observation is that the tragic situations being essentially the same, human beings react to them in accordance with their own idealisms, traditional beliefs or philosophies of life. As there is no denying of human predicaments, it is of universal interest to see in what different ways men and women may react to them in similar situations. Bor Boruah takes up the tragedy of Desdentā in his own angle of poetic vision wherein lies his distinct originality as an epic poet.

\(^{14}\) Ibid. Act V. Sc. II. Lines 370-372.
Hiteswar Bor Boruah's *Angila Kavya* was a product of the poet's facile pen of 1914, but it passed through press in 1917. The poet calls it a 'Kshudra Kavya' (a short narrative poem) and dedicates it to the living memory of his younger sister - Bimala Aideo.

Bor Boruah takes up the theme of this *Kavya* from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, a famous social novel by Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), a popular poet and writer of England. The novel, published in 1766, moves around its central character, who is a Vicar of Wakefield, called Dr. Primrose. Dr. Primrose goes on telling the tale of his eventful life and his family, their happiness and miseries, their rise and fall - which constitute the subject-matter of the novel. Though the Vicar is a good and innocent man, he is an easy prey to treachery of others like the Squire and Mr. Burchell who have been sowing the seeds of ruination in the family. The Vicar's wife Deborah Primrose and his two daughters - Sophia and Olivia have become easy victims of the treachery. Dr. Primrose takes the stand of a helpless spectator before all the treacherous play that has Wefallen his family.

The novel contains as many as thirty-two chapters. In the eighth chapter there is a scene of conversation between Mr. Burchell on the one hand and Sophia and others of the Vicar's family on the other. Sophia, in the course of her
conversation, praises the excellence of the English poet - Mr. Gray. One of the brothers of Sophia commends that the poetic excellence of the Roman poet - Ovid is far superior to that of Mr. Gray. As an alternative to this criticism Mr. Burchall opines: "It is remarkable that both the poets you mention have equally contributed to introduce a false taste into their respective countries, by leading all their lines, with epithet. Men of little genius found them most easily imitated in their defects; and English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection - a string of epithets that improve the sound without carrying on the sense. But perhaps, Madam, while I thus reprehend others, you'll think it just that I should give them an opportunity to retaliate; and, indeed, I have made this remark only to have an opportunity of introducing to the company a ballad, which, whatever be its other defects, is, I think, at least free from those I have mentioned."

Then appears the 'ballad' of the novel and it contains a self-sufficient story of love. The theme of the Aṅgila Kīvra is the theme of this ballad. Poet Bor Boruah has given us an Assamese version of the English ballad, and characterises it as a 'short narrative poem'. The English ballad contains forty stanzas with four lines in each, rhyming alternately as abab, cdcd, etc. The hero and the heroine of the ballad-tale are Edwin and Angelina. The English 'Angelina' has been named 'Aṅgila' in the Assamese narrative, but the hero's name has not been changed. In the Assamese version of the ballad certain

changes arrest our attention. Bor Boruah divides the poem into three sections: First, Second and Third, containing stanzas - 15, 25 and 4 respectively with a total of 44. The Assamese version, therefore, gains 4 stanzas over that of the original ballad. At the head of the first section of the Angolā the eighth stanza of the English ballad is quoted:

"Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego;
All earth-born cares are wrong:
Men wants but little here below
Nor wants that little long."

And this has been translated into Assamese as follows:

"Ataeba, herā yātri! olaṭā, olaṭā;
Cintā erā, bar beyā cintā samsārar;
Jagatat māmhar alap abhāv
Si abhāvo, jānā yātri! māthe Kantekār 16"

Again, at the head of the Second Section of the Assamese Kāvyā the Stansa - Nos. 19 and 20 of the English ballad have been quoted:

"What is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?
And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one's jest;
On earth unseen ............"

And this has been rendered into Assamese as fellows:

"Bandhutva ki ? bandhutva ja ekeve nahay,
Astitva iyar mote 'bandhu' sabadat;
Yadu-mantra mata ihe tepani-nihe
Aisarya jasar chhay sampad kalat 11
Bhalpeva kathati je nicei asar,
Uthi ah ghabharu mata upahaus 1
Jagatar hitarat nekshi iyak,
Alape napii kate iyar abhas 11"17

The last stanza of the English ballad has been quoted at the head of the Third Section of the Angilā Kavya:

"We, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true,
The sigh that rends they constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's toe."

These four lines have been rendered into Assamese as:

"Irupu katam kal, irupu ubhaye
Bhal paam ite site, kene samayat
Neha jen eri, humuniya jite
Angilā ! temak seek dibah hridayat;
Sei humuniya meko binas karib
Temar birah mai nevare sahiba 11"18

The Assamese lines rhyme as ab ab cc. While translating Goldsmith's ballad into Assamese Bar Beruah succeeds in maintaining his poetic excellence. And this is the only reason why the Angilā reads like an original poem in Assamese. Let us now have

17. Ibid. Section II : Stanzas 5 & 6.
Let us now have a taste of the tale of the *Angila Kavya* as given below:

One tired young traveller, in course of his aimless wandering, happens to come across one ascetic (a Yogi) and asks him to show the path. But the ascetic forbids the young traveller to follow the deceitful fire of the forest at night, and wants him to offer shelter in his hermitage. The ascetic presents before the young traveller a picture of his ascetic life:

"Banar mājat care harinār pāl,
Sihatar prān mai pālee nahare
Jī kare karunā mek, sei Isvarar
Sīkanit sīhatak sadā sneh kare l"

... ... ...

Aranyar sāk-pāt, gach-gachanir
Sāmānya āhār mai nite āni khāe l
Phalmūl ādi kari jaranār pānī
Kutirat thā āni jat ji jī pāh 1119

(The flock of deer graze in the forest. I do not kill them even if I can. With the blessings of God I love them all ... ...

... ... I take a little feed from the fruits and vegetables of the forest. I collect fruits from the forest and water from the springs and keep them in my cottage.)

Being convinced in the words of the ascetic the young wanderer enters slowly into the hermitage. The ascetic takes all possible cares of the guest. At the advent of the guest,

as if, the entire hermitage appears to wear a gay look:

"Kuṭirat rang dekhī birāī pavāli
Hāgat adhir hai nācīb dhārīle;
Jīfye jurīle gān, jui phiringati
Jūḥālar kephāle uphari parīle 1"20

(Seeing pleasures in the cottage the kitten begins to jump in boundless joy. The cricket also starts singing, and the sparks from the hearth begin to spring all around.)

This pleasant atmosphere of the hermitage seems to have failed in pleasing the young wanderer. An unknown tragedy seems to have been disturbing the mind of the young man. Here the First Section of the Āgilā Kāvya comes to an end.

The ascetic understands the pain of the young man and wants to know its cause. The ascetic explains to him the worthlessness of friendship, wealth, happiness and love in earthly life. On love the ascetic makes the following comment:

"Bhālpāva kathātīje nicei asār
Uthī aḥa gabhārur mātra upahās l
Jagatār bhitarat nedekhi iyāk
Alape nāpāhi kate iyār ābhās l"21

(The word - 'love' is totally meaningless. It is nothing but a taunt of the young woman. It can never be had in the world, not even a trace of it.)

The remove the curiosity of the ascetic the young wanderer wants to speak out his woeful tale, when, all of a sudden, the

real shape of the wanderer has struck the wonder-eyes of the ascetic:

"LaJuki mukhani āru okha bukmkhani
  Yogītir antarat sumuśāle bhay l
  Sundarī bidesī yātri pāche dhīre dhīre
  Gabharu chovāli buli dile paricay 11" 22

(The ascetic becomes afraid to notice the bashful face and the raised breast of the young wanderer. The beautiful foreign traveller then slowly discloses her identity that she is but a young girl.)

The young woman in disguise starts telling the ascetic a pathetic tale of her life. She was an orphan and she dwelt beside the river Tyne. Many a young man came to her and wanted to gain her hand in marriage, and offered her valuable wealth and ornaments. In the end a beautiful young man named Edwin came, but he had nothing to give her except his love-some heart. The young woman was simply impressed with the purity of love offered by Edwin. She used to enjoy the pleasing association of Edwin in the midst of a serene atmosphere of nature:

"Mor kāsarāt bahi phulanī mājat
  Gaichile ĝīt jave sulalit sure,
  Premgīte bhārichīle gotei phulanī,
  Bhārichil ardu bāyu phular gondhere 11" 23

(The young Edwin sat beside me in the midst of a garden of flowers and sang in melodious tune that pervaded the entire garden, and the breeze was enlivened with the sweet smell of flowers.)

But the wanderer says that she was proud enough to reject the proposal of marriage put forth by Edwin. As a catastrophic result of the refusal Edwin went away from her and perhaps he died from the dejection in love. As a retribution of her sin she (the wanderer) has been wandering and she decides to die there where her dejected beloved is lying in eternal sleep. In the midst of this determination of the disguised young woman, the Second Section of the Aṅgila Kāvya comes to an end.

With the start of the Third Section of the Aṅgila Kāvya the entire mystery becomes clear, and the ascetic draws the disguised woman closer to his bosom. The ascetic is no other than Edwin himself. Two love-lorn hearts of Edwin and Aṅgila as if being purified in the fire of dejection, get united to live happily ever after:

"Erūpe tomāk āji lai hrdayat
Dukh sek cintā mor dib bisarjan;
Paraspere duye āru noho erāeri,
Tumiye sarbasva; mor tumiye jīvan 124"24

(Let me abandon my sorrows and sufferings by taking you thus in my bosom. We will never be parted from each other. You are my everything; you are my life.)

This is the only kāvya where Bor Boruah deals with a tale ending in union. The original ballad in English is without any poetic charm, and it seems to be a straightforward narrative. But the Aṅgila Kāvya is replete with poetic pathes and charms that are the original characteristics of Bor Boruah's poetry.

The 'pathos and charms' that ring through the kāvya seem to raise it up to a tragic height, although abruptly it merges itself into a comedy through the union of two longest hearts. But the tone of the kāvya is characteristically tragic, being true to the epic lore of Hiteswar Ber Beruah.