Conclusion: A Wide-ranging Experiences of

Modern Boro Poets

Everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to the other events, to other literatures.


Among the contemporary Boro poets, Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Surath Narzary and Bishnujyoti Kachary are worth mentioning. They break away from tradition with the innovative themes and techniques. When they experiment modern subjects in their poetry, they speak of their people, culture, society, politics, religion and history. For a number of occasions in their works, they seem to have articulated with united voice and spirit: the Boro sentiment, issues, history and ideas, etc. Their common themes are nationalism, humanism, politics, history, culture, socialism, etc. These are beautifully blended with different myths and
legends from both the locale and across the globe to make their poetry more meaningful and artistic.

For the expression of the Infinity Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Surath Narzary and Bishnujayoti Kachary compose a number of poems. For example, Brahma articulates this in a poem ‘Biyw Thayw Eyun Bidinthaayo’ (He Lives in Posterity):

There is no end of time in the
womb of the yeaw,
I find fit it through the rules of creation
but I’ve not found Him
though I scanned thoroughly
as He has not appeared.
The time slips
from my hands to the past
and it remains in the bosoms of the future
for ever.¹

The poet speaks that there is no end of life. That is to say that the life never dies. It transforms one and behind all of this, there is one power. That is Almighty God. The poet never sees Him, though he searches for Him.
Tagore also reflects the same spirit of Brajendra Kumar Brahma in his poem, ‘Ebar Phirao More’ (Turn Me Round Now):

Who is He? I know not.
I recognize Him not,
but I know only this for Him
under the darkness of night. (Sen 259)

Surath Narzary strongly believes in God. His first poetic works totally dwell on it. He searches for infinity from the core of his heart both in sorrow and joy. Hence he says in Jiuni Alongbar (The Light of the Life):

Lo! God,
I do hear
thou shelter
at peaceful region
of heavenly abode.
I can’t reach thee,
thou art at far-off an unseen land
which I’ll never reach.²

It is said that after being influenced by Sibnarayan Paramahamsa in Calcutta, the devout Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma has come to preach his faith and philosophy to his near and dear ones since 1913, and, it was
a turning point for the Boros. The Boros have started writing Brahma surname after being converted to the newly born Hindu religion “Brahma Dharma” in terms of enlightenment.

Bishnujoyti Kachary also has deep faith in God like his fellow friends. He longs for His love and guidance. He shows his devotion to God with intense feelings and emotions. He says in his lyrical poem entitled ‘Gosai Angnw Nanga Nanga’ (God I don’t desire):

Oh! God

I don’t desire any treasure of the world

but bestow upon me always

thy heartfelt love.

Be bright, wholesome and wide,

my thought.

Be enlightened, my life be

blessed with thy blessings.3

This way, modern Boro poets show their deep faith in God. They realize the infinitude and His power of miracle. Similar spirit is reflected in the poem, ‘Rabbi Ben Ezra’ by Robert Browning:

Grow old along with me

The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:

Our times are in His hand

Who saith ‘A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!’

(Browning 433)

It is always seen that Bengali poets influence Boro poets more than any other poets in India. They have the habits of reading poems by the major Bengali poets because of close cultural contact. In Bengali poems, moreover, Boro poets gather vast knowledge of Indian philosophy, myth, history, culture, religion and human values.

Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Surath Narzary and Bishnujyoti Kachary are greatly concerned with their nation. They would like to make the Boros conscious and sensitive about their nation. Hence Brajendra Kumar expresses in the poem ‘Dubri Hagra’ (Carpet Grass):

I’ve started at the point

where the history of my life ended,

the body in the process of fossilization

has taken a new life today.

Amidst the dry leaves of the winter

I hear the voice of green

vegetation all around.4
With the certain line "the body in the process of fossilization" reflects the dark period of the Boros. Due to the lack of efficient leaders and descendants of the Boro Kingdom, the Boros were about to be dwindled. Besides the few heritages, culture and folklore, the Boros had found themselves to have gone astray. Similarly, Surath Narzary reflects his feeling with strong spirit of nationalism in the poem ‘Khwidang’ (Horrible) he says:

The articulated voice coming
out of the silent weep
in the serene moment
has been marginalized,
at the edges of reciprocation
and non-reciprocation of the feeling.
The indomitable move of the heart
has become dry unknowingly to-day:
the victorious boy who could dive and swim easily
in the vast Brahmaputra is
in no position to survive.
I tried to sit erect somehow
but failed, I’m not responsible for my failure
as I have been knocked by somebody else.
The poet would like to say that the Boro people, who were once very strong, even could dive and swim the mighty Brahmaputra. They are now in a drowning position due to someone else who are not in favour of them. Hence, Surath Narzary says: "The victorious boy who could dive and swim easily/ In the vast Brahmaputra is / In no position to survive." The poet hints those people as responsible for his race's doom. Gait wrote elaborately on it.

Bishnujyoti Kachary voices his national sentiment and aspiration in the poem, 'Dimapur Nwng Khwmsi Bikhayao' (Dimapur, you’re in the Dark) as:

The jungle covers you,

nobody to be welcome by your out-stretching hand

you’ve really turned to a ghost.

your historic past

is a wonder by itself.

why such a dead silence around you?

Rejoice and

be courageous again

put down the enemies.

Here Bishnujyoti blends the Boro history with national sentiment. Dimapur was the capital of the Bodo Kingdom, but it is in such a
position that the jungle is now enveloping the palace. It is due to the lack of proper care and maintenance, which is leading the palace to a deplorable condition. In this context, Samar Brahma Choudhury’s poem entitled ‘Sijau Geremsa’ (Stalwart Cactus), is very significant.

We are the people of this land,
the land that was cracked
in the winter’s sultry wave.
But the cultivators start tilling again
as the refreshing rain falls
over the winter’s cracked land.\textsuperscript{8}

Arun Kumar Borgoyary speaks in an emphatic tone in the poem, ‘Bidithani Bwdwr Phakhon’ (the Maddening of the Time):

We stand, rise and revolt once again,
we don’t care the cruelty of the time.
We behead, stab and shoot the enemies
to live in the world.\textsuperscript{9}

This poem has similarity with the content of the poem, ‘Amrita Manthana’ (Churning for the Nectar) by Umeshchandra Choudhury of Assamese literature. The poet wants to establish a new order based on equality and justice:
We are the new generation,
we bring new enthusiasm,
and march forward to establish
equality, liberty and fraternity.
We embrace the high and low,
the depressed, the poor, the alien;
we unite all unholy knots
and cut the roots of diplomacy. (Barua 136)

But still time is not bright for the Boros. There are innumerable challenges before them. Hence Brajendra Kumar Brahma says in his poem, 'Dwithun' (Evolution of Feeling):

- My attention goes to the distant region
- wide and open meadows
- to gather the true news of the life.
- But I have been compelled
- to stay standstill beside the line of demarcation,
- where still I remain
- after having a setback
- of the stumbling jolt.¹⁰

Here the poet speaks about the new challenges of Boro life.

The lines: "My attention goes to the distant region/wide and open
'meadows/to gather the true news of the life’, are voice of the community to which he belongs. His community desires freedom, the freedom of life and aspiration. In this context K. Satchidanandan’s write-up may be quoted:

It would, however, be wrong to think that this trend is entirely past as there are quite a few poets, especially in Telegu, Bengali and Hindi, who refuse to give up their hopes about a Communist revolution. Poetry has not abandoned its social critical function even in the poets who have no direct commitment to revolution. One such poet is Kunwar Narain of Hindi. See his poem “To Delhi” for example:

A familiar sight, then, as now,

Abject, pitiful, dragged

behind victorious horsemen.

Hands tied together, pitiful,

who was he this time,

on the road to Delhi?
No one knows.

Only a pair of hands, tied together,

made it there.

Satchidanandan further writes:

The Dalit poetry in Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Telegu and the Bandaya poetry in Kannada together constitute another dissenting collective, another alternative nationhood, that articulates the silent anguish and indignation of the so-called "untouchables" relegated to the bottom of caste-hierarchy for more than thirty centuries. To these poets, the socio-cultural phenomenon of caste is more real than the economic category of "class" (though "caste" may be considered a "social class" in the sense in which Nicos Poulantzas uses the term). There is indeed a diversity of attitudes even among the Dalit poets that springs chiefly from their ambivalent relationship with the Budha, Marx or Ambedkar. (Satchidanandan 43).

The Bodoland movement started by All Bodo Students’ Union in 1987, under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma, the father of
the Boros, in the demand of separate state namely Bodoland for the Boro people of Assam in India. Though their demand is not fulfilled entirely, it ended with the agreement among Bodoland Tiger Forces, the state government in Assam, and the center in Delhi. The outcome of the movement in 2003 is the “Bodoland Territorial Council” an administrative set up for the exercise of the minimum political rights of the Boros. Modern Boro poets are highly influenced by this movement and thus, there is a great intensity of nationalistic feelings that has crept into their poetry. Some of them were involved in the movement.

Thus, nationalism, no doubt, is one of the major themes of Boro poetry. It is all about their identity, which at that time was at stake. But the range of themes is vast. They are also able to develop their inner feelings. As such they speak about their experiences of life and try to put in a larger perspective of a yearning for enlightenment. Brajendra Kumar Brahma in his poems speaks about vast spectrum of life. He is quite satisfied with human life. So he says he will come back to this world again and again to fulfil his cherished hopes and aspirations. He is unlike Buddha. The former never fears rebirth as the latter. Hence he depicts in the poem ‘Sinainai Buhum’ (the Known Earth):
By concealing thyself in the shadow of death,
by avoiding the re-birth
thou step forward through the
silent path from life to Nirvana.
but I turn from life to life
on this earth where sorrow abounds
here I assimilate all the elements of life
for the creation of heaven.  

It is well known to all that Buddha meditated for a long twelve
year for salvation. But Brajendra Kumar Brahma never minds the
sorrows and sufferings. He loves it as he says in the lines, "But I turn
from life to life/ On this earth where sorrow abounds / Here I assimilate
all the elements of life/ For the creation of heaven." There is chaos
everywhere in the society. Life itself is a struggle of the world. In the
poem 'For a Life' (Jiuni Thakhai), Brahma delineates a different image.

With blazing fire
within their bowels.
The hungry generation thinks-
only a morsel of food is real
and everything is false.  

The poem ‘Juge Juge Kuruketra’ (Kurukshetra in Every Age) by Surath Narzary presents different theme and technique with humanism at the center. Social, political, historical as well as mythological elements are embodied effectively in this poem. The poem goes like this:

It is heard that a battle was fought
at Kurukshetra, a battle of Dharma
No, it was a battle for empire
and that kind of battle goes on,
thus the battle of Kurukshetra goes on. 13

Here, Narzary depicts the great truth, which underlies Indian politics. It is a never-ending process, which is leading to darkness more and more. In another poem Narzary speaks:

Your desire and my hope
are eroding.
It may be relevant to dream,
but there is a void in reality.
Now, the life is flowing only
to an unknown holocaust. 14

Kachary with regret speaks about the selfish motive of people who for their own self-interest deprive the fellow people in every
respect. His compassion for these people is noteworthy. He delineates his own feeling with splendid image in the poem ‘Gwswm Jenthokha’ (Black Mehendi):

The agents of God
are distributing medicines
of heaven
by vomiting and vomiting.

With fire
they put queries
to the skinny God,
‘where are the rations?’

In the first stanza, the poet depicts the picture of the agents ironically and their activities at the time of crises, while in the second stanza, he shows the deprived class, who have to face starvation and death during natural calamity.

Brajendra Kumar Brahma is influenced by the poets like Navakanta Barua of Assamese, particularly in the field of technique and Jibanananda Das of Bangla in the field of themes and philosophy, and T.S. Eliot both in symbol and the use of language. His experiment with style, technique and private symbols projects his search for own literary
distinction and voice. He is not in favour of chaos, and, calls for the end of conflicts and tension in the Boro society. He believes that peace only can give rise to material as well as cultural development of the backward community like Boro. With the poem entitled 'Okhrang Gongse Nangau' he expresses:

We are in search of a sky.

Today we need

free and fresh air

where a narrow boundary
doesn’t exist.\textsuperscript{16}

We find similar ideas in Navakanta Barua’s poem ‘To the Night Sky: Prayer through the Window,’ here the equal thought and theme find expression.

Surath Narzary has also made his mark in modern Boro poetry by introducing dramatic monologue through which he searches his own self. He also seems to be the representative of the Boro people with modern views. His search for identity is steeped in multicultural values. His high sense of introspection opens a new vista for laying the foundation stone of Boro literary renaissance. His use of dramatic monologue is a technique to bring to surface the deep-felt enlightenment.
His poems are lyrical in nature; there is a vivacity of his poetic form, thought and expression. Narzary writes only then when his poetic impulse is charged with emotion and feelings. Some of the Boro scholars believe that Robert Browning’s poems might have influenced him enormously for such kind of composition and diction. Narzary says in his poem ‘Jiu Swinai’ (Darling):

O my darling!

is it true as they say,

you do not have a life?

But do I see and hear

in my ecstatic moment,

all of your motion and voice.17

Here the poet would like to model his poem on Robert Browning’s dramatic lyric and monologue. Through this poem the poet depicts his vibrant and spiritual attachment to an inanimate thing. In his moments of emotional feelings, he often tries to see into the heart of things and, having seen he communicates and talks to himself. Assamese poet, Devakanta Barua, writes in the poem, ‘Premar Uttar’ (Love’s Reply) in the same spirit:

Darling! the silent gift of bountiful love,

which thy soft heart offered me,
Both the poets model their poems on Browning's 'The Last Ride Together,' which prompts them to a mystical perception of immortal love. Both of them also make use of this philosophy in most of their poems. Like Browning they also find success and contentment, where other see only frustration and despair. Non-fulfilment brings them a new pulsation of life and enjoyment.

Surath Narzary too applies the satires primarily in social context. In satirical poem entitled 'Nwngnwna Boroa?' (Are yourself a Boro?), he expresses in socio-political context:

Who are you, brother?

a Boro? -Who has a head on back!

thinks one, acts another

it's called Boro.

Ah! got angry with?

then you must belong to Ghotot Koch family

proud of having huge muscle and foodstuff and

like to call yourself of Ghotot Koch.18
The poet satirizes the Boros who have lost direction and have earned bad name. But such type of satire is not there in the poems of both Brajendra Kumar Brahma and Bishnujyoti Kachary. Both Brahma and Kachary are very serious poets and they use often symbol and image to heighten the sense of poetry. Bishnujyoti Kachary seems to have elevated and matured himself in his own poetic style and theme unlike Brajendra Kumar Brahma and Surath Narzary. It is also found that love delineated by Kachary is not like that of Surath Narzary and Brajendra Kumar Brahma. Kachary felt that life is not bed of roses. It is all about struggle and struggle like that of Shakespeare’s dramatis personae. But yet, what Kachary represents is nothing but his natural urge of national feelings. Moreover all of them are very much akin to Marxism and socialism in spirit and aspiration. Hence it is justified as Eliot says: “If Shakespeare had written according to a better philosophy, he would have written worst poetry; it was his business to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time based on whatever his time happened to think.”(Eliot 34). And what Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Surath Narzary and Bishnujyoti Kachary present is nothing but current situation of the Boro: struggle and chaos, life and death, victory and loss. In other words, they represent a vast spectrum of whole scenarios of their nation. Hence
sustaining their originality, they could focus their hopes, aspirations, and feelings despite the influences of both East and West.
End-Notes:


6. Sir Edward Gait wrote: “The Bodo dialects, though still spoken in Assam by more than half a million persons, are in their turn giving way to Aryan languages (Assamese and Bengali), and
their complete disappearance is only a matter of time.” A History of Assam (Guwahati: Lawyers Book Stall, 1926. P. 6.)


11. Ibid. P. trans. Surath Narzary, “the Known Earth.”


18. Ibid. P.3. trans. the poet, “Are yourself a Boro?”
Works-Cited:


