

PREFACE

Robert Browning, the English poet (1812-1889) and Shankar Kashirath Garge, the Indian Marathi writer (1889-1931) who wrote under the name Divakar practised the literary forms known as the dramatic monologue and the Natyachhata respectively. Robert Browning as a monologist and Divakar as a Natyachhatakar invite comparison as both of them employed the forms in their own way to convey their own specific ideas and attitudes. Browning wrote in other poetic forms such as the lyric, the narrative poem, the mono-drama. However, the form that suited his genius was the dramatic monologue. Divakar (Shankar Kashinath Garge), the Marathi writer wrote short plays, short stories, dialogues. His most significant contribution to Marathi literature is the Natyachhata, a new literary form which resembles the dramatic monologue in many ways.

Robert Browning was a prolific poet who wrote not less than one hundred monologues. As compared with Browning's literary output, Divakar's literary output is limited. Divakar wrote a total of forty eight Natyachhatas. It should also be noted that there is a considerable time-lag between Robert Browning's literary career and that of Divakar. Browning's Dramatic Lyrics which contained his monologues was published in 1842. Divakar's first Natyachhata was published in 1911. The last collection of Browning's poems entitled Asolando appeared in 1889. Divakar wrote his last Natyachhata entitled " यातहि नाही निदान-?" ("In this at least?") in 1930. The time-lag that exists between Browning's literary career and that of Divakar need not be given too much an importance in this kind of comparative study. A transfer of forms and ideas from one literature to another naturally takes time.

That is why the dramatic monologue which was popularized by Browning in the nineteenth century was adopted by Divakar in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

It is to be noted that Robert Browning did not call his poems dramatic monologues. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish his poems which possess the characteristics of the monologue from dramatic lyrics, dramatic narratives and dramatic romances. As for Divakar's Natyachhatas, they ought to be distinguished from "निपात्री संवाद " (Dialogues in which anonymous characters are presented) which have been written by Divakar. Some of Divakar's dialogues like " शेवटची किंकाळी " ("The last Shriek"), " रिक्कामी आगपेटी " ("The vacant Match-box") have been wrongly regarded as Natyachhatas and included in the book नाटयच्छटा (Natyachhata) edited by R.K. Lagu. Since these two are not Natyachhatas, they have not been taken into account in the present study.

In this comparative study, an attempt at studying Browning's monologues and Divakar's Natyachhatas has been made in the light of the literary and social traditions which Browning and Divakar inherited. It should also be noted that Divakar adopted the dramatic monologue, and like any other form that is adopted from other literary tradition, it underwent certain alterations. The prominent alteration that took place in the process was that the verse medium was replaced by the prose medium. Since the dramatic monologue and the Natyachhata do share important common features, the difference in the medium of expression is not very important, and the dividing line that may be discerned between these two forms remains too thin to rule out comparison. The present study, therefore, aims at examining whether the basic tenets

of the form have remained unchanged or whether these, too, have been altered in the process of reception.

It is possible to make a comparative study of Browning's monologues and Divakar's Natyachhatas by classifying them into different categories. The formation of common categories is not possible as Divakar did not write epistles or romantic monologues as Browning did. Besides, an emphasis on such kind of classification may lead to the creation of watertight compartments between monologues and Natyachhatas. Instead of classifying them into groups, it would be worthwhile to study them in their totality.

R.K. Lagu in his Preface to नाटयच्छटा (Natyachhata) suggested for the first time that Divakar's Natyachhatas should be compared with Browning's monologues. However, no comparative study, as such, of Browning and Divakar was undertaken. The present study may be accepted as an attempt to indicate some directions of this kind of comparative study.

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