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MAPPING OUT THE MELANGE OF UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR IN SELECTED DOGRI FOLKTALES

Rumy Dar

Lecturer in English
School Education Department
Jammu and Kashmir, India

Abstract : *Dogri folktales are the timeless oral records of Dogra community which provides a bird eye view to their cultural heritage. Their folktales are allied to their roots and thereby stand as a perfect specimen to analyse them and explicate those traits which are universal in nature. The present paper aims to trace the connection of this particular community to the outside world in spite of being coloured in their own regional flavour by tracing the presence of certain archetypal characters. The study is carried under the theoretical viewpoints of Carl Gustav Jung.*

Keywords: *Dogri folktales, regional flavour, universal traits, archetypal characters.*

‘Durgar’ or ‘Duggar’, the term which remained obscured till 11th century with no mention in Kalhana’s *Rajtarangini* or in any other valuable manuscript and inscription of its time, first came to existence only through some inscriptions on Chamba copperplates. ‘Duggar’-the homeland of Dogras, refers to the land of extended mountain ranges landlocked between two mighty rivers of the Sutlej and the Chenab. During the British rule in nineteenth century, this region was fragmented into eastern and western areas on the basis of its topographical features:

The eastern comprising the districts of Kangra, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur and the former States of Suket, Mandi and Bilaspur with the Ravi to the west, Dhauladhar and the higher Himalyas in the north, the Sutlej to the east and a line drawn from Rupar through Hoshiarpur to Gurdaspur in the south; and the western, consisting of the former Sialkot and Gurdaspur districts to the west of the Ravi, a line drawn from Gurdaspur to Sialkot in the south.” (*History of Dogri Literature*, 2)

This land of Dogras thereby stretches afar through three type of terrains; “the *Pahar* (high mountains), *Kandi* (lower hills) and the plains at the foot of the Shiwalik” (2). Each terrain shares the same Dogra culture and traditional patterns but with their own varied characteristic nature and life styles:

The people of the mountains are comparatively simple, hospitable, freedom-loving, happy in the lap of nature and generally content with their way of living. The people of the plains are less simple and less straightforward and more worldlywise and clever.... People of Kandi are the salt of Duggar, typical Dogras, hardworking, self respecting ready to die for the honour of their women and for the sake of their caste and country and prepared to break rather than bend. (2-3)

The Dogras are known for their gallantry, strength and courage leading to their recruitment as soldiers and generals in military services. The accounts of their valour have always acquired a significant place in their oral traditions and language. Dogri as a language was first referred in 1317 by Amir Khusro in his record of Indian languages. After Khusro, in nineteenth century Rev. Carey acknowledged Dogri as one of the Indian languages, and in 1867 John Beams in his essay ‘Outlines of Indian Philology’ included Dogri as one of the eleven languages belonging to the Indo German linguistic family. These were “Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Marathi, Gujarati, Nepali, Oriya, Assamese, Kashmiri and Dogra” (4). Dogri language and Dogri folklore, together these two stand as a citadel of Dogri heritage. Even the transition of Dogri folklore from orality to folk literature has also proved fertile in garnering and preserving the rich oral heritage of this land. Dogri folk literature is alive and stands as a living record of their moral

values, attitudes and teachings as well as a repertoire of their articulate expressions and their connection with their roots. The literature replicates their flow of life which unswervingly gushes out from their heart and plays a significant role in amusing and entertaining the people irrespective of their age. It remains fresh as ever even after generations and generations have passed on and this youthful stream never exhausted of its timeless treasure. This folk literature is characterised by:

Universality, richness and variety, representative character and research potential are the main features of this literature as of folk literatures all over the world. Dogri folk literature is universal in two ways: Firstly, its subjects are universal and the strands in which these subjects are woven are common, and secondly, it appears in the same forms all over Duggar- be it Akhnoor or Jammu, Udhampur or Basholi, Chamba or Kangra, Mandi or Bilaspur. (*History of Dogri Literature*, 9-10)

The Dogri folktales abound in these features, and embody all the mottled aspects of a human life interwoven into a local garb. It wouldn't be wrong to say that at the same time these folktales exhibit those traits which are universal in nature as well as are coloured in a regional flavour and thereby are "fully representative of the life of the people. It contains everything from the ideals, traditions, and beliefs of the community to the vignettes of day to day domestic and social life" (*History of Dogri Literature*, 11). Dogri folktales are a perfect medium to explore the psychic reservoir of Dogra community as well as their oral records which are impervious to the changes that have taken place in this community over the years. These folktales at one end represent a man's connection to his roots and on the other hand represent the traits which are universal in nature. The present paper explores that how this particular community having its own culture and traditions exhibits the traits or forms which are universal in nature through the analysis of its folktales. These universal traits are ubiquitous and their seeds are inherited inside the human mind linking up the whole humanity with a single thread called archetypes.

Archetypes are the forms, patterns, models or ideas which form an important component of a human psyche- collective unconscious. The concept of archetypes have been propounded by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, who called this as "primordial images" (Jung, 11) in its nature of being innately acquired by the human beings all over the world. Jung opines that "These images are "primordial" images in so far as they are peculiar to whole species, and if they ever "originated" their origin must have coincided at least with the beginning of the species....This specific form is hereditary and is already present in the germ plasm"(Jung, 11). This clearly indicates that certain human attributes are the manifestations or the expression of these pre-acquired forms. Jung in his *Four Archetypes*, mentions about some of these archetypal characters which are universally found, these are-trickster archetype, wise-old man archetype, mother archetype (terrible and good). These very archetypes manifest themselves in Dogri folktales as well, thereby strengthening the concept of their universality and existence in every human being irrespective of their geographical variance.

Trickster archetype:

Jung describes this archetype as having the attributes of a "shape-shifter, his dual nature, half animal, half divine" (160). A trickster appears in many guises in the tales. In the tale of "The God Himself" dual facets of the trickster becomes visible. The trickster visits a tradesman's house introducing himself as Narayana, to console the bereaved mother Shanini who had lost her daughter Munni. He consoles the women by these words "Why do you keep crying? Your Munni is very happy. There in Swarga, she is all time playing, running, running about even quarrelling with others of her age.... I came here only to inform you about her well being. I must go back now" (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 23). These words solaced the pain of Shanini who is happy to hear about her daughter. The lady who never did anything except crying for her daughter, gladly prepares meal for this trickster whom she thinks as a divine being. She sends some food as well as some ornaments for her daughter in heaven. The trickster takes it all. Till here the image of the trickster is a beneficent one but later the guise shifts to an evil one.

The trickster who has been benevolent to the lady becomes a deceiver and ultimately dupes the trader by stealing his pony and taking it with him as well "The shah got to the tree, tied

the pony to the trunk of the tree and began to climb the tree.... When the Shah had reached half way, the *jat* quickly climbed down from a branch and on to the back of the pony. He rode the pony away” (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 25). The tradesman who reached home in disappointment replied to the query of her wife “I’ve given that also to Narayana so that Munki can ride” (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 25). The archetypal figure possess contradictory and contrary nature; benevolent as well as deceitful at the same time. It depicts his undeveloped consciousness. Jung opines to this feature of trickster as:

the figure of the trickster. He is a forerunner of the saviour, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness....He is so unconscious of himself that his body is not in unity, and his two hands fight each other.(169)

In another tale titled “An Honest Thief” the archetypal figure appears as a Brahmin who was a thief. He gives up stealing under the influence of his friend who is a good Brahmin. He reduces the gratification of his own instincts by his habit of stealing to once an year on Diwali and vows to never break it. But he breaks his vow to aid his helpless friend financially by providing him five hundred rupees for his daughter’s marriage. In the process of arranging the required money, the thief helps a priest to cross a river and denies thrice the calls of Shiva bird (which symbolises his own unconscious) to steal from someone who has called him friend. The priest names him a “*dharmi* and *gyani* thief” (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 70). On another occasion he returns the money taken from the chest of a shop because he had a pinch of salt mistaking it as sugar and said, “One should never deceive someone whose salt one has eaten” (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 71). When he gets the chance to loot the treasury of a Raja, who himself accompanies him to test his employees, he steals only five hundred rupees for his friend and one thousand for his companion (Raja in disguise). This trickster figure in this tale suggests a clear separation and development of the unconscious and conscious self of the trickster who is able to control his instincts and urges to steal. Moreover, in this tale the trickster appears as dual faceted as well; initially a thief and later his emergence as a saviour who breaks his vow to aid his friend in hour of need.

Wise-old Man Archetype:

The archetypal figure manifests itself only when the hero sets on a task and is in need of guidance in his path of quest “The old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection or lucky idea....can extricate him” (Jung, 113). This archetype appears in the tale titled “The Flying Horse” where prince Ramadev goes in search of the flying horse and meets a Mahatma during his way who tries to test his resilience with these words “Till day no one has ever got the flying horse. Whosoever has attempted to get it, hasn’t returned alive” (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 82). But on seeing his unmovable determination, he reveals the whereabouts of this flying horse “About a hundred miles from here as you go straight, you’ll come across a hill. It is known as Bhauri hill. At the foot of the hill there is banyan tree with a branch of it leaning over the crystal clear waters of a spring. The flying horse comes there every day to drink water under that banyan tree branch. His arrival is preceded by a thin drizzle and mist” (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 83). Thus, the figure of wise-old man aids the hero by giving him clues about the object of his quest. On overt level, the figure fulfils the role of a mentor in guiding Prince Ramadev while on the covert level; the figure serves as a spiritual function as well by aiding his journey towards the unknown or unconscious.

Terrible-mother Archetype:

Jung describes this archetype as “On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything that secret, hidden, dark ; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, and that is terrifying and inescapable like fate” (15). A terrible mother archetype sometimes manifests in a step mother figure expressed in her hatred and jealousy towards her stepchild. The step mother in “The Flying Horse” is the manifestation of terrible mother archetype. She insists on sending his stepson Ramadev, in quest of flying horse with the intention of killing him:

One day the queen took herself to the dark room and in protest. She told her husband, the king, "I want you to get the flying horse for our kingdom. I will not eat until you get the flying horse." The king pleaded with her, "Look no, one has seen or caught hold of the flying horse. Whosoever has ever attempted to get it, has never come back alive." (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 82)

The king tries to persuade her but she refuses to entertain any of his suggestions in favour of prince Ramadev. Finally the king accedes to her wish and sends his son on a dangerous errand. After the completion of first task successfully, she once again makes another demand to get him killed by sending on another dangerous quest and says "Our Rajkumar has achieved a miracle by capturing the flying horse. Now it is time that he should get married. You know Raja Bhimdev of Sumarta has a very pretty and accomplished daughter by the name Geeti. Our Rajkumar should get married to her" (84). She was well aware that whosoever tries to get married to princess Geeti is killed in course of carrying out three impossible tasks set as a precondition for marriage by her father King Bhimdev. The devouring nature of the stepmother in this folktale is symptomatic of her archetypal attributes. Moreover, her strong urge to see the prince dead and poisoning his father-the King further strengthens her image as an archetypal character.

Good-mother Archetype :

Jung in his *Four Archetypes*, illustrates the characteristics of a good mother archetype as "The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female...any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility" (15). It points to the positive attributes of a mother who nourishes and provides warmth either for her child or for the sake of her child. The character of Shanini in the tale of "The God Himself" is a manifestation of good mother archetype. Her world falls apart at the death of her only daughter Munni. She doesn't allow the *jat* who masquerades as Lord Narayana himself and describes at length about the adventures of Munni in heaven, to leave without having food. "Please stay for a while. I 'll cook a nice meal for you....I can't allow you to go without a meal. It 'll please me. It 'll be a great favour please" (*Dogri Folk Tales*, 23-24). She also packs some dry fruits and ornaments for her daughter and hand over these to the *jat*. The mother never did anything except mourning for her daughter from the day she lost her. But, her act of cooking the food and feeding the *jat* signifies her as an embodiment of good mother archetype. Moreover, there is nothing which is mysterious about this character in the tale which could point to her negative side.

While concluding, it is pertinent to mention that Jammu region has own geographical variance and diversity as well as a rich oral heritage. The particularities which reflect in the folktales also provide an anchor to trace the connection which is specific to the whole species. The presence and manifestation of certain archetypal characters like trickster archetype, wise-old man archetype and mother archetype represent the concoction of local as well as universal at one hand and on the other hand clearly indicates the uniformity in human nature irrespective of all the superficial differences.

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