UNIT 5 GOPINATH MOHANTY : TADPA
TRANSLATION: SITAKANT MAHAPATRA

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

Our main aim in this unit, is to study one of Gopinath Mohanty’s lesser-known works, a short story entitled Tadpa; but we cannot do so straightway, and definitely not without sufficient preparation. The purpose here is first, in a few introductory paragraphs, to acquaint you briefly with Orissa history and culture, and also the tradition of Oriya fiction, especially the shorter version.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

If I asked you to name a few writers in languages other than your own, you would perhaps mention the names of some award winning writers you may have come across in the media, electronic or print. For, until recently, contemporary Indian Literature in the numerous Indian languages (the so-called vernaculars or Bhasas) used to be identified with a few award winning names and titles which were otherwise inaccessible to those outside their respective language-regions. Thanks to the now-flourishing translation industry, this seems no longer the case; and the category Indian Literature signifies much more than the sum-total of discrete literatures from different linguistic groups. In fact the inclusion of many titles in your course has been possible due to the flurry of translations. This is certainly true of many of the lesser-known languages such as Oriya and Assamese. More contemporary Oriya writers are accessible now to non-Oriya readers than was possible, say, in the 1980s, and Oriya literature means much more than the names of a few well-known, award-winning writers. Still, Indian literary culture is so diverse, heterogeneous, and unwieldy that people from one linguistic region often are ignorant of the traditions in the other linguistic groups. It is possible that many
of you have little or no information regarding Oriya literature, let alone about Gopinath Mohanty (1914-1991), preeminent among practitioners of Oriya fiction.

We shall begin with a synoptic view of Oriya Literature highlighting the contribution of Fakirmohan Senapati, and then go on to outline the development of the genre in the post — Senapati period.

5.2 A SYNOPTIC VIEW OF ORIYA LITERATURE

Like most other Indian states, Orissa’s geopolitical boundary as it stands today is a little over 60 years old. But Odissa, or the land of the Odras is ancient, and was variously known as Utkal and Kalinga, and its boundary varied with successive conquests and specific rulers. The beginnings of Oriya poetry coincide with the rule of Gajapati Kapilendra Dev, who ruled over a vast stretch of land from the Ganga in the North to the Kavery in the South in the 15th century. Thus, Oriya literature is about 500 years old, if not more. The broad periodization of Oriya literary history is relatively simple. The period stretching over 400 years — from the 15th to the mid-19th century is called “ancient” period the followed by the modern period (for our own convenience, we call this period medieval rather than ancient). Though within these periods, divisions are a little more complicated. There is very little space here to go into the details.

More religious than secular, traditionally by Oriya literature one understood, until early 19th century at least, songs and poems rather than prose. Also, the themes ranged broadly from the retelling of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, to the singing in praise of Jagannath. Sarala Das, belonging to 15th century Orissa of Kapilendra Dev, is considered to be Orissa’s adikabi. His epic, Mahabharat in 18 parvas, is not an exact translation from the Sanskrit original, rather an imitation of the same. For all practical purposes it can also be seen as an original piece of work. It has provided subsequent poets with the necessary foundation for a national literature. It gives a fairly accurate idea about the culture of the Oriyas at the time. Towards the end of the 16th century, Balaram Das’s Jagamohan Ramayan provided the other pillar on which subsequent literature was to thrive. However, the most influential work was yet to come. It came in the form of Jagannath Das’s Bhagabata. This was closely followed by Achyutananda’s Haribansha. This period stretching from Kapilendra Dev to the time of Prataprudra Dev is the period of efflorescence of Oriya poetry.

The second phase from the 16th century to the 19th century saw the emergence of descriptive poetry, which in turn could be sub-divided into three kinds. The first was secular writing that came into Oriya literary culture with the appearance of Narasimha Sena’s Parimala. This was followed by the better known Kanchikaveri by Purusottam Das and Chata Ichhhabati by Banamali Das. The second category comprised largely works which derived from the themes of the classical epics and Kavyas. Some of the earlier works, especially Kanchikaveri, have been seen by historians as being responsible for the formation of Oriya identity, which is an important subject for interdisciplinary studies. Yet another set of writings derive primarily from Bhagabata, and are based on the Balyalila and Gopalila aspects of Krishna’s life.
Numerous lyrics and other shorter forms of verse were written within the third category. The lyricism and emotional intensity of these poems sprang from personal experiences. Poets wrote love lyrics based on Radha-Krishna love, and also non-devotional love poetry about man-woman relationship. The forms used here were mostly chautisha, chaupadi and padabali. The kavya-alankar tradition was so dominant that poets showed their learning instead of letting loose their imaginative vigour. The tradition of Oriya prose fiction can be traced back to the 18th century works by Brajamath Badaja (1730-1795), especially his Chatura Vinoda. But the first Oriya novel was Padnamali (1887) by one Umesh Chandra Sarkar. The first Oriya poet to be influenced by the new world view was Radhanath Ray (1848-1908), and with him begins the modern period in Oriya poetry. Similarly, the first writer of Oriya prose fiction to represent modern Oriya society in fiction, that is the first writer of realist fiction, was Fakirmohan Senapat. In the works of Senapat, one notices for the first time, characters and incidents from the real, modern world. Modernity is said to have dawned on Oriya culture with the British occupation of Orissa in 1803. With the spread of English education, and the influence of neighbouring Bengal’s reformers, modern education spread in Orissa, as did the general awareness of the world beyond. Modernism is a movement in the arts, as you know.

5.2.1 Fakirmohan and the Oriya Language and Literature

The growth of modern Oriya literature owes a lot to the unceasing efforts of Fakirmohan Senapat and his circle of writers and poets such as Gaurisankar Ray, Radhanath Ray, Madhusudan Rao, and some younger contemporaries such as Gopabandhu Das and Gopal Krishna Prarhaj. For, at the time when Senapat began writing, Orissa was merely an adjunct of Bengal. Bengalis had so dominated the Oriyas that Oriya, as is well-known, would have perished but for the singular efforts of the few I have named above. After the British annexation of Orissa in 1803, the dismembered Kalinga came under different presidencies, but chiefly under the Bengal Presidency. There were many reasons why Oriyas felt exploited by the Bengalis. One was the so-called “sunset law”, by which land owners forfeited the right to their land if they defaulted on the payment of tax by the sunset of a notified date. After this, their land was auctioned away at Calcutta. Since many Oriyas could not keep track of the proceedings, petty Bengali officials working for the East India Company went for the bids. The rivalry was especially acute in North Orissa, because of geographical proximity.

You must also remember that along with the rivalry, ran a kind of cultural osmosis which is responsible for the development of modern Oriya literature. The influence of the West filtered into Orissa, partly through the interaction of educated Oriyas with their counterparts in Calcutta. It was mediated by Bengali culture no less. Fakirmohan, Radhanath (a Bengali himself), Madhusudan Das and Madhusudan Rao (a Maratha) were all exposed to Bangla culture through their knowledge of the Bengali language. Fakirmohan was born and brought up in the coastal town of Balasore. He grew up to be an administrator in ex-feudatory states. Enraged by the attempts of the Bengalis to marginalize, even replace Oriya by Bengali, he took to creative writing rather late. Though he had translated from Sanskrit, wrote poetry, and attempted many forms of literature, he is now known primarily as the father of modern Oriya prose fiction. His agenda was clearly cut out: a two-, even multi-pronged attack on all kinds of cultural invasion. As he says in an apostrophe in
5.2.2 Fakirmohan and the Tradition of Oriya Short Story

If either Fakirmohan or posterity had preserved his short story, “Lachmania” which he had written in the late 1960s, and which was published in the journal Bodhadayini, edited by himself in Balasore, Fakirmohan would certainly have been credited with having pioneered the genre in India. But as ill-luck would have it, except for a bare mention in his autobiography, the story cannot be traced, and thus his “Rebati” (1898) is widely recognized as the first Oriya short story. The credit of being the father of the Indian short story, thus goes to Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali. “Rebati” is the story of a young innocent girl whose desire for education is placed in the context of a conservative society in a backward Orissa village, which is hit by the killer epidemic cholera. The story is too easily celebrated as an example of Fakirmohan’s reformist zeal. However, in terms of art, the story lacks in the necessary qualities of strong plot or characterization which mark his later success as a writer of short fiction. The most celebrated of his stories of course is “Patent Medicine”. Between these two, Fakirmohan can justly claim to be a supporter of feminism. Though not all his stories have been put together in a single collection, some appeared in 1917 in two collection under the title, “Galpaswalpa”.

Fakirmohan’s stories remained a source of inspiration for many decades to come. They became models for his contemporaries as well as successors. It was difficult to emulate his linguistic virtuosity, as it was eclectic and highly democratic, having borrowed freely from Persian, Urdu, Bengali, and so on. He contributed to the “de-sansritization” (a term I borrow from the renowned comparatist, Sisir Kumar Das) of Oriya. Some writers such as Chandrasekhar Nanda, Godabaris Mishra, Bankanidhi Pattanaik, Laxmidhar Mohapatra, and Dibyasingha Panigrahi tried to emulate Fakirmohan’s craft, especially his social realism.

During the thirties, when the Pragatibadi tradition was in full flow, Bhagabati and Kalindicharan panigrahi, two brothers tried to give a fresh twist to the tradition inaugurated by Fakir Mohan. Fired by socialist thought, the two depicted the lives of the downtrodden, the subaltern (lower caste) people who were often discriminated against and exploited. You may have heard of if not seen a movie made by Mrinal Sen based on the short story “Mrigaya” (“The Hunt”) by Bhagabati Panigrahi. Made sometime in the 1970s, the film featured the now well-known actor, Mithun Chakravarty, who played the role of the protagonist. The next phase of the tradition of the Oriya short story was dominated by Gopinath Mohanty, who started writing when Kalindi Charan Panigrahi had made his mark.

5.3 GOPINATH MOHANTY: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Gopinath Mohanty was born in a small village called Nagabali, not far from Cuttack, a historical city, in 1914. His family was originally that of a Zamindar, but had fallen into bad days, and when he was born, his family was
one of ruined aristocracy. He left his village for higher education in 1923, and would return to his village only intermittently. But the nine years he spent of his childhood in his village, in many ways shaped his sensibility as he grew fond of its folk traditions and developed his sense of rootedness to one's land. He was then educated in Patna and Cuttack, obtaining his Master's degree in English in 1936, and became a civil servant under the Orissa Administrative Service. Among the intellectual influences one must count the indigenous as well as the Western, in the form of Gandhi, Freud and Marx. He was also drawn to the literary works of Romain Rolland and Maxim Gorky. He began writing in the 1930's, and his first novel Managahirara Chasa appeared in 1936. After this began his sojourn in various parts of Orissa, especially in the inaccessible areas with large populations of tribal people, who lived in abject poverty though far removed from the corrupting influence of modern society. Soon he grew fond of the Kondh tribes and learnt their ways. His writing subsequent to this was devoted to the depiction of the life of this underprivileged and endangered population. He died in 1991.

The Oriya critic J.M. Mohanty thinks that Mohanty's fiction can be grouped under three broad phases: The first works of fiction were produced during his tenure as civil servant in Koraput, during which he wrote novels like Dadhibudha (1944), Paraja (1945), Amrutara Santana (1947), Siba Bhai (1955), and Apakhuncha (1961). They deal with the theme of exploitation and suffering of the tribal people in the Orissa hills. The second group of novels deal with the lives of the townfolk. The novels under this category are Saralabunaka Gali, Rahura Chhaya, Sapna Mmati, Ddanapani, and so on. The last group comprises only one novel, an epic of Oriya village life. It also deals with the lives of the tribal people, but not exclusively so. Dannapani is his most ambitious novel, though he will always be known for Paraja. I can quote from J.M. Mohanty a succinct summary of the novel Paraja: The novel was published in 1945, when Gopinath had just left Koraput after spending 5 years there. The novel deals with the Parajas, a very poor and small tribal group of the district of Orissa, having a population of about 6000. Their life is revealed through the sympathetic depiction of a family, which is caught in an adverse situation. Sukruji is the protagonist of the novel who suffers at the hands of exploitative sakhars and government agencies. The language faithfully
captures the nuances of the spoken idiom of the tribal people, and is difficult
to translate. Amrutara Santaka depicts the life of people from the Kondh
community, and is much wider in scope, and complex in its structure. If you
want to know more about these works you can read translations of some of
these novels now available in English. His short stories are no less significant.
In fact, even if he had merely left behind his short stories he would still be a
well-known writer. Acknowledging the Gnanpath award he received in 1974,
he said: “I have faith in man, and in his ultimate victory and liberation”.

5.4 TADPA: THEME AND ISSUES

Tadpa is the eponymous story of Tadpa, the protagonist and a group of
officials, “outsiders”, moving from Bhubaneswar to the jungles of Orissa,
and on their way discussing how best they can “tackle” the problems the
gonds in the hills of Niyamgiri are facing. Their names, signifiers of their
caste, are Parasuram, the development officer, the anthropologist Bharat, and
Haripani: they are all educated, well settled, either Brahmans or belonging to
other upper castes. Their descent along the “fearsome” slope of the hill, which
is construed as a descent into the barbaric netherworld of tribals, is at once
their uphill task of “civilizing” these tribals. The journey of these academicians
and officials is clearly a journey motivated by the ideological imperative of
the civilizing mission. This argument gains strength when we realize that the
story contains very little by way of action and the bulk of the narrative is taken
up by the exchange of ideas and debates among the government officials and
academics regarding the best possible manner in which the illiterate,
uncivilized tribals can be brought within the pale of civilization. At the same
time, they are also concerned about the preservation of the dongriyas’
goodness and simplicity, which runs the risk of contamination in its contact
with the outside world.

5.4.1 Narrative Style: Realism and Point of View

The short story deploys and exploits the stereotype of the native as someone
who is very fond of liquor, who has no interest in what we call “civilization”,
who is like a child and thus at the mercy of his/her benefactors: the educated
superiors who are not only capable of “analyzing” the dongriyas and their
problems but are also equipped to prescribe the much needed, the much
awaited solutions! In a crucial passage at the end of the story, Tadpa is finally
presented as a shadow, much like his appariitional counterpart, Kurtz in
Conrad’s Heart of Darkness. Tadpa is given two coins, one a ten paise coin
and the other a five paise coin, because he had asked them for some money.

On obtaining the money Tadpa drops the coins, and the officials are surprised
to see that Tadpa who had asked them for money has not felt it necessary to
keep the money but has thrown it away. One of them asks, why was he
begging for it if he really did not care? Another replies that it was his way of
honouring us as his parents. As is the case with a child, it is enough for the
dongriya to get whatever s/he needs at a given time, to indulge in momentary
satiation. Money, the hallmark of civilization, is like pebbles for him.

There could be two response to the story. The story can be taken to be a
critique of the civilizing mission. However, this perspective can be troubled
by the recognition that apart from the three or four government officials, there
is another voice, the voice of the short story writer/narrator who concedes to
the argument presented by the characters in the story. This view seems to
to suggest that this is a mysterious land, that these people are very “strange”,
iliterate and uncivilized, and that it is not our privilege but moral
responsibility to try to find out what is good for “them”. What we would like
you to do is to read the story carefully and decide for yourself.

5.4.2 Cast of Characters

As we have already seen, the story is dominated by the representatives of the
so-called civilized world, who are called “outsiders”. The Development
Officer, Parashuram, anthropologist Bharat, the local official Hari Pani, the
forest guard, Madhusudan, and the three chaprasis, Makara, Najiru, Ramaya.
The conversation among the representatives of the “civilized world” in a way
summarizes the endless debates that have gone on among the self-styled
guardians of the tribes. Tadpa, of course, is the representative of the subaltern
“other”. It is interesting to note, that the thoughts of Tadpa are being reported
to the reader by the narrator, who we could call the omniscient narrator. While
introducing us to his character, the narrator supplies us with information about
the tribe, their customs, belief, their “culture” and world view. And we have to
trust the teller. Obviously he has spent time with the tribe, and knows, or
claims that he knows, everything about the way their mind works. Do you
think, there is a problem in the point-of-view of the narrator? How would you
compare this point-of-view with that of a narrator who belongs to the same
culture as that of the characters?

Tadpa is all good, noble. He is shown as being very friendly, and not at all of
the kind that the outsiders had expected. Madhusudan is dogmatic about the
Kondh people. They are totally wedded to their duties but they won’t change.
Hari Pani is optimistic that they will change. He believes in modernizing
them, giving them modern amenities. Professor Bharat holds a different view,
showing a deeper understanding. The story has two climactic points: one,
when Tadpa thinks the place where there is no practice of dhandha-bent, must
be full of animals. This is a complete reversal of perspective: two, when the
visitors find the same coins which they had given to Tadpa on his asking for
them. They try to arrive at some conclusions; but are not sure whether they
can ever fathom the mind of a Tadpa, the other.

5.5 POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH

The terms of reference of such a discourse are only too familiar to us, the
postcolonials, the former British subjects, to require any
elaboration/elucidation.

When texts such as Conrad’s or Mahasweta Devi’s or Mohanty’s become
“subjects” of study as part of the humanities/English curriculum, readers
irrespective of their respective identities are invited to undertake journeys in
the heart of darkness, Belgian Congo, or the Sunderbans, or Sundergarh, with
the narrator. The trope of the journey into the interior, the unknown, with
lurking dangers, carries the promise of knowledge of the world of the other.
There are remarkable structural parallels in most such narratives. In
“Pterodactyl...” it is Puran, in Tadpa it is Parasuram. ... In Conrad’s novella
too, we have come across the discourse of the other, and seen how at some point, a character suggests how the idea of civilization is a matter of perspective. The inhabitants of Congo in the 19th century must have viewed the Europeans as "primitive," says one character.

Don't you think there is a suggestion, among others, in the story that the tribals may be poor and exploited but they are intelligent and have worked out a simple philosophy of their own, and that those concerned with development need to consult them? The narrative focuses on: (i) a tribals' lack of fear; (b) the importance of song and dance and togetherness for a healthy relationship in life; (c) his acceptance of death as a sleep in the lap of Dhartani; and (d) his sense of communal responsibility towards outsiders. The last gesture of Tadpa's is almost grand — money is like pebbles for him and comes as a climax to his entire conversation with the outsiders.

Since Mohanty’s important works attempt to speak for the downtrodden, the subaltern, the marginalized groups, it might be necessary for us to take up the theories of subalternity. Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak's assertion that the subaltern cannot speak has been attacked as "an expression of terminal epistemological and political pessimism" (Lowe, Rosenthal, and Stilman, qtd in Chrisman 42). In her defense, Spivak has argued that her purpose had been to counter the impulse to solve the problem of political subjectivity by romanticizing the subaltern (ibid). Is this a defensible position when placed beside her own showcasing of Devi? [Spivak speaks of Devi's preoccupation with a “Space” which has to be called decolonization for lack of a more suitable word.] "There will always be a space in the new nation that cannot share in the energy of this reversal [of the logic derived from the old colony]". Elsewhere she says something similar. "There is a space in post-imperial arenas which is displaced from empire-nation exchange ... reversing it in many different kinds of ways. But in post-imperialist societies there is a vast arena, which is not necessarily accessible to that kind of exchange. It is that space that one calls subaltern". Though Spivak goes off in a different trajectory, I see this relevant to my purpose here, though in a less complicated way. The so-called tribal population remains unaffected by the chain of oppression. What Soso Tham says about the Khasis: "Do not rejoice because the White man has left. Their place will be taken by the Black man and he will enslave us". The "black" being referred to here is the plainsman, the Bengali coming from the sheltering plains. Here, not only is the European as the colonizer, and India as the colonized being questioned, even the black/white binary gets totally dislocated and complicates the enunciatory site of otherness.

The teleology of Spivak's progress from her deconstructive analysis of the category 'subaltern' to her more recent preoccupation with Mahasweta Devi is discernible in her work in the intervening period. For, first she says that by definition the subaltern cannot speak. Conversely, she who can speak is not a subaltern. Thus, for her, the ground is clear for launching Devi. Also, her response to the attack of Benita Parry that Spivak, Bhabha and Jan Mohammed do not listen to the voice of the native, that such an attitude is also Eurocentric clears the ground for Mahasweta Devi. It is well known that the globalization of Devi's work ("produce", commodification) owes a lot to the immense prestige and the star value of her translator.

When we "study" someone like Mahasweta Devi, who for instance is much talked about and ironically enough after Spivak wrote about her, translated her and talked about her in the West, we often forget that writers like Mahasweta
Devi are in the same position as say, Conrad was, when he was writing about Africa. For, in writing about the tribal populations of West Bengal, one wonders what qualifications she has, however sympathetic or humanistic the considerations may be, for, after all, she too has been following the liberal humanist discourse of the West. This is evident in the stance/role she assumes vis-à-vis the tribals — and by implication exhorts her readers to do the same. According to her, since we are in a position to analyze their condition and may be prescribe remedies for their suffering and poverty and exploitation, she advocates a sympathetic attitude towards these less privileged subjects. This is something I want to illustrate by discussing not Mahasweta Devi, but continuing with infinite regress and going back further into my own state, though not beyond. For, internal colonialism does not stop with even the Indian centre, or Hindi-Hindu-north Indians, or even Bengalis looking at Oriyas, the hills of Bengal or the northeast, but with the upper caste Oriyas looking at tribals in Orissa. It is possible to see this by reading the short story, Tadpa. I expect you to do this on your own, by using some of the hints I have already given, and referring back to your other course materials.

5.6 LET US SUM UP

As I have already suggested, though the story has many of the qualities of a story well-told, with well-defined characters, and interesting dialogue, suspense, and surprise at the end, it seems to be lacking in the complexities of some other stories by Mohanty. Also, it carries many of the stereotypical representations: the well-meaning but ignorant visitors, the mysterious Tadpa. The jungle is also represented in terms of the familiar trope of the space which holds many impregnable mysteries. To a reader of the 21st century, with her ultra-conscious and conscientious upbringing in political correctness, the story might strike as almost banal, and too proper.

5.7 GLOSSARY

Subaltern: According to the dictionary the word ‘subaltern’ means any commissioned officer in the army below the rank of the captain. It was used by the Marxist thinker, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) to mean a subordinate. He used it specifically to refer to unorganise groups of rural peasantry in southern Italy who had no social and political consciousness as a group. The concept was further developed by a group of historians lead by Ranajit Guha (b. 1923). This group defined the term subaltern as ‘the general attribute of subordination in south asian society, whether this is expressed in terms of caste, age, gender or office or any other way’. This group thought that the term included rural peasants, the working class and the untouchables.

Spivak expands the term by including women both from the lower class and the upper middle class among the subalterns.
Dhartani: The god of ancient earths, according to the Kondhs.

Kondhs: The Kondhs, also described Kandhas, Khonds and Konds are the largest group of tribals in Orissa. They are mostly concentrated in Koraput, Phulbani and Kalahandi districts. According to Meperson the name of the tribe is derived from Telugu word Konda which means a hill.

Dhangada and Dhangdi: Dhangda is a young male lover and Dhangdi is a young female lover. According to Sitakant Mahapatra, youth dormitories play and important part in the life of the Kondhs. These dormitories are known as dhangar basa. They are organized institutions meant for socialization of the youth, the unmarried boys and girls.

Post-colonial criticism: refers to criticism that has emerged from countries that were once colonized by white colonial countries. This criticism runs counter to the Eurocentric criticism that sought to justify colonial rule with the help of a systematic misrepresentation of the colonized people. In his essay, ‘Discourses on Colonialism’ (1950), Aime Cesaier talked of ‘millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement’. This feat was accomplished by the rulers to justify their rule, ‘the white man’s burden’. Some key texts that influenced the development of post-colonial theory may be mentioned. They are: Aime Cesaier’s essay: ‘Discourses on Colonialism’ (1950); Frantz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks (1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961); and most of all Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978). The collections of essays The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures (1989) edited by Bill Ashcroft and others gives examples of texts that run counter to the European view of colonial history. Post-colonial criticism thus looks at colonial literature from the point of view of the colonized and exposes the way in which the colonized people were brainwashed into believing in their inferiority that justified white domination.

Soso Tham (1873-1940): Nongkynrih, renowned Khasi poet, calls Soso Tham the chief bard of the Khasis. He has Soso Tham has written two volumes of poetry: Ka Duitara Ksia (The Golden Harp, 1925) and his crowning work Ki Sngi Ba Rim U Hymniew Trep (The Olden Days of U Hymniew Trep, 1936). Has also translated Aesop’s Fables.

5.8 QUESTIONS

1. What are the distinguishing features of the tribal identity, especially those of the dongria kondhs?
2. How correct shall we ever be in answering that question, without falling in the trap of stereotyping?

3. Why do you think Tadpa asks for bidis and coins?

4. What impression does the author wish to convey through the dialogues of the townsmen?

5. Do you think Madhusan knew better than the others, and he represents the authorial point-of-view?

5.9 SUGGESTED READINGS


