

Contribution to the Society

Nativism seems to have been gradually emerging in recent years through the collective efforts of intellectuals like M.N. Srinivas (in Sociology), Romila Thapar and Ranjeet Guha (History), Anil Seal and Partha Chatterjee (Political Science), Sudhir Kakkar (Psychology) and Meenakshi Mukherjee and Bhalchandra Nemade (Literary Criticism). *Nativism* goes farther than Internationalism and appeals not only Internationalism but also Universalism because it has an important role to play not only in literary criticism but also in the other areas of our intellectual endeavour. The present work is a beginning in the direction of formulating a well-considered and multi-dexterous response to the serious cultural challenges of our times.

Nativism is completely unknown and untaught in our institutes of learning which most students and teachers of literature in India have not even heard of is now being given a voice and shape, however feeble and blurred. The present study is an attempt to explore the area of study in Indian and African context with reference to the Indian critics: Bhalachandra Nemade, Ganesh Devy, Makarand Paranjape, Ashok Babar and the African critics: Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Adeleke Adeeko, Chinua Achebe, and Gabriel Okara. Indian *deshivad* and African *nativism* have some common values: ecological, social, and linguistic, to care about language death. According to Adeleke Adeeko African nativism is a highly productive and intensely generative category in the formation of African literature and criticism. It offers a self reflexive reading of representative oral and written, national and ethnic African literatures.

Bhalchandra Nemade observed that modern Indian literature has been basking in the glory of western modernism. It always locates the centre of creativity outside the *desi* (native) tradition. In his book *Nativism* Nemade poses a question, 'Do we need native standards to interpret and evaluate native tradition or the so-called "universal" standards for this purpose?' Nemade's question becomes very important in Indian context, because throughout the world cultural similarities do exist, but differences which are more fecund and important, also exist. There can be universal standards in science because in science there is nothing Occidental or Oriental, Western or Indian, but each culture has distinct native styles of living. Nemade takes into consideration the Whorfian thesis of how language decides the speakers' world-view. As the so-called 'universal standards' take into its ken only European knowledge and ignores conveniently others, the basis of these standards is 'hollow'. Nemade is right when he says, 'Having ruled

over most peoples of the world for generations, they have imposed upon the subject-cultures the rules based on their understanding of universe. Now accepting such irrational standards as 'universal' would mean we ourselves lack the power of investigating truth.

Before the now famous 1962 Makerere conference African literature was evaluated with reference to the critical standards of the West. Even the literature written in European languages were considered African literature. But for the first time during this conference a question was posed "what is African literature and by what standards is it to be evaluated?" The writers participated in this conference Ngugi, Achebe and all others tried to define African literature and also became aware of the fact that they were evaluating their literature by the critical standards of the West, which in fact is not altogether applicable to the African situation.

The present study gives an introduction to these native standards to evaluate indigenous literature with reference to India and Africa. It also provides an insight to the readers and critics of Indian and African literature to understand and evaluate their literature without giving any consideration to the western standards.

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