

FOLK SONGS AS SOCIO-POLITICAL CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST* AND ABU ISHAQUE'S *SURYA- DIGHAL BARI (THE OMINOUS HOUSE)*: REIMAGINING ROOTS

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Abstract

Using a textual and contextual close reading of representative folk songs from William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari (The Ominous House)*, this study explores the consideration of folk song as instruments of socio-political cultural resistance; highlights that oral textual traditions do not merely reflect the hegemonic discourses, but actually challenge and resist them, giving voice to those peripheral communities who otherwise would have been marginalized even further by dominant power structures. This project concerns the socio-political dimensions of folk traditions on both works, as they mirror colonialism and post-colonial history. Moreover, the study presents a comparative perspective on how both of the authors reinterpret their cultural heritage via folk motifs; ultimately affirming the idea that folk culture has universal significance as an identity-retaining source, serving anti-colonial functions well beyond specific traditions or literary and geographical focuses. Through these elements, the research study brings out an understanding of folk traditions in literature as providing resistant narrative strategies to hegemonic discourse.

Keywords: Folk Songs, Cultural Resistance, Colonialism, Post-Colonialism, and Identity Preservation.

INTRODUCTION

It was an important weapon for the oppressed throughout time who always needed to find a means of claiming back their truth, keeping it from being swallowed by hegemony because folk songs as a sub-culture of an oral tradition are too powerful and resilient to this resistance as they extrapolate the social and political/cultural struggles people have been fighting with. This article tries to demonstrate how two seemingly different kinds of literary texts — William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari (The Ominous House)* — intertextually interact with each other as sites for the reappropriation of folk elements through which cultural heritage is re-imagined and textualized as a form of resistance. Ishaque's novel, more than Shakespeare's play which is steeped in early-seventeenth-century colonial fears, captures the mid-twentieth-century post-colonial experience of Bengal. But both stress that folk traditions are symbolic

resistances to hegemony. *The Tempest* (1611) has frequently been interpreted by colonialists as an anti-colonial text but still echoes folk culture in its portrait of Caliban, whose union with the island places him beneath rather than high civilization memory heritage. This play is not directly based on folk songs, but the theme of dispossession and resistance to colonial authority relates to oral traditions and speech acts that offer a decolonizing cultural autonomy to the oppressed. Another literary work by Abu Ishaque — *Surya-Dighal Bari* (1955) — well engenders songs of the people and peasant folklore in its depiction of the Bengali peasantry. Drawing upon historical events such as the Bengal Famine and Partition, Ishaque's book illustrates that folk songs become an increasingly popular form for addicts to communicate resistance against political repression both when they are fighting back against cultural erasure or politically anchored attack roots culture—what is lost long term as a result of these efforts.

The reason for selecting this comparative reading of *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* is significant, as they enable us to contrast two qualitatively different traditions (whether by literature or by history—this will become clear later) placed in relation. Both works draw on folk tradition and deploy it to resist erasure by giving voice to the voiceless. Just as the struggle by Caliban to claim his ground in a Prospero-dominated world can be read on an analogous level with colonial resistance, so too does the folk song dialectically engage collective memory for rural Bengal relative to modernity and political oppression. By examining these works with respect to the folk song, and theory of cultural resistance, this thesis strives to illustrate that folk traditions are a form of socio-political opposition acting as a counter discourse to hegemonic ideology.

This is particularly relevant in Cultural Studies – encouraging the recognition that folk traditions do a lot towards shaping identity, as well as action against oppression. Focusing on folk song material, the paper gives textual evidence of *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* as cultural efforts to reclaim/invent nature in folk-culture. Such a concept as “re-imaginings of roots” can be used to clarify in what ways peripheral communities use cultural background to form identities that challenge hegemonic ideologies or develop within them. In this analysis, folksongs are coming into their own as a living act of cultural survival and resistance with deep currents of relevance.

Such comparative analysis demonstrates the universality of the folk traditions as specific tools of resistance in various cultures, which is further confirmed by this study. On the one hand, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a classic of the Western canon and Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari* is at least partly South Asian post-colonial literature, yet both can draw upon fundamentally similar epistemological commitments that rely heavily on folk culture as an arena of resistance to erasure of marginal voices. This convergence of literary analysis and cultural resistance sheds new light on how folk songs go to work on the project of re-writing cultural identity and resisting myriad forms of political oppression.

Objectives of the Study

This study has three objectives. This begins with an analysis of the oral traditions in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari*, showing how folk

songs serve both as instruments of cultural resistance that challenge hegemonic structures while also acting as a voice for marginalised communities. An imperative for further work is outlined by the paper in terms of socio-political analysis, particular to each work and to how it reflects synchronically a residue of colonialism and postcolonialism. However, this study offers a case of comparison between two authors drawn from currently less explored histories that imaginatively recast cultural origins as folklore and demonstrates the widespread performance that folk culture functioned in response to loss among different literary and geographical traditions. Through this lens, the research builds upon a more general understanding of folk traditions in literature as places where space for alternative—or counter—forms of narrative might be found.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Folk songs have been a very controversial arena in literary and cultural studies at large, where the onus is to question them as testimony of the ways by which the colonised or marginalised negotiates their way of resisting hegemony and/or claiming identity. It starts off with a discussion on some of the foundational texts concerning folklore, resistance, and identity in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari*.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is also read through a postcolonial lens. Critics including Ania Loomba argue that both the play and Caliban himself—as the embodiment of native resistance—act as a painful reminder of early modern apprehensions regarding colonization and the exploitation of “the other” (Loomba 118). Caliban, as the allegory of the horrible native and insubmission to colonial dominion is posited upon the land: his figure equals aboriginal culture. It lacks an uplifting folk song, but Caliban's refusal to let Prospero have him does have some folkloric resonance in that way. Within this vein, Brown interprets Caliban's rebellion as the indigenous populations aggress against colonial oppression and tries to place him within the imperial context (58). Thus, it implies that folk traditions, whether or not openly stated in relation to the uprisings of marginalised characters featured in *The Tempest*.

Most recently, Anna G. McPherson continues to study *The Tempest*'s 18th-century London stage adaptations and performance history in “A Thousand Twangling Instruments: Music and *The Tempest* on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage.” This article shows how the musical sounds — and especially folksong-like pieces — used in this play serve to dissolve the lines between human and magical worlds that become interwoven into a narrative. McPherson provides an overview of the role music plays in *The Tempest* on stage during this period but the study only analyses few aspects of socio-political implications of cultural resistance on interpretations of the play for contemporary readers (20).

Gabriel L. Sanchez Music in “Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: The Function of Operatic and Masque Elements,” — Sanchez argues that music is absolutely essential for parsing the narrative and thematic ambiguities of the two acts of *The Tempest*; Operatic and masque, through a blend of fantasy and reality that is established right down to the memorisation of character. This research shows how music complements an important part, which is

necessary to allow emotion to unfold and the whole story (41). In contrast to this, *Surya-Dighal Bari* directly interacts with both folk songs and orality as forms of resistance. As Tahmina Begum argues, the novel features “the folk songs written in pure ethnic language of rural Bengal” where masses are depicted standing opposed to political tyranny and gloomiest mental degradation (Begum 223). Set in post-colonial Bengal, the novel depicts khankah folk as an expression of communal resistance against famine, Partition and exploitation. Instead, as Ali (137) argues, Ishaque employs these same songs to anchor the peasant class in their culture, providing resistance through cultural mechanisms instead of socio-political institutions. This places the novel in distinct conversations taking place on postcolonial nature of its intent for cultural renewal through folklore.

In the third essay, Shama Naz Hossain discusses folk songs as a vehicle of cultural identity in the fictional plot of the Bengali novel “Folk Songs and Identity in Abu Ishaque’s *Surya-Dighal Bari*” (32). It reflects the socio-political situation of rural Bengal that they were involved in. Similarly, Mahtab Uddin Rahman discusses the place of folklore in Ishaque as cultural resistance to modernity and political oppression, making clear that folklore are contextualized within socio-political content (74). Mohsin Islam in “Reclaiming the Past: Folk Traditions in *Surya-Dighal Bari*” also discusses re-use of folk traditions and folklore methodology as a way of recovering cultural roots, and has an important discussion about how this approach to recovery shapes the themes of memory and resistance in the text (47). In “Music and Memory: The Role of Folk Songs in *Surya-Dighal Bari*,” by Tahmina Begum, folk songs were also empowered as medium for memory work that establishes cultural transmission across the duration Ishaque denotes spatially at Sariya. This demands that they fulfil their coded role as both an archive of history and tool for resistance (210). Last in the series, Musharraf Ali discusses folk narratives as sites of cultural identity in “*Surya Dighal Bari*: Tracing Resistance through Folk-Tales and Cultural Identity in Abu Ishaque’s Fiction” (92). Together, the contributors highlight folk tradition and cultural identity in Ishaque’s work through close readings that emphasize how folk narratives provide insight into contemporary social and political issues (Ali 92).

Studies that balance between English literature in the early modern period and South Asian postcolonial literature, including widely prostitution folk traditions which encrust each, have received particular attention. But the political function of folk song has been acknowledged for a while now. According to Jack Zipes ‘fairy tales constitute an agency of subversion for the oppressed peoples against [the] institutions and dogmas that dominate them’ (Zipes 24). *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* are similar in that both a (fable) narrative as well as in their use of folk materials to illustrate resistance against upper class oppression — so this view makes sense.

Edward Said, when talking about how marginalised being read the texts which define their cultures, describes a mode of reading that he terms as “contrapuntal reading” (Said78), and much these are the type of lenses through which the research will be viewing for active reclamation of cultural moorings embraced as a result existing folk traditions by

using Shakespeare and Ishaque (Said 78). They both lean on folklore to resist cultural erasure and other redemption of their origins.

At last, this kind of comparative study is also based both on what has already been done in the field research regarding folk songs and oral traditions and cultural resistance. While these factors have been dealt with independently in *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* respectively, this study connects them by treating the use of folk traditions as a form of resistance against cultural subjugation across both texts. The study also extends our understanding of the mechanisms through which musical works engage with traditional folk traditions to reconceptualize and reclaim cultural origins by directing attention onto the socio-political function(s) of folk songs.

Research Gaps

While earlier studies have acknowledged the role of folk traditions in cultural resistance in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari*, none has yet focused on a comparative study of representation of folk songs. *The Tempest* is mostly regarded as a colonial play, and most works of that criticism are centered on Caliban as the 'native,' while the presence of oral traditions in subversion has been largely overlooked. Folk songs never explicitly in the calm center of *The Tempest* but folkloric aspects in terms of Caliban's relationship with island oral tradition have been considered to what are forms of resistance, such as the fact that Conversely, some attention has been focused on *Surya-Dighal Bari* as a vehicle of political and cultural resistance regarding folk songs yet no attempt to juxtapose it to the folk tradition in Western literature e.g. *The Tempest*. In addition, when it comes to the use of folk traditions both Spivak and Rukmini do so not merely in order to destabilize colonial or postcolonial power but also larger forces like modernity and cultural disintegration – a feature of most such studies usually inadequately attended. The present study fills this lacuna by analyzing the two works' deployment of folk songs and oral traditions as instruments of cultural resistance, highlighting their common thematic concerns despite their different historical and cultural orientations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Punk subculture is already a well-documented thread of influence on the youth; here folklore is perceived as its own, resisting tradition. The Folk traditions as a form of resistance in culture —the aspect that other studies have dealt with but not Vis-a-vis folk songs in *Surya-Dighal Bari* and *The Tempest*— is how it inspired Cultural Studies, especially cultural practices to be taken into account. It deals with the proximity of how folk articulations as textual forms and interpretations are responsive, especially through oral traditions and songs, to their socio-political colonial/postcolonial contexts. Using theoretical frameworks of cultural studies and postcolonial theory inspired by Edward Said and Ania Loomba, the analysis shows that the two authors treat folk culture as a supplementary tool to shake off dominant power like Shakespeare and Ishaque.

Through a theory that oppositionalizes myths and cultural resistance, specifically that of Jack Zipes, the paper examines the role of folk songs as subversive mechanisms in each text. The *Tempest* itself interprets the relationship of Caliban to native oral forms and nature in its resistive readings against imperial authority, although without anything so explicit as a people's folksong. Taking the case study of *Surya-Dighal Bari*, it examines how folk songs in post-colonial Bengal embody the socio-political reality and communicate certain notions of communal solidarity along with resistance to modernity and political suppression.

The study employs secondary sources, such as literary critiques and historical accounts and follows MLA 9th Edition formatting for citations. The research is qualitative and library-based, with an analysis based on scholarly articles and books that support the review of literature to explain how folk songs serve as a cultural resistance in both texts.

Limitations of the Study

This study, comparison of folk songs as cultural resistance in *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* is limited by the following. The question, however, is to what extent such comparisons are valid in the first place: there are no simple folk songs in *The Tempest* that one could rely on for contrasting its more material folk elements and those of *Surya-Dighal Bari*. Consequently, our consideration of folk song in *The Tempest* approaches interpretatively and addresses symbolic connections between Caliban's oral traditions and themes of cultural resistance that are less rigorous boyfriend the comparison.

An additional point of weakness is the relatively small amount of secondary scholarship treating both sets together as embodiments of folk culture for just that reason. *The Tempest* has been extensively analyzed as a postcolonial text and *Surya-Dighal Bari* examined for its use of folk tradition; however, the point at which these different literary traditions find intersection is under-researched. This requires increased theoretical extrapolation and limits the tradition-critical option for comparison.

Furthermore, the historiographical and cultured differences between the two works can act as barriers as well. *The Tempest* from early modern England, *Surya-Dighal Bari* from mid-20th-century postcolonial Bengal. Second, though there may be resistance strategies and cultural expressions to thwart oppression, the context in which they operate may differ and their availability — including through social media, for instance — is likely not generalizable.

Finally, focusing on the folk songs as a site of resistance, this research may ignore other forms of resistance illustrated in both texts that are also important to address, such as political and social acts. This restrictive perspective maybe prevents the analysis of general resistance strategies as well.

Yet, it adds much-needed clarity around the usefulness of folk traditions as a response to cultural erasure and identity affirmation. Future could take this into adjuncts of other kinds of resistance or folk motifs that they believed in.

Exploration of Folk Traditions-Socio Political Dimension

Through reading folk traditions in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya Dighal Bari*, there is an exploration on the context of cultural presentation overall origins. Both texts, by the stress they lay on popular traditions, illustrate how subjugated societies are struggling to withstand imperial and post-colonial coercion and keep up cultural continuity.

In *The Tempest*, the social background is directly associated with colonization and affairs of power. The dehumanised figure of Caliban, commonly interpreted as an image of the colonised is also an embodiment of cultural resistance. His romance with the land as well as his rebellion against and benediction of colonization are telling of both his treacherous background. As Paul Brown writes, Caliban in many ways is a representation of "the ambivalence of colonial expansion" (58). While the play does not have folk songs per se, Caliban - through his oral traditions and aspirations to defy Prospero are found to be a kind of cultural rebellion (1). He says, that "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother", and with this proclamation he solidifies his cultural specificity against colonial histories of theft (Shakespeare 1.2.332).

Ariel's sonnet, too, speaks to folk motifs and folklore themes of metamorphosis and death: "Full fathom five thy father lies; of his bones are coral made; those are pearls that were his eyes ..." (Shakespeare 1.2.396-401). That parallels colonial imposition on cultures. Ariel owning the ocean, as a symbolisation of raw force of nature that cannot be tamed, speaks of resistance against colonialism.

In contrast, while *Surya-Dighal Bari* foregrounds folk songs as the articulation of socio-political resistance in postcolonial Bengal. Folk songs reveal opposition to damn politics and the will to survive (and preserve culture) through Bengal famine and Partition. In the words of Tahmina Begum, Ishaque's use of folksongs are a form of protest which express "the socio-political realities in rural Bengal" (Begum 223).

These songs act as defence for cultural identity against a powerful external threat. The Fakir's song in *Surya-Dighal Bari* blends folklore with resistance: "Laughingly a 'baan' I dispatch as a boul... My black 'baan' has finished the devils, with my hair I've tried all 'petnis'" (Ishaque 167). Inspired from Baul traditions, this song of the Fakir comes as an epitome of spiritual resistance and colonial legacy sentiments. They are the images and powers that embody a legacy of cultural pride and spiritual power. These are songs of what Begum would call "cultural memory and spiritual power" (Begum 223).

These folk idioms form a part of the socio-political opposition that emerges from analysis; they align with the concept of cultural imperialism elucidated in Edward Said's texts. As Said included in his own argument, the "literature of empire is part of the histories of imperialism" (Said 79). The defiance of Prospero by Caliban and the fact that Fakir stares down oppressive forces show how cultural traditions push back against colonial power (Said 79).

The paper states that these folk traditions are not merely photographic cards but the very nature of how folk can act as a force for keeping alive identity, resisting cultural extrument and extinction. Although there are quite different historical and social contexts, both texts show the ways in which folk traditions for speaking out continue to enliven both as sites of cultural counter-discourse that defamiliarise emic representations to address the circumstances of being literally marginalised.

Folk Songs as Cultural Resistance

Though quite different in scope, both the folk songs that appear in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari* are used as tools of resistance to struggle against the power hegemony. In both instances, marginalised communities are deploying folklore as a means of resisting erasure and reclaiming agency. The practice of folk song as cultural memory / agency in Caliban and *The Tempest*; the peasantry, *Surya-Dighal Bari*.

Folklore Songs as Resistance Tool

While some genres such as folk song are absent from *The Tempest* the traces of morality abound. Caliban embodies a symbolic link between the island and colonized culture against European genocidal oppression. His rejection is explicit in his renunciation of Prospero's language and culture, "this thing of darkness / I acknowledge mine" (Shakespeare 5.1.275). Thus the statement is a counter-narrative where those being oppressed are exercising agency from a position of engendered coloniality.

The music and songs in *The Tempest* have a dual function: They both frame the themes of the play, but they also serve subversive purposes. In the case of Ariel, an example is his song number 13: "Full fathom five" (Shakespeare 1.2.397–404) representing King Alonso embodying Nature. The phrase sea-change into something rich and strange turns the colonial power structure on its head; in this case, native nature becomes a standin for imperial metamorphosis. This aligns with Edward Said's concept of "contrapuntal reading," where an indigenous identity counters colonialist narratives (Said 78). The following anthems are indeed the arms of the resistance:

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I couch when owlsdocracy,
On the bat's back I do fly After summer merrily: Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough (*Shakespeare 5.1.88–94*) [5]

And thus Ariel's song speaks to liberation from serves of Prospero. The birds "merrily" take flight; this notion of "merrily" in song expands to indicate freedom or non-slavery. Previously, Ariel has been imprisoned by Prospero, trapped under his magical command; the words of flying free are a bitter irony. The song is the very spirit of resistance against colonisation; the land and the spirits of indigenous people will show their autonomy to take back their true essence Other than that, the lowest of the low in the play, Caliban professes freedom with his song. We have seen three examples of other characters

looked down upon by society but Shakespeare illustrates how these people sing over their yearning for liberation.

Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban
Gets — gets a new lordman.
Freedom, high-day! High-day, freedom!
Freedom, high-day, freedom! (Shakespeare 2.2.185–188)

Caliban's song in *The Tempest* is expressly a cry to be freed from Prospero's tyranny. By repeating the word "freedom," and mocking, "Get a new man," Caliban expresses his ravenous discontent. It is tempting to see him as a victim, but in this song we can hear his hope for freedom. It is the voice of the colonised which performs and embodies, and above all realise the struggle to reclaim agency. This song is a response to the colonizer — Caliban strikes back against his oppressor and affirms that he has the same dream of autonomy as those who have been colonized.

Additionally, music is crucial for establishing the otherworldly ambience of the island in *The Tempest* and repeatedly embodies both motifs of magic and control. One can realise this with Ariel's next song, in which he introduces the characters to the magical land of the island using a mix of animals and spirits who will steer their movements.

Come unto these yellow sands, And then take hands:
Well, if you bowed then surely I must have kissed.
The wild waves whistle, Trip it on your way as you go;
And gentle sprights to take love's burden on. Hark, hark!
Bow-wow, the watchdogs bark: Bow-wow.
Hark, hark! I hear the strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow! (Shakespeare 1.2.376–388)

Ariel's song opposes the wildness of the island with European past-aim at controlling and ordering nature. Not far do — summer of the Western Isles, never vexed and the shreds whisper about all "yellow sands" and "wild waves", thinking about a great world outside Prospero territory. The song subtly resists colonial pressures, by glorifying the beauty of the island. The unbreakable spirit of the island, stronger than Prospero's magic, stands as a symbol for the continued strength of Indigenous peoples in the wake of colonialism.

In these verses, Shakespeare combines elements of folklore with themes of freedom and resistance to nature. Although *The Tempest* does not feature folk melodies as such — popular music has a tendency to be an analogy for resistance and the lamentation of sources — it is passing on culture, hope and history from one generation to another: colonial or imperialistic. They invite readers to rethink the island and its people through folk culture and opposition. Unlike *Surya-Dighal Bari*, Bhawal uses the literary content for its outline although represented in an almost tableau-styled manner, as opposed to the birpurush of Bhawal — but rather embeds within / beyond that a certain amount of folk songs which best represent the socio-political conflicts taking place in rural Bengal. The songs that this book throws out to us are acts of broad solidarity, allowing for a minimal level of defiance against political repression and cultural annihilation. The songs

serve, as Tahmina Begum says: “a very important function in articulating the mass struggles of people” (223). In this regard folk songs reveal the class-consciousness of peasantry, pushing back against hegemonic narratives that dominated political discourse among ruling elites.

The song of Fakir Didar Bakhs is a fertile ground for the study of folk songs as a form of resistance. Though mythological, this song refers to the folklore of rural Bengal and comments on the socio-political and cultural forces that determine its existential condition. It invites reading into it, meaning: legends, colonialism, social-political insurrection and cultural re-shaping.

He also do with the following words of Fakir Didar Bakhs to bind Kashu:

Just so you know, my name is Didar.
For it chokes the twinned haired phantom pair to sway.
If I spell cast by Sheikh Faris name as a charm.
I can almost see every ghost over a thousand apparitions.
Hey-hi-hum-hi-hum-hi.
As for me, I am ill; come hither, give me thy name
What caste, what sub-caste and where were you?
Hey-hi-hum-hi-hum-hi.
He is called Lajfatka. Trees are my home,
Instead, I used to swallow the small ones dry like doily food that I could digest at
my leisure.
And grown-ups, I hop on their back.
I gulp down the blood they have shed in their bodies,
Hey-hi-hum-hi-hum-hi. (Ishaque 126)

The song references from Bengal oral tradition more specifically using local mythological words like Sheikh Faris and Lajfatka trees. These are gods of magical powers, worshipped by the local communities, and symbolise a native faith opposed to foreign religion. The Fakir is an ancient mythate creature, a bearer of his own power and thereby links back to cultural pasts that colonial ambitions fought with. This incantationy chorus (“Hey-hi-hum-hi-hum-hi”) underscores the song’s element of spirituality and ritual, reminding us that to sing is an affirmation of shared experience and heritage.

Fakir Didar Bakhs also used the spiritual power to counter colonial hegemony. The air-spread power of the fakir that armies then came to defeat called “phantoms” is also a foreign-fighting image over Bengal’s countryside. As for “Ghosts” — they’d be heavies — colonial forces that are not of human origin. In doing this he reasserts the native faith over the colonial morality by calling on Sheikh Farid, the Fakir linked to indigenous spiritual leadership. The occult emerges when local communities seek to defend themselves against outside influences and assert their cultural independence in the face of colonial power. A protest against the socio-political oppression faced by rural Bengal, this song of the Fakir is particularly in response to, and on account of British colonial rule over India post-invasion economic exploitation. This allusion of eating “little ones as my doily food”

and jumped on the backs of grown-ups" is a metaphor for the widespread poverty that villagers experienced at the time. This macabre imagery is analogous to the predatory behavior of colonizers and national elites who were "sucking the blood" out of peasants at high taxation or land rents. The Fakir in the song cannot only be portrayed as a cultural icon and symbol of resistance, revived from being lost within myths, but numbers should also contribute towards giving spiritual legitimacy to his image through popular legend.

It makes a statement of cultural roots. Didar Bakhs strengthen the Pir lineage of the community and its collective memory. It's a vision quest where he can fend off evil spirits later — the renaissance of indigenous culture as opposition. The Fakir thus is open to cultural and spiritual imagination that can survive the colonizing forces from without or the decay of culture from within. In referring to myths and magic, the song highlights a local potential of culture as something that can survive and seed different kinds of being outside systems of coloniality.

In *Surya-Dighal Bari*, Didar Bakhs showcases the meaning of folk songs and oral tradition are a form of resistance. This song upholds the cultural-identitarian and spiritual beliefs of the peasants, their rejection to colonial socio-political domination by the indigenous authorities. Though the song itself serves its purpose, and has throughout folklore: as a double-edged sword, tools of cultural memory, natural sociological destinies.

Cultural Identity and Memory

Even when folk-songs are partially used communally manipulated -the notes maintained through incessant rituals by patriarchal tradition neither of which turn to be a lively force for revitalization nor as directives -from the data and facts presented in *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* show work as precise media with cultural memory, significant enough to retain identity (due its eminence being deep rooted lie) even during repressed condition, an inclusion meant rite and fitly respond. Caliban's relation to the island metaphorizes an identity that is resistant to colonial interruption. In this sense, it is an attempt at negotiating identity like cultural reclamation, a practice of mimicry that resonates throughout Edward W. Said's *Culture and Imperialism* which writes of the empire subjectivity created by literature (66).

Surya-Dighal Bari is a rural folk-theatre of Bangladeshi people, depicting the roots and intimacy between the rural lifestyle and their culture. The songs are a historical record and contribute much to establishing cultural continuity against the backdrop of modernisation, political changes or upheavals. Ishaque argues that folk songs are necessary for the definition of cultural identity and characters to maneuver within post-colonial Bengal.

The Intersection of Resistance and Agency

Folk songs are acts of resistance in both works and highlight cultural manifestations that confront hegemonic power. In the case of Caliban, he is the native in *The Tempest* who resists colonial forces but where this resisting character involves rather than contests his colonial forces, instead 'go[ing] so far as to embrace [them] and exploit their desire for

closeness with him' (143), finding power through his affiliation with the island. Whereas the peasantry itself against exploitative practices and resistant themes factored in folk songs in *Surya-Dighal Bari*. With these two stories, cultural expressions act as resistance and identity and agency. As Jack Zipes states, folklore is an example of subversive discourse that disenfranchised groups use to express their opposition to the dominant ideology (24). This perspective coincides with the approach to both texts as folk songs, which subvert existing relations of power and hold a sanctuary for subterranean figures.

A comparative study of folk songs in *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari* as vehicles of resistance against hegemony and maintenance of heritage. As we saw in the case of both Shakespeare and Ishaque, folk traditions show how subaltern communities struggle to keep their power from being usurped by colonial narratives while holding on to their cultural roots. The cross-cultural nature of this testifies to the folk song's role as a musical means of cultural resistance, even to our order.

Decentring Cultural Roots in *The Tempest* and *Surya-Dighal Bari*

Through folk references and new consciousness around roots, a reappropriation of cultural identity is evident in his *The Tempest* as well as Ishaque's *Surya-Dighal Bari*, where — like Riverain who reproduce Native oral traditions as a dialectically textual indigenous site through their ethnically rich history — the authors arrest momentary erasure by claiming collective memory. The comparison indicates folk culture as a major conduit for marginalised bilities to craft their narratives against the mainstream discourse which is an undeniable commonality.

In fact, Shakespeare is said to place culture and resistance in the figure of Caliban in *The Tempest*. Native Caliban embodies the war between colonised and coloniser; he embodies autonomy. This island's mind, by Sycorax my mother. That it imagines a new kind of relationship to his cultural heritage, and to the earth, because he can no longer stand this fucking association:—Notes us into the world (Shakespeare 1.2.332). Although these traditions do not appear to consist of songs as we know them, the practices of oral transmission found in patterns local speech typified by Caliban's diction are governed by a realm of resistance against Prospero. According to Brown (58), Caliban is a figure who embodies the problems of colonialism and also gives an indication about cultural recovery. In this play, then, Shakespeare charts an urge to reposess indigenous narrative through Caliban's work against colonial erasure.

On the other hand, Ishaque nothing inherently placed the folk songs as a cultural resistance with *Surya-Dighal Bari* where some cousins hold in prison based on allusions of his previous non-performing elements which manages to prevent authenticity of rural Bengal rootedness. Specifically, in the context of political chaos and the Bengal famine, changing folk songs are used as a medium by which peasantry makes their common sufferings known (127). Folk songs, as Tahmina Begum Notes, provide a form of resistance in that they write "the socio-political conditions of rural Bengal" (223). The songs link the characters to their ancestral roots, but, as most collective prayer can do in difficult moments, they work on communal singing through shared identities.

In addition, the folkloric traditions present in *Surya-Dighal Bari* also assist us in reconceptualising the cultural identity of the story, locating it in a wider context of post-colonial self-identification. Ishaque recasts folk life as central to her characters, signaling the archetypal quality of such traditions in resisting cultural gypsyization and syncretism. As historian Musharraf Ali Ishaque calls upon the work of folk Ishaque historians, this resurgence may be seen not just as a matter of desire but — “the flight leaves ...a conscious act of cultural reclamation ... reasserting... that old culture has as much if not more value and quality than changing times, history whose spin-offs were marginal to the socio-political scenario” (Fly–Leaves 137).

The Universality of Folk Culture in Literature

A comparison of these texts demonstrates the importance folk culture holds, in literary traditions and regions alike, for maintaining a sense identity and guarding against cultural erasure. In Said’s terms, “Agency and will pervade all of imperial literature” (79). So this model can explain how Shakespeare and Ishaque uses their cultural narratives. In a parallel manner, both writers provide subversive interpretations of hegemonic discourse via folkloric elements that critique dominant ideologies and offer epilogues for the silenced, and they not only also imagine alternate views to these derogations but envision erasing them altogether.

This comparative reading is, in fact, a small part of an ongoing attempt to broaden our approach to the study of folk traditions present in literature and to recognize their potential as powerfully resilient forces that can reclaim and resist. Folk songs & the place of folk songs in the reshaping of roots: While part of a broader conversation about cultural identity, this work reminds us that oral traditions are one way to keep live the memories and experiences of people at the margins.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study makes some crucial points about the functioning of folk songs as socio-political cultural resistance in Shakespearean, *The Tempest* and Abu Ishaque *Surya-Dighal Bari*. The first thing we notice is that both authors draw on folk culture to challenge dominant hegemonic systems and to assert agency for subaltern groups. Caliban’s unique connection (with the island) in *The Tempest* is indicative of an anti-colonial resistance, and his story contains mythological motifs through which he regains his voice. Although Caliban never sings anything formally categorized as a folk song, the content and delivery of his speech and the function of oral culture in the island also relate to notions of cultural resistance and control. In sharp contrast, *Surya-Dighal Bari* has songs in which the conflict between caste and class norms, the socio-political tensions of rural Bengal, are collectively inscribed into the folk song genre as a vehicle for collective identity and communal solidarity.

Second, sociopolitical aspects present in folk traditions of both works indicate the different historical contexts of colonialism and post-colonialism. While the colonial context provides a background for Caliban (and the fight against Prospero), so does *Surya-Dighal Bari*, in

foregrounding: class advantage, as mirrored by its struggles with modernity and upheaval. By embedding long-cherished oral histories, such folk expressions connect traditions of the past with present political circumstances that force the characters in both texts to adapt their own identities to contests between threatened and ongoing hegemonies.

Moreover, the comparative lens allows one to see folk culture as universally valuable in the preservation of identity and struggle against cultural erasure across contexts and literature. In both Shakespeare and Ishaque the folk offers indigenous communities an agency, a cultural reclamation that is just as vital to preserving traditions from modernity encroaching upon them as it is resisting colonial forces.

CONCLUSION

This study presents an alternative take on the literary significance of (pseudo-) folk elements with an analysis of their function as oppositional narrative to hegemonic narratives. In bridging these gaps, the research contributes to ethnographic comparisons of folk songs between both bodies of text and discussions on cultural identity and resistance in general or contextualising them more specifically through oral histories. It is based on the notion that though contexts are different, everyone confronts questions about cultural roots and: the pressure from outsiders to conform and abandon aspects of their identity and beautifully illustrates how emigré folk traditions run deep within cultures. Besides, with this study we have to be aware that folk songs are essential in the literature because they are the main instrument of memory, resistance and social denunciation.

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