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Mythological Allegory and Colonial Subtext in Sakunir Protixudh

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Abstract

This paper examines SakunirProtixudh (শকুনিৰপ্ৰতিশোধ), a pre-Independence Assamese mythological play, as a work of allegorical expression shaped by the political and cultural constraints of colonial India. In a historical context where overt nationalist discourse was restricted by censorship and colonial surveillance, Assamese dramatists frequently employed mythological narratives as indirect yet effective vehicles for political reflection. This study argues that SakunirProtixudh transforms the Mahabharata episode into a layered allegory that encodes ethical critique, ideological conflict and resistance consciousness beneath its mythic surface.

Using allegory theory and a New Historicist approach, the paper undertakes a close textual analysis of character construction, dialogic conflict and dramatic structure. It demonstrates how the figure of Shakuni is reimagined not merely as a mythic antagonist but as a symbolic representation of manipulation, moral corruption and destructive power, resonant with the experience of colonial domination. The play's emphasis on intrigue, internal betrayal, ethical collapse and cyclical violence reflects the anxieties of a society negotiating subjugation, complicity and resistance under imperial rule.

The analysis further reveals how ideas of injustice, dissent and moral crisis are articulated through symbolic language, choric commentary and tragic confrontation without explicit reference to contemporary politics. By situating the play within its late colonial context, the study highlights mythological allegory as a strategic aesthetic mode that enabled political critique while maintaining textual safety.

The paper contends that SakunirProtixudh exemplifies how pre-Independence Assamese drama functioned as a literature of indirect resistance, sustaining nationalist consciousness and ethical inquiry through mythic re-inscription and dramatic symbolism.

Keywords:
Mythological allegory; Assamese drama; colonial subtext; nationalism; pre-Independence literature

1. Introduction

SakunirProtixudh(শকুনিৰপ্ৰতিশোধ) is a mythological play written by Ganesh Chandra Gogoi and published in 1976, during the late colonial period in Assam. At this time, India was under British rule and writers had limited freedom to express political criticism openly. Literary works that directly

opposed colonial authority often faced censorship or other forms of restriction. Because of this situation, many Assamese writers adopted indirect ways of expressing social and political concerns. One common strategy was the use of mythological and historical themes.

Instead of writing directly about colonial rule, playwrights used well-known stories from epics such as the Mahabharata. These stories allowed them to discuss injustice, power, suffering and resistance in a symbolic manner. Myth provided a safe narrative space where ethical and political ideas could be expressed without naming contemporary political realities. SakunirProtixudh follows this tradition.

Although the play is based on characters and events from the Mahabharata, it is not a simple retelling of the epic. Gogoi reshapes the myth to focus on moral conflict and human suffering. The play presents a world where injustice has become unbearable and where ethical values are deeply disturbed. This moral tension appears clearly from the very beginning of the play.

In Act I, Shakuni enters the stage in a disturbed state of mind and raises a powerful question:"ইমানচেষ্টাকিঅথলেযাবপাৰে? ইমানপাপকিপৃথিৱীয়েসহ্যকৰিবপাৰে?" (Imānchesṭākiotholejābopāre? Imānpāpkipr̥thibīyesojjokoribopāre?/Means:
Can so much effort go in vain? Can the world endure so much sin?) (Gogoi, 1976, Act I, Sequence 1, p. 1)

On the surface, this dialogue belongs to a mythological character speaking about events in the epic world. However, the ideas expressed here go beyond myth. The words "sin" and a world unable to bear injustice suggest a deeper ethical crisis. Such questions reflect a sense of frustration and moral anxiety that could easily connect with the experience of people living under colonial domination. The play does not mention British rule or colonial power directly, but the emotional force of the dialogue invites readers to think about unjust authority and suffering in their own time.

This indirect way of expressing criticism is significant. By using mythological characters and settings, Gogoi avoids direct political statements while still raising serious questions about power, responsibility and injustice. The mythological framework protects the text from censorship, yet it allows readers to interpret the play in relation to their lived realities. In this way, myth becomes a symbolic language through which dissent and ethical reflection are communicated quietly but effectively.

SakunirProtixudh can therefore be read as a work of mythological allegory. Allegory here does not mean a one-to-one political message, but rather a layered form of meaning. The epic narrative provides one level of understanding, while the ethical and social tensions point toward another level connected to the colonial context. The play's focus on manipulation, moral decay and destructive ambition reflects the broader atmosphere of uncertainty and injustice experienced during the late colonial period.

This paper studies SakunirProtixudh as a textual example of mythological allegory with a colonial subtext. Through close reading of its language, dialogue and narrative structure, the study

examines how myth is used to express ethical conflict and silent resistance. By situating the play within its historical moment, the paper shows how pre-Independence Assamese drama used myth not as escapism, but as a meaningful tool for reflection, critique and moral questioning under colonial constraint.

2. Theoretical Framework: Allegory and New Historicism

This study uses two related theoretical approaches: allegory theory and New Historicism. These frameworks are appropriate for reading SakunirProtixudh because the play is a mythological text written during the late colonial period, when writers often avoided direct political expression. In such historical situations, meaning is usually indirect, layered and symbolic rather than openly stated. Allegory helps to explain how such indirect meaning is constructed in the text, while New Historicism helps to explain why this strategy was necessary in its historical context.

Allegory may be understood as a literary mode in which characters, events and actions suggest meanings beyond their immediate narrative role. Walter Benjamin points out that allegory becomes especially significant during periods of crisis, when writers feel that reality can no longer be expressed clearly through direct representation (Benjamin, 1968, p. 175). Instead of presenting ideas openly, texts rely on symbols, figures and moral contrasts. This understanding of allegory is useful for reading SakunirProtixudh, where mythological characters speak and act within an epic framework, yet raise questions that clearly exceed the limits of the epic story itself.

Fredric Jameson's idea of the "political unconscious" further supports this approach. Jameson argues that literary texts produced under social or political pressure often contain historical meanings in disguised forms, even when they do not refer to politics directly (Jameson, 1981, p. 20). Mythological narratives are particularly suited to this kind of indirect expression because they already function symbolically. In SakunirProtixudh, the Mahabharata setting creates a distance from contemporary reality, but this distance does not remove political meaning. Instead, it allows concerns related to power, manipulation, injustice and moral breakdown to appear in a symbolic form. Characters such as Shakuni operate not only as epic figures but also as carriers of broader ethical and political significance. Allegory thus enables the play to express anxiety and critique without naming colonial authority.

The use of myth as allegory becomes clearer when viewed within a colonial context. Northrop Frye explains that myth is not only an ancient story but also a structural form that organizes human experience, especially around authority, conflictand justice (Frye, 1957, p. 136). When myths are rewritten in new historical conditions, they naturally absorb contemporary concerns. In pre-Independence Assam, mythological drama offered writers a culturally accepted and politically safer medium. By retelling epic stories, playwrights could engage with questions of injustice, moral failure and resistance while avoiding direct confrontation with colonial power. In this sense, myth functions as allegory not by hiding meaning completely, but by transferring present-day concerns into a past narrative frame.

New Historicism provides the second major framework for this study. This approach focuses on the close relationship between literary texts and the historical conditions in which they are produced. Stephen Greenblatt argues that literary works are shaped by the power relations, cultural norms and

social tensions of their time, rather than existing outside history (Greenblatt, 1980, p. 5). From this perspective, SakunirProtixudh is read as a product of the late colonial Assamese intellectual environment, where nationalist awareness was growing but open political opposition was constrained.

New Historicism does not treat the play as a direct political statement or a simple nationalist document. Instead, it examines how historical pressures appear indirectly within the text—through the choice of mythological subject, the emphasis on ethical conflict and the repeated concern with manipulation and moral responsibility. This method allows the study to connect the play with its colonial context without forcing fixed political meanings onto it.

By combining allegory theory and New Historicism, this study approaches SakunirProtixudh as a text of indirect resistance. Allegory explains how symbolic meaning is constructed within the mythological narrative, while New Historicism explains why such symbolic strategies were necessary under colonial conditions. Together, these frameworks support a careful, historically grounded reading of the play as a work shaped by ethical questioning, ideological tension and the limits imposed on expression during the late colonial period.

3. Myth, Character and Colonial Anxiety: Reading Shakuni

In SakunirProtixudh, the character of Shakuni is central to the moral and ideological structure of the play. Although Shakuni is a well-known figure from the Mahabharata, Ganesh Chandra Gogoi reshapes him in a way that goes beyond epic tradition. In this play, Shakuni is not merely a cunning uncle or a political schemer; he becomes the primary voice through which anxiety, injustice, manipulation and ethical decay are repeatedly articulated. Through Shakuni, the play constructs a disturbed moral world that closely mirrors the atmosphere of fear, uncertainty and domination experienced during the late colonial period.

From his very first appearance, Shakuni is presented as a figure tormented by a sense of historical and moral crisis. In Act I, Sequence 1, he enters the stage with anguish and speaks in a voice filled with urgency and despair: “ইমানচেষ্টাকিঅথলেযাবপাৰে? ইমানপাপকিপৃথিৱীয়েসহ্যকৰিবপাৰে?”(Imāncheṣṭākiotholējābopāre? Imānpāpkipṛthibīyēsojjokoribopāre?/Means: Can so much effort go in vain? Can the world endure so much sin?)(Gogoi, 1976, Act I, Sequence 1, p. 1)

These questions are framed within a mythological setting, but their meaning is not limited to epic time alone. From the beginning of the play, Shakuni speaks in a tone of moral exhaustion and anger, suggesting that injustice has crossed all limits. His language reflects a belief that the world has reached a breaking point. For a colonial audience living under political domination and restricted freedom, such expressions could resonate strongly with everyday experiences of exploitation, silence and suppressed resentment. In this sense, Shakuni functions as an allegorical figure through whom historical anxiety is expressed indirectly, rather than through direct political statement, a strategy often adopted in periods of political constraint (Benjamin, 1968).

As the play progresses, Shakuni repeatedly emerges as a figure who rejects ethical restraint and justifies violence as unavoidable. This attitude is clearly expressed in Act II, Scene 3, where he openly

dismisses mercy and forgiveness: "দয়ানাই, ক্ষমানাই! কোনেওকাকোক্ষমাকৰিবনোৱাৰে, নোৱাৰে।"(Dayānāi, kṣamānāi! Koneokākokṣamākoribonōwāre, nōwāre. / **Means:**There is no mercy, no forgiveness! No one can forgive anyone, no one can.) (Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Scene 3, p. 42)

This declaration presents a moral world where compassion has lost all value and cruelty has become normal. Shakuni's words suggest a system in which power operates without accountability and human suffering is treated as inevitable. Such a worldview reflects a deep ethical crisis, comparable to conditions in colonial societies where injustice persists without redress and moral responsibility is systematically eroded.

Towards the end of the play, Shakuni speaks with clear awareness of the destruction that has followed his actions. He does not attempt to justify himself morally, nor does he seek forgiveness. Instead, he accepts chaos, ruin and death as the final outcome of his long-held resentment and revenge. This self-awareness gives Shakuni a tragic depth. He is not portrayed as a mindless villain, but as a figure shaped by accumulated injustice and historical bitterness.

Read in this way, Shakuni functions as an allegorical representation of destructive power sustained through manipulation and moral erosion. His character demonstrates how prolonged injustice can deform ethical judgment and transform resentment into a force that destroys entire social and political structures. From a New Historicist perspective, Shakuni's ethical language and emotional extremity reflect the cultural and political pressures of the late colonial moment in which the play was produced, where open resistance was difficult and dissent often took indirect forms (Greenblatt, 1980). Through Shakuni, SakunirProtixudh uses myth as a language of anxiety and critique, allowing the play to express fear, anger and moral collapse without naming contemporary political authority.

4. Violence, Ethics and the Crisis of Dharma

In SakunirProtixudh, violence is not presented merely as a heroic necessity but as a serious ethical problem. The play repeatedly shows how war destroys moral balance and distorts the idea of dharma. Instead of offering a clear separation between right and wrong, the text presents a world in which justice is achieved only through extreme and disturbing acts. This ethical tension becomes one of the most important elements of the play's deeper meaning.

One of the most striking examples of this crisis of dharma appears in the killing of Dushasana by Bhima. In Act II, Sequence 5, Bhimafulfills his long-held vow by drinking Dushasana's blood after killing him: "ভীম, আজিৰক্তপায়ী/দুর্দান্তৰাক্ষস!"(Bhīm, ājiraktapāyī / durdāntarākṣas!/**Means:**Bhima, today you are a blood-drinking, fearsome demon!)(Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Sequence 5, p. 53)

This moment is deeply unsettling. Bhima is traditionally known as a righteous warrior, yet here he is described as a blood-drinking figure, almost demonic in nature. Although the act completes a vow made after Draupadi's humiliation, the play does not present it as a moment of pure triumph. Instead, it exposes how justice achieved through violence becomes morally disturbing. Dharma is fulfilled, but at a heavy ethical cost. In allegorical terms, this scene reflects what allegory theory identifies as the breakdown of moral coherence in times of historical crisis, when ethical action becomes inseparable from excess and cruelty (Benjamin, 1968).

The connection between violence and moral responsibility becomes clearer when Bhima later meets Draupadi. In Act II, Sequence 6, Bhima declares that Draupadi's long, unbound hair will finally be tied again after Dushasana's death: "…তোমাকোহত্যাকৰিম। আহাঁআজিমুক্তকেশীপাঞ্চালীকহত্যাকৰি, বিষন্নবদনাদ্রোপদ-নন্দিনীকহত্যাকৰিলাঞ্ছিতা, অপমানিতাযাজ্ঞসেনীকহত্যাকৰি……যাজ্ঞসেনীকপ্রতিজ্ঞামুক্তকৰি, কৃষ্ণাৰউন্মুক্তকৃষ্ণকেশআজিৰপৰাবেণীযুক্তকৰোঁ।"(…tomākohôtyākorim… KṛṣṇārunmuktoKṛṣṇakeśājirporābeṇī-juktokorõ.
Means:…free Yajnaseni from her vow and from today bind Krishna's open, dark hair into a braid.) (Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Sequence 6, p. 55)

This symbolic act marks the restoration of honour, yet it is achieved through brutality. The play forces the audience to confront a difficult ethical question: if justice requires such violence, can it still be considered righteous? Rather than offering a clear answer, the text sustains moral unease, suggesting that ethical resolution in a violent world is always incomplete and troubling.

A different but equally important ethical tension appears in Karna's encounter with Yudhishthira. In Act II, Sequence 3, Karna defeats Yudhishthira in battle but chooses not to kill him: "কর্ণহিনকৰেভঙ্গ/কোনোপ্রতিজ্ঞাৰ।"(Karṇoinokorebhanga / konoprotijñār./**Means:**Karna does not break any vow.) (Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Sequence 3, p. 43)

Here, Karna follows his personal code of honour even in the midst of widespread violence. This act stands in sharp contrast to the surrounding brutality and suggests that dharma survives only as an individual moral struggle rather than a shared social value. Karna's restraint exposes the fragmentation of ethical order, where righteousness exists in isolated actions rather than in collective conduct.

The crisis deepens further in the conflict between Arjuna and Yudhishthira in Act II, Sequence 4. When Yudhishthira criticizes Arjuna for failing to kill Karna, Arjuna almost attacks his elder brother. Krishna intervenes and reminds him of moral restraint: "ধর্ম্মৰাজজ্যেষ্ঠযাৰ,/পিতৃতুল্যযাৰ,/সেইমহাগুৰুনাশি/নেলাগেপালিবপার্থ,/সত্যঅঙ্গীকাৰ।"(Dhormmorājj yeṣṭho/ jāṛ… sotyoongīkār./ **Means:**That great elder must not be slain, Partha, to uphold the true vow.) (Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Sequence 4, p. 48)

This moment clearly shows how war has pushed even righteous figures to the edge of ethical collapse. Arjuna's vow to kill Karna comes into direct conflict with his duty toward his elder brother. Krishna's intervention prevents irreversible moral breakdown, yet the scene reveals how fragile dharma has become in a world dominated by violence.

Taken together, these scenes show that SakunirProtixudh does not glorify violence uncritically. Instead, it presents violence as a tragic necessity that steadily erodes ethical clarity. Justice is achieved, but through acts that disturb the moral conscience. From a New Historicist perspective, this ethical instability reflects the pressures of the late colonial period, when institutional justice was unreliable and moral order was under constant strain (Greenblatt, 1980). The confusion between duty and revenge and the emotional cost of righteousness, point to a society in which dharma struggles to survive.

In this way, the play transforms mythological violence into an ethical inquiry. By staging the collapse and partial recovery of dharma, SakunirProtixudh raises uncomfortable questions about justice, power and moral responsibility—questions that resonate strongly with the historical experience of oppression and resistance during the late colonial period.

5. Draupadi, Silence and Gendered Injustice

In SakunirProtixudh, Draupadi is not presented as a heroic warrior or a political actor, yet her presence shapes the ethical core of the play. She appears mainly through song, silence and emotional response, but these modes are not signs of weakness. Instead, they reflect the gendered nature of suffering and injustice. Draupadi becomes the moral centre of the drama, where personal humiliation turns into a collective ethical crisis.

One of Draupadi's earliest appearances occurs in Act I, Sequence 2, where she is first seen singing alone in a forest near the Pandava camp. Her song expresses pain, waiting and emotional abandonment: "আহোবুলিনাহিপ্রিয়, গলাকিয়দূৰলৈ?"(Āhōbulināhipriyo, golākiyādūrôloi?**Means:**You said you would come, beloved—why did you go so far away?) (Gogoi, 1976, Act I, Sequence 2, p. 5)

This moment is significant because Draupadi's suffering is shown even before physical violence appears on stage. Her voice carries anxiety, separation and emotional neglect. Although framed within a lyrical and mythological mode, this expression of pain reflects the vulnerability of women whose suffering is often marginalised during political and military conflict. In allegorical terms, such silenced or lyrical expression functions as an indirect articulation of historical anxiety, where personal grief gestures toward wider structures of injustice (Benjamin, 1968).

Draupadi's humiliation in the Kuru court is not staged directly, yet it remains a haunting presence throughout the play. In Act II, Sequence 5, Bhima recalls the moment when Dushasana violated her dignity: "এইহাতেৰেই—/কেশস্পর্শকৰিছিলি/সাধ্বীপাঞ্চালীৰ!"(Eihāterei—keśsporśokorisilīsādhbīPāñcālīr!/**Means:**With these very hands—you touched the hair of the virtuous Panchali!) (Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Sequence 5, p. 53)

This line confirms that Draupadi's body and dignity become sites of political violence. Her humiliation is not a private act but a public one, committed in the royal court. The play presents this act as a moral crime that demands justice. Notably, Draupadi herself does not speak here; instead, her violation is voiced by others, particularly Bhima. This narrative choice highlights how women's suffering is often spoken about rather than spoken by women themselves, reinforcing the gendered nature of injustice.

After Dushasana's death, Draupadi appears again in Act II, Sequence 6, when Bhima approaches her in a blood-stained state. Her response is fear and disbelief rather than celebration: "ভগবান্, ভগবান্,/এইবোৰকিশুনাইছা,/কিদেখুৱাইছা!"(Bhagabān, bhagabān, eibur/ kixunāisā, kidekhuāisā!/**Means:**O God, O God, what are you making me hear, what are you making me see!) (Gogoi, 1976, Act II, Sequence 6, p. 54)

This reaction shows that Draupadi does not rejoice in violence, even when it is carried out in her name. Although her humiliation has been avenged, the cost of that justice deeply disturbs her. The play thus refuses to portray revenge as emotionally satisfying. Draupadi's response restores ethical complexity to the narrative and prevents violence from being moralised uncritically.

The symbolic resolution of Draupadi's suffering occurs when Bhima declares that her long, unbound hair will finally be tied. Her unbound hair represents dishonour, unresolved injustice and prolonged trauma. Binding her hair signifies the restoration of dignity and social balance. Yet this restoration is achieved only through bloodshed, not through ethical or legal institutions. The play therefore exposes the failure of moral systems that are unable to protect women without resorting to extreme violence.

Draupadi's role reflects a broader structure of gendered injustice. She suffers publicly, waits silently and becomes the moral justification for male violence, yet she does not control the course of events. Her body becomes a symbolic battleground for honour, revenge and power. This pattern closely mirrors historical realities in which women bear the consequences of political conflict without possessing authority within it.

Read within a colonial context, Draupadi's silence and suffering can be understood allegorically. From a New Historicist perspective, her humiliation reflects a condition in which dignity is stripped without consent and justice is delayed or denied under oppressive power structures (Greenblatt, 1980). The restoration of her honour, achieved only through destruction, highlights the tragic ethical dilemma faced by societies living under prolonged injustice.

Through Draupadi, SakunirProtixudh foregrounds the moral cost of power struggles. Her presence reminds the audience that political conflict does not only destroy armies and kingdoms, but also leaves deep scars on vulnerable lives. In this way, the play uses Draupadi's character to connect mythological suffering with broader questions of justice, silence, gender and ethical responsibility.

6. Myth as Strategy: Silence, Censorship and Indirect Resistance

In the late colonial period, open political criticism in literary works was difficult and often risky. Writers faced censorship, surveillance and the constant fear of repression. As a result, many Assamese playwrights adopted indirect strategies to express social and ethical concerns. One of the most effective of these strategies was the use of myth. In SakunirProtixudh, myth does not function as escapism; rather, it becomes a deliberate literary method that allows the playwright to speak about injustice, domination and resistance without naming contemporary political powers.

The play consistently avoids direct political reference and instead relies on symbolic speech, silence and reflective commentary. This strategy is clearly visible in the recurring presence of the Baragi figure, whose songs appear at crucial moments of transition. In Act I, Sequence 5, the Baragi sings:"সকলোমায়াৰেখেলা/ ধনজনদেহামিছাসকলোটি"(Sokolomāyārekhelā/ dhonjondehāmichāsokoloti/ Means: All is a play of illusion; wealth, people, and the body - all are false.) (Gogoi, 1976, Act I, Sequence 5, p. 20)

This song reflects on illusion, impermanence and the emptiness of worldly possession. Although it does not refer directly to rulers, kings or political authority, the implication is clear: power, wealth and social dominance are unstable and deceptive. Such philosophical reflection allows the play to question authority indirectly. The Baragi's voice functions as a moral observer, encouraging the audience to look beyond surface power and to recognise its fragility. In allegorical terms, this use of song reflects what allegory theory identifies as a symbolic mode of critique suited to times of political constraint (Benjamin, 1968).

A similar reflective strategy appears again in Act III, Sequence 3, when the Baragi returns near the end of the play:"মৰণপথেদিকৰে/জীৱনেগতি/ ইযেনিয়তী"(Moron pothedi kore/jībônegôti/ iyeniyotī/ **Means:**"Along the path of death/life moves forward/ this is destiny.) (Gogoi, 1976, Act III, Sequence 3, p. 68)

Here, the emphasis shifts to inevitability and the cycle of life and death. This moment encourages the audience to step back from the immediate violence of the war and to reflect on its ultimate meaning. The song suggests that destructive power inevitably leads toward collapse. Such reflective pauses create space for ethical judgment without direct confrontation, allowing dissent to be expressed quietly rather than openly.

Silence is another important strategy in the play. Some of the most meaningful moments occur when characters choose not to speak or are unable to act. Gandhari's silence, particularly in moments of loss and realisation, becomes a powerful ethical response. Her refusal to offer false consolation stands in contrast to Dhritarashtra's obsession with revenge. Here, silence functions as a form of moral resistance, communicating truth more effectively than loud declaration.

Indirect resistance also appears in the way the play exposes power through excess. Characters like Shakuni speak at length, revealing manipulation, obsession and moral emptiness through their own words. Rather than glorifying authority, these speeches gradually strip power of its legitimacy. The audience is led to recognise that domination ultimately produces destruction, not stability. This strategy allows power to condemn itself from within, without requiring explicit political accusation.

The mythological setting of the play itself is part of this strategy. By locating ethical conflict in the epic past, SakunirProtixudh avoids direct engagement with colonial institutions. Yet the emotional and moral concerns, oppression, injustice, silence and resistance; remain deeply relevant to the colonial present. From a New Historicist perspective, this indirect mode of expression reflects the cultural pressures of the late colonial period, when dissent often had to take symbolic and allegorical forms in order to survive (Greenblatt, 1980).

Thus, SakunirProtixudh uses myth as a strategic language. Silence replaces protest, song replaces declaration and allegory replaces accusation. These techniques allow the play to exist within a censored environment while still carrying a strong ethical charge. The result is a drama that speaks quietly yet firmly, sustaining moral resistance through symbolic expression rather than direct confrontation.

7. Conclusion

This study has examined SakunirProtixudh as a mythological play deeply shaped by the historical and cultural conditions of late colonial Assam. Rather than reading the text as a straightforward retelling of the Mahabharata, the paper has shown that Ganesh Chandra Gogoi consciously reshapes myth into a medium for ethical reflection and indirect resistance. At a time when open political criticism was restricted by colonial control, myth offered a culturally legitimate and relatively safe form through which anxiety, injustice and moral conflict could be expressed.

Using allegory and a New Historicist perspective, the analysis has demonstrated how the play embeds its concerns within epic narrative. The character of Shakuni emerges as a key figure through whom manipulation, domination and moral decay are explored. His speeches and actions reveal how long-standing resentment and the misuse of power generate destruction on a massive scale. Shakuni is therefore not merely a traditional epic antagonist but a symbolic figure representing systems sustained by intrigue, division and ethical erosion.

The study has also highlighted how violence in SakunirProtixudh is presented as ethically troubling rather than heroic. Through scenes involving Bhima, Karna, Arjuna and Yudhishthira, the play exposes a deep crisis of dharma. Justice is achieved, but only through extreme and disturbing acts that leave moral wounds behind. This portrayal reflects a world where ethical clarity is fractured and righteousness survives only through painful individual struggle. Such a vision resonates with the historical experience of societies living under prolonged injustice, where moral balance is difficult to maintain.

Draupadi's role further intensifies this ethical dimension. Her suffering, silence and symbolic restoration reveal the gendered nature of injustice and the failure of social institutions to protect dignity without violence. Although she does not direct political action, her humiliation becomes the moral centre of the play. Through Draupadi, the drama reminds the audience that political conflict and ethical collapse inflict their deepest harm on those who possess the least power.

Finally, the paper has argued that myth itself functions as a strategic literary tool in the play. Silence, song and symbolic commentary replace direct protest. Figures such as the Baragi provide reflective pauses that encourage philosophical contemplation rather than confrontation. This indirect mode of expression allows the play to critique injustice while remaining within the limits imposed by colonial censorship.

In conclusion, SakunirProtixudh stands as a significant example of pre-Independence Assamese drama that sustains ethical inquiry and nationalist consciousness through mythological allegory. The play demonstrates that resistance does not always take the form of direct political speech. It can also survive through silence, symbolism and the careful reworking of inherited narratives. By transforming myth into a medium of moral questioning, Gogoi's play participates in a tradition of indirect resistance that is both historically rooted and aesthetically compelling.

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