



**A STUDY OF KUSUMAGAAJ'S POEM KOLAMBUSCHE GRAVGEET" AS A  
DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE**

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**Abstract**

*Kusumagraj is the greatest poet in Marathi literature who wrote the poem. Kolambusche Garvgeet in the book titled Vishakha in 1942. This small poem describes the life and work of the greatest sailor Kolumbus who undertook the voyage to discover the new land. The journey wasnot safe and he had to face many difficulties enroute. Kusumagraj's poem is translated intoEnglish by Vilas Solunke. This translated version of the poem is the finest specimen of versetranslation. The S L i.e. Source Language text depicts the personality of Kolumbus as a sailor.The present paper focuses mainly on the content analysis of this poem. The poem is a monologue.*

**Key words :** Kusumagraj :- A wellknown Marathi poet, receipt of Janpeeth Award.

*Kolumbusche Gavrageet :- The famous poem by Kusumagraj included in his book Vishakha.*



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V. V. Shirwadkar alias Kusumagraj was an eminent ewriter in Marathi literature. He was rewarded with the prestigious ‘ Dnayanpeeth Award.’ He was versatile personality. Vishakha, his trend setting volume was published in 1942. The poems included in this volume evoke sense of patriotism and humanitarianism. Simplicity and euphony are the two prominent features of his diction. His position in the field of Marathi literature is like the everfixed polestar

in the sky. Commenting on Shirwadkar's poems Kusumavati Deshpande and M. V. Rajadhaksha writes, "..... His patriotic poems have genuine passion but their expression is not merely passionate. They do not splutter with anger, or mouth battlecries, and they do not trade on the clichés of patriotism. They are good poetry." <sup>1</sup>

In the period of sixty five years as a creative writer Kusumangraj wrote eighteen plays, eight short story collections, twelve one-act plays, sixteen verse volumes. His play Natsamrat, the story of which he derives from Shakespeare's King Lear, won him Sahitya Akademi Award.

Vilas Solunke translated his well-known poem Columbusche Gravgeet into English. The title of the translated poem or meta-poem is "The Marching song of Columbus." It is as follows, <sup>2</sup>

Roar with your thousand tongues, O Sea  
Unsettling stars in the universe  
Stir up your way to watery mountains  
Shaking even the earth's corners!  
With the sun hiding in the underworld,  
Sky-demons dance in drunken mirth,  
And their queen, the lightning, blazes  
Its torches to split the earth!  
Or is this watery surge a wild dance  
Of the archangel fallen from heaven?  
He has come out to take revenge, dancing  
With his bands of devils on the ocean.  
Dethroned Angel, go on with your dancing,  
Burst clouds upon us ceaseless,  
Shoot meteors showering a rain of fire  
Born sailors, we are fearless!  
Comrades! Life at sea is a battlefield  
Forever, we've no regret as we roam  
Free over the blue like the stars above  
The boundless globe is our home.  
Did we set sail to turn back in fear  
And run away from strife

We'd sooner meet out watery grave  
Than guard a vanquished life.  
Millions of lives are born, but they wither  
Like leaves of grass in this world,  
We go sailing under seven skies with  
New horizons before us unfurled.  
Nothing can stop us, no love of wealth  
Nor the narrow prison of home,  
Blazing mankind's flag we'll conquer  
The land and ocean as we roam!  
Unfurl those proud white sails and tell  
The silly ocean what is in store;  
"While boundless are our hopes and dreams  
You are bound by your shore."

The poem has thirty Six lines. There are nine stanzas. And each stanza consists four lines or quatrain. The rhyming pattern is abcb. The title of the S. L.(i.e. source language) poem is Columbusche Garvgeet. The translator translated it as 'The Marching Song of Columbus.'

The poem is a dramatic monologue. In his book a Glossary of literary Terms M.H. Abrams defines dramatic monologue as, "A lengthy speech by a single person. In a play, when a character utters a monologue that expresses his or her private thoughts, it is called a soliloquy. Dramatic monologue, however, does not designate a component in a play, but a type of lyric poem that was perfected by Robert Browning."<sup>3</sup>

In a dramatic monologue the speaker is not the poet himself but some one other. In this poem the speaker or the narrator is not poet himself but Columbus, the well-known sailor who discovered continent called America. In a dramatic monologue the narrator interacts with other persons involved. In this poem Columbus tells the life of a sailor which is full of risks and hazards. He speaks with other sailors too.

"Comrades! Life at sea is a battlefield  
Forever, we have no regret as we roam  
Free over the blue like the stars above  
The boundless globe is our home."<sup>4</sup>

Columbus speaks with the hostile forces of Nature. He Knows well that the journey he has undertaken is not safe altogether, rather it is hazardous. The sea is boundless and voyaging for so many days on the surface of water is tiresome and mechanical. His companions or fellow sailors may possibly come in grip of melancholy. Columbus, a brave sailor speaks with sea and Devils who are living in the sky. He inspires the other sailors to continue their search and tells them that the day will dawn when they will have been reached on the shore which is unknown to the contemporary world. They are in search of New land and this search is really toilsome, dangerous. The narrator's personality, attitude and aptitude can be evident while he converses with other characters. Kusumagraj sheds light on Columbus (1454-1506), the greatest warrior in Italy. He had undertaken expeditions to find the unknown countries and territories. He persuaded Queen Isabella of Spain to pay for his expeditions that he had undertook especially to discover the new route to Asia crossing the Atlantic Ocean. In the year 1492 while Columbus was on his voyage to Asia, he discovered the new continent called America. This was the golden moment in the history of the world because it was the birth time of the greatest and the most influential democratic nation, the superpower, called America or the United States of America. This discovery is the landmark in the world history. So Kusumagraj wants to indite Columbus's personality. The poet presents Columbus as a symbol of determination and strong will power. Combating the hostile nature he continued his march. Columbus's life is inspiring story of a struggling man who ultimately achieves his goal. Columbus talks with the sea, the Devil in from of Strom and then with the crew. He inspires his fellows not to give up the mission halfway, stooping before the terrible waves, darkness, remote, desolate sea. The time might be tough but under the able leadership of Columbus the sailors landed the shore of the new continent also called the new world. Columbus's life has become the source of inspiration for those who desire to explore or discover what is unknown in this world. But this journey is not safe altogether. It requires great endurance, determination, willpower and indomitable spirit. Columbus is a symbol of man's 'never-say-die' spirit.

Columbus calls out the vast, rough ocean. He stands firmly and determines not to give in before this terrible force. He gathers his courage and asks the sea to roar with his thousand tongues. He asks the sea to pull down the stars located in the sky and shake every nook and corner of this earth. It seems he is challenging the sea to be aggressive while he firmly resolves not to stoop before this giant force. The darkness prevails everywhere as the sun hides in the

underworld. Sky demons start dancing in intoxication. Demons love chaos and darkness. Lightning is Demon Queen who blazes her torch to split the surface of the earth. The poet employs the figure called personification. Lightning an inanimate thing is described here as having human qualities. She holds a torch that emit bright, intense light. The picture is gloomy. And ordinary mortal could lose his heart and bow before the violent forces of nature but Columbus is extraordinary sailor who hesitates to give in. He glances at the high tides on the sea surface and thinks as if Archangel has been fallen from the heaven and descends to earth and now is dancing on the sea surface, riding on the giant waves along with bands of devils in the sky.

Columbus asks this dethroned angel not to stop dancing and creating terror in the minds of earthlings. He asks Devils to pour water over them continuously and shoot-meteors showering a rain of fire. Columbus addresses supernatural powers to display all their arts using all their might. Nevertheless he will not stoop before him Columbus tells the qualities of sailors. A sailor always struggles against powers of Nature. Like warriors sailors too fight against the hostile nature. Columbus says, “Born sailors, we are fearless!”<sup>5</sup> In the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries sailors, the fearless men discovered new countries, territories. European people and traders migrated everywhere. They introduced their culture and religion to the savage, tribes living in woods. This is the initial phase policy called of colonization. Columbus gives inspiring speech to his fellows. He tells them that at every moment they are battling against hostile nature. All their time is spent roaming in different countries of the world. He compares sailors with the stars in the sky who cross every geographical border and become part of the universe. For a sailor entire globe is the home. He asks fellow sailors, “Did we set sail to turn back in fear and run away from strife?”<sup>6</sup>

Columbus encourages them to move forward continually, battling against all odds. He instills this spirit in the minds of his fellows. He tells his fellow sailors that millions of people are born and brought up on this earth. The poet uses simile. These millions of ordinary mortals living on the earth are compared with a grass grown on the ground in large quantity. No one takes heed of the grass. Completing the life cycle, the grass wither away. In the same way men, too, grow old and die. Columbus appeals sailors not to turn back on any condition rather they should be prepared to embrace death. Running away like a coward is not becoming to sailors. Sailors are always in search of new horizons. They are in a true sense the citizens of the world who have a

home at each shore. They leave the house, cut family ties and roam in search of new territories. They couldn't settle at one place. They travel both on land and ocean.

The last stanza of the poem is very significant. Columbus tells his fellows to unfurl sails; start moving ahead and warns the adamant ocean that the hopes and dreams cherished in the human heart are boundless while it is bounded by geographical boundaries. Thus the hope and dreams of the man is more profound than the vast ocean.

To conclude, this poem is the fine specimen of dramatic monologue in the Indian poetry in English. Although it is a meta-poem or a translated by Vilas Solunke originally from Marathi.

In this poem Kusumagraj succeeds in depicting struggle of a brave sailor, Columbus. The flavor of the original poem (S.L.) has been maintained by the translator in the translated version (TLT) of the poem.

Qualities of Columbus the sailor are the source of inspiration to many people.

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