

## Shifts in Wooing in Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh and Anjan Dutt's Lyrics

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**Abstract:** Approaches to love and marriage have changed over the centuries with shifts in social and economic perspectives. The calm and solemn dignity of individual feelings in the paradisiacal country life of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century has largely been replaced by the 21<sup>st</sup> century economic recession and social class discriminations. This article focuses on the shifts in wooing in four lyrics by Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh, Anjan Dutt and an anonymous writer respectively in two different contexts. In 1599, Marlowe wrote his poem "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love" in which the lover offers a series of country pleasures to the beloved to make her accept his love proposal. In Sir Walter Raleigh's poem "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" written in 1600, the woman wooed rejects the proposal in a witty, sensible, and sophisticated language, of course, with some sort of tension and reservation. Anjan Dutt wrote a song in May, 2004 named "Eta ki 2 44 11 39?" in which the lover proposes marriage to his beloved in a polite and emotional language. But the lady, unlike the Nymph in Sir Walter Raleigh, refuses the proposal in unrefined language that lacks depth or ingenuity and simply turns into crude vulgarity. The present article attempts an analysis of all these four pieces of literary works to show the depth and shifts in wooing in different contexts between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

**Key words:** Wooing; Sophistication and Vulgarity; Culture and Nobility;

### Introduction

Wooing refers to seek love with a view to marrying or making romantic relation with a girl. The approach and response of love are not same. The way of offering love is different from age to age and society to society. There are thousands of poems short stories novels, plays and songs are available on wooing and cooing. Classic works of literature (whether drama, music or poetry) provide us with wisdom and insights into the nature and manifestations of love and emotion enacted in human social life. Such works broaden our outlook, widen our experience and deepen our comprehension of mutual relations between emotional response and social realities. Patrick Colm Hogan's work *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotion* describes emotional aspects of human mind. He explores the emotions of romantic love, grief, mirth, guilt, shame, jealousy, attachment, compassion, and pity – in each case drawing on one work by

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Shakespeare<sup>2</sup> and one or more works by writers from different historical periods or different cultural backgrounds, such as Li Ch'ing-Chao<sup>3</sup> and Wole Soyinka<sup>4</sup> (2011: ii).

The concept of aesthetics is connected with the essence of beauty, or, the ontology of aesthetics. Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* emphasizes coexistence of personal pleasure and pure beauty, and also focuses on the problem of taste and aesthetics. "A pure judgment of taste has, then, for its determining ground neither charm nor emotion, in a word, no sensation as matter of the aesthetic judgment" (Kant, 2007:14). This metaphysical or spiritual analysis of common aesthetical principles has transferred towards locating social groups that form the existing artistic taste or fashion.

In sociology, wooing is assessed by individual choice and preference. It shows the differences between themes and styles; manners and expressions among various people. The patterns of wooing vary from person to person and from society to society. The norms and behaviour of pastoral society and those of urban society are far different. Pastoral life is full of sharing and understanding. On the other hand, urbanization and massive expansion of science and technology have given motions in our life styles but snatched away the real essence of lives.

Social and cultural phenomena concerning wooing are also closely associated to social relations and dynamics between people. The concept of social taste is therefore rarely separated from its accompanying sociological concepts. An understanding of taste as something that is expressed in actions between people helps to perceive many social phenomena that would otherwise be inconceivable.

Terry Gifford, a prominent literary theorist, defines pastoral in three ways in his critical book *Pastoral*. The first way highlights the historical perspective of the pastoral in which authors describe life in the country and in particular the life of a shepherd. The second type of the pastoral is literature that expresses the country with an implicit or explicit gap to the urban. The third type of pastoral represents the country life with derogative classifications (1999: 1-5).

Raymond Williams argues that the foundation of the pastoral lies in the idea that the city is a highly urban, industrialized center that has removed us from the peaceful life we once had in the countryside. As a result, when society evolves and looks back to these shifts, it considers its own present as the decline of the simple life and taste of the past. He then discusses how the city's relationship with the country affected the economic and social aspects of the countryside (1964).

Frank Kermode in his classic work *English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell* discusses the pastoral within the historical context of the English Renaissance. His first of pastoral poetry is that it is an urban product. Kermode establishes that the

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<sup>2</sup> British dramatist and poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> Chinese poet of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>4</sup> Nigerian playwright of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

pastoral is derived as an opposition between two modes of living, in the country and in the city (1952).

So this study is an attempt at showing how the decline of aesthetic value corresponds to cultural variations among social groups that tend to form contemporary artistic wooing to challenge the spiritual orientation of cultural values. A comparative study of four pieces of literary works—two from the pastoral past and two from the modern urban present world testify this truth. Christopher Marlowe<sup>5</sup> and Sir Walter Raleigh<sup>6</sup> exchange a lively discourse in their poems ("The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd") on the prospect and problems of country love among shepherds and shepherdesses. The exchange shows a controlled temper, superior taste, logical reasoning and aesthetic sophistication. On the other hand, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an exchange of social discourse between two lovers—one in Anjan Dutt<sup>7</sup> and the other by an anonymous author ("Bela Bose" and "The Reply") ---shows a decline of cultural taste in the scale of aesthetic value. These two groups of literary works from the pastoral past and the modern urban present form the epicenter of this article.

Therefore, we offer the following discussion on the basis of the four selected pieces of literary works to show the variations of wooing and aesthetic sensibility between two distant generations in artistic and cultural arena. The effort is expected to stimulate further theoretical reflection in an area that has remained, so far, unnoticed.

## Discussion

As literature is a reflection of social life and culture, this study attempts an investigation into the changing patterns of human behavior in two different modes of creative arts—one from pastoral life and the other from modern urbanized culture. The study focuses on the values of the pastoral world versus the urban, and afterwards shows a gradual corruption of the latter over the change of time. It is an attempt at showing how the decline of aesthetic value corresponds to cultural variations among social groups that tend to form contemporary artistic taste or fashion. Such a tendency seems to challenge the spiritual orientation of moral values. It analyses the four pieces of literary works—two from the pastoral tradition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and two from 21<sup>st</sup> century modern urban background. The first pair is Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" and the second consists of Anjan Dutt's "Bela Bose" (Et Ki 2 44 11 39?) and "The Reply" by an anonymous poet. The purpose is to show how the use of language in literature determines

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<sup>5</sup> Playwright, poet and translator of the Elizabethan Age

<sup>6</sup> Sir Walter Raleigh was an English aristocrat, writer, poet, soldier, politician, courtier, spy, and explorer of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>7</sup> Anjan Dutt (19 January 1953) is an Indian film director, actor and singer- songwriter of the 1990s. His lyrics are simple and more natural. His songs and lyrics commonly referred to as meaning *towards life*, concerned itself with the tough reality of Bengali middle class social life ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anjan\\_Dutt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anjan_Dutt)).

the persona's speech orientation, culture and aesthetic sensibility. The poems in each pair are put side by side for the convenience of comparison and contrast. Let me, then, begin with Marlowe's and Raleigh's poems.

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love<sup>8</sup>  
by Christopher Marlowe  
1593

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields  
Woods or steepy mountain yields

And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks  
By shallow rivers to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flower, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold  
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs;  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May morning:  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love.

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd<sup>9</sup>  
by Sir Walter Raleigh  
1600

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;  
And Philomel becometh dumb;  
The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
To wayward winter reckoning yields;  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,  
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,  
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,  
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,  
All these in me no means can move  
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,  
Had joys no date nor age no need,  
Then these delights my mind might move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

In the first poem, a young lover offers a serene picture of country life to the lady he loves. Through the very first line, 'Come live with me, and be my love', he makes a number of promises to win the heart of his beloved.

<sup>8</sup> The Norton Anthology of Poetry, page no. 256

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, page no. 152

The first and second stanzas delineate a life style which is full of pleasures with natural phenomena. This encompasses a life of leisure which includes the scenery of tending flocks and listening to murmuring sounds of a falling river. In the next three stanzas the lover offers a number of things for her comfortable life. He will arrange a 'bed of roses' smeared with 'fragrant posies,' and clothes drawn from nature. Her gown will be made with the 'finest wool' and adorned with leaves. Her shoes will have golden buckles, and her belt will be decorated extraordinarily.

The last two stanzas portray a picture of luxurious life. They will take the best menu from silver plates set on ivory tables. Every morning young shepherds will sing for their enjoyment. Finally, the speaker finishes by repeating his initial offer to her, saying 'If these delights thy mind may move / Then live with me, and be my love.'

In Raleigh's poem, the Nymph responds with a counter argument to the details of the shepherd's proposal. The nymph points out that there are a number of changes in nature, and in human life. During winter flowers fade and there are hard times in life when cloths wear out, and jewels appear simply materialistic. So she indirectly refuses his proposal comparing human life with nature. She says:

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
To wayward winter reckoning yields;  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall (Raleigh: 9-12).

The Nymph says in the first stanza and the last that if time stood still and bad things would never come, then she would accept the shepherd's unrealistic proposal. The Nymph wants that her love should not be restricted by clock time. In real life love is not possible for ever and the conditions will not be fulfilled to the points and so she would not accept his love. If we compare the stylistic sides of these two poems, we will get a number of affinities in forms/structures. But the thematic approach is much too different. The tone of the passionate shepherd is hopeful and romantic; whereas the Nymph is defensive and realistic.

From another point of view, the two poems are quite similar because the "reply" is decent, wise and transparent. In her answer the nymph is much too grateful as she mentions all of the things which have been offered to her. There are some common expressions in both of the poems. The shepherd desires to sit on a rock and the reply also mentions it. He expects listening to madrigals, and she thinks so. The affinity of thoughts and expressions between them is quite significant. Undoubtedly, the offerings of the shepherd and the "Reply" are directly connected to each other.

In contrast to the two above poems, let us now have a look at the other pair. As these two pieces are written in Bengali, we provide Bengali texts followed by English translations of the poems:

| <p>Bela Bose ("Eta ki 2441139?")<sup>10</sup><br/>Anjan Dutt, 1994</p>   | <p>The Reply<sup>11</sup><br/>2012</p>   |
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| <p>চাকরিটা আমি পেয়ে গেছি বেলা শুনছ<br/>এখন আর কেউ আটকাতে পারবে না<br/>সম্বন্ধটা এবার তুমি ভেসে দিতে পারো<br/>মা-কে বলে দাও বিয়ে তুমি করছ না<br/>চাকরিটা আমি পেয়ে গেছি বেলা সত্যি<br/>আর মাত্র কয়েকটা মাস ব্যস<br/>স্টার্টিংয়েই ওরা ১১০০ দেবে তিন মাস পরে কনফার্ম<br/>চুপ করে কেন বেলা কিছু বলছ না<br/>এটা কি ২৪৪১১৩৯<br/>বেলা বোস তুমি পারছ কি শুনতে<br/>১০-১২ বার রং নাম্বার পেরিয়ে তোমাকে<br/>পেয়েছি দেব না কিছুতেই আর হারাতে<br/>হ্যালো ২৪৪১১৩৯ দিন না ডেকে বেলাকে<br/>একটিবার মিটারে যাচ্ছে বেড়ে পাবলিক<br/>টেলিফোনে জরুরি খুব জরুরি দরকার<br/>স্বপ্ন এবার হয়ে যাবে বেলা সত্যি<br/>এত দিন ধরে এত অপেক্ষা<br/>রাস্তার কত সস্তা হোটেলে বদখত কেবিনে বন্দী<br/>দুজনে রুদ্রশ্বাস কত প্রতীক্ষা<br/>আর কিছুদিন তারপর বেলা মুক্তি<br/>কসবার ওই নীল দেয়ালের ঘর<br/>সাদা-কালো এই জঙ্গলে ভরা মিথ্যে কথার শহরে<br/>তোমার আমার লাল-নীল সংসার<br/>চুপ করে কেন একি বেলা তুমি কাঁদছ<br/>চাকরিটা আমি পেয়ে গেছি সত্যি<br/>কাল্লাকাটির হল্লাহাটির সময় গেছে পেরিয়ে<br/>হ্যালো তুমি শুনতে পাচ্ছ কি<br/>হ্যালো ধুর ছাই হ্যালো<br/>এটা কি ২৪৪১১৩৯?</p> | <p>চাকরিটা ওগো পেতেই পারো তুমি<br/>তবুও তোমায় বানাব না যে স্বামী<br/>সম্বন্ধটা ভাঙব কেন, কিসের এত ঠ্যাকা?<br/>চাকরি পেলেও তোমার বাপের আছেই বা কম ট্যাকা?<br/>স্টার্টিংয়ে ওরা ১১০০ দিক, আমার কী হলো তাতে?<br/>চাইনিজে যেতে ২২০০ লাগে, মরতে চাই না ভাতে।<br/>চুপ কর গাধা মাফ কর মোরে<br/>দে ছেড়ে দে লাইন।<br/>হ্যাঁ, এটাই ২৪৪১১৩৯<br/>বেলা বোস আমি, শুনতে পাচ্ছি ফাইন।<br/>মিটার বাড়ুক তোমার পাবলিক টেলিফোনে<br/>মোবাইল তো আর পারবে না দিতে কিনে।<br/>স্বপ্নের আমি গুপ্তি কিলাই শুনো।<br/>এত দিন ধরে আমি মরি মরি।<br/>রাস্তার কোনো সস্তা হোটেলে<br/>বন্ধ কেবিনে বন্দী দুজনে<br/>তুমি শুধু টানতে কেবল বিড়ি।<br/>প্রতিদিন আমি বিল দিয়েছি পারব না দিতে আর।<br/>জঙ্গল ভরা মিথ্যা শহরে হবে না<br/>তোমার আমার টানাটানির সংসার।<br/>চুপ করে তুমি কাঁদছ ফুঁপিয়ে।<br/>ভালো একটা মেয়ে দেখে করে ফেলো এবার বিয়ে।<br/>মরে গেলেও তোমার কাবিনে করব না আমি সাইন।<br/>হ্যাঁ, এটাই ২৪৪১১৩৯।</p> |

<sup>10</sup> Bose ("Eta ki 2441139?") is a Bengali song by Anjan Dutt from the album "Shunte Ki Chao" (1994). Bela The 'title' of the song was Bela Bose's phone number - 2441139 - which is also the recurring line of the song... "Eta ki 2441139?"

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from <<https://twitter.com/anjan22/status/205525923787845634>>

The following is an English translation of the two above pieces of Bengali poems:

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| <p>"Bela Bose (Is it 2 44 11 39?"<br/>Anjan Dutt, 1994<br/>I have got a job Bela, are you listening?<br/>No one can stop us now.<br/>You can send back that proposal<br/>and tell mother you are not marrying.</p> <p>I have indeed got a job.<br/>Just a few more months (of wait)<br/>They will pay 1100 now.<br/>Confirm the job after three months...<br/>Bela, why are you silent, why don't you say<br/>something?</p> <p>Hello... 'Is that 2441139?'<br/>Bela Bose are you listening?<br/>I have got you after a dozen wrong numbers<br/>I will not lose you now at any cost...</p> <p>Hello... 2441139?'<br/>Please call Bela Bose, just once.<br/>Meter's running on this public telephone<br/>this an important, very important matter...</p> <p>This time our dreams will really come true<br/>After all this long wait<br/>We have spent many a days in dusty dingy<br/>cabins by the road<br/>Waiting with heavy breaths...</p> <p>Just a few more days Bela, then freedom.<br/>That blue-walled house in Kasba (will be ours)<br/>In this white-black, trouble-ridden, bitter-<br/>sweet city<br/>(We will start) our colourful life...</p> <p>I have got a job indeed<br/>Those times of sobs, of brawls are gone now<br/>Hello... Can you hear me or not?<br/>Bela, why are you crying silently?<br/>I have indeed got a job<br/>Those times of sobs and brawls are gone<br/>Hello... Can you hear me?</p> <p>Hello? **** Hello?<br/>2 44 11 39, 2 44 11 39?</p> | <p>The Reply<br/>Anonymous, 2012<br/>You may have got the job<br/>Yet I'm not going to marry you, love!<br/>Why should I break up my marriage?<br/>What's my bondage?</p> <p>Even if you get a job, how much wealthy is<br/>your father?<br/>What matters to me if 1100 they you offer?<br/>A Chinese lunch costs 2200,<br/>No wish to die from hunger.</p> <p>Shut up you ass! Get rid of me,<br/>Cut the telephone line<br/>Yes it is 2441139.<br/>Bela bose I am, can hear you very fine</p> <p>Let the meter of your public phone increase<br/>Not worthy of buying me a cell-phone<br/>Damn with your dream, my heart is a stone!<br/>Long did I suffer<br/>In closed-door cabins<br/>Of cheap road-side restaurants<br/>While you were having leaf-made cigars</p> <p>I'm not going to pay the bill anymore<br/>No beggars' life with you is possible<br/>Weeping in silence!<br/>Go get a better girl and marry<br/>No marriage bond am I going to sign<br/>Yes it is 2 44 11 39.</p> |
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Unlike Marlowe's young lover who is presumably an illiterate country shepherd, Anjan Dutt's young lover appears to be a well-educated and well-cultured urban gentleman. He seems to have got his first job as he says "They will pay 1100 now; Confirm the job after three months..." and he calls up his girlfriend - Bela - to convey the good news. As a routine, the girl's family is planning to marry her off to a better alternative. But the young man feels that his status has improved with this job and the girl should refuse the arranged match. But there are muffled cries at the other end despite his plaintive cries "Bela, why are you crying silently?" .Maybe the girl has not been able to resist the family pressures.

The language used by the lover is noteworthy. Except in a place or two, the young man has used simple, respectable language. In his Bengali telephonic talk, he uses English words such as "starting", "confirm" and so on which indicate his education and smartness. His sense of respect is seen in his addressing the girl's mother as he says "Tell mother you are not marrying". No trace of arrogance is noticed from the beginning to the end. A proof of his sincerity and modesty lies in such expressions as "I have indeed got a job" or "Please call Bela Bose, just once". His later expressions, however, are a bit ambiguous as he says:

"That blue-walled house in Kasba (will be ours)  
In this white-black, trouble-ridden, bitter-sweet city  
(We will start) our colourful life..."

The colour, "blue", may mean something dismal or bleak. Secondly, he says that their destination is a city which is full of lies. If so, then the promise of the young man or the appeal of his love may seem unimpressive to the lady. But if he means the opposite, for example, that although this modern urban city life is difficult and that here promises of marriage bonds are frequently broken, they are committed to each other and will remain so long. Even he requests her not to leave the phone as he has got the line after a long time. "I will not lose you now at any cost..."

Unfortunately, the girl's reply, unlike Sir Walter's Nymph's, appears cold, negative and vulgar. She has arrogantly attacked the poor young man "Even if you get a job, how much wealthy is your father?" and used low dialects ("slangs") such as "thaka"(pronounced as /θækə/), "taka"(pronounced as /tækə/). She has nakedly refused the proposal with the words "Shut up you ass! Get rid of me/ Cut the telephone line". In another place she has directly humiliated this person using very negative comments "Damn with your dream, my heart is a stone!". And finally, she has mocked the lover by telling him to marry another beautiful girl "Go get a better girl and marry". The use of such language in any speech community (whether romantic or realistic) shows a kind of decadence of taste.

While Raleigh follows Marlowe's poem stanza by stanza and matches it in tone, subject, form, and structure, Dutt's "Bela Bose" and its reply by an anonymous poet are poles apart in tone and mood. The tone and mood of the first poem in the second pair appears optimistic and romantic, and that of "The Reply" is satirical and nihilistic. While the Nymph in the 16<sup>th</sup> century rejects offers of material pleasures for the reason that all these

are fleeting and transitory, the lady of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is eager to eat "Chinese dishes" and to get all that modern life can offer. Obviously, such life-style and psychological upbringing indicate an essential contrast between the ideal and the material.

### Conclusion

Cultural taste is an individual's personal and cultural choice and preference. Wooing draws distinctions between things such as styles, manners, etiquettes, and expressions. Social quest for wooing is about the human ability to judge what is beautiful, good and proper. Social and cultural phenomena concerning wooing are closely associated with social relations and dynamics between people. The concept of social taste is, therefore, rarely separated from its accompanying social aspects. It may be an expression in actions between people to perceive their development of cultural maturity and esthetic sensibility. Perhaps the lady of the 21<sup>st</sup> century fails to understand what is beautiful, good or proper. Thus while Marlowe's shepherd is a rustic idealist and his beloved a sympathetic realist, Dutt's young lover is a visionary romantic, and the modernist lady is a shallow hedonist. For lack of aesthetic orientation, she is lost in cultural destitution. In her encounter with a hard choice between the ideal and the material, the 21<sup>st</sup> century lady appears uneducated, unsophisticated, and unimpressive.

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