

A CONTRAST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN “ROUGH BEAST” MENTIONED IN YEATS “THE SECOND COMING” WITH “NARSIMHA AVATAR” OF LORD VISHNU MENTIONED IN OUR HINDU MYTHOLOGY: A MODERNISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT:

This study aims at investigating the implication of modernism in W.B. Yeats' "The Second Coming". It depends upon the approach that how to analyze the poem "The Second Coming". The study depends upon the characteristics of modernism, themes, techniques and form to prove "The Second Coming" is a modernist poem. W.B. Yeats has divided his poem into two stanzas, in which the 1st stanza tells us the chaos and disintegration post World War -1 and the 2nd stanza explained us his pessimistic view to the world's end. Here he predicts the horrifying beast is coming that will bring more destruction, anger, sadness and depression to the humanity. If we analyze the poem themes, style, form and techniques, this study tells that the modernism's characteristics are filled in "The Second Coming" is a modernistic poem. The 2nd stanza of the poem presents a contrast to the first section and works out the Christian myth of the second coming of the Christ as predicted in the Testament Bible. However Yeats doesn't have Christ in mind in the phrase, Spiritus Mundi which can be collective consciousness, though it actually means the spirit or soul of the world. The "Rough Beast" sloughing towards Bethelhem again may not be Christ because Christ initiated a civilization (religion) of compassion and forgiveness. The aim of this study is to find out the contrast characteristic between "Rough Beast" mentioned in Yeats "The second coming" with "Narsimha Avatar" of lord Vishnu mentioned in our Hindu Mythology. After the thorough research, the finding which we get is that there is a contrast relationship between "Rough Beast" mentioned in Yeats "The second coming" with "Narsimha Avatar" of lord Vishnu mentioned in our Hindu Mythology.

Keywords: Contrast, Hindu Mythology, Modernism, Narsimha Avatar, Rough Beast, World War- 1

INTRODUCTION:

As we all know that Yeats has divided his poem into two stanzas, in which the 1st stanza tells us the chaos and disintegration post World War-1, and the 2nd stanza explained us his pessimistic view to the world's end. Here he predicts the horrifying beast is coming that will bring more destruction, anger, sadness, and depression to the humanity. If we analyze the poem, themes, style, form and technique, this study tells that the modernism's characteristics are filled in "The second coming" and thus W.B.Yeats's "The second coming" is a modernist poem.

Modernism: refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the twentieth century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life.

W.B.Yeats was one of the foremost figure of twentieth century literature. A pillar of both the Irish and British literary establishment in his later years. Yeats served as an Irish Senator for two terms. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival, and along with Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn founded the Abbey Theater serving as its chief during its early years. In 1923, he was awarded a noble prize in literature for what the noble committee describe as "inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation." He was the first Irish man so honored. Yeats is generally considered one of the few writers who completed their greatest works include *The Tower* 1928 and *The Winding Stair and other Poems* (1929).

World War-I: The First World War (28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918), often abbreviated as WWI, was one of the deadliest global conflicts in history.

The early decade of the twentieth century were marked by the catastrophe of the 1st world war, which tremendously destroyed the world and the European society. Before the world war-1, people expected a better future but unfortunately they were disappointed after the war because of the destruction, the huge numbers of deaths and the chaos that swept the world during that time. The psychological effect of world war-1 was as harsh as the physical effect. People believed that they reached that situation because of their traditional values. Therefore, they sought newness in all field of life, music, literature, and architecture etc.

After the horrors of world war-1, modern men felt disenchanted with their religion, tradition and morals believing that those old values let their world into a bloody war fare. This W.B.Yeats already has shown in his poem "The second coming". He also used new form and style of writing.

The aim of the modernism reflects a new experience shaped by the devastation and chaos caused by world war-1. The writer of the modernist period desired to express the sensibilities of their modern time through using new ways and techniques totally different from the traditional ones.

In the poem the "worst" the mindless power yielding people, are like the falcon that is out of control, out to destroy the weak. The second section of the poem presents a contrast to the first section and works out the Christian myth of the second coming of the Christ as predicted in the New Testament Bible. However Yeats doesn't have Christ in mind in the phrase, Spiritus Mundi which can be collective conscientiousness, though it actually means the spirit or soul of the

world. The “Rough Beast” slouching towards Bethlehem again may not be Christ because Christ initiated a civilization (religion) of compassion and forgiveness.

Rough Beast: is a destructive animal coming on the earth two thousand years after Christ and destroying the entire human race.

The poet’s apprehension of the coming events like the wars and revolution are expressed in the image of the rough beast. The “Rough Beast” is also walking towards the same place but this time it is not Christ who is going to take birth. Thus the images of anarchy and blood shed of the 1st section are revived in the last part of the poem in a reference to the rough beast.

The “Rough Beast” and “Narsimha Avatar” has contrast physical appearance.

Contrast: a clear difference between two things or people that is seen when they are compared.

Hindu Mythology: Hindu mythology is the body of myths and literature attributed to, and espoused by, the adherents of the Hindu religion, found in Sanskrit texts such as the Vedic literature, epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Puranas, and myths specific to a particular ethnolinguistic group.

Narsimha – “Man-Lion” is the fourth avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu. He is regarded to have incarnated in the form of a part – lion, part – man being to slay Hiranyakashipu, to end religious persecution and calamity and the destruction on earth, there by restoring dharma.

Narsimha avatar: is known as the fieriest avatar of lord Vishnu among his Dash avatar.

Lord Vishnu took his avatar to eliminate the demon king Hiranyakashipu, who had created havoc in all three dimensions. One day he was performing an intense penance to please Lord Brahma for obtaining a boon. He wishes to Lord Brahma “O Brahma, let not death come to me either by man or beast, nor devil nor god shall cause my death by day or by night, with steel or stone or wood, indoor or outdoor or earth or in sky. Lord Brahma agreed, thus Hiranyakashipu became practically immortal. When his son Prahalad was born, he had the blessing of Lord Vishnu when he was in his mother’s womb. Hence despite being the son of the demon king, he exhibited divine qualities. But his father got to know about his son’s devotion towards Lord Vishnu, he ordered his servants to kill his son. All servants tried to kill him but failed in all their attempts. One day the king challenged his son to sit in fire with his sister Holika, who had a boon that fire will not harm her body. But Prahalad was saved with the grace of Lord Vishnu but the Holika was burnt into the fire. The furious king got up from his throne and hit the pillar with his mace. Suddenly pillar cracked and Lord Vishnu appeared as a form of Narsimha (half man half lion). Narsimha avatar conceived in such a way that it invalidated the boon of Lord Brahma. As a result, Narsimha killed Hiranyakashipu at dust of the threshold of his house making him lie on his lap and executed him with his claws. Thus, Lord Vishnu saved Prahalad and restored peace.

The poet’s apprehension of the coming events like the wars and revolutions are expressed in the image of the rough beast. Christ was born in Bethlehem. The “Rough Beast” is walking towards the same place but this time it is not Christ who is going to take birth. Thus, the images of anarchy and blood shed of the first section are revived in the last part of the poem in a reference to the

“Rough Beast”. Yeats also refers to “a shape with lion body and a head of a man” clearly hints either at the Sphinx or the Assyrian lions with bird’s wings and bearded human faces. This stony beast is coming to life and there are “Indignant desert birds” (vultures) reeling in the sky, expecting bloodshed and human and animal carcasses to feast on. These are again reminders of the war, revolution and anarchy. The object of Yeats vision which was formerly symbolize as a pitiless Sphinx, is now described as “Rough Beast” on its way the Bethlehem – The birth place of Christ – “to be born”. The slouching of this beast is “Animalistic” and similar to the slow gait of the Sphinx. Its stands more than a little menacing to the dessert. “The Rough Beast” is the anti-Christ. Thus with it unremitting pessimistic tone notwithstanding the poem at least give human kind the possibility of redemption. That having been said the persona is not necessary espousing’ a traditional Christian world view.

Lord Narsimha as an incarnation of Vishnu is the fourth avatar of god. In Hinduism, avatars are specific appearances of the god, usually in some animals or man form, who appear for a specific reason. The word “Avatar”, meaning “descent”, is a direct reference to this. Belief in them is especially popular in Vaishnavism, in which Vishnu himself is the central deity. Vishnu’s avatars, including Narsimha, demonstrate the Hindu belief in divine intervention, as these deities usually come to rectify some type of divine injustice or persecution against the human race. According to Hindu mythology and writings, Narasimha’s man – lion form bust forth form a pillar to rescue one of Vishnu’s faithful follower, Prahalad, from his evil father. Narasimha’s action also restore balance to the world. Vishnu’s avatar Narsimha is especially violent in his mythology taking his enemy on to his own lap and killing him with one strike. Narasimha’s physical attributes as a lion and man represent a mixture of two highly respected creations (humanity and lions), which demonstrate intelligence and courage, respectively. Thus in combining the two, Vishnu came to the earth as in formidable protector of human kind. In Hindu scriptures, Narsimha is described as protecting other divine beings as well as people, with some stories including the detail that he came from a column of stone and other slough. The lion god appeared during the Satya Yuga period, the first and the purest of the ages of the world when man were sinless.

OBJECTIVES:

To find out the contrast characteristic between “Rough Beast” mentioned in Yeats “The second coming” with “Narsimha Avatar” of lord Vishnu mentioned in our Hindu Mythology.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. <https://www.templepurohit.com/story-of-lord-narasimha-prahlada-hiranyakashipu/>
Lord Vishnu is known to have taken ten incarnations to stop the reign of evil on this earth and bring peace and prosperity everywhere. Narsimha avatar is considered to be Lord Vishnu’s fourth avatar, and he had taken the form of a half-man half-lion to protect his devotee Prahalad. Lord Vishnu heard his devotees’ prayer and took the form of a giant boar, known as his Varaha avatar to kill Hiranyaksha. This is considered to be Lord Vishnu’s third incarnation. Hiranyaksha hid the earth, personified as Bhudevi, in the deep ocean. Lord Vishnu’s Varaha avatar finally managed to find the location of the earth, and Hiranyaksha along with it.

Brahma was really pleased with Hiranyakshipu's devotion, and granted him any boon that he wished for. He asked Lord Brahma to grant him a boon that would allow no man, god or animal created by Brahma to kill him. Also, nobody could kill him at day or night, and no one could kill him in heaven or on earth. Also, no one could kill him with a weapon, or kill him either inside or outside his house.....

2. M. Deepti, S. Matt. Encyclopedia Britannica. Narasimha – Hinduism. July 20, 1998.

Narasimha, (Sanskrit: "Man-Lion") one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the Hindu god Vishnu. The demon Hiranyakashipu—twin brother of Hiranyaksha, the demon overthrown by Vishnu in his previous incarnation as Varaha—obtained a boon from the god Brahma that he could not be killed by human or animal, from inside or outside, by day or by night, and that no weapon could harm him. Thus, feeling secure, he began to trouble heaven and earth.....

3. Geetha S. Hoovu Fresh Pooja Flower – Website. The Fourth Avatar of Lord Vishnu – Narasimha Avatar. April 28, 2021. hoovufresh.com

Narasimha avatar is known as the fiercest avatar of Lord Vishnu among his Dashavatara. Lord Vishnu took this avatar to eliminate the demon king Hiranyakashipu, who had created havoc in all three dimensions.....

4. Literature in English from 1832-1980 – I. SLM. The Second Coming. Published by Registrar (Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune). P.no. 29-30

"The Second Coming" – The first eight lines of the poem allude to some momentous upheavals in contemporary history of both the world, of the England and Ireland.... Yeats called it "the blood – dimmed tide".... "The ceremony of innocence is drowned". It is an anarchical situation where no one has any control over the happenings. This is suggested in the image of the falcon and the falconer: the bird of prey (falcon) is no more under the command or control of the falconer. The best minds are no more confident of convincing the worst minds about the futility of the conflicts and anarchy. The "worst", the mindless power wielding people, are like the falcon that is out of control, out to destroy the weak.

5. Gaboussa S. People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Implication of Modernism in W.B. Yeats' the Second Coming. P.no. 1-62.

- Characteristic of Modernism
- Impact of modernistic society on poetry
- Implication of modernism in poetry
- Themes of death
- Themes of pessimism
- Themes of chaos
- Techniques. Etc.

6. Khader, T.K. “William Butler Yeats’ “The Second Coming” A stylistic analysis”. IUG Journal of Humanities Research, vol.24, no.1, 2016, pp.25-32.

All the changes that characterized the early twentieth century European society highly affected the literature produced at that time. The advances of industrialization, technology and science led to a change in life style as well as peoples thoughts and beliefs. The final attack that shattered the traditional values was the bloody World War I. As a result, a new literary movement emerged to reflect the new sensibilities of modern society. This movement is called modernism. Modernism came to revolt against the traditional forms and style of writings, resulting in the creation of new ones more appropriate to a life in a fully industrialized society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Author have gone through various researches published on the above mentioned topic separately like we studied the research published on the “The Fourth Avatar of Lord Vishnu – Narasimha Avatar” as well as “William Butler Yeats’ The Second Coming”. Author have referred the story of Narsimha Avatar in the Hindu Mythology book “Vishnu Puran” and “Bhagwat”. As the topic is more theoretical and based on personal understanding, it is very difficult for the author to do the practical analysis, practical questioning, and practical application of it. Along with referring published articles based on “Narsimha Avatar of Lord Vishnu” author read all the incarnations or avatars of Lord Vishnu, which helped the author to understand the reasons behind each and every incarnation and the solved purpose of taking such avatars. Along with the poem “The Second Coming” by William Butler Yeats, author again has referred each and every published work by Yeats, so that it would be easy to understand the basic themes of his works and the purpose behind writing it, as well it has given the author the confidence to write the soul and heart of the Yeats’s thought process and to make it familiar among the readers in the very understandable language.

DISCUSSION:

➤ In depth study of Hindu Mythology helped us to understand the power of good over evil. Few examples helps us to prove this fact:

1. **Rama & Ravana (Ramayan):** In Ramayan the main character Rama is way better undoubtedly. Both Rama and Ravana are exact opposite. Lord Rama is infinite percent better. He is considered the personification of goodness and ‘Dharma’ – in upholding duties and laws and in exemplifying the right way of living. He is considered an embodiment of virtue and righteousness. Rama is at atmavan i.e. one who has control over his desire and senses and has conquered his mind. He has win over his krodha. Krodha includes desire to kill. He has a beautiful body which compels everyone to keep on looking, one who possesses special grace. Ravana was never like this. He was a demon full of evil qualities like greed, lust etc. so he cannot even be compared to lord Rama in my opinion. Ravana was a great warrior only because of boons he received, he had nothing without the boons. He forcefully ceased the kingdom of Lanka from Kuber (Step brother) who actually built the prosperous kingdom. Ravana was a Shiva

devotee. Shiva himself was Rama devotee. Shiva loved Rama so much that he took a special avatar of Hanuman just so he could serve Rama. Ravana was womanizer. Sita was not first woman he captured. He raped Rambha and was cursed that he would die if touches another woman. That is the reason, he never was able to touch Sita. Ravana snatch Lanka from his own step brother Kuber, while Lord Rama gave Ayodhya and resigned to forest so that his brother Bharat could be the king. Lord Rama spent fourteen years in forest leading a tough life.... Ravana spent his entire life in royal kingdom with all comforts. Lord Rama on multiple occasion offered peace and opportunity to avoid war with Ravana if he could release Sita. That shows maturity and composure of Lord Rama. Ravana was learned man, a very powerful warrior. Alas, none of these is worship able trait. Ravana is full of selfishness, ambitions, while Lord Rama depicts giving up 'Tyaag' victory over the senses etc.

2. **Krishna and Kansa:** Krishna is one of Hinduism's most treasured gods (being an avatar of Vishnu, who is reversed as a protector figure and destroyer of evil). He is a lover of Radha. Krishna like many Hindu deities, is portrayed as the over whelmer of obstacles. A young boy with blue skin playing the flute. As per Hindu mythology, Kansa, brother of Krishna's mother Devaki, was a cruel and evil ruler of Mathura. He killed seven children of her sister Devaki because Kansa was warned that Devaki's earth child would kill him. He spared Devaki's life but killed every child born to her because of threat to his life. When Devaki was carrying the seventh child, a miracle happened. Lord Narayana summoned Yoga Maya and asked her to transfer Devaki's four-month-old foetus to the womb of Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva. When this was accomplished everyone thought that Devaki's foetus-had aborted. Now Kansa was in confusion with the grace of god foetus transferred to Rohini's womb was born at the appropriate time and was named Balarama. So it was seventh child who was safe and sound. When Devaki became pregnant for eighth time, Kansa wondered if it would not be wise to kill her and be rid of the threat to his life once for all. Krishna was born as her eighth child, in Rishabha Lagna, when five planets were in most auspicious position. Chandra was in Rishabha Lagna, Mars was in Makara Rashi, Mercury in Kanya, Jupiter in Kakataka Rashi, and Saturn in Tulsi Rashi. In other words, all the demon Pootna, Bakasur were failed and ultimately get into the grip of death by Krishna. It was the power of good over evil.

➤ For those who wants to do further research on this topic should read different Puranas in depth to understand the various aspects and description of same kind of story with slightest alteration in understanding. For example: Shiva avatar 'Sharabha' vs Narasimha avatar of Lord Vishnu. This is the suitable example which show that how such hidden stories in our puranas can also shows us the right path to follow the Dharma. Along with this, this story has different description of the character of Lord Shiva avatar Sharabha according to various Mythological text. Somewhere, In Puranic literature, Sharabha is associated with Devotee, who incarnates to subdue fierce manifestations of Vishnu. The legend of Sharabha fighting Narasimha - the man-lion form of Vishnu - brings to fore the overt rivalry between the devotees of Vishnu (Vaishnava sect) and those of Shiva (Shaiva sect), which exposes the fierce debate aspect. The Shiva Purana, The Sharabha Upanishad portrays Sharabha with two heads, two wings, eight legs of the lion with sharp claws and a long tail. The Kalika Purana describes Sharabha as black in colour, with

four feet downwards and four feet uplifted, with an enormous body. It also has a long face and nose, nails, eight legs, eight tusks, a cluster of manes, and a long tail. It jumps high repeatedly making a loud cry.

➤ SCOPE:

1. This poem has mentioned the modernism in the form of “Rough Beast” from the character of Narsimha which is mentioned in our Hindu Mythological books.
2. By reading this poem, we can able to understand the anarchy, where good people are not motivated whereas bad people are impassioned to do the worst things.
3. We can visualize the picture of chaotic world.
4. We can compare the state of peace with the destruction of war.

➤ LIMITATIONS:

1. The rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem again may not be Christ because Christ initiated a civilization of compassion and forgiveness.
2. There is a vast image of Spiritus Mundi that troubles the sight with its unusual brilliance.
3. The reference to Bethlehem is a clear suggestion of the birth of Christ who initiated a new (Christian) civilization in the world after the destruction of the Greek Philistine culture. Christ was a benevolent “beast” – the Holy Ghost – but Yeats is not sure about the signs of the time. He is doubtful and perturbed as his mental agitation is reflected in the poem.

CONCLUSION:

- The understanding of Yeats poem and the character of beast, he described in his poem along with similar resembling character of Lord Vishnu fourth avatar Narsimha and their contrast physical appearance as well as their contrast roles in their respected story and their contrast philosophy. In which where he described Rough Beast in the form of “A shape with lion body and the head of a man” whereas according to Hindu Mythology, the description of Lord Narsimha “part lion – part man, the upper body is of Lion and the lower body is of man”.

- We also got to know the concept of Modernism according to W.B.Yeats - The aim of the modernism reflects a new experience shaped by the devastation and chaos caused by world war-1. The writer of the modernist period desired to express the sensibilities of their modern time through using new ways and techniques totally different from the traditional ones. Next, the modern era witnessed a great development in industrialization in technology and science. In addition to it, the 1st world war, led to change of the society’s lifestyle as well as of people’s thoughts and believes.

- We also understand the way author wanted to describe “the Christ of modern era” – “The second section of the poem presents a contrast to the first section and works out the Christian myth of the second coming of the Christ as predicted in the New Testament Bible. However Yeats doesn’t have Christ in mind in the phrase, Spiritus Mundi which can be collective conscientiousness, though it actually means the spirit or soul of the world. The” Rough Beast” slouching towards Bethlehem again may not be Christ because Christ initiated a civilization (religion) of compassion and forgiveness. So the “Rough Beast” is a destructive animal coming on the earth two thousand years after Christ and destroying the entire human race.”

The poet’s apprehension of the coming events like the wars and revolution are expressed in the image of the rough beast. The “Rough Beast” is also walking towards the same place but this time it is not Christ who is going to take birth.

- We tried to understand the basic themes of the W.B.Yeats’s poem or his work in this field – like:

1. The stolen child (1886-1889) – Theme “feelings of the child who is now alone in the world”.
2. When you are old (1893) – Theme “Love, beauty and ageing”.
3. A prayer for my daughter (1921) – Theme “he was wishing to see his daughter to be likewise in the coming future”.
4. AEDH wishes for the clothes of Heaven (1923) – Theme “limitless wishes of human kind”.
5. Among school children (1928) – Theme “description of woman life from childhood to adulthood”. Etc.
6. Leda and the Swan (1928) – Theme “described Leda as a beautiful lady whereas Swan was described as a Vulture who raped her”.
7. Sailing to Byzantium (1930) – Theme “A portray of Rome destruction and chaos”.
8. Easter (1920) – Theme “described the rebellion act at the occasion of Easter by Irish people”.

- Overall this research gave us the understanding of the “Importance of themes”, which is the most important for laying the structure of the literature.

- Many of the western world writers take the learning from our Hindu Mythology and gives their unique interpretations on it.

- The art of storytelling in the form of a poem, is something we can cherish and these poem teaches us the culture of different era and time that will never come again.

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