

# Love for Beauty in Bodo Romantic Poetry: An Exploration

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This paper delves into the profound appreciation of beauty as depicted in Bodo Romantic poetry, focusing on three central themes: the beauty of nature, feminine beauty, and artistic or poetic beauty. Bodo poets, such as Ishan Mushahary, Rupnath Brahma, and Manaranjan Lahary, draw deeply from their cultural and natural surroundings, creating vivid and evocative portrayals that resonate with the core tenets of Romanticism. Through thematic and textual analysis, this study examines how these poets celebrate the sublime beauty of the natural world, the idealized allure of femininity, and the aesthetic pleasure derived from poetic artistry. The findings reveal that Bodo Romantic poetry, while rooted in its unique cultural context, shares universal Romantic ideals, emphasizing the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of human experience. This exploration contributes to a broader understanding of Bodo literature and its place within the global Romantic tradition, highlighting the timeless and cross-cultural appeal of the love for beauty.

**Keywords:** Bodo Romantic Poetry; Beauty in Literature; Nature in Poetry; Feminine Beauty; Artistic Expression; Romanticism.

## 1. Introduction

The Romantic movement, which emerged in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, is renowned for its profound emphasis on emotion, nature, and individualism. This literary and artistic movement found expression across various cultures and languages, influencing countless writers and poets. In the realm of Bodo literature in the northeast India, evolved as its literary tradition since the early part of twentieth century, a distinct form of Romanticism has emerged, characterized by a deep appreciation for beauty in its many forms. Bodo Romantic poetry, a significant aspect of Bodo literary heritage, reflects the core tenets of Romanticism through its vivid portrayals of nature, its celebration of feminine beauty, and its appreciation of artistic expression. Unlike its Western counterparts, which often emphasize the sublime and the idealized, Bodo Romantic poetry brings a unique cultural perspective to the Romantic ideals, infusing them with local color and sensibility.

This paper aims to explore the manifestation of beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry, focusing on three central themes: the beauty of nature, feminine allure, and artistic or poetic beauty. By examining the works of key Bodo Romantic poets such as Ishan Mushahary, Rupnath Brahma,

and Manoranjan Lahary, among others, this study seeks to uncover how these poets express their admiration for beauty and how these expressions reflect broader Romantic ideals.

The exploration of nature's beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry reveals a profound connection between the poets and their environment, capturing the enchanting landscapes and seasonal changes that define their world. Similarly, the portrayal of feminine beauty in Bodo poetry offers insights into the cultural values and aesthetic preferences of the Bodo people, highlighting the ways in which beauty is celebrated and revered. Finally, the appreciation of artistic and poetic beauty underscores the skill and creativity of Bodo poets, showcasing their ability to craft evocative and melodious verses.

Through this examination, the paper will elucidate how Bodo Romantic poets contribute to the broader Romantic tradition, offering a distinct and valuable perspective on the universal theme of beauty. By delving into the thematic and stylistic elements of Bodo Romantic poetry, this study will not only enhance our understanding of Bodo literary culture but also enrich the broader discourse on Romanticism.

#### Objective of the Study:

The primary objective of this study is to explore and analyze the representation of beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry. Specifically, the study aims to:

- a. Examine the depiction of natural beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry, focusing on how poets express their admiration for the natural landscapes, seasons, and environmental elements.
- b. Analyze the portrayal of feminine beauty, investigating how Bodo poets idealize physical appearance and personal virtues within their poetic works.
- c. Explore the appreciation of artistic and poetic beauty, assessing the ways in which Bodo poets celebrate the craft of poetry and the aesthetic pleasure derived from artistic expression.
- d. Highlight the unique cultural perspectives embedded within Bodo Romantic poetry while identifying commonalities with the broader Romantic tradition.
- e. Contribute to the broader understanding of Bodo literature, establishing its significance within the context of global Romanticism and offering insights into the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of Bodo poetic traditions.

#### Significance of the Study:

The study of beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry holds significant value both within the context of Bodo literature and in the broader field of literary studies. The key significance of this study is outlined as follows:

- a. Contribution to Bodo Literary Scholarship: This study enriches the understanding of Bodo Romantic poetry by focusing on a central theme—beauty—that has been relatively underexplored. By examining the ways in which Bodo poets express their love for natural, feminine, and artistic beauty, the study provides deeper insights into the thematic and aesthetic dimensions of Bodo literature.

- b. **Cultural Preservation and Appreciation:** The study highlights the unique cultural perspectives embedded in Bodo Romantic poetry, offering a valuable record of how Bodo poets have historically engaged with their natural environment, societal values, and artistic traditions. This contributes to the preservation and appreciation of Bodo cultural heritage.
- c. **Inspiration for Future Research:** The findings of this study open avenues for further research in Bodo literature and other indigenous literary traditions. By shedding light on the centrality of beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry, the study encourages future scholars to explore additional themes, genres, and comparative studies within and beyond the Bodo literary tradition.
- d. **Enhanced Understanding of Romantic Ideals:** The study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Romantic ideals, particularly how they manifest in non-Western literary traditions. It provides evidence of the universality of themes like the love for nature, idealization of feminine beauty, and the celebration of artistic expression, thus broadening the scope of Romantic literary studies.

This study not only deepens the understanding of Bodo Romantic poetry but also affirms the significance of indigenous literary traditions in the global literary landscape. It underscores the value of exploring regional literatures to gain a more comprehensive understanding of universal literary themes and aesthetics.

## **2. Data and Methodology:**

This study primarily relies on a qualitative analysis of selected poems by prominent Bodo Romantic poets, including Ishan Mushahary, Rupnath Brahma, Pramad Ch. Brahma, Samar Brahma Choudhury, and Manaranjan Lahary. The data comprises a collection of their works that thematically focus on the depiction of beauty in nature, feminine allure, and artistic expression.

**Data Collection:** The primary texts were sourced from anthologies, published collections, and literary journals featuring Bodo Romantic poetry. The selection criteria focused on poems that vividly explore the concept of beauty, ensuring a representative sample of the poets' broader thematic concerns.

**Methodology:** The study employs a thematic analysis approach to explore how beauty is portrayed in the selected poems. Each poem is examined for its depiction of natural, feminine, and artistic beauty, with attention given to the poets' use of language, imagery, and symbolism. The analysis also considers the cultural and historical context in which these poems were written, providing insights into the unique cultural perspectives embedded within Bodo Romantic poetry.

Through this qualitative approach, the study aims to uncover the underlying themes and aesthetic principles that characterize the love for beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry, contributing to a deeper understanding of this literary tradition.

### **3. Review of Literature:**

The written literature in Bodo began to take shape in the early part of the twentieth century. However, the tradition of literary criticism in Bodo literature only started to develop in the latter half of the twentieth century. Within this critical tradition, Bodo poetry has been the primary focus of analysis, with particular attention paid to early poetry, specifically the classical and romantic periods.

Several prominent critics have contributed to the study and critique of Bodo poetry. Among these, Manoranjan Lahary, Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Mangol Singh Hazoary, Rakhao Basumatary, Dinanath Basumatary, Uthrisar Khunggur Basumatary, and Phukan Ch. Basumatary stand out for their significant contributions to the field.

Manoranjan Lahary, in his influential work *Boro Thunlaini Jarimin*, dedicates a chapter to the examination of early Bodo poetry. His analysis is particularly notable for its systematic approach to the themes and figures of speech found in the romantic poems of poets such as Rupnath Brahma, Ishan Mushahary, and Pramod Ch. Brahma. Lahary's scholarly discussion is widely regarded as being of a high standard, providing deep insights into the romantic tradition within Bodo poetry.

Brajendra Kumar Brahma is another leading figure in Bodo literary criticism, with several critical works to his name, including *Thunlai Arw Sansri* and *Nwjwr Arw Swrji*. Brahma's critiques are comprehensive and nuanced, with a particular focus on the romantic poetry of Ishan Mushahary, whom he considers the finest romantic poet in Bodo literature. His analysis extends beyond thematic exploration to include discussions on the passion and rhetoric of Bodo romantic poems. Additionally, Brahma's comparative studies of Bodo romantic poetry with other linguistic traditions further enhance the depth of his critique.

Mangol Singh Hazoary, in his work *Raithai Arw Sansri*, offers thematic discussions on early Bodo poetry, providing valuable insights into the foundational themes of the romantic period. Rakhao Basumatary is also a well-respected critic in the field, known for his extensive publications on Bodo literature. His critiques often draw comparisons between Bodo and English romantic poetry, focusing on both thematic and technical aspects, thereby enriching the understanding of Bodo romanticism within a broader literary context.

Dinanath Basumatary's rigorous analysis of early Bodo poetry is encapsulated in his work *Mwndangthini Phwrmaithi*. His critique is notable for its dual approach, drawing on both Western literary traditions and Eastern aesthetic principles such as *Rasa* and *Alankara*. This comprehensive analysis offers a detailed exploration of Bodo romantic poetry from multiple critical perspectives.

Uthrisar Khunggur Basumatary's *Gwdan Sansri Arw Gwdan Mwndangthi* and Phukan Ch. Basumatary's *Nwiji Jouthaini Boro Khonthai* are also significant contributions to Bodo literary criticism. Uthrisar Khunggur Basumatary's work is distinguished by its application of Western romantic theory to Bodo poetry, presented in a clear and accessible manner. Similarly, Phukan Ch. Basumatary provides a straightforward yet insightful discussion of the themes found in early Bodo poetry.

In recent years, there has been a growing number of emerging critics in Bodo literature who are also contributing to the study of Bodo romantic poetry. While there have been numerous

*Nanotechnology Perceptions* Vol. 20 No. S10 (2024)

general discussions and analyses, there is still a need for more focused and detailed studies on specific aspects of Bodo romantic poetry. One such area that requires systematic and thorough examination is the theme of "Love for beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry." This topic, among others, represents an essential and rich field for future research, offering the potential to deepen our understanding of the aesthetic dimensions of Bodo romanticism.

#### Analysis:

This section provides a detailed examination of how beauty is depicted in Bodo Romantic poetry. The analysis is organized around three central themes: the beauty of nature, feminine beauty, and artistic or poetic beauty. By exploring these themes through the works of key Bodo Romantic poets, this study aims to elucidate the various ways in which beauty is celebrated and represented.

#### Love for the Beauty of Nature:

The Bodo Romantic poets are ardent admirers of nature, and their deep love for the natural world is vividly reflected in their poetry. Much like the English Romantic poets, Bodo poets embrace the beauty of natural landscapes, the changing seasons, and the harmonious coexistence of diverse elements within nature. Their works are not just descriptions of nature but are imbued with a profound sense of awe, reverence, and emotional connection to the environment.

Ishan Mushahary, often regarded as the harbinger of Romanticism in Bodo poetry, exemplifies this deep connection to nature. His works, such as *Badari*, *Mwnabili*, and *Hajw*, are rich with imagery that captures the twilight beauty of villages, the enchanting scenes by riversides, and the majestic presence of natural elements. In *Badari*, Mushahary beautifully depicts the captivating beauty of a village at sunset, evoking a sense of nostalgia and longing:

"The sun has descended,

the evening is cloudy.

Oh what a beautiful village!

I have yearned to stay."

—Wood Cutter (English version)

Through these lines, Mushahary not only paints a picture of the natural landscape but also conveys the emotional resonance that such beauty evokes in the human soul. Similarly, in *Mwnabili*, he personifies the evening as a beautiful maiden, infusing the natural scene with a sense of intimacy and personal connection:

"In this way,

we meet each other regularly

by the river side.

We avoid each other's company

in public only."

—Evening (English version)

Here, the evening is not merely a time of day but a cherished companion, symbolizing the poet's ongoing relationship with the beauty of the natural world. This personification of nature is a hallmark of Romantic poetry, where the natural world is imbued with human qualities and emotions, making it a living, breathing entity that interacts with the poet.

Pramod Ch. Brahma, another prominent Bodo poet, deepens this exploration of nature's beauty in his poem Hayenni Suphin, where he depicts the physical and spiritual beauty of a valley. Brahma's portrayal is infused with a deep sense of awe and reverence for the harmonious coexistence of beings within the natural world. His poem Udang Bwthwr (The Spring Season) captures the rejuvenation and transformation of nature with the arrival of spring:

"The appearance of nature has changed.

The plants and trees of varied colours look beautiful and wonderful.

The nature has worn an embroidered 'dokhona'

and she looks attractive."

—The Spring Season (English version)

In these lines, Brahma not only describes the visual transformation of nature but also attributes to it a sense of cultural identity, as seen in the metaphor of nature wearing a 'dokhona,' a traditional Bodo attire. This blending of natural beauty with cultural symbolism enriches the poem, offering readers a deeper connection to both the natural and cultural heritage of the Bodo people.

Samar Brahma Choudhury continues this celebration of nature's beauty in his celebrated poem Mwnabili, where he paints a vivid picture of the evening scene by the river Gongiya. Choudhury's depiction is enriched with sensory details and melodic elements, bringing the scene to life for the reader. His work exemplifies the Romantic ideal of capturing the sublime beauty of nature and the profound emotional responses it elicits.

Manoranjan Lahary, in his poem Mithinga, expresses an intense admiration for the beauty of nature, stating:

"Oh nature, I am maddened with your beauty."

—Nature (English version)

Lahary's words convey an overwhelming sense of passion and wonder, illustrating the deep emotional impact that the natural world has on the poet. His expression of being "maddened" by nature's beauty reflects the Romantic notion of nature as a powerful and transformative force that can evoke intense emotional responses.

These Bodo poets glorify both the physical and spiritual beauty of nature, reflecting a profound and intimate connection with the natural world. Their poetry does not merely describe nature but elevates it to a central theme, where the natural world becomes a source of inspiration, emotional depth, and spiritual reflection. Through their works, these poets invite readers to share in their admiration for nature's beauty and to recognize the deep, intrinsic value that the

natural world holds within the human experience.

#### Love for Feminine Beauty:

Feminine beauty is a profound and recurring theme in Bodo Romantic poetry, where poets passionately express their admiration for the physical allure and inner virtues of the women they adore. This theme, which intertwines physical beauty with moral and emotional depth, serves as a reflection of the poets' idealization of feminine grace and the powerful impact it has on their lives and art.

Rupnath Brahma, one of the most celebrated Bodo poets, masterfully captures the essence of feminine beauty in his famous poem *Angni Khwina*. In this work, Brahma offers a heartfelt tribute to the physical beauty and moral virtues of his beloved, whom he regards as a source of inspiration and guidance. The poem vividly portrays her as a figure of radiant beauty, standing by the riverbank, her body glowing under the sun's light, adorned in a red 'dokhona':

"I cannot explain

how beautiful you look

with the dazzling light of the sun

when you stand by the river bank

wearing red 'dokhona'

on your glowing body."

—My Wife (English version)

These lines convey not only the visual splendor of his beloved but also the deep emotional connection that her beauty evokes. Brahma's admiration extends beyond physical appearance, as he also praises her caring nature, acknowledging the importance of her presence in his life as a source of support, guidance, and companionship. This multifaceted appreciation of feminine beauty, blending the physical with the spiritual, is a hallmark of Bodo Romantic poetry.

Similarly, Ishan Mushahary, in his poem *Ala Khala Harsingwi*, is captivated by the charm of a maiden he encounters. His portrayal of her beauty is delicate and evocative, highlighting the elegance of her features and the subtle allure of her presence:

"Her lips are smiling and her face is spherical.

She is fair in complexion and her eyes are bright.

Her silky hairs are playing on her nape among the fragrant air

and the mildly red 'dokhona' on her body looks very beautiful."

—Uncertainty Lonely (English version)

Mushahary's description emphasizes the gentle and ethereal qualities of feminine beauty, capturing the transient and almost otherworldly nature of his admiration. The interplay of natural elements, such as the fragrant air and the soft red hue of her 'dokhona,' adds a layer of sensuality to the poem, making the experience of beauty not just visual, but multisensory.



Kali Kumar Lahary, in his poem *Dodere-Fangdang*, further explores the theme of feminine beauty by focusing on the specific physical attributes of his beloved. He lovingly refers to her as 'dodere-fangdang,' which he compares to a blossomed flower, symbolizing both her physical beauty and the freshness of her youth. Lahary's use of imagery, such as bright eyes and a melodious voice, conveys a deep appreciation for the delicate and harmonious aspects of feminine allure, likening his beloved to the perfect bloom of nature.

Samar Brahma Choudhury, in his celebrated poem *Mwnabili*, takes a slightly different approach by personifying the evening as a beautiful maiden. This personification blends the beauty of nature with feminine grace, creating a powerful metaphor that links the serene and tranquil aspects of the evening to the gentle and alluring qualities of a woman. The evening, as depicted by Choudhury, becomes a figure of beauty and calm, mirroring the qualities he admires in the feminine form.

Manoranjan Lahary, in his poem *Radab*, offers a more modern portrayal of feminine beauty, describing the mesmerizing allure of a girl he observes on a University bus. His focus on her captivating eyes, rhythmic movement, and overall charm reflects the contemporary setting while maintaining the timeless appreciation of beauty. Lahary's depiction is both vivid and relatable, capturing the everyday encounters with beauty that leave a lasting impression on the observer.

Brajendra Kr. Brahma also contributes to this theme with his poetic tributes to feminine beauty. In his works, he frequently compares his beloved's smile to a heavenly kingdom and her beauty to a 'sweet dream' or a 'multi-colored picture.' These metaphors elevate feminine beauty to an almost divine status, emphasizing its ability to transcend the ordinary and evoke a sense of wonder and admiration.

The Bodo Romantic poets, through their rich and varied portrayals of feminine beauty, not only celebrate the physical attributes of their beloveds but also delve into the deeper emotional and spiritual connections that such beauty inspires. Their poetry reflects a holistic appreciation of femininity, where physical allure is intertwined with virtues such as kindness, wisdom, and emotional strength. This theme of love for feminine beauty is not merely about admiration but is also a reflection of the poets' deep respect and reverence for the women who inspire their art.

#### **Appreciation of Artistic/Poetic Beauty:**

The appreciation of artistic and poetic beauty is a significant theme in Bodo Romantic poetry, reflecting the poets' deep engagement with their craft and their reverence for the aesthetic qualities of poetry. In their works, Bodo poets often emphasize the power of language to evoke emotions, create vivid imagery, and resonate with the reader on a sensory and emotional level.

Manoranjan Lahary, in his poem *Khonthaigiri*, exemplifies this theme by celebrating the melodic and evocative potential of poetry. He praises the beauty and harmony that poets achieve through their skillful arrangement of words, likening it to the creation of music and visual imagery. Lahary addresses the poet directly, acknowledging the transformative power of poetic language to touch the hearts and minds of the audience. He suggests that through their artistry, poets enable people to not only hear the music of their verses but also to see the "word pictures" they paint, thereby enriching the reader's sensory experience and deepening



their emotional engagement.

Similarly, Brajendra Kr. Brahma in Mwnabili Juthumao underscores the pleasure and fulfillment derived from poetic expression. He reflects on the intrinsic beauty of poetry itself, celebrating its capacity to bring joy and inspiration to both the poet and the reader. Brahma's work reinforces the Romantic ideal of poetry as a form of artistic creation that transcends mere words, becoming a vehicle for profound emotional and aesthetic experiences.

The focus on artistic beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry highlights the poets' acute awareness of their literary craft. They are not only creators of content but also masters of form, using language with precision and artistry to produce works that resonate with readers. This emphasis on the beauty of poetic expression aligns with the broader Romantic celebration of the arts, where the creation of beauty through literature is seen as a noble and elevated pursuit.

Through their works, Bodo Romantic poets invite readers to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of poetry, urging them to listen, visualize, and feel the harmonious blend of words and emotions. This celebration of poetic beauty not only enhances the reader's experience but also underscores the enduring value of art as a source of inspiration and emotional connection.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

The exploration of beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry reveals a profound and multifaceted appreciation of the world, reflecting the poets' deep connection with nature, their reverence for feminine grace, and their celebration of artistic and poetic expression. Through the lenses of these three dimensions—nature, femininity, and art—the poets weave a rich tapestry of emotions and imagery, capturing the essence of beauty as a powerful force that transcends the mundane and touches the sublime.

In their love for the beauty of nature, Bodo Romantic poets demonstrate a spiritual and almost mystical connection to the natural world. They do not merely describe the landscapes and seasons; they immerse themselves in the natural environment, allowing it to shape their thoughts, emotions, and artistic expressions. The natural world, in their poetry, is not a backdrop but a living, breathing entity with which they engage intimately. The vivid depictions of twilight villages, serene riverbanks, and the rejuvenation of spring evoke a deep sense of wonder and reverence, inviting readers to see nature through the poets' eyes, as a source of endless inspiration and solace.

The celebration of feminine beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry is equally profound, reflecting a deep admiration not just for physical allure but for the virtues and emotional depth that femininity embodies. The poets' portrayals of their beloveds are rich with affection and respect, elevating feminine beauty to a symbol of purity, grace, and strength. This admiration is not confined to the surface; it delves into the emotional and spiritual qualities that make their beloveds not just objects of desire, but partners in a shared journey through life. The poets' tender and evocative descriptions reveal a culture that honors women as central figures in the emotional and moral fabric of society.

The appreciation of artistic and poetic beauty, as explored in these works, reflects the poets' self-awareness of their craft and their commitment to creating works that resonate with beauty,

melody, and emotional depth. The Bodo poets understand the power of words to evoke images, stir emotions, and create a shared experience of beauty. Through their careful choice of language and imagery, they craft poems that are not just read but felt, leaving a lasting impact on the reader's mind and heart.

In synthesizing these themes, it becomes clear that the love for beauty in Bodo Romantic poetry is not a superficial pursuit but a profound engagement with the world. Whether in the form of nature's splendor, feminine grace, or artistic creation, beauty is seen as a reflection of the divine, an expression of the sublime, and a source of deep emotional and spiritual fulfillment. The poets of the Bodo Romantic tradition, much like their counterparts in other literary traditions, use beauty as a means to explore the depths of the human experience, capturing the transient and the eternal in their verses.

Ultimately, Bodo Romantic poetry stands as a testament to the timeless and universal appeal of beauty, transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. It speaks to the fundamental human desire to find meaning and connection through the appreciation of the world around us, the people we love, and the art we create. Through their eloquent and heartfelt expressions, Bodo poets invite readers to join them in their reverence for beauty, offering a glimpse into a world where beauty is not just seen but deeply felt and cherished.

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