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Encounter of Man and Nature with Intervention of Scientific Advancement; Triumph of Humanity- A Study of Dhruba Hazarika's *Luck*

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Abstract: One of the pivotal roles of literature is to blow off the dust on human soul that is what Dhruba Hazarika's fictions does. He has made a marked on North-East Literature through his remarkable works. This paper incorporates various problems of the states of North-East, touching every aspect of life from a simple to a complex one. It intends to explore his collection of short stories entitled *Luck*, addressing multiple atrocities in minute details from various perspective through his books. The problems of North-Eastern states have been put forward, detailing every part of the states from the common people to the nature and its beings, it is also a sociopolitical research encountering every phase of circumstances faced by the people during the troubled time, and not forgetting the condition that led to the struggle for power. Also, to focus on the other end of the book drawing attention towards the nature and its significant contributions to the literature of North-East. The author's work has provided endless aspects to the vision of the readers giving new direction in seeing the undiscovered truth of Assam behind the text. The effort is made to bring in the concept of humanity and nature in connection with the author's work. The paper attempts to create awareness on the present developing scene of the world where changes have led to a life of turmoil and chaos due to its loss of connection with nature. This research paper is an attempt to endeavour to study various problems of North-East region existing both internally and externally, at the same time, preserving the beauty of the atmospheric places and showcasing the various heterogeneous culture.

Keywords: Assam, Luck, humanity, animal, North East India, Hazarika.

Dhruba Hazarika's is a powerful sensational writer from India's North East whose book *Luck* comprises of nine short stories which entirely deals with the relationship between human beings and other denizens of the natural world, and how it has drastically changed with time. The stories capture the moments of men encountering with natural world and its inhabitants, and the change which resulted through the phenomenon.



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The predominant themes identified in the book are the reflection of humanity and the human errors. The book deals with different themes which are very relevant, but the reflection of humanity is the most dominant theme throughout the stories. When we take an in-depth analysis of the book, we see that the stories are trying to teach humanity to the readers, it reflects to the other side of the stories through the medium of stories. The author has laid the foundation of the lesson by introducing us to the first story of the book called 'The Hunt', which touches the unconscious human instinct and makes them realize the course of humanity and how it has changed. The Doe in the story takes the readers attentions to a different level, making them realize the effect of this human disease and how it has taken a toll on humanity. Throughout the stories, the author keeps on building the mirror to reflect humanity, he does it piece by piece collecting all the parts, joining and arranging all the stories in a set pattern to show the real colour of humanity and how it has changed to the present day.

Human beings are social animals, who are always concerned about themselves and the social norms of the society and they forget who they really are. Through the stories, the author tells the readers to take time out of their busy schedule and see through the eye of the animals, how cruel humans have become. The author takes into notice the present-day scenario and blends it into his works to shows the past and the present of the world between men and nature. Though the stories are regular and written in simple words, but the impact is enormous on reader's mind.

One major thing that differentiates short fictions from novels, is the length, novels are long narrative stories consist of multiple chapters whereas short stories are brief, concise and shorter in nature. Short stories are usually intended to be read in one sitting and are design to produce the single effect, known as single emotional effect or feelings, whereas novels take longer time in reading and it usually talks about the journey of the protagonist as well as the other major characters found in the novel. On the other hand, short stories primarily focus on one or two incidents and present to the readers those events or incidents in the most effective way. They contained their pages in centralizing the main conflict and justify it in a summarized manner



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without enlarging the problems. The idea of the author in short stories are brought out in a simple and short way, since they directly attack the main conflict and resolve it quickly.

Animals As Protagonists:

The titles of the stories are very significant and dominating which owes its credit to the author, each of stories have different titles which talks about the whole thing in one or in few words. The whole collection of stories is titled as *Luck* which is also the title of one of the stories in the book. 'Luck' is very significant as an incidence of chance changes a person inside out, the pigeon in the story brought good luck in the life of the character's life and so he named the bird 'luck' and through the pigeon, the man learn the true taste of happiness in life. The very title 'The Hunt' speaks for the story, the whole story revolves around one incident of hunting and killing down a doe. The significance of the title 'Ghostie' is very interesting for the name ghostie refers to the dog a ghost like dog who appears from no nowhere to test the level of patient of the kids. 'Chicken Fever' is another title of a story which speaks for the whole story, the man been obsess with his chicken and how the scene of a hen protecting her chicks brought a change in his life and he learn to his own kind. The title 'The Gunrunner of Jorabat' speaks for violence, the story revolves around the theme of extortion and black marketing in the area of Jorabat. The title 'Asylum' deals with the happenings of life in and around an asylum and how it affects people around them. Other titles of stories like 'The leopard', 'Vultures' and 'Soul Agret' are simple for they directly speak for the entire story, as the stories revolve around the particular animals.

Northeast has been a habitation for many species of flora and fauna, the rarest of all plants and animals are found in this region. The chill climate along with enough rainfall makes it a place for many species to resident, the dense forest with variety of fauna makes it a suitable feeding ground for many herbivorous which in turn attracts various carnivorous and omnivorous and makes it a complete eco-cycle. Along with the wild animals the northeast has a wide range of cattle to support their daily requirements, food as well as medium of income. There are many depictions of animals



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in the stories popularly found in the northeast region, which the author has made them as a medium of reflection for humanity.

The animals depicted in the stories have a deeper impact in the minimum consciousness of the characters, they have been like the trail of truth in the stories who helps the characters find themselves in the midst of chaos and inhumanity. There are various animals who have been portrayed in the stories which have something unique to offer and teach through their nature though they are voiceless. Through the various animals like dogs, soul agret, pigeon, hens, deer and many more in his stories, the author has displayed both the good and the bad side of humanity. The animals act as an agent to bring out the good as well as the other side of human's, the difference of being a human being and being human is clearly brought into the mind of the readers through the acts. One of the purest animals on this Earth is deer, and in the story 'The Hunt', Hazarika keeps the innocence of the Deer and uses it to guide the readers through the worse inhuman acts of human beings. The pregnant deer is the perfect example of a pregnant woman who carries a body in her womb, fragile, innocent and unaware of the world outside of the mother's womb who is killed without even letting a chance to breathe the life in the world, which shows many of inhuman acts such as excessive hunting and if we put in an effort to understand through the eyes of humanity, we can also relate it to the ongoing happenings in the present day society where if a girl gets raped or has to deal any unwanted pregnancy, most of the times are killed along with the mother or aborted. Other animals in the stories also have the same fate as the deer like the cow in the story 'The Leopard' who was killed and eaten by a Leopard along with the baby inside her stomach who at the end of the story is killed by the villagers leaving her two cubs to starve to death which depicts how the animals brings out the story through their presence.

On the other side of the boat, the animals show what humanity stands for. The pigeon in 'The Luck', stands for all good acts in life, the pigeon becomes a companion and the only friend of the character where his act of kindness wins over the animal and throughout the story we see their relationship developing and how after seeing how the bird lives happily with his other companions, the man learns to give up fear of companionship and adopt to the society and the people around



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him. The pigeon changes his whole life where the man learns to live again, his whole perspective of life changes after he met the pigeon, teaching him what life is. In another story 'The Soul Agret', a man finds his solemnness in the bird and develops a deep affection towards the birds and sees through the eye of the bird how human beings dense to act cruel to other living beings forgetting the existence of life that lives in every organism. The author has taken the simplest animal to work in his short stories like in the story 'Chicken Fever', where the hen shows how one dense to protect her own kind by even risking her own life. The hen was protecting her chicks from the danger around, she stood there firmly not fearing "All people run away, but she had stayed; even the sound of things being smashed and pummeled around her hadn't driven away" (50) which shows how humanity should work to protect every being and make the world a better place to live.

Man is an organism living with its host i.e. nature, they are always connected as men cannot exist without nature, the connection between the two is very intimate. Men and nature are both part of the cycle and the chain of life. Many writers have dominated the theme of men's relationship with nature bringing out the best of their words for the treatment of nature. This can also be seen in most of the northeastern works, nature has been given the highest appreciation and concern. Writers has never failed to portray the beauty of nature in their works, the best of inspiration comes from the place called nature filled with mystery, magic and beauty.

In this case, Dhruva Hazarika's collection of short stories Luck also adds its jewel to the crown of nature. The stories contents evidence of men's connection with nature and how they are related. Men always had the voice to complain or speak for himself, but nature never had its voice, it is beauty in silence, but the author has given a voice to nature to defend itself and bring out both the good and the bad sides of human beings. Some of the animals in the stories, like the vulture in 'Vultures' and the leopard 'The Leopard' has reflected the human nature, feeding on the corpses of the innocence, weak and the miserable ones trying to survive on the expense of other. Human tendency to not see the weak as someone who needs a helping hand to aid them but dragged them down to death. Nature has always been a part and partial of Hazarika's work where everything has



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been connected, He has chased to make the use of men's' primitive notions and its surroundings to make the readers understand the value of less conscious things in the world. The author uses all the elements of nature at its best to tell the readers about human connection with nature and how people have so much evolved and developed themselves that they no longer have the time to look back at the root of all humanity. Nature has never failed to comfort human beings physically, mentally which is very much visible in the stories written by Hazarika. In almost all the stories, the animal presented gives some level of comfort to the characters like the pigeon in the 'Luck' brought an end to the physical and mental loneliness of the man. And the soul egret in the story 'Soul Egret', the birds were the man's only comfort and company amidst his lonely and miserable life.

The stories feature various animals which are the part of the eco-cycle and gives the story its complete form. The author has done his best to take out the worse in men through nature, he is successful in bringing out the long-forgotten relationship between men and nature. He is also adored for bringing out men's primitive instincts through the animals and teaching humanity the core meaning of being a human being, animals in the stories are the best representation of men and its relationship with nature. The success of the author can be seen throughout the stories as he invokes men and its relationship with beings of nature in his collection of short stories *Luck*.

Quest For Primitive Self:

Quest is an important theme in Hazarika's works, if we go through all his works, we can identify theme of quest as prominent. He has given a profound interest in this theme; his works are authentic and based on his personal experience. The book *Luck* is considerably, one of his outstanding works which has taken a step out of the box to teach the meaning of true living, it deals with numerable themes but the one that outshines them all is the theme of men's own discovery. Throughout the story we can feel human errors which are minor or major which are not taken so seriously in the present context, but the author has taken these common errors of men to teach humanity. The collection of stories has been an eye opener for the readers as it touches them through the core of realization of men's change and revolution.



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Throughout the anthology, we see the presence of natural elements presented by the author which gives its originality, the nature plays a key role in bringing the colours to the canvas of humanity. Men and nature existed together for thousands of years, without nature men existence is not possible, men have been always dependent on nature for every need and wants which shows the connection that men and nature had, man is the child of nature. But in the present-day context men have been so materialistic, selfish, and cruel that they have forgotten about the Mother Nature. They cannot see the change that is taking place every day and how they have been distance from nature, they find happiness in destroying rather than preserving the nature. The stories Hazarika connects men with nature and tries to bring back the primitive self of men, he introduces animals in the stories to show men and nature did co-exist in the past without destroying it. The story 'Chicken Fever', the author tries to bring out the sense of protecting one's own kind from any danger and how this sense of nature is present in both men as well as animal, but with the passage of time men has slowly forgotten this very sense. The author through the simplest creature like hens and chicks tries to make men realized his primitive instinct to protect his own kind. When the character Rattan Beb Barman went out for a raid in a forest, he came across a scene which brought a change in his heart,

He saw a fat black hen sitting on some straw, her neck extended and eyes alert. There were a couple of chicks peeping out from under her, but there was no noise from them, and thinking of his own brood back in his bungalow, Rattan smiled. The hen looked directly at him now, the red lobes from her beak and on her forehead quivering... Rattan chuckled and whispered, 'Don't be scared of me, fat mother hen. (pg. 49)

This scene act as an agent to motivate Rattan to save the girl, hiding behind the haystack. As he observes the mother hen protecting his chicks, his primitive instinct to protect arouse, when he saw the woman hiding behind the straw, his instinct to protect took over him, "He put a finger to his lips to silence her and picked up the second bundle of straw and pressed it around. His only thought as he moved away was whether she would be able to breathe through the straw until they were gone." (pg. 52) the whole time of their stay there in the forest, his full attention was to protect the woman from being seen by his fellow partners for he knew she would be killed if they took notice of her.



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He was successful in protecting the woman. Through this very story, we can see how the man discover his primitive instinct to protect and care for his own kind, the chicken reflects men's primitive self which takes over the man's present self and reminds him of his inner self of love and humanity. In the other stories too, we can see the reflections of men inner self like in the story 'Luck', where a lonely who distanced himself completely from the rest of the world thinking of the curse that surrounds his life. But everything changed when a pigeon enters his life as a companion, his luck started to change, and he knew it was the bird bringing him the luck and therefore he named the pigeon luck. The story of these two species i.e. the man and the bird teach us that men and nature do co-exist in harmony and peace. The inner self of the man took a whole new turn of happiness. In 'Soul Agret', we find men seeking companionship from nature beings, the man who always seems lonely found a kind of comfort whenever he sees the birds taking shelter on the tree. Here in these two stories, we see how men finds his own self in these animals. The men become part of nature and sees it with the eye of the primitive self, feeling the bond of connection between the nature and himself reflecting oneself into the primitive form of existence.

A Slice Of Modernization:

The world has changed its course through evolution, it is not the same as yesterday, today or will remain the same in the future. Time has made humans evolve from animals to intelligent beings, it happened through constant changes in all spheres of life. Men's ability to think, reason and to create, has made them superior from all other animals, the power to adapt, overcome and conquer every change made them humans. Through time over and again, men have proven themselves to be worthy of the title 'superior beings. With the rising needs, men have leveled up to meet the challenges and proved that men are curious by nature. So, curiosity made them achieved the impossible like they say curiosity is the mother of all invention. Who would have thought that men would fly or walk on the moon but it is possible due to men's ability to reason and create. Through modernization men has achieved the impossible, minds grew more reasonable and capable that men achieved everything and made life easier around them. Modernization has done a



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tremendous work in the world and in the life of men, but it also had its negative drawback. Men became advance in their sixth sense but forgot the seventh one i.e. the nature, modernization gave a leap to mankind, but it broke the bridge that connects the world of men with nature. Dhruba Hazarika in his short stories tries to show how it is happening and how men are forgetting the nature because of modernization. Human beings are becoming more materialistic and selfish that it has greatly affected the bond between him and nature, so the author through the little animals in the stories tries to show the effects of modernization in people's life.

The 'Asylum' shows the revengeful and selfish human side, which is an after effect of modernization, the story shows how men have forgotten the value of life around him. Though it is a small animal or a grown man, nature values life equally, but characters in this story out of their selfish interest has harm the innocent beings of nature through use of modern advancement in science and medicine which turned life to just an experiment of human negativity. When we run through the story, we see that hatred for men was poured out on the innocence beings like the cat, pigs, dog and pigeons, the character named Dhaniram was fierce with anger towards Hargovind, a vet-psychiatrist also a superintendent of an asylum, who had an affair with his wife Reema. When he came to know about their act the doctor shot him with tranquillizer and later proved him to be mentally unstable. Here we see that doctor used his position and knowledge for his own benefits and harming his own kind. On the other side of the story, Dhaniram vengeance towards the doctor led him to do wrong to the most innocent beings on earth i.e. the animals who had nothing to do with the hatred that they hold within themselves. Dhaniram in order to avenge the wrong done to him by the doctor, he attack his only companion i.e. his pets, the cat Pusso, the dog Missus Tippoo, the pigs and the pigeons who fly around his domain, we known realize his cruel acts when he said to the doctor that "I made pellets of the thick mixture of my color paste and your drugs. I also know you take home the leftover bread and rice and dal from the hospital for your pigs and your cat and dog. So, I sprinkled some of your drug into the rice and the bread when you were out in the wards." (pg. 106) the trace of tranquillizer, drugs as well as the aspects of hatred in the story are the signs of modernization and how it has changed men to be its servant.



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Through the two stories' title 'The Hunt' and 'The Gunrunner of Jorabat', the readers might get the idea of what the story contains. The title itself tells it, the story is about human's most innovative inventions i.e. gun or perhaps most dreadful weapon created to destroy humanity. Guns or rifles have always played the role of killing, weather it was for good or bad caused. It has always bought destruction to both men and nature, though invented for helping in needs but is now used as an agent to show men's power or his errors. In the story 'The Hunt', we see how men utilized this very weapon called gun or rifle to harm the beings of nature for their own pleasure, the innocent beautiful doe was shot death with the use of rifle, "Adrian did not take the aim, so the doctor did. He sighted down the barrel of his rifle and fired. There was a sudden jerk and rustle, the legs pawed the air and then the deer was down. In the yellowish-green light and against the dark of the forest, the silent spasm of the deer's death looked unreal, like a poorly lit shot in an amateur movie." (pg.2-3) in the other story 'The Gunrunner of Jorabat', we notice how violence has become part of the life of people in this modern world, and they do anything to possess the power to defeat the enemies. Through pout the story we see how guns are being extorted from place to place and how it has become the means to do business by extorting the guns and selling them illegally. "Thirty AK-47s, brother. I was to receive them and hand them over to two Assamese boys who would pick them up from my hut three days later... You know about these weapons? Each weighing three and half kilograms minus the thirty bullets in the magazine. Designed in such a way that unless a bullet hits you right in the heart there's every chance you won't be killed." (155-156) these short stories bring up the negative effects of these modern invention, it has made killing easier taking or ending a creature's life is just reduce to a touch of a finger through the trigger. With this modern creation, all it takes is one finger to end life from the smallest to the biggest creature of the earth. Its main focus is to show how life has been reduce in nature for men's selfish interests and intentions that humans no longer care about the nature and its inhabitants anymore. The stories show how this tool have made killing an amusement for people and how everything seems easy with modernization.

Though different in their approach to reflect humanity, these three stories have a common cause i.e. modernization. All plots are set on these dangerous causes of human civilization, the stories



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deal with a common enemy that is modernization which have corrupted the human mind and soul that men no longer think about anyone else rather than themselves. The stories tell a tale of how man is losing touch with nature trying to cope the fast-moving world of today.

Voice Of The Animal/ Voice Of The Universal Problems:

The only difference that men and animals have is their capacity to think, reason and deliver their need through speech. Man has lost its humanity in course of modernization that they don't feel love or any sympathy towards animals. Men have become so selfish that they kill and destroy everything around them. The poor animals are the helpless victim of inhumanity and human greed, they suffer the consequences of human evolvment. Being voiceless, the animals cannot speak for themselves or do anything to tell men that, it's wrong to treat them like this. Animals have not only hunted, butchered for meat but they have been also victimized for human amusement as some people don't hunt for living but to entertain themselves. The animals in the world are degrading due to this problem according to analysis every three years, two or more species of animals are extinct or endangered. Humans have been very childish in understanding the cycle of nature which always ends with them being destroyed in the end.

The author in his collection of short stories has done excellent work in giving voice to animals, he has raised his voice about a real problem that concerns humanity. Hazarika's works mostly centered around the portrayal of the northeast region of India where he talks about the beauty and the problems of the people, but the 'Luck' overall is a different story bringing in the best of the writer's imaginative faculty to bring out the positive change in human beings. The common problem that nature and man is facing is related, they run on the same train, men's actions have always affected nature and nature has always affected men. In the collection of short stories *Luck*, he talks about what men has lost in his evolution and takes in animals as an agent of change to bring out the best in man's nature. The stories consist of number of animals which are given a chance to show or portray their pain, the animals speak for themselves as well as the nature of men. The



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character in the stories have different problems which have been solved or finds a way to humanity through the animals, he has kept in context the various problems faced by other living being all over the world. The animals due to lack of human qualities have suffered the cruel way, they were mistreated because they don't complain or speak for themselves.

'The Hunt' is the first story of the book *Luck* which gives us the whole gist of what the writer has in mind. The story deals with men's evil nature of hunting, it has a big irony as the doctor who was supposed to save life was the one who was killing, it was a beautiful doe which shows how men have forgotten to treat life. The doe along with its fawns dies leaving a mark on men's cruelty against these innocent beings. In the other story 'Soul Agret', the birds who had taken shelter in a tree near a men's house suffers through horrible pain as every season they have to go through the same trauma again and again when the baby birds are born, they were killed for eating by the kids around. The dog being called as the men's best friend, also suffers through the same fate as the ones who are supposed to take care of them are the ones who are the cause of their miseries, in the story 'Ghostie'. Throughout all these stories, we observe one thing in common i.e. miseries of the animals shown to us through their presents in the stories. The animals are given a voice in the stories through their characters by the author, they are not given supernatural power to speak or to walk but are given a voice through their stories which can be understood by everyone. The voice of the animals is loud and audible rather than the other human characters though the stories talks about men, but the voice of the men are suppressed by the animal's voice. Not only talking in context of the stories, we can see that this is a universal problem where uncountable numbers of animals go through the same thing.

The world has become a dreadful place for life to exist, survival depends on our dominance. Animals are being hurt, butchered, hunted and even petted as domestic away from the natural habitation which causes lots of disturbance in the natural world. Dhruva Hazarika, as a writer steps out from the comfort of writing and makes a difference by giving a voice to voiceless animals and brings out the pain of these innocent beings through his collection of stories. World of academia



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must encourage and welcome writers like Dhruba Hazarika as this is the dire need of our time to express our apprehension concerning bio-diversity and its value.

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