Folklore and Folkloristics

An e-journal on Folklore and allied disciplines

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Invitation for writing in Folklore and Folkloristics

This e-journal Folklore and Folkloristics publishes write ups in different sections specified as follows:

**Article Section:** Research based articles are published.

**Reflection Section:** Short write up is published.

**Young Scholar Section:** Contribution of Young Scholar (belonging to UG, PG, M. Phil, Ph. D. level) is published.

**Highlight Section:** Short write up is published.

**Book Review Section:** Book Review is published. Books must be sent to the Editor-in-Chief. He will get the book reviewed by competent person.

**Advertisement Section**

Advertisement of books and journals relating to folklore and allied subjects are published. Advertisement of any institute working on culture and society is also published.

**News and Information Section:** News and Information relating to any activities of culture in general and folk-tribal culture in particular is published in this section. Contributors are requested -

(i) to mention the name of exact event, incident, occasion
(ii) the exact date, time and place of commencement
(iii) name of institution, person, performer, artist, funding agency concern
(iv) name of tribe, community, caste whatever is relevant
(v) attach all possible photo documentation
(vi) mention the name, phone, e-mail of contributor (mandatory)

**Photo Gallery:** Any photograph (digital photo) reflecting exclusive feature of culture is published in this section. Please send a detailed information or statement of the photograph (of which the photo is about).

**Video Section:** Any significant video document on folk and tribal culture is uploaded in this section.

**Reader’s Response Section:** This section will start from June 2012 issue. Letters of the readers or the response of the readers are published in this section. Mention the name, phone, e-mail.
Who can write in this Journal?
Persons belonging to any discipline of pure science and social science may write in this journal. Students, teachers, research scholars, interested persons in any discipline like – language and literature, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, folklore and folkloristics, economics, social work, physics, chemistry, medical science – so on and so forth may write in this journal. The only thing is that the write up should address culture, tradition, folklore or tribal-lore. Interdisciplinary approach is highly solicited.

How to send articles and other contribution?
1. Articles should be written in English.
2. Typed in Times New Roman font (Font Size: Heading-14/Bold; Body Text-12/Normal).
3. Line Spacing – double.
4. Page setup margin: Left-1.25″, Right-1.25″, Top-1″, Bottom-1″.
5. Foot note should be written as text with the main paper. Please do not use Foot Note option available.
6. Diagram must be within 14 cm x 10 cm.
7. Always put diagram number and mention the number in the text.
9. An abstract is essential for article (mandatory)
10. Send information “About Author” within 2 to 3 lines.
11. Digital photo or other visual document may be sent in PDF format or as JPEG image.
12. Reference and foot note are expected in research based articles.
13. Author’s brief introduction, address, phone number, email is mandatory.
14. A passport size photograph of the contributor is preferred.
15. Send all articles through e-mail.

Please Note
1. No remuneration is paid to the contributors.
2. No printed version of this journal is published.
3. Send write up by 31st March for June issue and by 30th September for December issue.
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- *Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam*  

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Editorial

The June 2013 issue (Vol. 6, No. 1) of Folklore and Folkloristics is now ready. This issue has wide ranging topics starting from religious studies, Bengali regional poetry, Indian Writing in English, manuscript study to women rights issue. Each of the contributors has thoroughly given thrust and justice to their research areas. I feel that this issue takes up folklore study to a new level. In fact the interdisciplinary approach enriches the cultural specificities.

I would like to congratulate all the members of editorial board, advisory board, all representatives of International and National (State) level as well as district level.

I am thankful to NFSC and M. D. Muthukumaraswami of giving their cordial assistance to this e-journal.

Sk. Makbul Islam
Editor-in-Chief
Folklore and Folkloristics

June 2013
Article-1

Russian Islam
- Victor Pogadaev

Abstract
This paper is a reflection on how Islam found its way into Russian society. In fact, Islam became an alternative religion to Christianity. This paper argumentatively answers the question why ethnic Russians accepted Islam.

Full Version of Paper
Until recently the term “Russian Islam” was something difficult to imagine or it was an expression which didn’t reflect the real situation. Half a century ago the expression "Russian Muslims" was odd. Islam was considered as a religion of Russian Tatars only. The pioneers of Islam among the ethnic Russians were Russian women married to Muslim foreigners, Russian soldiers captured during the war in Afghanistan (1979-1989), and some spiritual seekers who were not satisfied with Christianity and found in Islam the true religion. Actually they were at the margin of the Russian society major part of which were adepts of the Russian Orthodox Church. Nevertheless they successfully produced a strong wave that was felt not only in religion departments of several universities but also at the high government level.

The advisor to the Russian President’s Representative in Federal Volga Region, namely Sergey Gradirovsky in several interviews openly stated that "Russia has its Islamic sector. And this sector will increase and widespread". It was stated in the context that Islam is a force of life in Russia and if the country wants to exist further it must consider this force ("power if it wants to be legitimate must rely on the live processes below"). Spiritual revival in Russia not necessarily should be contacted only with the rise of the Russian Orthodox Church. Policy like this can divide Russia on religious principles (such as India was divided in 1947) and will promote the isolation of Russia in regional and world scale. Conclusion is: not Islam itself is a danger to national security of Russia, but anti-Islamic policy.

There is no accurate statistics about the number of ethnic Russians who embraced Islam. The figures vary usually from 20 to 30 thousand. Is it much or little? If you compare that figures with the data of the Soviet Encyclopedia (1977) this 30 thousand is three times more than the population of ethnic minorities in the Russian North as chukcha or evenki. Moreover Russian Muslims are usually young and vibrant community and widespread in many Russian cities. There are among them politicians such as Abdul-Wahed Niyazov (Vadim Medvedev) who is also a member of the Russian parliament and a leader of the

Union of Russian Patriots, famous artists such as a singer Yulian (Jabrail) and even some former Christian clergy, such as Ali (Vyacheslav) Polosin.

The activity of Russian Muslims are organized by the National Organisation of Russian Muslims (NORM)³ and the Movement "Straight Way". Until recently, the community considered one of the most active Islam is a community in the region of Karelia (the Russian North) which exists thank to da'wah activity of Ahmat Abu Mustafa (Russian name is Oleg Starodubtsev). According to some of the observers the number of Russian Muslims will increase greatly. And there are several reasons for this conclusion.

Russians now can freely enjoy the translations of the Holy Al Qur'an including the poetic translation (1991) made by Iman (Valeria) Porokhova, a Muslimah of Russian origin who accepted Islam under the influence of her husband, a citizen of Syria.

If previously the Muslims mixed in mosque with each other in the languages of their ethnics (at that time there were almost no Muslims of ethnic Russians), now they socialize in Russian. Many Islamic mass media emerged in Russian, including electronic one partly owned by the Muslims of ethnic Russians. One of the government television channel (channel 2) introduced a special program about the life of Muslims in Russia entitled "Muslimat".

Slowly a perception that Islam in Russia is the religion of ethnic minorities and their core characteristics completely vanished. Now for Russians to become Muslims does not mean that they will belong to Chechens or Tatars. According to Sergey Gradirovsky, Russian Islam is not a sect or a new movement and certainly not a distortion of principles of faith but "cultural support" that corresponds Russian culture with Islam.

One can only rejoice with this kind of opinion from the staff of the Russian government. If this opinion is shared by all Russian government servants then Russia becomes a territory of jihad without bloodshed because the purpose of jihad is not violence but the spread of the faith.

Why do ethnic Russians accept Islam?
The observers forward the following arguments:
1. "Rationalism", in other words the simplicity of Islamic dogma. Contrary to the Russian Orthodox Church which shroud the dogmatic ambiguity with mystics, Islam gives a clear understanding about God, Life after death, causes of the violence in the world.

Actually the problem was highlighted at the beginning of the last century by Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian genius, author of the novel War and Peace and Anna Karenina, great thinker who contributed much to world literature and Russian history.

A Russian woman married to a Muslim named Vekilov wrote to Leo Tolstoy that her son wants to embrace Islam and asks for advice. Here is the answer to that woman by Leo

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² http://www.lebed.com/1999/art1181.htm
³ http://www.norm-info.ru/
Tolstoy: "As for the advantages of Islam compared to Christianity then I am very sympathetic to those who change religion and become Muslims. Maybe it is strange, but I who carry high the value of the true teachings of Christianity, no longer doubt that Islam outwardly is higher than Orthodox Church. So if there are only two options whether to hold Orthodox Church or to embrace Islam, then all sensible people without doubt will choose Islam with its simple declaration of belief in the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as his prophet (“There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”), and not Christianity with its complex and ambiguous teaching of the Trinity, sin, redemption, secret institutions, Saints and their drawings, complex prayers and rituals". (Yasnaya Polyana, March 15, 1909)

2. "Comfort" or the simplicity of worship. Islam does not require its followers to fast too much like Orthodox Church: all kinds of fasting are in fact often are not to be fulfilled and consequently this leads to hypocrisy. In the case of Islam, it offers fasting only at day time during Ramadan. Islamic rituals such as wedding or funeral ceremony is also simple and does not burden its followers.

In Islam, its adepts can make a direct confession to God, they do not require intermediate in the form of the church bureaucrats. Spirit of bureaucracy generally is alien to Islam. In spite of this, Russian Queen Ekaterina II tried to instill bureaucratic structure of Islam in Russia. In 1778 she established the Islamic Religious Council (muftiat) to the Orenburg region led by the mufti paid by the government. After some transformation this Council is up till now a tool to control the Muslim community from the Kremlin. In general hierarchy of the Islamic umma is based on the authority of Islamic scholars.

3. "Antisistem nature". Islam is a serious alternative to the consumer’s society. Not everybody is satisfied with the idea that the only form of culture should be pop commercial culture based on promotion of sex and violence. Not everybody wants to be a tool to acquire and spend money that often does not become means for living but a server of images that match a particular status. Not everybody wants to see the moral decline when youth crime, corruption and husband-wife infidelity become the norm of the life. Old age in consumer’s society becomes horrible. In the West, parents who are abandoned by their children live alone at old people’s home. In Russia, their destiny is also loneliness. Often they become the object of the adventurists. Islam is an alternative to all that. The Holy Al Qur'an allows adjusting the positive aspects of all areas of politics: market without speculation and social justice without cruelty.

All these arguments are confirmed by ethnic Russians converted into Islam.

The deputy Chairman of the National Union of Russian Muslims is Taras (Abdul-Kerim) Chernienko. He is 30 years old, graduated from two universities, holds the post of the head of international department at a bank. In the early 1990s he told his parents that his

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4 http://www.islam.ru/newmuslim/izvestn/Lev/
5 Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiyskoi Imperii (The Complete Collection of Laws of Russian Empire), T. 21, № 15352. St.-Petersburg, 1830.
name would be Abdul. Taras was brought in in Christian intelligencia family but his parents were always teaching him to search for truth by his own. That’s why they understood and accepted this choice. He explained with what aspects of Christianity he was not satisfied:

"All of it is based on the irrationality. I believe because it is absurd. But I want to believe because it is reasonable. Islam is a religion of knowledge and intellect. All in Islam is based on reliable information or on the law and logic. Of course every religion states things that can not be proven - the existence of God. From this point of view, each religion is absurd. Religion, but not God. Allah cannot be absurd because absurd can not create. So the true religion must have the inner logic. Islam has it. At least Islam can explain many things that Christianity cannot. Why should we avoid alcohol? Because half of crime is committed in a state of intoxication. Why should we avoid pork? Because it contains too much cholesterol. And the most important - Christian dogma about the Trinity. How something can be a single and equivalent to that consists of three parts? Actually this dogma was confirmed by people at the World Assembly-2 three and a half centuries after the death of Jesus Christ. The are a lot of such ambiguity in Kristienity. That is why I accepted Islam".  

Two years ago Shamil Matveev’s name was Russian name Vladimir. 12 years he was active in the human rights movement. During the first Chechen war (1994-1996) he began to participate in demonstrations and to show interest in Islam. "I understood, so Shamil, that Islam is not an authoritarian religion as some think. It is more liberal than Christianity. For example imams and elected and not appointed from above. In Islam there are firm law statutes. Besides, the religious leaders stand above the government, not below it ".

A singer Yulian (Jebrail) who embraced Islam in 2005, said: "During all my life, I was preparing myself to accept Islam. I love Islam and ibadat and stand in it in earnest".

Conclusion is that Russian Islam is a proper and positive development. A sector of Russian culture featured by Islam in the situation when other sectors are in decline, have opportunity to become one of the most important and influential force in the development of Russian society in the future.

Dr. Victor A. Pogadaev is an Assoc. Professor of Lomonosov Moscow State University (Russia), now attached to University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). E-mail: victor@um.edu.my

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6 http://old.sektam.net/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=7
7 http://www.religare.ru/print7124.htm
Twentieth Century Bengali Poetry: A Critical Note
- Sk. Makbul Islam

Abstract
Twentieth century has its due significance in the history of India. Radical changes in political system, scientific discoveries in the world, invention of new theories in the field of pure sciences and social sciences altogether brought about many changes and transformation in the culture of India and in the minds of her people which have found expression through the entire cultural configuration of this country, of which, literature is a very significant part. This paper proposes to throw light on the 20th century, with particular reference to Bengali poetry involving the following selected issues –

- The perspective of the 20th Century Bengal and her Literature
- Poet Rabindranath and his influence on Bengali poetry
- Emergence of “Modern Poetry” by transgressing Rabindranath
- Western influence on the Bengalee poets
- The Rebellious Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam: Orissa’s Response
- Evaluating some general trends of the 20th Century Bengali poetry
- Conclusion

Full Version of Paper
The Perspective of 20th Century Bengal and her Literature

It would be more justified to mention that the perspective of the 20th century Bengal is partly the nursling of yester centuries and partly the experiences sprung up from the time frame of the 20th century itself. Literature in general and cultural history in particular, cannot be evaluated properly without considering the diachronic dimension of the 19th century at least, if not more.

The rural set up of our culture of medieval period experienced gradual collapse in late Mughal and British period, grossly interrupting the political, economic and cultural spheres. The East India Company was given Sanad by the Mughals and later on, the British occupied the prime position of state power in 1757. Consequently, a good number of business centers were developed by the efforts of the British. As a result, the business based economy emerged and the economy of Bengal confronted a conflict between agrarian economy and business based economy. The joint family set up started disintegrating inviting some major changes in vision and traditional value system. The trend of Bhakti (Devotion) and Adhyatmabad (Spirituality) started declining gradually by the emergence of staunch materialistic, individualistic as well as the so called rationalistic views.

Besides, some of the inventions and events in the field of science, technology, politics, history and culture in different parts of the world altogether have also contributed a lot in laying the edifice of the “20th Century Mind”. Sum of such inventions and events may be referred to here in this context -

i. Newton’s Theory of Gravitation (1687) and Monodynamics (1687);
ii. Invention of Steam Engine by James Watt (1776);
iii. The Freedom of America (1776);
iv. The French Revolution (1789);
v. Karl Marx’s Dialectical Materialism (1848);
vi. The Industrial Revolution (1848-1850);
vii. Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution (1859);
viii. Benedetto Croce’s concept of intuition and expression (1902)
ix. Sigmund Freud’s interpretation of human mind (1900 – 1904);
x. Einstein’s Theory of Relativity (1905),
xi. Bergson’s Theory of Elan Vital (1907);
xii. The First World War (1914);
xiii. Revolution in Russia (1917-1918);
xiv. The Second World War (1939)
xv. Socialist Revolution in China (1949)

These are some of the references which have influenced not only Bengal but also the entire world in different terms to a perceptible degree. Some socio-political factors within India and Bengal, like – The Agitation of Bengal Divide (1905 -1911), the Martyrdom of Khudiram (1911); Jalianwala Bagh Massacre (1919); the Khilafat Movement (1919), the Non-Cooperation, Non-Violence Movement and the Dandi March of Mahatma Gandhi; the entire freedom movement of India – altogether have given birth to the history of the 20th Century.

So far as the history of the 20th Century Bengali Poetry is concerned, I must mention that I have to be selective and very precise in presenting my points. I have selected some specific areas to throw light on certain important points. The 20th Century Bengali poetry is a vast area. Here the term Bengali poetry involves the Bengali poems of West Bengal, Bangladesh, Tripura, Assam and some other pockets of India. The Geographical distribution of the Bengali poems may be shown in the diagram below:

![Bengali Poetry Diagram]

Technically, it is rather impossible to raise all the possible points within a short paper. For my presentation I have chosen the poets of undivided India and West Bengal, excepting exceptional case. Keeping this reality in my mind, I would like to pronounce some of my views in this critical note. I have tried to avoid any descriptive account and have given much emphasis on analysis and re-interpretation.
Poet Rabindranath and his influence on Bengali poetry

Poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), undoubtedly a towering talent of yester millenium, had left an indelible contribution to world literature as well as in Bengali literature. The time span of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) involves the second half of the 19th century and the first half of 20th century. So far as the influence of Rabindranath Tagore on the 20th century is concerned, I must mention that the Bengali poets of the first two decades of this century were fully hypnotized by the poetic miracles of Rabindranath. As a result, a number of Bengali poets had no other alternative than moving around Rabindranath’s orbit in their creation. Poets like-

Satyendranath Dutta (1882-1922),
Karunanidhan Bandopadhyay (1877-1955),
Jatindramohan Bagchi (1878-1948),
Kumud Ranjan Mullick (1882-1970),
Kirandhan Chattopadhyay (1887-1931),
Kalidas Roy (1889-1975) were so attracted by Rabindranath, that they did not think of any poetic creation beyond Tagore. Whatever they wanted to create, they did “like Rabindranath”. They emulated Tagore’s poems. Rabindranath had that mesmerizing potentiality in making the poets of Bengal think and create like Tagore. Consequently, those poets have sacrificed their individual talent and efficiency in imitating Tagore’s poetic creation. That is why no such remarkable poetic creation sprung up in the first two decades of the 20th century.

Emergence of “Modern Poetry” by transgressing Rabindranath

Whatever was known as “modern” in case of literature in Bengal initially, were protest against the thought and style of Tagore. After the first two decades of the 20th century, appeared Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899 – 1976). He is known as the “Rebellion Poet” (Bidrohi Kabi). Started his literary works as folk singer first and later on emerged as a ‘poet’. In this context the phase of Leto Singer of his life may be mentioned. But, Kazi Nazrul Islam was successful in elevating himself up to the national level. Like an unpredictable meteor, Nazrul appeared in Bengali literature.

Nazrul Islam was really different for being a “social conscious” poet (Samaj sachetan kabi) and he voiced his protest with unambiguous clarity. He never had any conscious intention to create some thing “new” in the field of Bengali poetry. It is certainly an accident that whatever literary works Kazi Nazrul had contributed to Bengali literature between 1920 and 1941 had shown a new threshold of creating ‘Unlike Rabindranath’ to the others. The poets of Bengal discovered that the content of Nazrul’s poem and the manner of his representation is very much “unlike Rabindranath”. Consequently, they followed the path of Nazrul Islam.

This does not mean that every poet followed or imitated Nazrul. Poets like - Jatindranath Sengupta (1887-1954), Jibananda Das (1899-1954), Sudhindranath Dutta (1909-1960), Bishnu De (1909-1981) have their distinct position as poet. A few lines about some of the selected poets may be added here.
Mohitlal Majumdar (1888-1952) initially was a follower of Tagore and declared his difference by referring to that love cannot ignore the body. Rabindranath’s idea of love was more romantic. However, the so called modern poetry started singing the song of physical-love which conspicuously dominated the 20th century poetry.

Jatindranath Sengupta (1887-1954) brought about his extreme materialistic view as well as Dukhabad against Rabindranath, by pronouncing –
‘Mithya prakriti miche ananda mithya rangin sukh
Satya satya sahashrya gun satya jibane dukh’

Such a philosophical stand has brought about a new flavour in Bengali poetry. Tagore’s vision was deep rooted in to the Sanatan Knowledge – the Upanishad. Rabindranath could turn his knowledge to wisdom with the help of his immeasurable devotion (Dhyan). In single word, Rabindranath was Anandabadi. He believed in God and believed in Satya, Mangal and Sundar (Truth, Goodness and Beauty). The poets of the third decade and thereafter, made a conscious departure form Tagore’s vision and appreciation of Anandabad. They indoctrinated themselves with more materialistic view by ignoring the Upanishadic consciousness. They denied Anandavad and tried to project Dukha (sorrow) to be the truth, laying more emphasis on death than life. Some of the poets have surrendered their consciousness to darkness and death. Naturally, the poetry of the third decades onward witnessed a series of new ideas like – morbidity, alienation, suicidal trend, materialism, physical love, political protest and so on.

Jibananda Das (1899-1954), sometimes eulogized death which has given him the status of a “Death Conscious Poet” (Mrityu Chetanar Kabi). He was Sur-realistic poet. He tried to reflect depression, dejection, death and disappointment to be more real in some of his poems. His Aat Bachar Age Ekdin is a representing poem in this regard. Of course, Jabananda Das tried to portray the complicated mind and the unfathomable subconscious psychic-reality of so called middle class urban people. This declares his exclusive position as poet. His love for nature and his style of portraying nature is also unparalleled in Bengali literature in post-Rabindranath period.

The modern poets of the third and fourth decades have shown their impatience regarding Rabindranath’s Romanticism, Optimism and intense inclination towards God. Poet like Sudhindranath Dutta (1909-1960) had surrendered unto alienation and annihilation introducing a new style of his own.

Portrayal of Political and Ideological Thought
Incorporation of political strategies and political ideologies into the core of Bengali poems was perceived. The rise of terrorist movement emphasizing violence (1902 onwards), the rise of Non-violence Movement and Non-cooperation by Mahatma Gandhi (1919-1921), the rise of communist ideology in 1925-1926, the development of communal power-politics and incidents of communal riots (1926 and 1946), the rise of Adolf Hitler’s totalitarianism, the 2nd World War (1939), our Freedom
Movement and separation of India-Pakistan (1947) – altogether have influenced the Bengali poetry.

As a result, anti-communal voice, oscillation between terrorist movement and Gandhi’s Non-violence were reflected through Kazi Nazrul Islam’s writings (1922-1940). Leftist and Marxist ideology as well as fight against the egalitarian power were found in poetic expression made by Bishnu De (1909-1981), Samar Sen, Subhas Mukhopadhyay, Arun Mitra, Sukanta Bhattacharyya (1926-1947), Dinesh Das etc.

The agony of partition of India was reflected through the poems of Arun Mitra. Socio-political ideas like love for the subaltern class and hope for economic-equality are found in Nazrul Islam, Premendra Mitra, Subhas Mukhopadhyay.

**Style and Configuration**
Along with thematic and ideological variations, the forms and philosophy of writing poetry, also underwent some experiments in conformity to some movements of art and literature originated in the West, like - Fauvism (1906), Cubism (1909), Dadaism (1916-1920), Symbolist Movement, Imagist Movement, Impressionism (1874-), Expressionism (1910-1925), Sur-realism (1904-), Existentialism (1843-), Futurism, Feminism etc. However, Jibananda Das is marked as sur-realist poet. His poems like - Bidal, Harinera, Ghora - are some among the famous sur-realist poems in Bengali literature. Taslima Nasrin is well known for writing from feministic point of view. All such effort together tells of that the poets of the 20th century tried a lot to get of Tagore’s influence. Hence, Raindranath was the personality whom the poets tried to follow or tried to come out of his orbit. However, Tagore was the visible or the invisible factor for the poets of Bengal, whom the entire 20th century could not deny.

**Western Influence on the Bengali poets**
Western influence on Bengali poetry is very much conspicuous in the 20th century. Poets like Rossetti, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), D. H. Lawrence, Lord Tennyson, Boudelaire, Mallarme - have inspired some of the Bengali poets of the 20th century. With reference to the western influence on the Bengalee poets, I would like to present brief account of only two poets namely – Jibananda Das and Buddhadev Basu. Both the poets, initially, were influenced by Tagore. But later on, they have developed their independent style incorporating the influence of the West and their own vision.

**Jibananda Das (1899-1954):**
Incidentally, we find some similarity in the life of both Jibananda and W. B. Yeats (1865-1939). Born in Ireland, Yeats has seen an agriculturist and the folklore treasures (like folk tale fairy tale) which have influenced his mind. Jibananda Das too was born in Eastern Bengal where agrarian society predominated and he was inspired by the rich folk tradition of Bengal. The social perspective wherefrom Yeats and Jibananda have originated is almost similar.
However, we come across some striking similarity in the poems of Jibananda and Yeats. In this regard we can make comparison between Yeats and Jibananda (Mitra, 1986 : 76).

Yeats wrote –

Curlue, cry no more in the air,  
Or only to the water in the west  
because your crying brings to my mind  
passion-deemed eyes and long heavy hair… (He reproves the Curlew)

Jibananda Das wrote –

hai chil  
sonali danar chil, ei bhije megher dupure  
tumi ar ude ude kendonako dhansidi naditir pase!  
tomar kannar sure beter mata tar mlan chokh mone ase! (Hai Chil)

We must observe the semblance of using symbolism in the two creations made by Yeates and Jibananda.

T. S. Elliot was another poet whose influence on Jibananda Das (including many other poets of the 20th century) is conspicuous. The depression, the dejection, the monotony of city life and the agony of the age as have been reflected through the poems of Eliot, has inspired Jibananda too (Mitra, 1986 : 76). The following lines may illustrate the idea –

the brown waves of fog toss up to me  
twisted faces form the bottom of the street,  
and tear from a passer by with muddy skirts  
an aimless smile that hovers in the air  
and vanishes along the level of the roofs

(Morning at the Window: Prufrock, 1917)

We find that Jibananda Das has also portrayed the grim picture of city Kolkata that has witnessed the 2nd world war (1939), famine (1942-1943) and communal right (1946). However, his portrayal of the city reminds us about T. S. Eliot, such as –

Anek rat hoyeche – anek gabhir rat hoyeche;  
Kolkatar phutpath theke phutpathe-phutpath theke phutpathe-  
Kayekti adim srapini sahodarar moto  
Ei je tram lain charidye ache  
Payer tale, samastha sarirer rakte eder bishakta bishad sparsha  
Anubhab kore hantchi ami (Phootpathe: Mahaprithibi)

Like T. S. Eliot, Jibananda was a poet of time-consciousness (Samay Chetana). Jibananda’s Banalata Sen is remarkable poem where consciousness of time and space both are inter-woven together.

hajar bachar dhare ami path hantitechi prithibir pathe  
simhal samudra theke nisither andhakare malay sagare anek ghurechi ami  
aro dur bidarbha nagare ami klanta pran ek  
chari dike jibaner samudra safen  
amare du danda santi diyechilo natorer banalata sen (Banalata Sen)
The poem *Banalata Sen* contains the influence of Baudelaire’s (1821-1867) poem “Hair”. For example –

languorous Asia, Africa, aglow,
whole world distant, absent, almost gone
rivers aromatic forest, deep in you!
is other soul to sea on music go,
Mine, o my love!

Jibananda wrote –

> chul tar kabekar andhakar bidishar nisha
> mukh tar srabastir karularya; atidur samudrer par
> hal bhenge je nabik harayeche disha
> sabuj ghaser desh jakhan chokhe dekhe daruchini dwiper bhiter
> Temani dekhe tare – (Banalata Sen)

Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) was another French poet. Apart from the English poets, French poets have also left their influence in Bengali literature. But many of the *Bengalee* poets have taken the taste of French poetry through English translation. Jibananda believed that English translation can also play a significant role in communicating the wisdom of the poem (Mitra, 1986 : 80).

Symbolist Rimbaud’s portrayal of hell is similarly present in Jibananda’s poem (Mitra, 1986: 93) –

> .. I die of thrust, I suffocate, I can not cry. This is Hell, eternal torment! See how the flames rise! I burn as I aught to. Go on Devil. (Night in Hell)

Jibananda wrote –

> Saper matan bish loye sei aguner phanse
> Jiban pudiya jay; - amrao jhare pude jai (Jiban: Dhusar Pandulipi)

Edgar Allan Poe (1809 – 1849) the American English poet, wanted to rest in dream. This is a way of forgetting the unbearable hard realities of life. He said that he is happy in dream (Mitra, 1986 : 101) –

> “I have been happy, tho (but) in dream…” (Dream)

Jibananda Das also tried to avoid the pain of time by inviting dreams –

> “Tomra chaliya aso, -
> Tomra chaliya aso sab!
> Bhule jao prithibrir oi byatha-byghat-bastab!
> (Swapner Hate: Dhusar Pandulipi)

**Paul Valeri (1871 – 1945)**

Paul Valeri originally a French poet, believed – “All literature which has passed a certain age reveals a tendency to create a poetic language apart form ordinary speech, with a vocabulary, syntax, licenses and prohibitions that differ more or less from those in ordinary use” (Mitra, 1986 : 93). Like Valeri, *Jibananda Das* also created *poetic language* of his own bringing about a new dimension in the Bengali poetry, like –

> Phalgunerandhakar niye ase sei samudra parer kahini
> Aparup khilan of gambujer bedanamoy rekha
In his poem ‘The Graveyard by the Sea”, Paul Valery had declared his faith towards life. He sang the song of life conquering the threat of death and destruction. Jibananda Das, in spite of portraying death and depression of the modern age, sometimes sang the song of life too –

\[ \text{Batase bhasitechilo dheu tule sei alodan} \\\	ext{odar kabar chede prithibir dike tai chute galo mon’} \]

(Jiban : Dhushar Pandulipi)

The influence of the Western poets on Jibananda may schematically be presented in the following diagram -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W. B. Yeats</th>
<th>T. S. Elliot</th>
<th>Baudlaire</th>
<th>Rimbaud</th>
<th>Edgar Allan Poe</th>
<th>Paul Valeri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhadev Das</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buddhadev Basu (1908-1973) was also influenced by a band of western poets. Without entering into any detailed information, I shall refer some of the Budhadev Basu’s poems which contain the influence of the Western Poets (Tripathy, 1997 : 69, 79, 81, 85, 85).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budhadev Basus Poem</th>
<th>Influenced by Western Poets like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papi (Prithibir Pathe)</td>
<td>D. H. Lawrence (Manifesto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serenad (Kankabati)</td>
<td>Tennyson (The Ballad of Oriana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabita (Kankabati)</td>
<td>D. G. Rossetti (Troy Town)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janma (Natun Pata)</td>
<td>Lawrence (New Heaven and Earth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samudrasnane (Natun Pata)</td>
<td>Lawrence (Wedlock)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We compare the text of Buddhadev Basu and Lawrence to appreciate the influence (Tripathy, 1997 : 85) -
Rebellion Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam: Orissa’s Response

Some of the Bengalee poets have influenced the poets of Orissa (the neighbouring state of Bengal). I think it would not be irrelevant if I mention the Bengal-Orissa Relation in terms of poetry, highlighting the case of Kazi Narul Islam (1899 – 1976). Nazrul, commonly known as the “Rebellion Poet” of Bengal had inspired some of the Oriya poets to infuse the spark of fire into their consciousness to voice protest against the existing system.

Poets of Orissa like Rabi Sing, Kishore Das, Annada Sankar Roy - are some of the names whose names may be referred to in this connection. I must clarify that the Oriya poets have their own distinct vision sharing similar social psychology and finally had to confront the same sociopolitical consequences as Bengal did. Naturally they had not imitated Kazi Nazrul Islam. But, they liked the high potential of protest and unbeatable vitality of Nazrul Islam. They made their own way of expression, which reminds us of Kazi Nazrul at the same time presents the distinct aesthetic identity of the Oriya poets.

The most significant work needs to be highlighted in this connection is Nalini Devi Rrout Roy’s Oriya translation of Nazrul (“Nazrul Samchayani” 1962, Bijay Shree Prakshani, 16 Cantonment Road, Cuttack). She had translated 37 poems of Nazrul in Oriya. Only one copy of the book is preserved in Kolkata National Library (Accession No. OR 891 441 N 756 SR). It was a very good translation rendered by Nalini Devi. She believed - “a good translation is adored and accepted as the original poem do” (Islam, 2005 : 106).

Poet Brajanath Rath has translated Nazrul’s poem – Nababharater Haldighat – into Oriya. Dr. Krishna Chandra Bhuian has translated two famous poems (song) of Nazrul namely – “mora ekai brinte duti kusum hindu-muslaman” and a famous song namely – “ganga sindhu sarmada kaberijamuna oij” (Islam,2005 : 109).

What was Nazrul’s reaction regarding Orissa? It is his appreciation of Lord Jagannath. Nazrul mentioned that Lord Jagannath personifies castelessness. While voicing his protest against the narrowness of caste system and untouchability, he had referred to the name of Jagannath. He mentioned –
So far as the Bigraha of Lord Jagannath of Orissa is concerned, Nazrul appreciated Him as the embodiment of a casteless vision. And in support of Nazrul’s vision, I may mention a Oriya proverb – “katakare rati nahi, purustamare jati nahi”. Not only Nazrul, the people of Bengal have their deep respect for Lord Jagannath.

**Evaluating some general trends of 20th Century Bengali poetry**

It has been observed that the 20th century Bengali poets have tried to find some new ways in configuring Bengali poetry. The first two decades of the 20th century (1900-1920) was fully absorbed in Rabindranath, resulting in a complete phase of imitation. The second two decades (1921-1940) has witnessed a collective conscious effort to transgress the hypnotizing influence of Tagore, by creating some thing new and unlike him. The poets of later decades (1941-2000), like – Mangalacharan Chattopadhyay, Birendra Chattopadhyay, Nirendranath Chakraborty, Sankha Ghosh, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Shakti Chattopadhyay, Joy Goshwamin, Nabanita Dev Sen, Kabita Simha, Mullika Sengupta, Bithi chattopadhyay, Taslima Nasrin – are some of the names may be referred to in this context. Their general trend is to portray the conflicts of the middle-class life, death consciousness, love, romanticism and voicing protest against the corrupted social system.

Once, the poets of Bengal tried to get rid of the influence of Rabindranath Tagore. But time has proved that it is difficult or rather impossible to transgress Rabindranath in any term. Surprisingly, some of the poets engaged in opposing Tagore got their inspiration form the writings of Tgore himself! Whatever they have created in the name of new creation or modern creation proved to be highly “temporal” by the judgment pronounced by time. They lack the wisdom, the vision and the profound realization what Tagore had. In spite of all such criticism, I must admit that some times the social situation wants literature to pronounce some temporal issues. And like eternal, temporal too, has its significance in the social scenario that our country had undergone during the second half of the 20th century.

**Conclusion**

The influence of the English poetry, and the thought of the Western poets have shown a new path in thinking in a different way as well as in configuring their concept in the form of poetry. Bengalee poets have made a conscious effort to come out of Rabindrnath’s influence by creating something “new” and consequently achieved success to some extent in doing so in their term.

The 20th Century is categorically divided into two segments - colonial and post-colonial. However, the British domination has forced us to be equipped with new vision and spirit, with new inner-power and initiatives to make India “independent” in its diverse connotation.

The poets of 20th century had made conscious experiments with the forms and content of the poetry. Rabindranath himself and thereafter Jibananda Das were very much
successful in portraying the picture of the city - Kolkata. Jibananda imposed social significance in the description of city life.

Human body received due emphasis in interpreting love and a number of poets have followed this path. Women were treated with both love and hatred.

Finally, the set up of traditional Indian mind like - loyalty to the rich philosophy of Veda, Upanishada, Bhagabata, Purana, the wisdom of *Sanatana Culture* - started vanishing gradually, as the poets of the 20th century moved more towards West than – the wisdom sprung up from this mighty country - India.

I agree that sometimes, the contemporary situation demands something new to interpret or to confront the emerging complexities of social life. This is essential but it is a temporal necessity, certainly having its limitation. But departure form the some total *Sanatan-wisdom*, made our existence rootless devoid of our cultural identity. In Bengal, Rabindranath was the last poet to have that potentiality.

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*Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam*, Associate Professor, St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College, Kolkata, India; Email: ife@rediffmail.com; skmakbulislam@rediffmail.com
Reflection
Unexplored Manuscript of Jagannath in Nepal: A Brief Note
- Sk. Makbul Islam

Abstract
While working on the impact of Sri Jagannath Consciousness in Nepal, I had the opportunity to collect information about a manuscript relating to Jagannath Pratishta (Rites and Rituals of establishing Sri Jagannath). This short article presents a descriptive account highlighting its importance in Sri Jagannath Studies.

Full version of Note
This is an interesting event in my research life. I was working as the Principal Investigator of UGC Major Research Project on “Sri Jagannath Consciousness in West Bengal, Nepal and Bangladesh” (2009-2011). I visited Nepal with Professor Surendranath Dash, the Co-investigator of this project. We visited Bhaktapur to make survey on Sri Jagannath temples of that historical city. I contacted one of my close fried Professor Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, an eminent archaeologist of Nepal.

On 6th June 2011, Prof. Shrestha took us to different Jagannath temples of Bhaktapur area and interpreted me the history and cultural significance of Jagannath Consciousness Bhaktapur in particular and in Nepal in general.

I asked him: “Is there any manuscript of Jagannath in Nepal?”
Prof. Shrestha: “Yes. It is there. I have one friend. He is a priest of Jagannath temple itself”.

I asked: “Can you show me the manuscript?”
Prof. Shrestha: “The priest is not available right now. It is impossible this time”.

Naturally, I had to suppress all my thoughts and eagerness about manuscript on Sri Jagannath. I was disappointed too. I do not know whether I should come next time for this purpose or not. My project is going to be completed very soon.

It was probably end of 2011. I got an e-mail from Nepali Folklore Society. Prof. Tulashi Diwasa, Prof. C. M. Bandhu, Prof. Abhi Subedi and Dr. Bhim Rengmi jointly have sent me an e-mail asking me to attend the 4th International Folklore Congress in Kathmandu, Nepal during 15-18th August 2012. I asked Prof. Sujay Kumar Mandal to go Kathmandu along with me and he agreed. Immediately I arrived in Kathmandu airport, I made a telephone call to Professor Purushottam Lochan Shrestha asking him to contact his priest-friend to bring the manuscript of Sri Jagannath. Professor Shrestha told me - “all right”.

It was 3.00 pm on 14th August 2012 when I reached Professor Shrestha’s residence. His priest-friend Sri Vinod Raj Sharma was present there. I was highly delighted to to see him and gave a copy of my book ‘Sri Jagannath of Nepal’ (See: Islam) to him. We really exchanged very cordial gestures of friendship. We also had a homely conversation regarding the manuscript. Selected part of the discussion may be rendered here to convey the spirit of conclusion.
Author: Namaskar, please tell me your name.
Vinod Sharma: Vinod Raj Sharma

Author: I have heard that your family has been serving Sri Jagannath … may I know how long have you been serving?
Vinod Sharma: Tentatively 300 years …

Author: I have heard from Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, your friend, that there is a manuscript in your house … may I know what this manuscript is about?
Vinod Sharma: This is about “Sri Jagannath Pratshta Bidhi” (Rules of establishing Sri Jagannath)

Author: How old the manuscript is?
Vinod Sharma: My grand father’s grand father had collected this. The manuscript is there in our house since his time – around three hundred years.

Author: In which language and in which script this manuscript was written?
Vinod Sharma: Newari language.

Author: Can you tell me any specific date?
Vinod Sharma: 15 Jayastha 663 Sambat, Purnima

Author: How many pages are there in this manuscript?
Vinod Sharma: Not so lengthy – 47 pages

Author: Please allow me to photocopy the manuscript or to take still picture. This manuscript is a significant document of Sri Jagannath research in the entire continent.
Vinod Sharma: Islamji, please forgive me. This manuscript is wealth of our family. The tradition of our Jagannath-Sadhana is tied up with it. This manuscript is preserved with full purity and sanctity in our family. I have brought it out exclusively for you. It is impossible to give you the full photocopy of this manuscript. Our ancestors hardly wanted the full text of the manuscript to be disclosed in public. I too, can not violate the tradition. Please forgive me…

Author: Can I take the manuscript in my hand?
Vinod Sharma: Certainly - certainly. I don’t allow everybody to touch it. You are a servant of Jagannath -you can see it.

Author: I would have prepared the text of the manuscript if I get the photocopy of the same. I would have translated it from Newari to Bengali, Oriya and English languages. However – I should pay respect to your family tradition. I would like to convey my gratefulness to you for the coppration you have extended to me. I convey my Namaskar to you and Purushottam Lochan Shrestha on behalf of my country – India.
The salient information regarding the manuscript is mentioned here in a structured format below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of manuscript</th>
<th>“Jagannath Pratistha Bidhi”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time/Date</td>
<td>663 Nepali Sambat (1543 AD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiquity</td>
<td>470 years (in 2013 AD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Pages</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material/Made of</td>
<td>Hand made paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of manuscript</td>
<td>Newari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Complete Manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place where found</td>
<td>Bhaktapur, Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place where preserved</td>
<td>Preserved in priest’s house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Priest</td>
<td>Vinod Raj Sharma</td>
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<td>Data Collected by</td>
<td>Sk. Makbul Islam</td>
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<td>Sk. Makbul Islam</td>
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<td>Special Note</td>
<td>Probably copy of previous manuscript (Details not known)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copied by</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I know whatever I have presented in this brief note is just some structured information of a manuscript. But there is one important point to be considered within the fold of Sri Jagannath Research. The earliest date of the manuscript (663 Nepali Sambat; 1543 AD) corresponds to the date of establishment of Tripur-Sundari Jagannath temple which was established in the same year in the reign of king Paran Malla (1519-1547 AD). It is also possible that the manuscript was used to establish the Tripur-Sundari Jagannath temple. This is my hypothesis. Sri Chaitanyadeva left his mortal body in 1533 AD. The manuscript and the establishment of Tripur-Sundari Jagannath temple are recorded in 1543 AD – 10 years after Sri Chaitanyadeva’s demise. Whether Sri Chaitanya Deva’s influence had played any role in spreading Sri Jagannath Consciousness in Bhaktapur (Nepal) is yet to be explored.

I tried to make full documentation as well as textual analysis of the manuscript. But I had to compromise with situation. Apart from rendering information, this note also speaks of what I wanted to do but could not.

Reference

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Young Scholars Section
After effects of postcolonialism in the two novels of R.K. Narayan – ‘The Vendor of Sweets’ (1967) and ‘The Painter of Signs’ (1977)
- Amrita Bhattacharyya

Abstract
This paper shows the constant conflict, clashes and modifications between western and eastern values in the lives of the protagonists of Narayan novels.

Key Words
Postcolonialism, Gandhian ideals, modernity

Full version of the paper

R.K. Narayan’s (1906-2001) novels show the dilemmas and confusion and ambivalence in a world whose ethos has been challenged and modified by the after effects of postcolonialism. The novels generally depict the traditional Indian values adhered to by individuals crumbling in the face of the pressure of modernity and a postcolonial world where consumerism, materialism and individual growth in the form of rat race is the order of the day. The individuals try to modify their values and try to adapt to the newly changed world. The colonialists have left this world but the vestiges of their influence have seeped deep into the new generation and traditional values get threatened. As in most of the novels the Indian values are pitted against the western ones and the Indian values get moulded. The dissimilarity between the Indian and western values has been propounded by Narayan himself in his book, ‘My Dateless Diary: An American Journey’:

“…America and India are profoundly different in attitude and philosophy, though it would be wonderful if they could complement each other’s values. Indian philosophy stresses austerity and unnumbered, uncomplicated day-to-day living. America’s emphasis, on the other hand is on material acquisition and the limitless pursuit of prosperity.”

While this is the pressure of American consumerism on Indian youth, the British love for power and fame is everpresent in the Indian blood. This is shown ironically in Narayan’s short story “Lawley Road”:

“For years people were not aware of the existence of Municipality in Malgudi. The town was none the worse for it. Diseases if they started, ran their course and disappeared, for even diseases must end someday.”

Then there is the obsession of re-naming the streets. There is also a heap of unused stones of the municipality lying on the pavement for road making since 1947. As there is vast difference between the promise of politicians and their work, there is also difference in Jagan’s views and actions.
Gandhian ideals became the watch word of the day with elderly people and even the students. Gandhian ideals of Satyagraha consisted of Satya or search for truth, ahimsa or non-violence and tapasya or self-suffering. Jagan in ‘The Vendor of Sweets’ (1967) refers to the title character and has taken Mahatma Gandhi as his role model. The role of Gandhi on the Indian consciousness has been immense like almost a saint. Mahatma Gandhi has served as the model for emulation both in public and private life. The process of emancipation from the British through an elaborate ritual of Swadeshi, Carkha, Tiranga (tricolour of Indian flag), khaddar or home spun thread initiated against the colonisers as often seen in the Bhagavad Gita equivalent to the struggle against evil. But how far is Jagan a Gandhian? Jagan prides himself on the fact that he “had to leave college when Gandhi ordered us to non-cooperate.” The narrator divulges that actually Jagan had failed several times in his college examinations. Then he also tells lies to Grace that Mali has written him letters. Jagan later decides to implement Gandhian non-cooperation with his son’s business venture. Jagan also follows the Gandhian principle for swift action after a decision is made. He gathers up courage to talk with Grace after reminding himself that once he had planted the Indian flag in place of the Union Jack and found himself in prison.

Jagan has implemented the Gandhian ideals and his father’s view of life in his lifestyle which often takes him to the extreme level not for the betterment of society but as a means of self-satisfaction. Jagan is a widower like Narayan himself and his cousin flatters him by saying, “You have perfected the art of living on nothing.” (p.10) Jagan is a philosopher who delivers his views about the modified ways of living which often sound a nuisance for himself and others. He gradually becomes a cynic of everything European – he detests seeing himself in the mirror as it is an “intolerable European habit,” wears a loose jibba over his dhoti made of thread spun by himself. He spins the Charkha everyday for an hour – a vow he had taken after Gandhi visited the town of Malgudi twenty years before. He even wears shoes made out of the leather of an old animal which died due to old age. The process of tanning which he conducts himself is described in a mock-ironic fashion by the narrator. Jagan has also given up salt. This is reminiscent of Gandhi’s Dandi March as a protest against the monopoly of the British government on salt. Jagan has also replaced sugar by twenty drops of honey in hot water and given up rice and takes stone-grounded wheat with honey and vegetables. He does not forget to read Bhagvad Gita but later he replaces it with the letters sent from America. He does not eat fruits like guava and prescribes that socks are not good for health.

Jagan’s deeply traditional Indian values can be contrasted with his sense of economy and attitude of a businessman. The first thing which strikes us in his sweet shop is the framed picture of Goddess Lakshmi who is the goddess of wealth. He sells the excess cloth spun by him to the local hand-loom committee and proudly pockets five rupees which is a meagre amount considering his sprawling business. He measures his swadeshi feeling in cash, does not like to count his earnings even in front of his cousin. He is also a manipulator as he pays tax on his earnings upto six o’clock and the excess earnings finds protection behind the portrait of Mr.Noble in the loft at home. He is also very careful about locking the drawer in which he keeps his cash and gets the lock doubly checked by
a second person. While Jagan’s life is based on the proverb, “Simple living and high thinking,” his cousin confesses, “I cannot understand why you go on working and earning, taking all the trouble!” which is also the dilemma of the westerners and Narayan breaks the illusion of India as only a land of sadhus and spirituality where unemployment is also a real fact. Jagan also has some economic theories and is strict in following them. Thus Jagan cannot be said to be completely insular to traditional Indian values but who is very much aware of the changing circumstances of the age.

Compared to Jagan, his son Mali can be said to be the western equivalent of the prodigal son who detests everything which is Indian and is totally satirical about his country. Mali has imbibed in himself all the negative aspects of the western values. He is literally HomiBhaba’s mimic man. Jagan is stuffed with information about the American way of life but Mali’s heretical views about Indian food habit and his new beef-eating habit shocks Jagan. Mali writes in his letter, “I sometimes feel ashamed when India asks for American aid. Instead of that, why not slaughter useless cows which wander in the streets and block the traffic?” Jagan is most unsettled when Mali brings a Korean-American wife and his cousin is curious to know about “that casteless girl at home” (p.60) and whether they eat meat. Mali is restless about his misplaced luggage, inconvenience of not having a telephone and the time wasted at the railway office for his novel writing machine to get cleared. Later Mali expresses dissent about eavesdropping neighbours and the scorching Indian sun. Jagan also is not fully satisfied with his country like Mali and suggests many alterations. As a measure for eradicating the paupers everyone should “eat off plates… unlike the leaves which are thrown out after dinner for vagrants to pick.”(p.16) and “his head throbbed with several national and human problems and their ramifications.”(p.17)

Often Jagan’s life based on his theories becomes a source of problem for others. Jagan has inherited from his father the love of nature and its products. He has even written a book on Nature and natural remedies waiting to be published. He takes pride in his “father who died at ninety without a single tooth loose in his jaw”(p.20) which is the result of brushing one’s teeth with Margosa twigs. Jagan even denied his wife her dose of aspirins and called it poison. Greta Garbo, the American actress once asked Narayan “Do you owe those teeth of yours to your vegetarian diet? Do all Indian have strong teeth?” and Narayan was proud to tell, “Even the poorest have strong and resplendent teeth in our country.”

Jagan is also a deeply religious man. He decides to offer coconuts to Ganesha at the temple for Mali’s safe landing in America. Jagan uses his prayer time as a tactics to isolate himself from Mali’s novel making machine’s business but he is always distracted even when he opens Bhagvad Gita. Jagan even enlightens his shop boys and cook on Gita. Jagan’s ultimate realisation occurs when ChinnaDorai, the sculptor and a hair dyer makes him realise that he lives in a self-centred life. Jagan finds that Chinna’s master lived in closer relation with nature and finds that his strict diet has left him without energy to carry a stone. Jagan is suspicious about Chinna being the illegal offspring of his master and sceptic about the stone which seemed ordinary rather than marked out for the ten-handed goddess, Gayatri. Chinna, a man of sixty nine claims to finish the statue before dying though the stone might be damaged from within. The enthusiastic Chinna suggests
that the lotus pond can be a retreat for Jagan but he has to buy it first. They talk about the Hindu custom of Vanaprastha or renouncing the security of household at old age but even that has to be supplemented with the cheque book. Jagan is aesthetically inspired and at sixty feels that he is in a new ‘janma’: “I am a new personality and have to speak a new tongue.”(p.124)

Before Jagan reaches this stage of realisation the dualities in his character can be studied. His views on the art of making sweets sound inconsistent. While he knows that leftover jilebi(a sweet) will be a waste, the other sweets can be pulped together, fried and resold as he philosophically justifies his trickery by saying, ‘‘After all, everything consists of flour, sugar, and flavours...” (p.13). Jagan feels for the little school children who looks longingly at his sweets but his rising conscience is checked by the rising statistics of expenditure. He is satisfied that he has not raised the price inspite of sugar crisis and uses pure cow’s ghee. It is only when Jagan separates his commercial self from the desires and anxieties of the world, that he desides to reduce the price of sweets and distribute free sweets. This acts as a catharsis which makes him realise that “I have felt things to drift too long”. While Sivaraman, the cook is “afraid that stagnant business might limit prospects and promotions”, later he thought this is another clever step to increase customers. But later Jagan has to revert to his old price because of the protest from neighbouring shopkeepers and at last left the reins of his business to his cousin and son, Mali.

Jagan has high regard for the traditional literature exemplified by “Kalidasa suddenly bursting into inspired song.”(p.33) But his aesthetic view is not always far away from his commercial ventures. Jagan is interested in his son’s adventure because, “I have heard that writers earn a lot of money nowadays. They become famous.”(p.29) Mali hopes to participate in the novel writing competition for the prize money of twenty-five thousand rupees. Jagan is disheartened when Mali leaves his venture and angry when he learns about his American stint: “Did Valmiki go to America or Germany in order to learn to write his Ramayana?”(p.45) When Mali after coming back to India proposes his business of story-writing machine, Jagan makes Grace aware about the epics which were composed orally. Mali’s grand venture of competing with America with the quantity of published books makes a dig at India’s blind imitation of foreign capitalism without any regard to quality.

Jagan can be compared to blind Dhritarashtra of Mahabharata – the great epic where the blind king so much loved his vicious son Duryodhon that he was blind to his follies. Similarly, Jagan from the first sympathises with his motherless son “Poor boy, poor boy, let him be”(p.17) and he is very conscious about his son’s physique and reflects that he “must give him some time.”(p.18) Narayan calls him “a cowardly father”(p.24) and his “maternal obsession”(p.24) about Mali’s eating habit. He is possessive and has high expectations about Mali and wants to make him his clone: “I hope he will also emulate my philosophy of living. Simple living and high thinking, as Gandhi has taught us.” Jagan is thrilled by the word ‘service’ which Gandhi used in 1937, addressing the Malgudians. Mali will also do a service by writing novels and the cousin delivers service of spying over Mali very effectively when Jagan’s communication with his son has
ceased. Jagan never dissuades his son from leaving college because he thinks: “Perhaps he wants to educate himself in the school of life.” When Mali wanted to talk to Jagan’s cousin about his plans, the cousin says, “I’m at your service” expressing the servility of a colonised for a foreign returned son.

The relation between father and son has long ceased to be filial but evolved into economic terms. As the narrator says that on the eve of Mali’s leaving college and his splendid plans for novel writing: “The only link between them was the five-rupee currency note that he left on the hall table every morning and checked later to find out if it had been accepted.”(p.42)

The cousin aptly draws the conclusion that their relationship has reached to such a point that Jagan cannot speak to Mali at all and the cousin acts as the mediator. Mali knows the way to his father’s money and Jagan says indulgently: “What is the cash worth to me? It’s all for him.”(p.49)

But actually Jagan is thinking of a more safe place to hoard his money. Jagan is really very happy when Mali sends a ten cent letter rather than waste on a costly telegram which could have relieved his fears much earlier. Mali’s flight to America is like a “pilgrimage” (p.55) to a “country of millionaires” (p.55). When Mali comes back he has become a stranger and his attire provoked Jagan to address him as “sir”. The spoons and knives in the picnic hamper gifted by Mali was of no use to Mali and he locked it away. Mali distances himself from others and “carried himself like a celebrity avoiding the attention of the rabble.”(p.61) Jagan feels uncomfortable in a world where power relations have shifted and he feels like “a petitioner in his own house”(p.75), waiting for an interview with Mali just like Mali used to nag for money like a child. Mali has taken his father so much for granted that he is confident that his father will finance his whole business venture.

Jagan’s relationship with Mali’s supposed wife Grace is the perfect union between tradition and modernity which lasts for little time. While Jagan is aware of Grace’s upbringing, he is surprised and disillusioned about his son when he learns that the letters were actually written by Grace herself. Grace readily accommodates herself into the role of an Indian daughter-in-law and even wears a sari. Grace’s ecstasy of “living in a house like this”(p.62) might be due to her unstable upbringing. Her respect and admiration for a father figure like Jagan might be due to the painful memory of her American soldier father who deserted her Korean mother. Grace’s apprehension about the rigid caste system in India is pushed aside by Jagan for his own convenience. Grace’s overindulgent and enthusiastic household works and her involvement in the novel writing machine, irritates Jagan and he is bound to surmise her as a “charmer from outer Mongolia”. Grace even tells Jagan that she might have been a Hindu in her last life. Jagan becomes very upset when he learns that they are unmarried and simply living together. Jagan feels himself tainted just like his relatives who ceased all relations with him for bringing a foreigner daughter-in-law. But later when he decides to go for a retreat he has no grudge towards Grace and promises to buy her ticket to America. He decides not to actively support his alcoholic son’s misdeeds but will always help him financially.
Jagan reminiscences about his own marriage where his views and opinions were never asked for. Jagan had to unwillingly go through a whole ritual of being a grave son-in-law. He also disagreed with many opinions of his father like his asking dowry of five thousand rupees. His mother assessed the in-laws by their quality of the gifts of silverware and criticised the gold belt which was not so heavy. While Jagan preferred to be in a dhoti and jibba he was made to wear a tweed suit. The narrator tells that “Jagan felt particularly martyred and would have been happier with fewer relatives and friends around.” (p.161)

Jagan also remembers the taunts and jeers which his wife, Ambika had to bear for remaining childless for ten years. Jagan and his wife were led to the temple on Badri Hill where “No one who prays at that temple is ever disappointed with a daughter.” (p.172) Amruta Rao in her book, 'Women Then' points out that “The institution of marriage has always occupied very important position in Hindu society, so also during this period not only parents but also the king of the country was held responsible to get the daughters married to brave and strong men from good families.”

Just as the society had its bias towards unmarried maidens, barren women and widows in the postcolonial and modern world, Jagan and Raman in The Painter of Signs (1977) fear of their impotence. The roles are reversed in ‘The Painter of Signs’ where Raman is rejected and heart-broken after Daisy ditches him. A man of strict and punctual business, Raman’s world is turned upside down when he encounters Daisy.

‘The Painter of Signs’ written in 1977 during the state of Emergency declared by the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, depicts the tale of a modern woman and a conventional man trying hard to cope with a strong woman’s unconventionality and individuality. The events recounted in the novel takes place around 1972 when change has set in. Raman observes the “bunch of young men, students of the local college, admirers of hippie philosophers, as evident from their side burns and check shirts” and the Mempi Hills has become the base for a hydroelectric project. While reminiscing about his loss in painting a signboard for the lawyer, Raman embark on a tirade against the whole nation of black marketeering: “What about the American milk powder meant for the orphans of India and sold on the black market? What about the government hospital surgeon who flourished his knife like an assassin and made money and acquired the much-coveted building sites beyond the railway crossing! And that wholesale grain merchant who cornered all the rationed articles and ran the cooperative stores meant for the poor?” (p.356). He is also concerned about the sprawling business of his rival Jayaraj who is illiterate.

Raman is self-sufficient and a rationalist and so does not support his aunt’s occasional fast. When his aunt narrates her life and her lore of beauty and the “several children in the house” (p.361) because according to her, “It’s not like these days when people are afraid of children.” (p.361) Raman feels a grudge and says, “How could the Age of Reason be established if people were like this! Impossible.” (p.361) Raman also does not like the inquisitiveness of his aunt regarding his whereabouts. His aunt also recounts the story of his grandfather who lived with a concubine but her grandmother bore it silently, converted her lusty husband into a father of several children. But the old grandfather remarried at the age of seventy five, a girl of seventeen, to give a lesson to his eldest son.
Raman’s aunt is a traditional woman who is ignorant and feels that children are born by God’s will. Later when Raman is going to marry Daisy, who she feels is out of caste and a Christian, she decides to go on a pilgrimage to Badrinath and Hardwar to wash her sins.

Very much removed from her religious aunt, Raman is obsessed with money and sex which apparently he likes to refuse to himself. He cannot erase from his memory the image of the woman bathing in the river. The narrator voices the general thoughts of his generation in this sexually explicit novel: “Money and sex, he reflected, obsessive thoughts, too much everywhere – literature, magazines, drama, or cinema deal with nothing but sex all the time, but the female figure, water-soaked is enchanting.” Later Raman was unable to resist his masculinity on the verge of raping Daisy.

The general picture of Malgudi is people’s concern about the increase of profit. While the just qualified lawyer is superstitious about the opening ceremony of his office, the bangle seller rejects the signboard because the colour red might dissuade the customers from buying his products for credit. There is Gupta, who tries to trick the income tax officers by changing the name of his business every year and thus gives a good amount of work to Raman. There is also the bangle seller who sensually messages the wrists of his women customers on the pretext of selling bangles. The Professor philosophically says: “No credit. Strictly, strictly, strictly cash, cash, cash! That is what the world is coming to.” (p.366)

Raman meets Daisy who is a government official of Population Control Board and immediately gets interested in her. Raman recounts that even the Puranas are full of examples of saints who are bewitched by beautiful women and compares Daisy to Mohini, the enchantress. But he resolves to take the solution of Gandhi who advised one of his followers to fix his eyes on his toes during day and on the stars at night. Raman wants her to look like Soorpanaka whose nose was cut and himself to be disinterested Rama. He also uses a tactics of wearing dark glasses but her touch makes him fantasize more about her. Raman himself feels guilty about his cravings and agrees that: “This is the tragedy of womanhood – utility articles whether in bed or out.” (p.381)

The strong femininity of Daisy can be compared to Indira Gandhi whose name and deeds are discussed in ‘The Boardless’ inn. This novel defines the portrait of a modern woman but becomes a caricature. Daisy’s rejection of her maternal side and even the natural impulses of a woman are stretched to a grotesque level. Daisy’s present stance as a population control activist is nonetheless commendable as over population is one of the aftereffects of colonialism with different types of migration taking place. Daisy’s industrious effort at teaching the birth control measures indiscriminately to all age groups in the different inaccessible villages she tours accompanied by the smitten Raman is laudable. Raman is assigned the task of writing family planning signs as in a New Delhi two wheeler it is painted, “BibiRahe Tip-Top; Do Kebaad Full Stop.” Daisy argues with the mild school teacher who does not agree that population increases in the rainy season and says that India is vast and full of resources. Daisy even harbours extreme measures of having no children and wishes she could campaign: “Just the two of us shall remain happy forever without the nuisance of children.” (p.397)
Daisy’s knowledge is scientific and up to date. Her knowledge of population statistics makes her portray the appalling condition of population explosion:

“It was just six hundred last year this time...and there is an increase of nearly twenty percent. Has your food production increased twenty percent?
Have your accommodations increased twenty percent?” (p.395)

But in India barrenness is perceived as a curse and barren women are a bad omen treated with contempt and Indian women have been bribed with bangles to make them practise family planning. As Ragini Sen says, “most women regard childbearing as the ultimate 'dharma' (duty) of all women.”

It is this age old duty that Daisy denounces when she declares to her big family that, “I would like to work, rather than be a wife.” (p.440) She left home and joined a missionary and followed her own vocation. She is the emblem of a Gandhian social worker.

While Raman fancies that he will become the father of many children, Daisy has already dictated her terms and conditions of marriage: “One that they should have no children, and two, if by mischance one was born she would give the child away and keep herself free to pursue social work. Raman was not to object or modify this in any manner.”(p.459)

Raman feels like the mythic king Santhunu who was bound in an oath to his wife Ganga who apparently killed her sons and was forced to remain mute on her actions. Ultimately Daisy’s social zeal wins over Raman’s enthusiasm for a family life.

The roles are reversed in a postcolonial society where womentake active choice to remain unmarried and childless destabilizing the myth of Gandhari as the mother of hundred sons and marriage is consummated beforehand, institution of marriage turns into the concept of living together and the bride rejects the bridegroom. The power of Indian patriarchy has become slippery just as the displaced photograph of Mr.Noble, the colonial District collector lies neglected in a corner. “Power gets reappropriated” traditional values and their validity are questioned in a postcolonial world. Gandhian values which were valid in the colonial world make one misfit in the modern commercialized society.

As jagan observes that “the world doesn’t collapse even when a great figure is assassinated or dies of heart failure”(p.184). Americans and even Indians have a tendency to find a concrete answer to the truth and validity of Indian culture. They are obsessed about stereotyping India as a country “all about religion, mysticism, evolution and reincarnation”.

The famous American actress Greta Garbo asked Narayan about philosophy of life: “Why have we been created, why have we been made to suffer, undergo pain, and then what is the meaning of all this? Why? Why?”(p.175)

It is this craving to understand India as a simple symbol that led the English director of the film ‘Guide’ based on Narayan’s novel ‘The Guide’, to represent Raju and Rosie’s husband’s Marco’s rivalry as a symbolic fight between a Royal Bengal Tiger and a leopard. The world has become small and all cultures are exposed to other cultures and differentiation and complexities arise. R.K.Narayan was exposed to the influences of English fiction writers like Arthur Conan Doyle, P.G.Wodehouse, W.W.Jacobs, Arnold
Bennett due to his access to the school library where his father was the headmaster. Alexander Mc Call Smith says in an article that Narayan teaches us that: “Life in this world is, for many, not easy: the barricades are not always in the right place, people do not understand what it is we really want, our abilities are not always readily recognised…But in spite of all the limitations that we have, we still have our dignity.”  

End Notes

9. Ibid, p. 179

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Highlight
Highlight-1
Pritish Kumar Mondal is no more

We deeply regret the untimely death of Prof. Pritish Kumar Mondal, an Assistant Professor of Department of Bengali, St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College, Kolkata.

He got admitted in a Nursing Home with severe cerebral attack and after struggling for three days he expired on 19th June 2013. During his demise, he left his 12 years old daughter and 86 years old mother.

Pritish Kumar Mondal was a sincere, dedicated and responsible Professor and was highly respected by all the students and staff members of our college.

We find Pritish Kumar Mondal a good soul with simplicity and honesty. His sudden demise brought an irrecoverable loss in our college as well as in our personal relationship.

May his soul rest in peace.
Photo Gallery
The Devotee
Prof. Dinesh Kumar Khan in Kamakshya Temple (Assam) Photo: Sk.Makbul Islam