

Cinematic Version of Tagore's Short Stories by Anurag Basu

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INTRODUCTION

Sarkar in her article "Rabindranath Tagore Perhaps the First Indian to Theorize on Cinema" – Death Anniversary Special." *Cinestaan* borrowed the lines from Rabindranath Tagore Ode to Cinematic adaptation. These lines were dedicated to the inauguration of Rupabani Theatre, Calcutta:

May your wish come true
Lost images be held in captivity
The shadow, dismembered from the body
May arrive and in hand with light
At your celebration of vision" (Sarkar, *Cinestaan* 01)

After "revisiting" to Tagore short stories through several translation books, literary collections, review from renowned teaching fraternity like Prof. Chaudhari from Jadavpur University, Oxford University, Viswa Bharati, Jharna Basu work and many other scholars who read Tagore work and noted the critical points. I found nostalgic as in family since childhood my grandparents and father shared these stories. Belonging from Bengali family Tagore's work has to be read, learned and understood. Later it becomes hierarchy and culture in every Bengali family. It is an attachment of Regional text and Cultural bond.

Even though I have read so many Gurudev (Tagore) stories in English as well as Hindi during school, college syllabus but still the level of understanding of the context was not up to the mark. When children in eastern India families grow up they actually start learning from family background. The emphasis was more given on Tagore's work similarly was the scenario with myself. Later in school/ college it was simply a story some of them are easy to understand with the help of teaching faculty and few were not able to grasp even. And at last there was a big question in mind what is this story all about. So that was the gap between reader and context.

Literature has taken the shape of a movie through this people are getting interested towards literature and good themes. A well said Book to Reel but critical and challenging task This paper is observing similar kinds of things to develop the efforts taken by Anurag Basu for

adapting and translating it so it can reach a large audience. This is a forward step for spreading, conserving, and sharing real life thoughts to people.

In this paper Tagore's best collection *Golpoguccho*, collection of 95 stories and published by Indian Publishing House in 1908. It was divided into five parts. Originally written in Bangla and later translated into English is studied from adaptations into web series.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Tagore was the first person to cover his views on many areas of literature, philosophy, politics and art and cinema too. In short he was an all rounder in the creative world. Sarkar states in her article 'According to National award-winning film critic, journalist and author Shoma A Chatterji, Tagore was perhaps the first Indian to theorize on cinema. In 1928, Madan Theatres made the first feature film on Tagore's novel *Bisharjan*. There were four adaptations of alone 'Noukadubi' the first was made in 1932.' (Sarkar 01)

Another book called *Rupar Kalpa Nirjhar: Cinema, Modernism and Tagore* by Someshwar Bhowmik. According to Bhowmik, Tagore's writing turned cinematic in the latter phase of his life. Documentary filmmaker and former head of the department of mass communication, videography and film studies at St Xavier's College, Kolkata, Sarkar admits with Subha Das Mollick lines, "Tagore's understanding of the social impact of cinema goes hand in hand. It is completely modernist writing (Sarkar 01). Numerous stories from his *Golpoguchchho* and various novels have been adapted into films from the vintage era till present generation digital platform.

TAGORE'S GALPGUCCHO AT BASU SCREENPLAY

Tagore is Bengal's Shakespeare; Basu has to be credited with maintaining the tone and tenor of the period when Tagore wrote his stories. Especially charming are the protagonists' costumes-the men in their Bengali dhotis and the women in their lace-trimmed, puff-sleeved blouses and the saris worn in the typically Bengali style, with even the small detail of the key bunch, hanging from the end of it, if it is the lady of the house. The sets involving period furniture, appropriate locales, the use of Rabindra Sangeet and the dropping of Bengali words, give the stories an authentic flavour.

Beginning of the serial, Basu exhibits his thought about a new dimension of gender equality with reference to women characters. All the stories depicted that Tagore has tried to understand the inner world of women and explain the psychological world, needs and desires especially in a story like "Chokher Bali," / Grit in one's eye.

Binodini, loses everything in the end and attains the path of spirituality by force of guilt. It is partial, considering that Mahendra, the male protagonist, who carries selfish and bad intention to get out of Binodini's life after his desire completion. Possibly Tagore trying to indicate that

revenge can lead to grief. Radhika Apte turns into Binodini character, She plays role naturally as Aishwarya Rai does, in one directed by Rituparno Ghosh version.

“Kabuliwala” was made in Bengali in 1957 by Tapan Sinha, followed by the 1961 Hindi version by HemenGupta. Basu’s interpretation beautifully brings out the affection between the young girl, Mini, and the Afghani dried fruit seller whom Mini chooses to call “Kabuliwala,” as he hails from Kabul. The Afghani is drawn to Mini, as she reminds him of the daughter he has left behind. The last scene in the serial is poignant, as seeing the grown-up Mini reminds Kabuliwala that his daughter must have grown up too and probably forgotten him. The character of Mini in the serial seems a little more contrived than the girls who played the part in the movies.

Another story, “Atithi,” Hindi and Bengali its same meaning guest. The story revolves around Tarapada wanderlust of a young Peter Pan-like character, who cannot stay in one place and runs away from a family to wander in exploring. He was a character who can't stick to one place. It was an element of Tagore's love for travel and leaving behind his home.

“Samapti” means ending is the story of a man, Apurba, refusing a girl selected by his parents. He opted for Mrinmoyee, as his bride, a tomboy. Apurba leaves his bride in a village and goes to the city for his studies, feeling the disinterest of her wife in married life where on another hand she realizes a loss of freedom on her mother-in-law, too. But time changes all and she realizes the importance of her husband. Tagore explored girl to woman transition that is beautifully picturized by Basu. The story has a happy ending of love. Aparna Sen acted awesome in Satyajit Ray. (Tagore 6)

Tagore’s Nashtanir /Broken Nest, Charulata is the protagonist character. It is all about an ordinary housewife and her brother-in-law, Amol, he spares his time in music and teaching to Charu. They both bond in an undefined relationship. And it is love and affection for close person to heart. This relationship doesn’t mean any affair. Tagore reflects that within family people have their best and loved person. But for balancing Charu’s life, Amol further accepts marriage proposal. He leaves heartbroken Charu, after that Bhupati, her husband is not able to win her affection. Amrita young and charming girl had a role of Charu but still character in Satyajit Ray movie was remarkable. (Tagore 15)

The next story, “Dui Bon/Two Sisters,” seems to be similar with the earlier story but a little complex. Urmi gets involved with her older sister’s husband, Shashank, after visiting their place. Sharmila, the older sister, is devastated and depressed but does not show her pain and suggest for their union. Soon both of character Urmi and Shashank feel guilt and leaves the relationship overwhelmed with the selfless love of his wife. Basu handles such a complex theme.

CONCLUSION

Rabindranath Tagore, India's first Nobel Laureate, multi-talented. There is no human psychology, emotion which he did not unfold in his novels, short stories and dramas. Basu deserves applause for reviving such amazing stories and showcasing to the best that Tagore may be intending. All these stories indicate the point of vision that Tagore had for women. Women are the gender from whom society has a lot of expectations, therefore Tagore penned down emotions, helplessness, especially in matters of marriage. Tagore's stories also provoke and exhibit the strength of women characters. Basu has selected a good collection of stories to share among viewers. Detailing and authenticity give stories the effect of belief. The effective use of culture and localness in everything creates the era of plotting perfectly. Rabindra Sangeet is an added element in visual presentations.

All the above discussed stories are epic from their thoughts that Tagore has captured. Basu, one of the finest producers in the Indian Television industry has chosen these stories after reading them in depth. Few of them have already been seen through Hindi cinema. But still, the rawness of literature has freshness in it. A film adaptation is a translation of a literary text into visual communication. Adaptation involves chances in the organizing it into the complete structure, to survive in the new contemporary world but Basu had confined it into old limitation and kept all the text as it is in visual form.

In one of the Interviews Basu stated his reason to work on this particular project was the depth of context. He states that it is really above the level of normal perception about society and people's lives. Belonging from Bengali family Tagore's works are always moderate but religiously attached. Basu on the other hand belongs to Bhopal, a city in Madhya Pradesh where more non-Bengali culture was spread. He could not understand the depth of Tagore's language from pure Bangla at the initial level. He is thankful to his wife for making the context understand as it is to origin to depict the real feel of the story in series. There are 26 episodes overall with 21 stories. It is very soothing to the eye and ear. The whole visual depiction is balanced with light colour cinematography. It feels real from a drop of rain on leaves to the sound of a fan no fake or artificial appearance is added. Lastly, Adaptation and Translation engage a wider level of sociocultural transfer. Heritage culture should be addressed by the new generation Basu has really work hard on plotting of the entire story has been set both in rural as background and urban town as showing the pre-independence times e.g. Farming tools, river, a boat of bamboo, jungles, set of house, huts, flora and fauna etc. It helps viewers to connect to a decade and lifestyle influence of a simple natural environment.

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