Role of Prosody in Semiotic Interpretation of Poetry

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Abstract

This article deals with three semiotic concepts, i.e. semiosphere, boundary and poetic text, introduced by Lotman (1976, 1990, 2005) to interpret two poetic texts written by Shakti Chattopadhyay, an eminent modern Bengali poet. I also deploy the conventional method of metrical scansion of Bengali prosodic structure and address the irregularities by deep reading of the said texts. The result of such deep reading leads us to some significant semiotic moves that coordinate the readers with the poet. The structural interpretation also includes prosodic irregularities compared with the regular prosodic patterns.

Keywords

1. Introduction

This article aims to discuss with the examples how certain semiotic tools can be used in the interpretation of poetry. There are several semiotic tools available across the history of semiotics to interpret different genres of language. Among these, I use a conceptual framework, namely, *semiosphere*, used by Lotman (1990, 2005). The concept of semiosphere was borrowed from the concept of *biosphere*. A semiosphere is a range of semiosis, where there is *a specific semiotic continuum* with a hierarchy of interconnected signs and semiotic variants (Lotman 2005: 206). This concept is used in this study to remark on the use of language in poetry as a cultural process. To apply Lotman's concept of the semiosphere, I have selected two Bengali poems as the examples written by Shakti Chattopadhyay. I have also been interested in Lotman's (1976) application of structural intervention into the Prosody. Therefore, the uniqueness of this work is that it uses analytical application of prosody to interpret a poetic text structurally specifying a cultural domain of significance according to the concept of semiophere. These two selected poems written by Shakti Chattopadhyay are: *abanī bāṛi ācho* 'Abani, are you there in the house' and *āmi śvecchacārī* 'I am imperious'. I use the Roman alphabets for names, titles and terminologies and International Phonetic Transcription (IPA) throughout the paper to refer to Bengali phonemes, words, utterances and verses.

Now the problem is that in the Bengali community there is a misunderstanding between the regular ordinary readers of Bengali poetry and the interpreters of Bengali poetics, who interpret poetry using universal tools from different schools of interpretation. I find it necessary that a research problem regarding the available universal interpreting tools of poetry must meet the cultural need of a community. Is it like how semiotic reading brings ordinary readers of poetry to a special status in the process of reading? Or, the semiotic practitioners discover something new in the reading which is associated with our cultural practice that is not known to the ordinary reader? Or, am I taking the privilege of knowing semiotics to display the socio-

political as well as cultural relationship between human and text? Or, am I fixing a guideline of how to read a poetic text? If the last is my motto then the ordinary readers will refuse to take my venture as they are historically attuned with the appreciation of poetry.

In the Indian poetics it is said that the poetic appreciation, namely, *raśa* 'the essence' (in short *aloukika* 'unworldly' perception of poetry) is not rooted to the poet or not even to the poetic text but to the mind of certain reader, who is attuned to or use to with the poetic genre subject to its relationship with the real emotions (Gupta 1992: 25). In this discourse of poetry, what is then the function of structural intervention into prosody?

A simple answer to this question is that, well, the reader's gracious open-hearted mind is the primary orientation of *raśa*, where *bhaṣyakara* 'the interpreter' is like a guide or like an expounder of technical texts. *Bhaṣyakara* in the Indian tradition is also a prime reader, whose interpretation is a well-functional form of readership. Negotiating with this tradition, I also consider a semiotic practitioner as nothing but an interpreter and on the other hand, readers as according to the Indian philosophy trained or attuned with a particular genre.

Therefore, my dear friends, readership and reading are the most specialized process of cultural practice. In the theory of *raśa* in Indian poetics, the readers mean the trained minds. Semiotic interpretation does not aim to teach how to read a text but to read it with some preconditioned analyzing tools. In this view, semiotics can be considered also as a mere scientific approach to elaborate and explain why and how the trained minds react with the poetic texts. This approach rather stages the possibility of plural interpretations tied up between the reader and the text, subject to the space, time and subject in a universal semiotic process. This approach helps to differentiate the reading of news in the newspaper from the reading of a poem. A semiotic practitioner is interested to know why the poetic use of language is special on the contrary to the ordinary use of language in an entire cultural sphere. They don't even forget that they are also trying to train their minds as far as poetry is concerned.

1.2 Prosody of Two Poems

There are three classical prosodic patterns recognized in the conventional metrical system of Bengali poetics although the irregularities, deviations and exceptions in the modern and pre-modern poetry in Bengali have been the issues of the central debate. This study is not liable to take part in the debate. According to Lotman (1976), prosody of a verse is important to semiotically interpret a poetic text so that I select two poems of Shakti Chattopadhyay as the cultural texts written in the conventional prosody measure with slight deviations of feet to interpret the same in the Lotmanian manner. I have fixed my objective to analyze the least analysis of prosody of these two poems required to interplay with semiotics as the present semiotic agenda of this paper. Therefore, my aim is to show how prosody plays an important role in reading to interpret a poetic text, to capture the togetherness of homogeneity and diversity of information of a text within a semiosphere.

However, before I engage with the texts of two poems, it is important to display what I used to designate as the conventional metrical system of Bengali poetics. There are three well-established prosodic patterns in Bengali poetics: **(a) Syllabic pattern** (*dalabṛittva chanda*), **(b) Moraic pattern** (*kalābṛittva chanda*) and **(c) Mixed moraic pattern** (*miśrabṛittva chanda*). There are many debates about this classification, which are not so important in this study. In the syllabic pattern of prosody, metre is syllable-centric and each and every syllable both closed and open is 1 metre. In the moraic pattern, open syllables are 1 metre long and closed syllables are of 2 metre irrespective of their positions in the words. However, in mixed moraic pattern, open syllable as usual is 1 metre and word medial closed syllables are of 1 but word-final closed syllables are of 2 metre. The complete foot in syllabic pattern is usually of 4 metre long, in moraic pattern of 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 metre long and in mixed moraic the complete foot is of 8 and 10 metre. This three tier estimation is a standard prosodic system in Bengali poetics.

2. The Poem, *abanī bāṛi ācho* (IPA: ɔboni baɽi acho) 'Abani are you there in the house'

Amongst two poems of Shakti Chattopadhyay chosen in this study, the *abanī bāṛi ācho* follows the pure moraic pattern as discussed in the previous section. One important feature of the moraic pattern of the Bengali verse is that there is no scope to over-determine a closed syllable shortening to be 1 metre. Rather, depending on the contextual information, the reader has to cross their feet with an overdue melody. Moraic prosody in Bengali is associated with a smooth melodious progress of reading, whereas syllabic pattern has something to do with rhythmic speed which is essential for emphasizing the information by stressing on the ending consonants of the closed syllables. Syllabic pattern is chosen for lighter or sarcastic contents whereas moraic pattern is used for comparatively heavier contents. *Abanī bāṛi ācho* is essentially written in moraic pattern, i.e., readers of this poem are indicated to a slow reading so that the readers can cross each foot with an extra time to exchange information with the audience. In *abanī bāṛi ācho*, there are only three word medial closed syllables:

(a) *raŋ* in *pɔraŋmukh* 'desisting'
(b) *dhek* in *adheklin* 'half closed'
(c) *dur* in *durgami* 'far-going' (if not *durgami* is read as *durogami*).

However, most of the readers pronounce the later one, i.e., *durogami*. Thus, it can be assumed that the poet intentionally went with the choice of words that are so fit to a moraic environment.

The poem, *abanī bāṛi ācho* has three stanzas. The entire composition has been distributed within these three stanzas. The composition is itself a description of a *pāṛā* 'the regional block', where the subject of the poem, namely, *Abanī* lives. As *Abanī*, the subject describes the picture of the silence, where someone is calling him, breaking the silence by knocking the door: ɔboni baɽi acho 'Abani, are you there in the house'. However, the subject still remains silent as his

pāṛā is. Knocking the door and calling by the name of the subject as the breakers of the silent is not so sudden. As if it is the norm, which breaks the silence. The introductory stanza of the poem speaks about the central context of the poem. Everything that happened with the silence is known to the subject of the poem. The composition centered in the sleeping *pāṛā* and on the contrary to the silence, subject recurrently listens knocks on the door by asking the presence of the subject:

duar ẽṭe| ghumiye ache| paṛa   [5+5+2]
kebol ʃuni| rater kɔṛa| naṛa   [5+5+2]
ɔboni baṛi acho?|| [7]

'The *pāṛā* is sleeping by shutting the door
(I) recurrently listen door-knocking of night
Abani, are you there in the house?'

The call has been repeated three times in the poem as a fore-grounded 7 metre long foot that allows an outsider with his eternal call the composition of silence. Even the poem is named by this calling clause and prosodic pattern of which is also irregular in terms of the entire prosodic pattern of the poem. This particular clause of eternal calling made this poetic text tending towards a blank verse. However, all other complete feet from the first verse to the last are of 5 metre and incompletes are of 2 metre (vide annexure – I for the prosodic scansion of the entire poem).

The fore-grounded or the title verse of the poem, *ɔboni baṛi acho*, may either be read as *ɔboni| baṛi acho*, where the feet are respectively 3 and 4 metre long, or be read as a whole foot of 7 metre. The moraic pattern [5+2], commonly used in the entire prosodic structure of the poem is not allowed by the Bengali speakers for this particular verse, *ɔboni baṛi acho*. Ordinary Bengali speech does not consign the clause to be pronounced as *ɔboni baṛi| acho* since *baṛi acho* 'are you there in the house?' belongs to the verb phrase as the highest node of the clause. Therefore, any of the either patterns, i.e. 3+4 or 7, mentioned above leads this text as irregular and thus to be a blank verse.

Since I have decided to let the verse remain as a complete 7 metre long foot of an eternal calling from outside the silence, the verse becomes a sparkle in the silence. There should not be any controversy regarding the division of foot in this verse, because the weight of each syllable of this verse is open and thusis of 1 metre. Ghosh (1972/83: 51) remarks that the trained or attuned reader who wants to read a poem with his/her own (internal) appreciation not to recite it apparently, should realize either he/she reads the text as the string of words ordinarily expressed in daily speech or he/she use extra melody into the reading.

With this autonomy, anyone can read the initial verses of the poem as: *duar ẽṭeghumiye ache| paṛa/ kebol ʃuni rater kɔṛa| naṛa*, where the complete foot is considered to be as of 10 metre and incomplete foot is as it is of 2 metre. Such reading will also be flawless. If so, then the key

verse, *ɔboni baɽi acho*, must be considered as an incomplete foot of 7 metre. In that case, readers do not take breath after crossing 5 metre length of reading rather he/she is continuing reading until the 10 metre foot is complete. 5 + 5 is not melodiously different from 10. But the difference is by prosody and speed. So as far as the compositional context is concern and the manner of ordinary speaking is chosen to express the contextual information, the structure: *duar ẽʈe| ghumiye ache| paɽa* [5+5+2] is much more realistic. This short foot division does not imply that reading of such a silent verse is broken by the repetitive breathing and the entire verse gains a higher speed than it requires. The structure of [5+5+2] reading is so considerable because the composition is speaking about a silence.

In the first verse of the poem, there is a grammatical significance also. The whole adverbial phrase *duar ẽʈe ghumiye ache* 'is being slept shutting the door' move to left of the NP *paɽa* 'the regional block'. This left peripheryis very well-known and celebrated in modern generative syntax. Here, I can only mention that the entire ADVP has been focused on the basis of necessary projection. The second verse also exhibits a structural significance. It starts with a topic *kebol ʃuni* '(I) always hear'. What do I always hear? Comment ends with *rater kɔɽa naɽa* 'door knocking at/of night' and according to the prosodic structure this verse is divided into two feet and the comment is broken into two parts, i.e., *rater kɔɽa| naɽa*. In fact, the poet as the creator of the text has some intentions to play with words and offers a strategy of reading to guide the reader to reach its implied meaning. Ghosh (1972/83: 51-52) comments that Rabindranath Tagore as a poet showed us how the words are pulled and matched between its sound and meaning intending possible tonality of the reader of the text. Ghosh (1972/83) reminds us about the silence of the word *æka* 'lonely' in the poem, "*Kṛṣṇkali*" and the light sparkling sound of the word *jhɔnjha* 'the storm' in the poem "*Jhulan*". All these are captured in a milled manner of tonality. But since Rabindranath deeply concentrated on managing the verse-ending soft tonality with the word-final vowel /ɔ/ in the compositions or on the overall splendorous ripples in the composition, his desire of melody is assumable.

Similarly, as a poet, Shakti Chattopadhyay's intention is clear by his choice and use ofwords and structural transformation of sentences in the overall composition of *abanī bāɽi ācho*. The poem is written in first person. Apparently the role of readers is deactivated. Nonetheless, readers in the subconscious enter into the text as the observers of the happenings as in the fifth dream, 'crows' of Akira Kurosawa's movie "Dreams".

Second stanza of the poem is a narrative of an extension of the description of that *pāɽā*: *briṣʈi pɔɽe ekhane baromaʃ* 'it rains here throughout the year' and *ekhane megh gabhir moto cɔre* 'here the clouds roam like cows'. Bengali readers are very comfortable with the picturesque description of cloud and rain. The second stanza consists of two parallel verses with [5+5+2] moraic pattern. As if the subject of the poem tries to go out of the melancholy of the clouds but he cannot. And this failure has been supported by a third same moraic structure of verse followed by a short verse [5+2] with: *pɔraɦmukh| ʃobuj nail|ghaʃ/ duar cepe| dhɔre* 'outward green nail-grass/ tightly holds the door'. The last verse of the second stanza of the composition

ends with one complete and one incomplete foot in the same moraic structure [5+2]. Third stanza is also composed with the pattern of [5+5+2] with three consecutive verses.

adheklin| ɦridɔe dur|gami   [5+5+2]
bæthar majhe| ghumie poɽi| ami   [5+5+2]
ʃɔhoʃa ʃuni| rater kɔɽa| naɽa   [5+5+2]

'With a half-closed heart, (in the) far-reaching
In the (far-reaching) pain, I have slept off
Often (I) listen the door-knocking at/of the night'

The concluding part of the poem shows that the subject gives up and sleeps in pain and the door-knocking continues in an ostentatious silence. Therefore, that fore-grounded verse of calling Abani continues additionally with an interrogation: *ɔboni baɽi acho?* 'Are you there, Abani, in the house.'

3. The second poem, āmi śvecchacārī (/ami ʃecchacari/) 'I am imperious'

The second poem of Shakti Chattopadhya I took to interpret is *āmi śvecchacārī* 'I am imperious', although he is not at all imperious in the structure of prosody. However, he likes to play with the words, feet and verses that become imperious. The prosodic structure of the second poem as mentioned follows a mixed-moraic pattern. I have no doubt about it that two stanzas of the poem are bound to the mixed moraic pattern. Therefore, keeping the convention in mind I am predetermined with 1 metre word-medial closed syllable and 2 metre word-final closed syllable. Later, I will be discussing the controversy.

Like *abanī bāɽi ācho*, this poem is not composed with the description of silence. Two poems have two different semiotic spheres. There is no hint in the structure of the poem about how to read the text! However, some hints are therein the level of words and sentences. There may be an imbalance between complete and incomplete feet if one tries to follow typical grammatical rules to read it. Although its composition is quite different from *abanī bāɽi ācho*, *āmi śvecchacārī* also starts with a declarative sentence: tire *ki procoɳɖo kɔlorɔb* 'what a chaos in the beach.'

As a reader if one decides to read the text of *āmi śvecchacārī* like the first one in moraic dimension of prosodic pattern and lengthen *coɳ* in *procoɳɖo* up to 2 metre, then the reader would face troubles like prosodic inequity in the later part of the poem. Thus, the prosodic estimation will become complex. Not only that but also in the verse: *tire ki procoɳɖo kɔlorɔb*, as a reader I realize that my so-called attuned mind desires to take its first breath after pronouncing *tire ki procoɳɖo* and thus *kɔlorɔb*. The problem is if I try to read out the text following the moraic pattern, an initial 7 metre long off key foot impedes to carry on the tonality over the whole body of the text. On the other hand, according to the mixed-moraic pattern this foot is of 6 metre, which is not usual in mixed moraic versions of Bengali prosody.

Conventionally, a mixed-moraic pattern of prosody in Bengali should be either of 8 metre or of 10 metre.

The next immediate verse *jɔle bheʃe jae kar ʃɔb* 'whose dead body is floating on the water?' has no word-medial closed syllable.Therefore, openly there all open syllables are of 1 metre and word final closed syllables are of 2 metre so that the structure of prosody of this verse does not enforce a reader to read the said verse either in moraic or in mixed-moraic pattern. In that case, this verse can be clustered as parallel as the initial verse: *jɔle bheʃe jae| kar ʃɔb*, where complete foot is of 6 metre and incomplete foot is of 4 metre. However, as a Bengali one may have to read *procoɳɖo* 'heavy' in the initial verse, *kɔllol* 'wave' in fourth verse and *sranti* 'tiredness' in tenth verse slightly with a prolonged verbalization. Especially you may want *sranti* to be read as /sra[a]nti/ since the text has something to do with a temporal unrest. The text starts with the eagerness of the readers - *jɔle bheʃe jae kar ʃɔb* 'whose dead body is floating on the water?' Second stanza of this poem is the poet's analysis of the unrest.

But if you reader do not care about your sudden feeling of a certain word and proceed with the pre-modeled mixed-moraic pattern of 1 metre long word-medial closed syllable, then the balanced structure is look like as following:

First Stanza: [6+4, 6+4, 6, 6+6+6]
Second Stanza: [4+6, 6+4, 6, 6+2+6, 6, 6+2+6, 6+4, 6+4, 6, 6+6+6]

However in this structure, incomplete feet are varied in length 2 and 4 metre and in position, i.e., it somewhere occurs in the middle of the verse and somewhere it occurs in the verse-final position. The interesting point is that the verses in their paradigmatic association are either in parallel prosodic structures or in the opposite prosodic variations. For example, at the starting of the poem, one finds the structures like 6+4, 6+4 in conventional parallelism. Similarly, the patterns set an opposite parallelism in the second stanza as 4+6, 6+4. The second stanza starts with the following:

ʃomudro ki| jibito o mrite|	[4+6]
ebhabe ʃɔmpurno| ɔtɔrkite|	[6+4]
ʃɔmadɔronio?|	[6]
ke jane gɔrol| kina| prokrito panio|	[6+2+6]
ɔmritoi biʃ|	[6]
medhar bhitor| sranti| baɽe ɔhorniʃ	[6+2+6]

'Does the ocean in life and death
Completely sudden in this way
Admirable?
Who knows if the poison is the perfect drink
Nectar is itself poison
In the intelligence tiredness increases continuously'

This part of the second stanza is irregular respect to the entire structure. Clear parallelism is reflected in first and second, third and fourth and fifth and sixth verse of the stanza, i.e., a-a, b-b and c-c. The estimation looks balanced although the problem remains the same. How can a mixed-moric pattern consist of a 6 metre long foot? Was it a simple comment when I mentioned earlier that Shakti Chattopadhyay's choice of words and projections may lead to an imperious structure? What happens when a reader's inclination to read this poetic text bound to a mixed-moraic pattern fails? It is not an easy task to break the traditional paradigm of prosodic standards. However, I remember that as a reader I also put myself into the mixed-moraic protocol atleast in time of reading the first stanza of this text.

What if I suppress my desire of reading and continue my breath up to the mark when I complete an 8 metre long foot and the rest is of 2 metre? Then the prosodic structure of the first stanza will be as follows:

tire ki proconɖo kɔlo| rɔb
'jɔle bheʃe jae kar| ʃɔb
kotha chilo baɽi?'|
rater kɔllol ʃudhu| bole jae – 'ami ʃeccha|cari.'

'What a chaos in the beach
"Whose dead body is floating on the water?
Where is its house (where did he live?)"
Wave of the darkness (night) passes only by saying – "I am imperious."'

Therefore, the metrical structure of the prosodic pattern of the text is as follows:

First Stanza: [8+2, 8+2, 6, 8+8+2]
Second Stanza: [8+2, 8+2, 6, 8+6, 6, 8+6, 8+2, 8+2, 6, 8+8+2]

This structural distribution is also problematic. If I consider a complete foot is of 8 metre, then, firstly, third, seventh, ninth, thirteenth verses remain incomplete or there is no complete 8-metre long foot in these verses. Secondly, dividing the words and phrases forcefully, e.g., *rater kɔllol ʃudhu| bole jae – 'ami ʃeccha| cari.'* However, there is a lengthy stay in it than the verse, *medhar bhetor| sranti| baɽe ɔhorniʃ*. Then, have I not maintained consistency in foot-division? Is it possible to keep reading a prosodic text with two simultaneous foot lengths (i.e. 8 and 6 metre)? We shall come back again to these questions after discussing varied tempos and realizations of readers of poetic text subject to semiotic space where the readers live by. Let me discuss two concepts, *semiosphere* and *poetic text*, introduced by Lotman (2005, 1976).

4. Lotman's interpretation of poetic text

According to Lotman (1976), language is the component of literature similarly as stone in a sculpture, sound in music, and colors in a painting so that this language is the primary problem

of poetry. This point of view implies that an ordinary language has innumerable rules. As a result, language has limitations which influence the distribution of its elements, e.g., word order. On the other hand, without these limitations a language cannot work as a communication medium and the flow of information reduces if the limitations increase. Lotman's (1976: 32) clear cut description about a poetic text is as follows:

> "The poetic text is subject to all of the rules of a given language. However, new limitations, which are supplementary in relation to language, are imposed on it: the requirement that it observes certain metrico-rhythmical norms and be organized on the phonological, rhyming, lexical and ideocompositional levels. All this makes the poetic text significantly more "nonfree" than ordinary conversational speech."

Moreover, poetry remains unnecessary if we accept a poem as a simple or ordinary text and think that the limitations of the language as the limitations of the text –or if one thinks that a poet like an ordinary speaker only expresses his/her own feeling with a pinch of ornamentation. Rather Lotman's (1976: 32) consideration is to remember that a poetic thought can produce such a text which is to be read with *infinitely increasing redundancy and sharply diminishing information content*.

In Culture and Explosion, Lotman (1992) emphasizes on the model of communication established by Jakobson. Jakobson's model was: Sender – message (language) –receiver. Altering this model Lotman proposes: Sender – code (text) – receptor. According to Lotman (1992) the message is different from code because code is an artificial configuration whereas language is made of code and history. Code consists of the concept of newly constructed artificial configuration. This new configuration has been made through an agreement. Thus code is not a history. It is an artificial linguistic construction. The ideal concept of communication is to deliver the message of the speaker to the hearer. The message at the same time has to address the speaker's intention and hearer's understanding. Lotman (1992) says that the speaker-hearer as the sender-receiver requires to have a form of tension and disapproval. Only such exchange can create a new linguistic environment that is the essence of communication. This conceptual definition of communication is seeded in the concept of semiosphere. Lotman (2005) launched this concept as a derivation of Vladimir Vernadsky's concept of biosphere. According to Lotman (2005), semiosphere is the right place where a language is rightly functional and existent.

Therefore, I can deduce that the code is such a message which has no history or background. On the other hand, language is such a system that consists of all these codes and history. Several concepts can be working as messages in a semiosphere defined by a boundary. I can examine these conceptual frameworks regarding language and code in the different genres of literature. Therefore, I may consider language not only as an estimation of grammar but also as literature, music, and so on.

Although the core of a semiosphere is constructed with the basic elements of language, its wide region is dynamically associated with many language usages. The poetic language, according to Lotman (2005), is a system of secondary modeling is the object of the macro premise of a semiosphere. Thus the language of poetry is codified two times. First time it is codified as a natural language and second time as a poetic language. In a semiosphere, an infinite number of code as a secondary modeling system can be generated. Lotman's (2005) interpretation implies the concept of boundary of semiosphere significant. The boundary separates semiosphere from non-semiotic space or text from non-text although several non-texts can enter into a semiosphere and have to conform to the rule of the certain semiosphere. Therefore, contradictions and conflicts between the members of a semiosphere are evolved. These contradictions result in new objects. Therefore, the semiosphere is a dynamic space where the members inside the boundary also interact with the outside components.

5. Return to the Texts

Let us reread the poems we are discussing about. Both these two poems start with a declarative clause, an utterance, a statement. However, two statements in both these two poems have no punctuation mark. Only poetry amongst the other forms of writing can be able to go beyond the standard practice of grammar. The grammar is the main advocate of the idea of prose, in which the utterances or sentences are related to each other bound by syntagmatic relationship. In the generative grammar, ordinary speech is only supposed to be a prose-type formation of language. On the contrary, I am advocating the semiotic view of language, where a string of words is a definite outcome of a syntagmatic relation but it has a limit to be expressed as a single phrase like expression or as a sentence-like utterance. A verse of a poem could be either of these two. An expression or an utterance or a verse is strongly associated with the other field mates of a certain paradigmatic field, where the similar or typical constituents are paradigmatically associated. This view equally works for both ordinary conversation and poetry.

Therefore, here the initiating statements of the two poems are utterances rather than sentences and do not care about the punctuations which are basically used to juxtapose phrases or sentences in a syntagmatic order. However, the both the utterances, *duar ẽʈe ghumiye ache paɽa* and *tire ki procoɳɖo kɔlorɔb* are subsequently significant because crossing these verses means to enter into the boundary of semiosphere as Lotman defined. Among these two verses, a tension lays in the second one *tire ki procoɳɖo kɔlorɔb* 'what a chaos on the beach', the key word of which is particle ki 'what'. /ki/ in Bangla is used to build polar questions as in (P):

(P) tumi ki kal kolkata jabe?
You KI tomorrow Calcutta go-fut-2p
'Will you go to Calcutta tomorrow?'

But /ki/ also is used as in the initiating verse of the poem *āmi śvecchacārī*. This use of /ki/ is for additional emphasis on the adjective or to increase adjectivity. For example, if the first verse of the poem *āmi śvecchacārī* would have been like *tire procoṇḍo kɔlorɔb (- ki)*, the volume of information of the declarative utterance remains the same as present. But the additional /ki/ increases adjectivity or the degree of the word *procoṇḍo* 'tumultuous' as it works in the expressions like *ki ʃundor* 'what a beauty', *ki kharap* 'what a worse', and so on. The expression, *ki procoṇḍo* 'what a tumultuous', also belongs to the paradigm of such structural expression that increases the degree of adjectivity.

Although I am using Lotman's idea of semiosphere and boundary throughout my discussion, my reading and interpretation are typically text-centric. I have selected such two poetic texts which anyhow create tension in the reader's mind, sometimes with the prosodic structure, sometimes with grammar and sometimes with significance. I do not consider these two texts as two expressions of the same person as the addressor so that these are not the parts of a single semiosphere or a single poetic space although these two poems were written by the same author. I consider these two texts as two members of two different semiospheres. These texts have different expression modules. My intention was clear. I take prosodic and syntactic structures and the signifying strategies of these two texts into the account. So I intended to activate deep reading of these texts as the small parts of these can be able to help me in my interpretation. Moreover, by this process readers also can realize how the new significances with new interpretations have been generated by the contradiction I mentioned.

One important similarity of these two poems is both the texts end with direct quotations, one of which is a call with a quest (manifested as polar expression) and the other is a declaration: *ɔboni baṛi acho?* 'Are you there, Abani, in the house?' and *ami ʃecchacari* 'I am imperious.' These two texts are structured very clearly. In the first text there are three structural or compositional units and in the second, there are two such units. Every unit is designed as stanza. *Abanī bāṛi ācho* has three stanzas. Only as the last verse of the poem, the recurring call ends with an interrogation mark. Otherwise, the entire text has no punctuation. The entire composition consists of three small compositions. The first small composition describes the *pāṛā* presently outside the house where the subject lives. Second small composition continues describing why the *pāṛā* is so silent with contingent natural phenomena, like here rainfalls throughout the twelve months, here the clouds roam like cows, here the apathetic green *nāli grass* holds doors tightly to be closed. Third small composition is the narrator's or the subject's own position in the circumstance described in the earlier two stanzas: lastly the subject has slept off in the remote pain of his half closed heart (however *ādheklīn* is a typical poetic expression that means beyond something 'half-closed') and continues listening the *door-knocking of the night* and *the eternal call*, somebody has been calling and asking 'are you there, Abani, in the house?'

In *āmi svecchacārī*, there are two visible stanzas but the second stanza includes the first. The overall structure of the text is as: [a – b (b₁ a)]. The first stanza declares a fact of a barren dead body floating on the water and the second stanza analytically establishes life. The verse, *ami*

ʃecchacari is foreground in the text and the poem is named same. In two poetic texts, each and every verse is related to each other subject to phonological, syntactic structural parallelism and rhymes. There is no scope of interrogation in the title, *Abanī bāṛi ācho*, which on the other hand is thematic to the composition of the poem. Narrator of this poem is himself *Abani*, who is stuck in the room of silence. Someone is calling him from outside the room in the silence. But there is no response to this call in the text. The poem does not consist of an answer. The call is not broken till to the end of the poetry. Poetic text describes where *Abani* lives. The narration makes the environment of silence more unspoken. Does *Abani* think to go out from silence in the second stanza? Composition declares that this special disposition of the silence obstructs him to go out.

Earlier I said that if we read this poem as the mixed-moraic prosodic verse, then we might have faced problems from the very beginning verse. Rather readers are more comfortable with 5 metre long moraic patterns. Only the irregular motion, the fore-grounded as well as the title verse is 7 metre long that offers choice of reading to the readers, because *baṛi acho* is itself a indivisible phrase not by choice of grammar but by force of illocution. A question remains unanswered till to the end of the text, i.e., is the *blank verse* (*ɔboni baṛi acho*) a call or a solicit to get into the house for relief to be incorporated into the silence? At the tenth verse, *bæthar majhe ghumie poṛi ami*, as a syntactic continuation of the ninth verse, the subject of the poem reset itself because readers are capable to see the *durgami* of the phrase *durgami bæthar* occurs in the ninth verse. This distribution of poetic verse is called enjambment, i.e., sentence-final pause has been placed crossing a verse. *ʃɔhoʃa* at eleventh verse means 'sudden', whereas the door-knocking of the night is not so sudden. Rather this is such an expression that goes beyond time either to call one to get out of this melancholy of the silence or to insert himself into the eternal timeless silence. That is why the verse starts with the phrase *kebol ʃuni* '(I) continuously listen to' that is connotatively related to the timelessness, so that the word *ʃɔhoʃa* lost its denotative meaning or purpose. Readers may read rater *kɔṛa naṛa* as a unit as it is written with the parallel phrase *kebol ʃuni* and *ʃɔhoʃa ʃuni*. However, the moraic structure of prosody obstructs reader as it pressures reader to read this part of the verse as rater *kɔṛa* and *naṛa* separately to maintain 5 metre long foot.

In the second stanza, the situation is again very silent. *briʃṭi pɔṛe ekhane baromaʃ* is to be read with moraic prosody. Reader can wish to read *briʃṭi pɔṛe* with the 5-metre foot moraic pattern and leaves the rest of the verse (*ekhane baromaʃ*) open to read as a complete continuous appearance as /e-kha-ne ba-ro-maʃ/. Therefore, it must be allowed for the reader to go beyond the foot division because most of the phonemes of this part are open syllable and let this part to be a foot of 7 metre. Then, where is the problem?

Now the interesting part is that – according to my reading, the verse, *ɔboni baṛi acho*, consists of a complete foot of 4 metre and an incomplete foot of 3 metre. And I leave a provision of reading the verse without break up, i.e., a moraic 7 metre long verse. This verse is used three times in this small text, which ends with the same verse. This verse is used as a boundary of a certain semiosphere. The ultimate silence itself continues after the melancholic description of

silence, which consists of a call or an offer. But if a reader goes for a [3+4] division for this verse used previously in this text, then let us observe the complete foot immediately after the verse. As if the prosodic structure of *baɽi acho* (4 metre) compels other verses to be distributed with complete feet of 4 metre (*briʃʈi pɔɽe* and *adheklin*), whereas these are all of 5 metre as far as moraic structure is concerned. According to mixed-moraic structure, where word-medial closed syllable is 1 metre, *briʃʈi pɔɽe* is of 4 metre. Again the word *adheklin* consists of two morphemes, *adhek* and *lin*. But the phonological characteristics of these two are different. I must remind readers that the second syllable of /adhek/ and the first one of / briʃʈi / have the same stress irrespective of their positions in the words. The components of the poetic text are associated parallel at the level of word as the same association we have seen in the second stanza. There we have seen that under the dominance of the paradigm, adjacent two sentences are broken and thus set as parallel like [a-c, b-d] distribution, e.g. the rhymes of first and third, second and fourth verse, although a complete foot has vanished from fourth verse.

The same reading problem occurs in *āmi śvecchacārī* 'I am imperious'. The most important feature of AS is the contradiction between sentences and parts of composition. The syntactic structure in the second stanza is perfect. Although the verses are associated by the enjambment, the punctuation marks are evident. For example, one sentence is distributed during fifth, sixth and seventh verses and another is during eighth and ninth verse. Although there is no such punctuation mark in the tenth line, as a complete sentence it restricts the essence of composition, whereas, in *abanī baɽi acho*, there three grammatically acceptable sentences that constitutes three consecutive stanzas. It could be a great example of parataxis if these sentences like components juxtapose in relation to each other on the syntagmatic axis. In the context of poetic text or prosody, this functional episode could be understood by the framework of juxtapose alpha (Dasgupta 2007, 2010, 2014), which enables us to compare the possibilities of syntagmatic association of parallel and opposite verses beside their paradigmatic meadow. According to this operation the specialty of a poetic text is where the components syntagmatically related can be projected in the paradigmatic axis. To establish the entire composition of a sleeping *baɽi*, the operation juxtapose alpha brings readers into the text. Onthe one hand, the essential verse, *ɔboni baɽi acho*, recurs at the each parametre of the composition and the verse is used as boundary of the semiosphere of the text and on the other hand at the same time this verse allows interactions between inner and outer elements of the semiosphere.

The elements coming from outside conforms to rules of the semiosphere whenever they consider themselves as the members of the semiosphere, even in the conflicting environment. I said that the only interrogative punctuation is used with the central or fore-grounded verse at the final position of the entire composition and satisfies the condition of the boundary of a semiosphere. The interrogation at the same time attracts readers to stay inside the semiosphere and provokes them to converse with the outer lives. Constantly it makes readers stimulated by seeding lives into the melancholy of the silence (*briʃʈi pɔɽe*, *ʃobuj nalighaʃ*), either active or apathetic. The universal subject of the poem has slept off in an endless pain. Then *Abani* must be in the house or maybe he is in the house. In the semiosphere, the door-knocking

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of the night (*rater kɔɽa naɽa*) as the only sound of life in the silence enables the quest of an outsider. Therefore although the subject has slept off, he listens to the door-knocking of the night as if as the precondition of the silence. This conflict grows in the tension of the reader as the structural feature of the semiosphere.

However in, *āmi śvecchacārī*, signification becomes easier since its syntactic structure is well-defined and punctuations are given grammatically. It is important to refer that this poetic text becomes unique (a) by struggling to cope up with the irregular prosodic pattern, especially when mixed-moraic prosodic pattern allows a 6-metre long complete foot, (b) with the deployment of the stress on the word-medial syllable con in *procoɳɖo* and (c) with the use of a lengthy syllable /sran/ in /sranti/ at the last essential verse. Otherwise, rest of the text is the repetition of the first stanza.

Now the significant point is the harmony between syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes. Relationship between the first and the second verses, two completely different clauses, has been established only because of prosodic parallelism. The paradigmatic field of the poetic text, *āmi śvecchacārī*, is also important because all the verses of this poem are distributed as a monotonic pattern of rhyme, i.e., a-a, b-b, and so on. Is the ocean desired to all humans either living or dead? The first verse, /jibito o mrito/ of this partial composition is unlikely related. The functional part of the second verse /ebhabe ʃɔmpurno ɔtɔrkite/ and at the end *ʃɔmadɔronio*. Then, there is no difference between 'living' and 'dead' and *gɔrol* and *prokrito panio*? The 'time' referred in the text is that where: *rater kɔllol ʃudhu bole jae - 'ami ʃecchacari'* 'wave of the darkness (night) passes only by saying – "I am imperious",' where *ɔmritoi biʃ* 'nectar is itself poison'. These are all false parallelisms. This is not the time of happiness so that to stay inside the semiosphereis contradictory, which increase tiredness in the intelligence (*medhar bhitorsranti baɽe ɔhorniʃ*).

By prosodic assessment, it is observed that the poem, *abanī bāɽi ācho* may flawlessly be read in moraic pattern, where a complete foot is 5 metre long and incomplete feet are of 2 metre. However, the fore-grounded verse *ɔboni baɽi acho*, as it is realized with the notion of semiosphere, cannot be divisible into 5/2 structure. Because in Bangla cultural practice /baɽi acho/ can be said together but then the foot division would have been 3/4, which does not match with the entire pattern of the poem's structure. On the other hand if one tries to follow the foot-structure as /ɔboni baɽi |acho/, it goes against the Bangali practice. Rather as 7 metre long foot or as a undividable verse /ɔboni baɽi acho/ works better in the reader's mind so that it can be attracted to this verse as an idiomatic expression of calling someone who has been sleeping for the years. The objective of the *call* also to reach the *I* of the poem belongs to a certain semiosphere. That is why the verse is also used as the title of the poem. The second poem *āmi śvecchacārī* is written following a mixed-moraic prosodic pattern, where there are two types of complete foot. One is of 8 metre and other is of 6 metre (vide Annexure – II). Incomplete feet in *ami ʃecchacari* are 2 metre each. A dead body is floating on the water. The central expressive force of this poem is Curiosity and prediction/analysis, where *ʃomae* 'the time' being the tide of the dark goes by saying: *ami ʃecchacari*, a 6 metre long foot.

6. Concluding Remark

Now, my concluding remarks are as follows. As the concept *raśa* from Indian tradition of poetics was introduced in the section 1, I would rather sum up the discussion with it. Lotman's concept of semiosphere is such a space where *raśa* can be defined as a key concept of interpretation of a cultural text. For example, *raśa* is typically culture-centric function so that a community within a specific semiosphere is equipped with the specific sign-system and *raśa* works as a more specific operator of extraordinary signs or significations collaborated between receiver and producer of a cultural text.

I have shown by selecting two poetic texts (abanī bāṛi ācho and āmi śvecchacārī) written by Shakti Chattopadhyay that the prosodic structure including regular and irregular verses is intensely associated with the semiotic projection. For example, I have shown that the text called abanī bāṛi ācho entirely consists of several 5 metre long complete feet with one repetitive, fore-grounded 7 metre long open as well as blank verse. The readers and the text belong to a semiosphere where this blank verse works as a call connecting two different states of mind, i.e., melancholy of silence and an unknown living world. These two separated sub-spheres are the parts of the same semiosphere, where I being the subject of the silence interact with the outer world, which is living more prominently. On the other hand, the interactional blank verse is not associated with a single illocutionary force, sometimes it is interrogative sometime is not.

In the second case, āmi śvecchacārī, the text is built as reportage of a synchronic semiosphere. A time was significantly unrest in Kolkata (a.k.a Calcutta) in 1970's. The unrest was the result of several political disagreements and anarchist movements. The text I have selected as a metaphor of the time, where the tide of the night says 'I am imperious' and similarly like the first one, the verse is structured with irregular pattern of Bengali prosody in terms of other verses of the text. The semiosphere in the second case, collaborates not only the readers who have the memories of the 'Calcutta time' that denotes a specific political unrest but also the readers who feel the imperious time always continues with their lives. Thus, *raśa* in such case operates the community-centric chronological minds that are assembled in a single synchronic semiosphere.

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Appendix – I

Table 1: Prosodic scansion parametre of *abanī bāɽi ācho* (IPA: *ɔboni baɽi acho*)
Prosody: moraic, Complete foot: 5 metre, Incomplete foot: 2 metre, one special verse: 7-metre long

#	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
	1-2	1-1	1-1-1	1-1	1-1	
1	Duar	ẽṭe|	ghumiye	ache|	paɽa	
	1-2	1-1	1-2	1-1	1-1	
2	Kebol	ʃuni|	rater	kɔɽa-|	naɽa	
	1-1-1	1-1	1-1			
3	'ɔboni	baɽi	acho?'			
		2+1	1-1	1-1-1	1-1	1-1
4	briʃṭi	(briʃ+ṭi)	pɔɽe|	ekhane	baro-|	maʃ
	1-1-1	2	1-2	1-1	1-1	
5	Ekhane	megh|	gabhir	moto|	cɔre	
	1-2-2	1-1	1-2	1-1	2	
6	pɔraɦmukh	(pɔ+raɦ+mukh)|	ʃobuj	nail-|	ghaʃ	
	1-2	1-1	1-1			
7	Duar	cepe|	dhɔre –			
	1-1-1	1-1	1-1			
8	'ɔboni	baɽi	acho?'			
	1-2-2	1-1-1	1-1	1-1		
9	adheklin|	ɦridɔe	dur-|	gami		
	1-2	1-1	1-1-1	1-1	1-1	
10	Bæthar	majhe|	ghumie	poɽi|	Ami	
	1-1-1	1-1	1-2	1-1	1-1	
11	ʃohoʃa	ʃuni|	rater	kɔɽa-|		
	1-1-1	1-1	1-1			
12	'ɔboni	baɽi	acho?'			

The quantitative prosodic structure of this poetic text is as follows:

- First Stanza: [5+5+2, 5+5+2, 7]
- Second Stanza: [5+5+2, 5+5+2, 5+5+2, 5+2, 7]
- Third Stanza: [5+5+2, 5+5+2, 5+5+2, 7]

Table 2: Prosodic scansion parametre of *āmi śvecchacārī* (IPA: *ami ʃecchacari*)
Prosody: Mixed-moraic; Complete foot: there two types of complete foot – 8 and 6 metre;
Incomplete foot: 2 metre

#									
	1-1	1		1-1-1	1-1	2			
1	tire	ki	procoɲɖo	(pro-coɲ-ɖo)	kɔlo|	rɔb			
	1-1	1-1	2	2	2				
2	'jɔle	bheʃe	jae	kar|	ʃɔb				
	1-1	1-1	1-1						
3	kotha	chilo	baɽi?'|						
	1-2	1-2		1-1	1-1	2		1-1	1-1-1-1
4	rater	kɔllol	(kɔl-lol)|	ʃudhu	bole	Jae|	–	'ami	ʃecchacari|'
		1-1-1	1	1-1-1	1	1-1			
5	ʃomudro	(ʃo-mud-ro)	ki	jibito	o/	mrite			
	1-1-1		1-1-1		1-1	1-1			
6	ebhabe	ʃompurno	(ʃom-pur-no)	ɔtɔrkite	(ɔtɔr|	ki+te)			
	1-1-1-1-1-1								
7	ʃɔmadɔronio?|								
	1	1-1	1-2	1-1	1-1-1	1-1-1			
8	Ke	jane	gɔrol	kina|	prokrito	panio			
	1-1-2	2							
9	ɔm-ri-toi	biʃ|							
	1-2	1-2		1+1	1-1		1-1-2		
10	Medhar	bhitor	sranti	(sran+ti)/	baɽe	ɔhorniʃ	(ɔ-hor-niʃ)			
	1-1	1		1-1-1	1-1	2			
11	Tire	ki	procoɲɖo	(pro-coɲ-ɖo)	kɔlo|	rɔb			
	1-1	1-1	2	2	2				
12	'jɔle	bheʃe	jae	kar|	ʃɔb				
	1-1	1-1	1-1						
13	Kotha	chilo	baɽi?'|						
	1-2	1-2		1-1	1-1	2		1-1	1-1-1-1
14	Rater	kɔllol	(kɔl-lol)|	ʃudhu	bole	Jae|	–	'ami	ʃecchacari|'

The quantitative prosodic structure of this poetic text is as follows:

- First Stanza: [8+2, 8+2, 6, 6+6+6]
- Second Stanza: [8+2, 8+2, 6, 8+6, 6, 8+6, ४+2, ४+2, 8+2, 8+2, 6, 6+6+6]