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A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN *PUTUL NACHER ITIKATHA* & *THE PLAGUE*

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Abstract: 'Putul Nacher Itikatha' and 'The Plague' both are time winning novels. Manik Bandopadhyay wrote Putul Nacher Itikatha in 1936 and in 1947 Albert Camus wrote 'The Plague' keeping in mind the same identity crisis and same Ja Pal Sartriyo philosophy. This study shows the similarities and dissimilarities between these two novels. Here vivid pictures of Gaodia village, Oran city, Shashi doctor and Dr. Bernard Rieux will be found. We will find a lyrical struggle against diseases, death in both of the novels.

Key Words

Existence, Mystery of life, World War, Oran, Gaodia, Disease, Death, Plague.

Manik Bandopadhyay showed influence of Marxist theory and Freudian approach in his writings. He became an active politician of Marxism by joining the Communist Party of India in 1944. His writing dealt with the pettiness and wretchedness of existence in the context of rural Bengal. His primary concern was the dark alleyways of the human mind, even among the supposedly simple village folk, and not the serene beauty of nature that was always in the background in his novels. In *Putulnacher Itikatha* he took on rather savagely the hypocrisy in villages. He focused on the life of ordinary rural and urban people, with the colloquial language and with a neat narrative with insight into human mind. *Putul Nacher Itikatha* is one of the outstanding works of Manik Bandopadhyay. Manik said that this novel was a humble protest against those who tend to play with the lives of humans as if they were puppets.

The Plague (Fr. La Peste) is a novel by Albert Camus, published in 1947, that tells the story of medical workers finding solidarity in their labour as the Algerian city of Oran is swept by a plague. It asks a number of questions relating to the nature of destiny and the human condition. The characters in the book, ranging from doctors to vacationers to fugitives, all help to show the effects the plague has on a populace. The novel is believed to be based on the cholera epidemic that killed a large percentage of Oran's population in

1849 following French colonization, but the novel is placed in the 1940s. Oran and its environs were struck by disease multiple times before Camus published this novel. According to a research report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oran was decimated by the plague in 1556 and 1678, but outbreaks after European colonization, in 1921 (185 cases), 1931 (76 cases), and 1944 (95 cases), were very far from the scale of the epidemic described in the novel. The Plague is considered an existentialist classic despite Camus' objection to the label. The narrative tone is similar to Kafka's, especially in *The Trial*, where individual sentences potentially have multiple meanings, the material often pointedly resonating as stark allegory of phenomenal consciousness and the human condition. Camus included a dim-witted character misreading *The Trial* as a mystery novel as an oblique homage. The novel has been read as a metaphorical treatment of the French resistance to Nazi occupation during World War II.

Putul Nacher Itikatha and *The Plague* both are time winning novels. Manik Bandopadhyay wrote *Putul Nacher Itikatha* in 1936 when he was only twenty Eight years old. At that time he also wrote *Padma Nadir Majhi* and later *Janoni*. On the other side in 1947 Albert Camus wrote *The Plague* keeping in mind the same identity crisis and same Ja Pal Sartriyo philosophy and won Nobel Prize after ten years of publication. If Camus wrote it earlier than Manik in any other language, we might think that Manik copied him. But it was not possible, none of them read each other's writing and *Putul Nacher Itikatha* was not translated on that eleven years.

Putul Nacher Itikatha shows symptoms of modernism after First World War at thirties but it keeps a deep impact on readers. It gives a deep realization of life overcoming modernism and non-modernism. This novel reflects person's sufferings and conflict regarding his identity, about his self assessment on life with death. Here human being's universal feelings about mystery of life get an artistic form. This novel is an Odyssey of individual person. It's a surprising 'itikatha' of complex but deep sense of a person's examining life.

Manik Bandopadhyay portrayed the protagonist's character through a complex philosophy of life. The structure of *Putul Nacher Itikatha* is not dramatic; it's a story of a flowing life where little currents come and go, they are apparently individual current but somewhere they are united. There are two branches of story lines – Moti-Kumud and Bindu-Nandolal with the main story which is Shashi centric. Shashi's sister Bindu and neighbour Moti's huge behavioural and psychological changes show the continuity of these characters. This novel is narrated in first person, through Shashi's eyes and speeches.

Albert Camus' *The Plague* is about dangerous experiences of World War II. During World War II, Camus went to Paris and joined the anti-Nazi

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resistance movement. It was in wartime Paris that Camus developed his philosophy of the absurd—the assertion that life ultimately has no rational meaning. While the philosophy of Camus' fiction often tends to imply that no moral order actually has a rational basis, Camus himself did not act with moral indifference. Rather, since Camus does not draw a direct correlation between the lack of hope and despair, his philosophy can best be characterized as a form of optimism without hope.

Throughout his life, Camus was deeply concerned with the problem of human suffering in an indifferent world. In *The Plague*, Camus addresses the collective response to catastrophe when a large city in Algeria is isolated due to an outbreak of the bubonic plague. Although the effort to alleviate and prevent human suffering seems to make little or no difference in the ravages of the plague, Camus asserts that perseverance in the face of tragedy is a noble struggle even if it ultimately fails to make an appreciable difference.

The Plague is narrated in different way. In the last chapter the writer comes out from the curtain and says that the story is narrated by Dr. Bernard Rieux. This five chapters' novel seems a five act classical drama which unites all places and actions of characters but didn't fix it in a time frame. Though it's a story of ten months (April – January) but it gives an impression of universality and timelessness. It's beyond any time frame. It's a symbolic story. All the events and situation are described in the eyes of sociologist and artist. At last through Father Paneloux's deeds and death Camus creates a complex situation for Theism and Atheism. Camus' dissatisfaction for destructive politics is expressed through the character of Jean Tarrou. Camus wished to show through Tarrou that patience and forgiveness are more effective than jealousy. For any logic of humanity, jealousy should not be encouraged.

Oran city was totally disconnected with outside world for plague. This picture gives us the reflection of defeated Paris after World War. Plague symbolizes all the destructive diseases, sin, tyranny and non-democratic movement against humanity. By 'Nazi' Camus meant all evil conscious. Virus of plague is here evil. Camus shows that the infection of this disease is always alive in our surroundings. That's why we have to be careful always. He thinks that all the cruelty's answer is creative oppose. In Camus' judgment it is humanity.

Manik Bandopadhyay started his story with the death of Haru Ghosh in *Putul Nacher Itikatha*. Through this incident he entered in the Gaodia village along with the readers. Almost in the same way Camus said in the very first page of *The Plague*, if we want to know about a city first of we have to know how the citizens of that city work, how they love and how they embrace death.

Though both novels' setting and background is different—one is about village and other is about city life; but both the protagonists experience same kinds

of life, its ups and downs, mobility and all these keep a deep impact in both mind set. Both Shashi doctor and Dr. Bernard Rieux have some similarities – both see everything scientifically, both have deep feelings for people, both are mentally disturbed for social customs, both suffer internally for the philosophy of life, which attacks them sharply.

Dr. Bernard Rieux is one of the first people in Oran to urge that stringent sanitation measures be taken to fight the rising epidemic. A staunch humanist and atheist, Dr. Rieux has little patience with the authorities' foot-dragging in response to his call for action. His actions and personality imply that he believes in a personal as well as a social code of ethics. When Oran is placed under quarantine, Dr. Rieux continues to doggedly battle the plague despite the signs that his efforts make little or no difference. Although he is separated from his wife, he does not allow his personal distress to distract him from his battle to relieve the collective social suffering wrought on the confused and terrified population of Oran.

Camus describes Oran city's situation through Dr. Rieux in first person. Readers enter in the psychological world of Dr. Rieux. In the same way Shashi Doctor's psychological world is *Putul Nacher Itikatha* – his life's story, his confusion, sufferings' world. No one has any control over that world.

Imagery of the sea is often used in Camus's works to suggest life, vigor, and freedom. In *The Plague*, a key description of Oran occurs early, when it is explained that the town is built in such a way that it "turns its back on the bay, with the result that it's impossible to see the sea, you always have to go to look for it." Symbolically, Oran turns its back on life. When the plague hits, the deprivation of this symbol of freedom becomes more pronounced, as the beaches are closed, as is the port.

The theme of exile and separation is embodied in two characters, Rieux and Rambert, both of whom are separated from the women they love. The theme is also present in the many other nameless citizens who are separated from loved ones in other towns or from those who happened to be out of town when the gates of Oran were closed. In another sense, the entire town feels in exile, since it is completely cut off from the outside world.

The ravages of the plague in Oran vividly convey the absurdist position that humans live in an indifferent, incomprehensible universe that has no rational meaning or order, and no transcendent God. The plague comes unannounced and may strike down anyone at any time. It is arbitrary and capricious, and it leaves humans in a state of fear and uncertainty, which ends only in death.

In times of calamity, people often turn to religion, and Camus examines this response in the novel. In contrast to the humanist beliefs of Rieux, Rambert,

and Tarrou, the religious perspective is given in the sermons of the stern Jesuit priest, Father Paneloux. While the other main characters believe there is no rational explanation for the outbreak of plague, Paneloux believes there is. Sudden changes of these two characters in the novels do not give impression of awkwardness. Their inner mind is sometimes act as dualism, they change with friction with others, their end seems normal.

Man's helplessness is found in the epidemic like plague, same way people's helplessness shows against *akashar debota* in *Putul Nacher Itikatha*. Shashi doctor and Dr. Rieux are readers' companion in death. Both do struggle against death- from one death to another. Sometimes they feel frustration; again they wake up to save another.

In *Putul Nacher Itikatha*, disease and death are the two main elements of mystery of life. Same elements are found in *The Plague*. Manik Bandopaddhay showed life's mystery through few village people's death in Gaodia village and Camus showed the same mystery with hundreds of people's death in Oran City. Through Jadob pandit and his wife's self-wished death, Manik drew a picture of self-deceived and Camus also showed suicide of a character, to whom death was very beautiful and desirable.

The town Oran, which gets afflicted by pestilence and cut off from the outside world, is the equivalent of France. Camus draws from his own experience of isolation during the war in writing *The Plague*. The citizens are slow to realize the magnitude of the danger because they do not believe in pestilence or that it could happen to them, just as the French were complacent at the beginning of the war. They could not imagine that the Germans, whom they had defeated only twenty years previously, could defeat them in a mere six weeks, as happened when France fell in June 1940.

The different attitudes of the characters reflect different attitudes in the French population during the occupation. Some were the equivalent of Paneloux and thought that France was to blame for the calamity that had befallen it. They believed that the only solution was to submit gracefully to an historical inevitability – the long-term dominance of Europe by Germany. Many people, however, became members of the French Resistance, and they are the allegorical equivalents of the voluntary sanitary teams in the novel, such as Tarrou, Rambert, and Grand, who fight back against the unspeakable evil (the Nazi occupiers). Some French collaborated with the Germans. In the novel, they are represented by Cottard, who welcomes the plague and uses the economic deprivation that results from it to make a fortune buying and selling on the black market.

Other details in the novel can be read at the allegorical level. The plague that carries people off unexpectedly echoes the reality of the occupation, in which people could be snatched from their homes by the Gestapo and imprisoned

or sent to work as slave labor in German-controlled territories or simply killed. The facts of daily life in the plague-stricken city resemble life in wartime France: the showing of reruns at the cinemas, the stockpiling of scarce goods, nighttime curfews and isolation camps (these paralleling the German internment camps). The scenes at the end of the novel, when Oran's gates are reopened, recall the jubilant scenes in Paris when the city was liberated in 1944. In some places, Camus makes the allegory explicit, as when he refers to the plague in terms that describe an enemy in war: "the epidemic was in retreat all along the line; victory was won and the enemy was abandoning his positions."

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JAPAN'S ROLE TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHT IN SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract : Japan plays an important role to establish democracy and human rights in South Asia by providing aid and logistic support, dispatch special election observer and monitoring team in South Asian countries, using aid as a tool to remove authoritarian regime in South Asian countries, supporting the mass people movement and criticize the authoritarian government, supporting democratic activities and appreciating free and fair election in South Asian countries.

Keywords

Japan in South Asian Democracy and Human Rights

Introduction

Japan drew the world concentration during the last several decades by its outright economic growth and exceptional political stability. After Cold War, Japan has been contributing toward

democratization in the third world countries. The principles set forth in Japan's ODA Charter show clearly that ODA cannot be provided without this linkage to foreign policy. The four principles in the charter provided specific criteria to guide decision-making in such an event. Paying adequate attention to efforts for democratization is one of the four principles of Japan's ODA Charter.¹

Japan plays important role in establishing democracy and human right in South Asia in the following ways:

1. Providing Aid and Logistic Support

Japan's plays an important role to remove dysfunctional politics and establish human rights and democracy in South Asia by providing aid and logistic support. In support of Bhutan's transition towards a parliamentary democracy, Japan provided assistance in conducting elections, administrative capacity- building and mass-media. Japan provided emergency grant aid of approximately \$1.07 million through UNDP for the

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