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THEIR "WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN": THE HUMAN FACTOR RECONSIDERED- BENGALI
THEATRE AND COMMERCIALIZATION.

Introduction

In the December of 1880, Pratap Chand Johuree, a Marwari jeweller bought off the National Theatre from its Bengali owner, when it was almost on the verge of closing down. This forms a landmark event in the history of Bengali theatre as this heralded the beginning of the entry of business people in the entertainment industry. This signified that theatre was no longer an exotic entertainment but an enterprise where capital was invested with a profit motive. So long (till 1880s) Bengali theatre was essentially amateurish with middle class, enterprising youths earnestly promoting the cause of theatre amidst a number of adversitiesⁱ. For these youths theatre was more of a passion than a profession and most of them joined theatre as a creative agency to fulfil their desire to experiment with a novel medium of entertainmentⁱⁱ. Many of these amateur theatre units had worked with a few hired professionals, but the bulk of the theatre troupe consisted of what we can roughly describe as theatre enthusiasts who did not take any payment for their work. An important feature of this involvement was the voluntary wholehearted participation of these theatre lovers without any pecuniary motives. It was only the actresses (who were not drawn from respectable background and were invariably the fallen women who had some skills in singing and dancing) and several other professionals who most often accompanied the actresses, who were paid a wage for their services.ⁱⁱⁱ But certain marks of commercialism like promotion of the theatre through advertisements, distribution of handbills and sale of tickets had already crept in. But what distinguished this phase from the latter period was the almost total disregard towards making theatre an enterprise. In the

period under review, from the 1880s onwards production for profit became the steering factor behind all theatrical activities. The Marwari entrepreneurs and later on many Bengali owners, (many among the latter were ardent thespians) conjoined the idea of business and recreation and a new phase in the history of Bengali theatre was started. This paper will address one of the many consequences that followed from commercialisation, namely its impact on the various groups employed by the *industry*, the chief actors here being the owner of the theatre and the employees whom he hired in his service.

The Beginning

Bengali theatre began as an elite enterprise in the second half of the nineteenth century in the city of Calcutta. From the outset Bengali theatre was an urban affair, with a distinct style of presentation and a vocabulary shorn of the rusticity that characterized other popular forms of entertainments, like the jhumur, khemta, kabigan etc prevalent during the period.^{iv} The Bengali proscenium theatre, it can be argued, was more a response to the growing sense of disenchantment with the prevalent entertainment forms, which appeared rather vulgar, obscene as well as anachronistic to the new urban intelligentsia, who demanded a more sophisticated and contemporary fare. The new, urban populace who had received the first lessons of the western education and were already exposed to the theatrical presentations of the West tried to emulate the same for its own entertainment purposes.^v

At its inception in the second half of the nineteenth century, the patronage of the Bengali theatre, was largely limited to the wealthy gentlemen, who were often titled Rajas as mark of social and financial distinction, were able to pay for the lavish cost of productions and competed with each other in this. The theatres were staged at their mansions and most importantly they worked with amateur performers, mostly family members and some theatre enthusiasts. Theatre's capacity of social networking or organising social relations also comes out well from the available theatre histories of the period. Each one of these private performances brought together important sections of the social elite and on occasion the English ruling elite. The producers of amateur theatre were always

and necessarily discriminatory towards their audience. As quoted from Mahendranath Mukhopadhyay's memoirs, one can see the discrimination at work:^{vi}

“An amusing incident gave rise to strong criticism in the newspapers. When the invited gentlemen were showing their tickets on their way into the theatrical precincts, at that time a man stood by sizing up the clothes of the guests and shouted out, “Sir, front seat!” Sir, side seat!” at every person.”

Another way of regulating the audience consisted of discriminating about the distribution of the guest cards. There was a decision made to invite only those who could qualify as knowledgeable audience. “At this many people showed up three or four days before the night of the show with their certificates to prove their knowledgability”^{vii}. Those who possessed such certificates were securely middle class and probably nobody who belonged to the wealthy and elite section of the community would have been turned away.

Interestingly, this process of distancing it from the masses in an indirect way heightened the popularity of the new medium. The new, urban middle class whose appetite had been whetted by the traditional cultural presentations were looking for a more refined system of entertainment, that would be more in consonance with their changed tastes and preferences. This clamour for a public theatre ultimately led to the foundation of the National theatre in 1872.

The inauguration of the National Theatre heralded a new age in the history of Bengali theatre. For the first time a public stage was inaugurated for a ticket buying audience, who it was thought would be regularly presented with well-crafted plays, produced by white collar workers rather the richest families and intellectual dignitaries of the city. The private home based theatre continued, but the new public theatre became the dominant form. It was the National Theatre that gave Bengali theatre its first major facelift. At this stage there was nothing that could really be called commercial about Bengali theatre. The National Theatre essentially worked with amateur theatre lovers, many of whom took to theatre as a part time preoccupation. The organizers and patrons of this theatre were mostly middle class youths, who did not have the means to organize theatre productions on a grand scale. Nonetheless, their enthusiasm saw several good plays staged but lack of space often made much audience leave

the venue. It was suggested that a hall for viewing be made through the proceeds from the sale of tickets. These suggestions had a few opponents but eventually tickets were sold for staging of plays. The success of the National Theatre actually paved the way towards the commercialisation of the Bengali theatre. ` It created the market for theatre and raised the popularity so that it became a very attractive zone for investment from the business minded people. It became a matter of time before the final plunge was taken.

Towards the last decade of the nineteenth century the popularity of theatre caught up so much that alarmed by the portrayals of plays with nationalist fervour, the colonial government clamped severe censorships on the stage^{viii}. Such censorships had great repercussions on the stage and many of the theatre companies had to ingloriously pull down their shutters. Even the National Theatre could not survive the brunt of government legislations. Driven by circumstances, Bhuban Mohan Niyogi, the proprietor of the National Theatre had to put it up for auction. At this juncture Pratap Chand Johuree, a jeweller merchant bought off the theatre in the winter of 1880. This incident transformed the entire character of Bengali theatre and we had the emergence of commercial theatre in Bengal.

The transformation

What was striking about the passage of ownership of the National Theatre to Pratap Chand Johuree, was that the owner was no longer the passionate theatre lover but a shrewd business person who actually tried to exploit the goodwill and popularity of theatre to further his business gains. Pratap Chand Johuree was a wealthy jeweller merchant who was driven to invest in theatre, realising its great potential for profit. He understood that like any other business venture theatre too must be given a proper infrastructure to develop as a trade. The first thing he did was to appoint a manager who was well versed in the nuances of this dramatic form. So he persuaded Girish Ghosh, who was still an amateur but had already left an impression on the theatre going audience, to leave his present assignment as a bookkeeper in a mercantile family and join his company. This means that theatre would no longer be the amateur production of some enthusiastic youths but a very serious vocation. The new theatre owners now hired professionals for their theatre companies against a monthly wage. When Girish Ghosh joined

the National Theatre of Pratap Chand he was promised a monthly wage of one hundred rupees. Similarly other members of the theatre company were paid a salary when they joined the theatre companies. The promise of a monthly wage was indeed very alluring to a great number of people who were facing great improbability in the face of severe job crunch. Many of the people who joined theatre was actually the trained musicians and singers displaced from an earlier tradition of courtly patronage in pre-British Bengal. The gravitation towards amateur theatricals seemed inevitable, given that they did not fully belong to the group of upper class intellectuals nor had the professional qualifications for a white-collar job. Many of them did not aspire to an ordinary office job or where they trained to do the work of an artisan or manual labourer, although they were willing to endure physical hardship for theatre. Theatre afforded this group of declassed intellectuals as access, however limited to a public sphere. Theatre acquired the traits of a full time profession for a whole range of people, who sold their creativity against a wage. This also brought in several changes so far the organization of the theatre companies were concerned. The hired professionals were now engaged as full timers as opposed to their previous part time engagements and everything concerned with the theatre was now organized under a single roof -- the makeshift arrangements of the former years were done away with. Such a system could not be egalitarian and exploitation set in, the most glaring victim of which was creativity itself that now became a saleable commodity. For example Girish Ghosh whose adaptation of Mac Beth won raving praises from the press, discontinued with the further enactment of this play, as he feared that the average viewers would not appreciate the theme. So he went back to his former themes and most of his lays had an essentially mythological content. Theatre historians have noted that theatres with social themes lost their charms and it the theatres with puranic content that enchanted the viewers^{ix}. Moreover there was also the fear of government censorship, which made many a proprietor extra cautious about the content of the plays staged. The closure of the theatres would mean that the entire amount invested in theatre would be a futile investment. This consideration coupled with the fact that it would leave many people jobless made the owners very critical towards the content of the plays. Since their main motive was profit maximization, they ensured that the risk factor stood at the minimum. The kind of authority that the new owners

had over their theatre companies becomes evident from certain incidents, which apparently benign, had great implications so far the employer' position was concerned. In the following paragraph an incident is recorded, which took place at the Classic Theatre of Amarendranath Dutta.

It was a normal practice those days that the theatre companies maintained one or two carriages. The actresses were brought to the theatre in those carriages. It was Amarendranath's strict instruction that the doors of the coaches would be kept tightly shut till the actresses had reached the theatre. After their arrival at the theatre, the actresses, with their faces veiled would directly head towards the green room. On one performance night it so happened that the doors of the coach were slightly ajar and the coachmen were immediately fined eight annas for neglect of their duties. At the end of the month the coachman found that apart of his salary had been deducted and when they asked Amarbabu for an explanation he put forward the charge of negligence of duty. The poor coachman said that it was at the request of the actresses only that he had violated Amarbabu's orders. Amarbabu decided to claim an explanation from the actresses. The actresses answered in the affirmative saying that they had ordered so because they were feeling hot. An angry Amarbabu chided them saying that the very arrangement of bringing the actresses in closed carriages was to keep them away from public gaze. In his opinion these actresses were put up on the stage after adequately dressing them up and if therefore the public saw them in their natural self they would refuse to come to the theatre. The actresses understood their error and the coachman were redeemed of the fine. ^x

The incident narrated above more than anything else revealed the omnipotence of the employer in every matter related to the theatre. Amarendranath, himself was a noted theatre personality but more than that he was the employer who had hired the actresses in his theatre company and was paying them. He therefore guarded against any possible event that might reduce the income of his company and to this end he was ruthless. In his consideration of the pecuniary well-being he even failed to give the minimum respect to his actresses on the ground of solidarity even. He even refused to be turned on by humanitarian considerations. Though he had

justifiable reasons to be harsh, the event actually highlights the potentials of exploitation of the owner at his discretion. The incident also showed that the democratic spirit that had characterised Bengali theatre in its formative years was now totally done away with.

This was a very tangible transformation in the character of Bengali theatre. Thus the most important change that characterized the Bengali stage in the post 1880 period was the destabilization of the former patron centred theatre, degrading the very institution crucial to the cause of theatre. The theatre owner's position became anchored in the impersonal rules that had been legally enacted and contractually established and came to signify hierarchical relations. The theatre owner now had the right to command others, which entitled him to take decisions over issues where different individuals or groups expressed different policy preferences. Such display of power revealed how the proprietors tended to exercise power by making his employees do things to benefit themselves. Obviously in such circumstances there would be a conflict of interests in which the employees' happiness was never given the due recognition. What actually gave the theatre owners' such an authoritative position were the economic vulnerability of the employees he hired and their craving to prove their histrionic potentials. Since patronage was not easy to come, the theatre owners tried to exploit the situation by giving them a place in his company with the promise of a wage, thereby making him part of a contract. The employers took advantage of the employees' lack of awareness of being a community with collective consciousness and mentality. This should not make us feel that these people were not aware of their indispensability in the production process. They, therefore, functioned through collaboration and resistance, submission and rivalry. While collaboration was achieved through persuasion of the employers, the employees retained their sense of agency and autonomy by registering their dissent through non compliance, manipulation, sabotage and sometimes through direct resistance, not in the form of collective action, but by resigning from their present employment and joining a rival theatre company. The last aspect became apparent from the incidents that led to

the foundation of the Star Theatre. Binodini recounts the whole account that went into the making of the Star theatre and the severance of ties with the national theatre of Pratap Chand Johuree.

“The excessive labour that I undertook every day took its toll and I began to fall sick. I applied for a month’s leave; after much insistence, he granted me leave for fifteen days.... I rejoined the theatre but came to know that Pratapbabu did not want to give me wages for the duration of the leave. Girish babu told him, ‘if you don’t pay her wages for the duration of the leave, Binod will stop working here; and then we shall be in great difficulty’. I had not heard exactly what had transpired, but when I heard something of this sort, it made my blood boil. I was furious. A little thing was enough to set me on fire and I would be quite blinded by rage, when Pratap-babu came to the theatre that day, I asked him for my salary. ‘What salary?’ he laughed and said, ‘You have not done any work.’ that was enough. ‘So you will not give me my salary!’ I said, and went away. And did not go back.

Then Girish-babu and Amrit-babu came to our home. I told Girish –babu then, ‘Mahashoy, I want a higher salary, and whatever money is due to me has to be put down in a contract; otherwise I shan’t work.’ at that Amrit-babu said, ‘now, come on Binod, don’t be difficult. There’s a marwari son who would like to build a new theatre; he is willing to do whatever is necessary. Just keep quiet for a few days, let’s see how things move.’

The making of Star theatre may be traced from this incident. I too did not say anything more to Pratapbabu as per Girish Babu’s words; but secretly, I began to find out as to who this new person was who wanted to start the new theatre.”^{xi}

skills of many people. The lighting designer, composer, costume and set designer, the performers, the writer, the publicist and even the lighting, sound technicians One of the positive impacts of commercialisation of Bengali theatre lay in its linkage effect. Directing and managing a theatre production is an exercise in collaboration, which required the harnessing of and stage manager, to varying degrees contribute their bit to have their work recognized by an astute audience. As an arena of employment therefore theatre offered specialized jobs to many people. The induction of actresses into stage on a regular basis, hiring various personnel to carry out the various backstage activities created a number of job opportunities. An area of intense professionalisation following this commercialisation was the very act of penning down of plays. There ensued a competition among budding playwrights for recognition. This was facilitated by the demand of an audience in transition, who as consumers of a metropolitan culture wanted a rapid change of fare, quite different from the predictable cycle of palas available in jatra.^{xii}

Certain factors made this transformation possible. The entry of business people especially Marwaris into Bengali theatre coincided with the steady marginalisation of the Bengalis in business affairs.^{xiii} The Marwari entrepreneurs and later on their Bengali compatriots looked upon theatre as a promising area of investment assuring sizable return of their capital invested. For this they introduced adequate changes in the organization of the theatre thereby imparting a very professional look to the theatre and transforming theatre into a commercial enterprise. More than experimentation with a new medium of entertainment^{xiv} it was now primarily geared to serve the need for entertainment of the audiences. In their opinion, the theatre must in other words, satisfy the criteria of the audience or it will not flourish. There was thus a qualitative transformation of the basic agenda with which Bengali theatre had started its career. It was a period, which saw the migration of a large section of the middle class into the metropolis in search of jobs as the traditional fields of employment had dried up. There was a deep disquiet among sections of the middle class bhadralok who could not readily adjust to the situation brought in by the colonial intervention. English education brought reasonable success in professions and services for some but a large section was bitterly dissatisfied at the overnight imposition of the rules of Chakri. 'The precise nature and implications of this (bhadralok) aversion to chakri ... needs some analysis' comments Sumit Sarkar in his essay on Ramakrishna, and then adds the following:

"What made the chakri intolerable was -- its connotation of impersonal cash nexus and authority, embodied above all in the new rigorous discipline of work regulated by clock-time. Disciplinary time was a particularly abrupt and imposed innovation in colonial India. Europe had gone through a much slower, and phased, transition spanning some five hundred years ... Colonial rule telescoped the entire process for India within one or two generations ... Chakri thus became a chronotype of alienated time and space."^{xv}

The middle-class enthusiasm with theatre was to a large extent a manifestation of their disillusionment with the colonial mode of employment, which offered very little in terms of gratifying an inner wish to satisfy an urge to recreate.^{xvi} Theatre was an escape from the monotony of scheduled job structure. It not only provided an avenue for experimenting with a new media but also a novel way of keeping oneself busy by venturing into an uncharted

zone of investment and creativity. For example When Girish Ghosh Gave up his secured job at the Parker Company to join Pratap Chand's theatre, he was conscious of the great risk he was taking yet it was his passion for theatre that made him take the final plunge. Despite the great successes he had Girish Ghosh Insisted that his son, Dani, never join the theatre because of the faltering fortunes. That His son later on became a great thespian was largely the result of latter's decision to stick on to theatre rather than any direct thrust from his father. Even Amarendranath Dutta gave up his employment at the railways to tread on a very uncertain path. He faced uncertainties but that never deterred him from stepping back. Thus a way was found out that could be truly a self-funding, self-satisfying zone of investment, materially and otherwise that would not shackle them to the rigors of office hours and constant ridicule of the colonial boss.

Prior to the 1880s many a theatres had grown in the city of Calcutta but none survived due to problems of funding, lack of infrastructure and improper management. The new owners of theatre, made sure that their venture did not end so ingloriously and thus ensured there was some elements of professionalism in their units. Yet despite such brave attempts, the history of the Bengali theatre reveals that no theatre could survive for long, a very pertinent cause being lack of adjustments among the working members.^{xvii} For example the breach between Amritlal Basu and Girish Ghosh, Girish Ghosh and Nagendrabhusan Mukhopadhyay was a clear reflection of how the core group failed to appreciate each other's limitations, therefore revealing a very faction ridden face of the Bengali theatre.^{xviii} Nothing reveals this incident more clearly than the rupture between Girish Ghosh and Amritlal Basu. This incident took place shortly after Girish Ghosh rejoined the Star theatre after his brief interlude at the Emerald Theatre. It happened the Star Theatre had made great name for itself under Amritlal Basu's tutelage after Girish Ghosh's departure. Once Girish Ghosh returned, the credit for the shows now went to the latter, which Amritlal Basu could not readily accept. There thus ensued a bitter war of nerves with neither being able to speak out their grievances. The final rupture ultimately took place in February 1891.

How do we explain this breach in the mentor –disciple relationship of Girish Ghosh and Amritlal Basu? At a primary glance the reluctance on Girish Ghosh's part to acknowledge his disciple's greatness was a revelation of his hegemonic position, which he refused to do away with. Girish Ghosh had come to nurture the belief that he held an assailable position in the Bengali theatre world and that his position would remain unchallenged. Such an assumption on the part of any individual, however great his contributions might be, was bound to create a rebound effect when another person with similar capabilities appear on the scene. For a man like Girish Ghosh who had long dominated the theatre world of Bengal, it would have looked dignified and graceful if he had left the centre stage to the younger generation. But that was an alternative ridden with several considerations. For Girish Ghosh the stage held an attraction that was not easy to overcome and the respect and adulation that the stage had given him was too overpowering to ignore. Moreover in an age when insurance and a life after retirement was not such a happy recluse it was difficult too give up the source of his employment which was at the same time a passion with him. So far Amritlal was concerned it was not wrong on his part to crave for publicity and make a name for himself. Theatre, after all is a creative enterprise where each wants to leave some impression. For someone as gifted and versatile as Amritlal to continue to work under somebody else's shadow was a difficult situation to accept. More than the recognition of his worth (which must have plagued him), what hurt him more was perhaps his inability to work on his own and give expression to his ideas. He could not deny his indebtedness to his master but after a certain point he refused to be guided by his mentor's instructions. There thus emerged a peculiar situation when the clash over personal and professional relationship brought about a veritable conflict. In such circumstances both the individuals should have risen above such petty considerations of age and experience and what was desired was a more masterly handling of the situation through a solution that would have been acceptable to both. What happened instead was another division in the world of Bengali theatre, thereby exposing the fragile basis of understanding among the peers of Bengali theatre.

The breach between Girish Ghosh and Nagendrabhusan can be taken as a case of two unequal members tenaciously held together by ties of convenience. Nagendrabhusan had approached Girish Ghosh to accept the responsibilities of running his Minerva Theatre and train the artists for the play. An interesting aspect of this partnership was the rather uneasy basis of understanding between Girish Ghosh and Nagendrabhusan. The basis of uneasiness might have been the unequal social position of the two and the highhandedness of the proprietor, which might have disturbed Girish Ghosh.^{xix} Girish Ghosh who had been used to with the professionalism of the Marwari firms and the strict code of conduct that prevailed there perhaps had tried to introduce the same at Minerva. He might have disapproved the exploitation and absence of paternalism inside the theatre unit of Pratap Chandra Johuree but he surely appreciated the value of thrift and orderliness, which were so essential for the promotion of a performing art like theatre. There was a certain degree of refusal or arrogance on the part of the proprietor to follow the discipline that was necessary inside the theatre premises and that too on the suggestion of his subordinate staff.

Conclusion.

The transformations in the relationship between the owners and those hired for performances can be explained as a phase of incomplete transition between the highly personal feudal bonds of the years predating the 1880 decades and the sharply materialistic capitalist divide. This relationship can be understood in the wider context of the changing nature of the colonial economy ushering in a phase of capitalist production and the peculiar construction of the communal identity of the ones employed in theatre. As a result hierarchy, dependence and power characterised the relationship inside the world of Bengali theatre. This, enables us to understand how different and unequal groups interacted in structuring class differences through ideologies, concepts and behaviour. It has been my endeavour in this paper to recover and restore the visible and invisible activism and interaction of two unequal groups in the cultural world of Bengal. I have indicated some of the strategies employed by these people to resist and undermine their

oppression and drudgery and have also tried to point out how they articulated ways to survive and dominate in an intensely competitive world. By exploring the social contestation of the employer and the employees at a particular historical conjuncture, I have tried to highlight the “ omnipresent tension and contradictions between hegemony and autonomy in consciousness” ^{xx} as revealed through different groups of people cohabiting the same place for specific time periods, their mutual interdependence and differences, submission and rivalry.

sⁱ The chief adversity in case of these Bengali youths was their financial insecurity. Also many of the upper class patrons kept themselves aloof from these youth's enthusiasm, as they had underestimated their love as well as their understanding of the new medium.

ii Manoranjan Bhattacharyya uses the term *natyanuragi* to define this group. Loosely translated the term means theatre aficionados. He also uses the terms *utshahi* and *utsahadata*, enthusiasts and enthusers, respectively to describe this group. See, Manoranjan Bhattacharyya, *Janagan o Theatre, Natya Academy Patrika, No-2, Calcutta, 1992, pp142-143*

iii Taking payment against acting was not regarded honourable those days. For example Girish Ghosh insisted that the word Amateur be put before his name, lest anybody assumes that he receives a wage for his performance. Another reason for which he did not want his name to be advertised was the fear that his engagement might offend his higher officials at the place of his work. The word amateur would ward off such a possibility. Even among other amateur actors receiving wage was a very demeaning proposition. They were often given a token amount as recognition for their work. When actresses were introduced, the musicians and other hands were paid a small amount. See, Arun Kumar Mitra Ed, *Amritalal Basur Smriti o Atmasmriti*, Calcutta, Sahityalok, 1982 p-194 & p-198 respectively.

iv For a detailed discussion of the popular forms of Entertainment see *Sumanta Banerjee, The Parlour and the Streets, Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta*, Calcutta, Seagull Books, 1998,p-78-79. Also, by the same author, *Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal, in Kumkum Sangari & Sudesh Vaid ed Recasting Women, Essays in Colonial History*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1989

v The need for a western form of proscenium theatre had been in the air for quite sometime. As early as 1926 the *Samachar Chandrika*, expressed the need for a theatre in the western form in its editorial. The main concern expressed was with regard to lack of arrangements for entertainment of the urban populace.

Cited from *Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, Bangiya Natyashalar Itihas, 1795-1896*, Calcutta, Bangiya Sahitya Partishat, Sraban, 1405BS p-18.

vi Subir RayChaudhuri & Swapan Majumdar ed, *BilatiJatra Thekey Swadeshi Theatre*, Calcutta, Dey's, 1982, p- 20

vii *Ibid*, p-21

viii **The Dramatic performances Act of 1876** and the government to stem the tide of nationalist plays and writings passed **the Vernacular Press Act of 1878**. See the books referred above.

ix *Puranic* means Mythological

x Debnarayan Gupta, *Jarimana Makub*, from *Wingser Araley*, M.C. Sarkar & Sons Pvt Ltd, 1385BS

xi Rimli Bhattacharya, ed & tr, *Binodini Dasi, My Story and My Life as an Actress*, New Delhi, Kali, 1998

^{xii} *Palas* are the regular staging of the plays, that usually were held in intervals, often not sequential but independent with different story lines. *Jatras* are the indigenous forms of dramatic presentations, was more amateurish, did not require much rehearsing and was by nature rustic. The rusticity gave it a character of its own, markedly different from the western proscenium theatre.

^{xiii} See Pradip Sinha, *The City as a Mosaic—Ethnicity and Occupations in Calcutta*, from *Calcutta in Urban History*, Calcutta, Firma KLM, 1978; Also, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Traders and Trade In old Calcutta*, from *Calcutta, The living City, v-1*, Sukanta Chaudhuri ed, OUP, 1990.

^{xiv} This had characterized the efforts of the middleclass intellectuals who derived great pleasure in experimenting with this novel form of entertainment.

^{xv} Sumit Sarkar, Kaliyuga, Chakri and Bhakti from *Writing Social History*, OUP, 1997

^{xvi} The term recreate is not used in the conventional sense of recreation. I have broken the word into two parts re and create and tried to use it in the sense of creating something anew.

^{xvii} Amritlal Basu records the rampant factionalism that characterized the Bengali stage from its Start. See, Arun Kumar Mitra, ed, *Smriti o Atmasmriti*, Calcutta, Sahityalok, 1982, p-194-96

^{xviii} See Shankar Bhattacharya, *Bangla Rangalayer Itihaser Upadan*, West Bengal State Book Board, August, 1982p-461-62: Upendranath Vidyabhusan, *Tinkari*

^{xix} For a detailed account of how the final breach between Girish Ghosh and Nagendrabhusan Mukhopadhyay came about ,see Upendranath Vidyabhusan, *Tinkari*. Cited from Shankar Bhattacharya, *Bangla Rangalayer Itihaser Upadan*, West Bengal State Book Board, 1982, pg-461-462

^{xx} Gyan Prakash and Douglas Haynes, eds, *Contesting Power Resistance and Everyday Social Relations In South Asia*, Berkeley, Ca: University of California Press, 1992, p-25