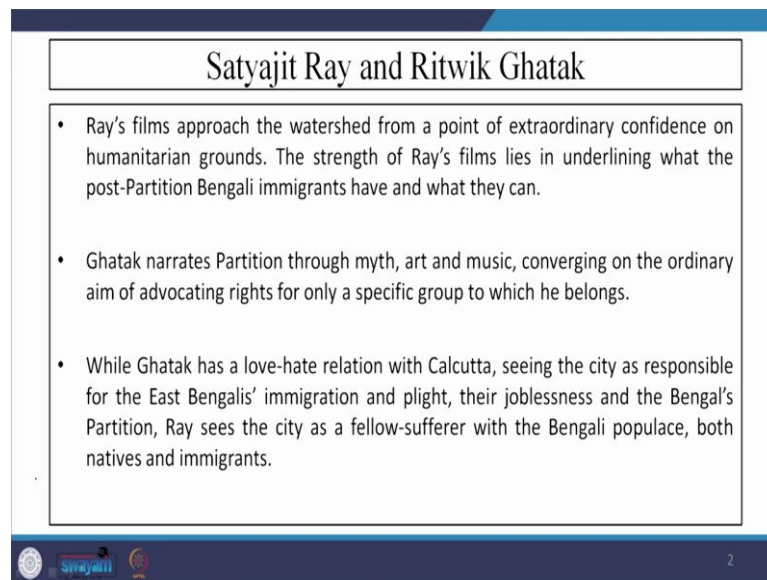


**Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema**  
**Prof. Sarbani Banerjee**  
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**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

**Lecture - 54**  
**Refugee Women and Patriarchal Society - III**

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema. So, we are talking about Refugee Woman and Patriarchal Society. We are.. here we are going to make a comparative analysis of Ghatak and Ray's films. We have already talked about the Cloud-capped Star or Meghe Dhaka Tara and Satyajit Ray's The Great City or Mahanagar. (Refer Slide Time: 00:59)



**Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak**

- Ray's films approach the watershed from a point of extraordinary confidence on humanitarian grounds. The strength of Ray's films lies in underlining what the post-Partition Bengali immigrants have and what they can.
- Ghatak narrates Partition through myth, art and music, converging on the ordinary aim of advocating rights for only a specific group to which he belongs.
- While Ghatak has a love-hate relation with Calcutta, seeing the city as responsible for the East Bengalis' immigration and plight, their joblessness and the Bengal's Partition, Ray sees the city as a fellow-sufferer with the Bengali populace, both natives and immigrants.

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So, one could say that Ray's films approach.. Ray's approach of making the film, approach to the watershed called partition is from a point of view or it is from... it is from a point of extraordinary confidence that he exhibits on or the extraordinary confidence that he shows and ...it draws on his general faith in humanity. So, an extraordinary confidence on humanitarian grounds, on something that draws on his faith in humanity, in the possibilities.. the good possibilities in a human character.

So, he believes that a civilization, a people cannot be entirely defeated and broken by a cataclysm, by a watershed such as the partition. They can still rebound; the refugee, the immigrants have the qualities, have the potential to rebound, to question the wrong and

be resilient thereby. So, the strength of Ray's films lies in underlining what the post-partition Bengali refugees or immigrants have and what they are capable of.

Ghatak narrates partition through using, through very powerful usage of myth, art and music. However, he converges on the aim of advocating rights only for a specific group of the immigrant populace to which he also belongs. So, there is an I-you or we-they rhetoric, to which Ghatak relapses again and again or to which Ghatak chooses to go back again and again.

The question of immigrant and native populace, the East Bengali-West Bengali populace and their difference is something that comes back again and again. Ghatak is advocating for the rights of the immigrant people very clearly, and this keeps coming back frequently in all his films.

So, Ghatak had this love-hate relation with Calcutta, where he saw the city as responsible for the East Bengali's migration and plight, their joblessness and Bengal's partition in general. However, Ray sees the city as a fellow sufferer, the city that is suffering along with the Bengali populace - both the natives and the immigrants. (Refer Slide Time: 04:11)

**Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak**

- Whereas Ghatak's films, *Subarnarekha* and *Bari Theke Paliye*, focus on the protagonists' leaving Calcutta to return "home," albeit with changed perceptions, in *Parash Pathar*, Ray's opening sequence shows a man's miniscule figure from above, trying to cross a busy street in a big city. As this individual figure eventually acquires prominence before the camera, it implies an endlessness of seemingly absurd possibilities within Calcutta (Malini Bhattacharya 1009).
- Priyanka Shah questions the possible typecasting in Ghatak's films:  
  
East Pakistan has been portrayed in Ghatak's films as an idyllic place breeding prelapsarian innocence and purity. On the other hand, Calcutta has been time and again portrayed as a dumping ground of debris. Calcutta to Ghatak, is a place which he loved to hate and hated to love. If East Pakistan is portrayed in the shadow of the Emile Bronte's Yorkshire moors, vibrant and innocent, then Calcutta resembles Dickens' London, a dark world of apocalyptic stupor (126).

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It is very interesting how in Ghatak's films, such as in *Subarnarekha* and *Bari Theke Paliye*, focus on the protagonists leaving Calcutta and going back to their "home", the idyllic home, the desire to return, the nostalgic desire to go back to the idyllic you know origin... keeps coming back in Ghatak's films and keep informing his different films,

albeit with changed perceptions. So, although the characters have a significantly different perception, they are still making a way back to home.

On the other hand, in Ray we see Calcutta as a source or as you know.. a hub of endless possibilities. So, in Parash Pathar we see Ray's opening sequence shows this... shows a man's minuscule figure from above. So, it is a top view of the city and the man is trying to cross a busy street in a big city, and this individual eventually acquires some prominence before the camera. From a diminished figure, he becomes a full-bodied human.

It implies an endless, you know, the endlessness of absurd possibilities within Calcutta, anything could happen within a metropolitan city. A city not only takes away from an individual, but makes an individual...but rather renders individuality to a person, it enables a self-discovery... different aspects one is able to discover, different aspects of oneself through the vast opportunities that are available in a metropolitan city, such as Calcutta.

So, it does not only take away, but also gives back, is something that Ray wants to depict in his films.

Priyanka Shah questions a possible typecasting in Ghatak's films. So, Shah notes that East Pakistan has been portrayed in Ghatak's films as an idyllic place breeding prelapsarian innocence and purity. On the other hand, Calcutta has been time and again portrayed as a dumping ground of debris.

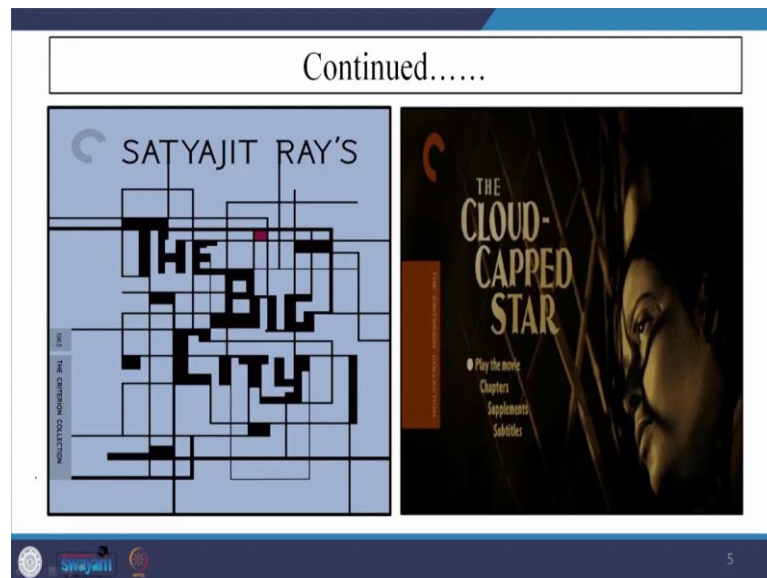
Calcutta to Ghatak, is a place which he loved to hate and hated to love. If East Pakistan is portrayed in the shadow the Emile Bronte's Yorkshire moors, vibrant and innocent, then Calcutta resembles Dickens' London -- a dark world of apocalyptic stupor. (Refer Slide Time: 06:34)

## *Mahanagar and Meghe Dhaka Tara*

- *Mahanagar* provides a personalized platform to the story of the female protagonist, who, despite being a bearer of the socio-economic adversities of Partition, cannot be entirely defined in terms of her refugee identity.
- The film is an antithesis to the nationalized accounts that have been consciously appropriating or misrepresenting women. The heroine has a different story to offer about her own professional sphere, which, even if carrying the lasting impressions of Partition, succeeds to overcome the accounts of nostalgia, suffering, or an overdone tale of women's success caused as a result of Partition.

So, Mahanagar provides a personalized platform for the story to unfold, where the female protagonist bears the socio-economic adversities of partition and yet, one cannot entirely define her in terms of her refugee identity. She is not only a refugee woman; she is more or less than that, but not just that.

The film is an antithesis to the nationalized accounts that have been consciously appropriating or misrepresenting women. So, the heroine has a different story to offer about herself, about her professional sphere, which carries the lasting impressions of partition and yet it succeeds to overcome the accounts of nostalgia, suffering or it is not only an overdone or underdone tale of a woman's success caused as a result of partition. It is a very specific story, specific to Arati, an ordinary middle-class woman. (Refer Slide Time: 07:46)



She is not a symbol of or does not bear a larger meaning. She is neither demonized nor deified in the film. (Refer Slide Time: 08:07)

## Continued.....

- *Mahanagar* does not follow Ghatak's predictable line, where the Bengali refugee woman is put up as a demi-Goddess, and epitomized as a miniaturized, bonsai Bengali nationhood.
- The figure of the *banga bala*, torn Bengali motherland, keeps coming back in Ghatak's work. It replicates the Indian nationalist rhetoric in narrating Bengali nationalism with the same fervor through the figuration of the ill-fated woman.
- In the length of the journey traversed by Arati from her home to the world lies a distantiation from the immediate post-Partition syndromes. During this phase, she acquires components of optimism and individualism. Arati does not enact the role of a gendered mythical model, who is portrayed in the tragic, messianic shades through the lens of the patriarchal history.
- Compared to Nita, whose tenacious *bhadra* or 'correct' conduct keeps the last strings of prestige attached to her impoverished family, Arati's ventures as a saleswoman – someone traditionally looked down upon by the *bhadralok* – narrates a new experience.

So, Mahanagar does not follow Ghatak's predictable line where the Bengali refugee woman is shown as the demi-Goddess and epitomized as a miniature, Bengali nationhood. So, we see that the figure of bonga-bala, torn and and you know.. the torn Bengali motherland keeps coming back in Ghatak's work, in most of his works.

And it replicates the Indian nationalist rhetoric in, you know, narrating Bengali nationalism. So, it is a miniature Indian nationalist rhetoric focused on the region of Bengal and woman figure. Just like we celebrate Mother India, here Ghatak is celebrating bonga-bala with the same fervor, like I said, through the figuration of the ill-fated, the starcrossed woman.

On the other hand in Mahanagar, we see that in the length of the journey traversed by Arati from her home to the world, there is a distantiation from the immediate post-partition syndromes. She acquires (components of) optimism and individualism and so, she does not annoy, she does not necessarily enact the role of a gendered mythical model, who is portrayed in tragic messianic shades through the lens of the patriarchal history. She is not the patriarch's imagination; she is a real woman and thereby more nuanced.



And so, compared to Nita, whose *bhadra* or 'correct' conduct keeps the last strings of... last strings of prestige attached to her impoverished family, Arati is experimenting with a role as a saleswoman. There is a point when she makes up stories in front of her boss; she lies also. So, she talks about.. she cooks up a story about her husband.. so, there is a

point where she lies, she makes up stories and does not tell about the real situation of her...real situation back in her home.

And this is actually caught by Subrata. He is surprised that Arati is capable [of lying]. So, she has this aspect in her; she is capable of lying so smartly. So, we see that Arati is you know constantly dealing with a new persona or different personas, different facets of her own self. (Refer Slide Time: 10:47)

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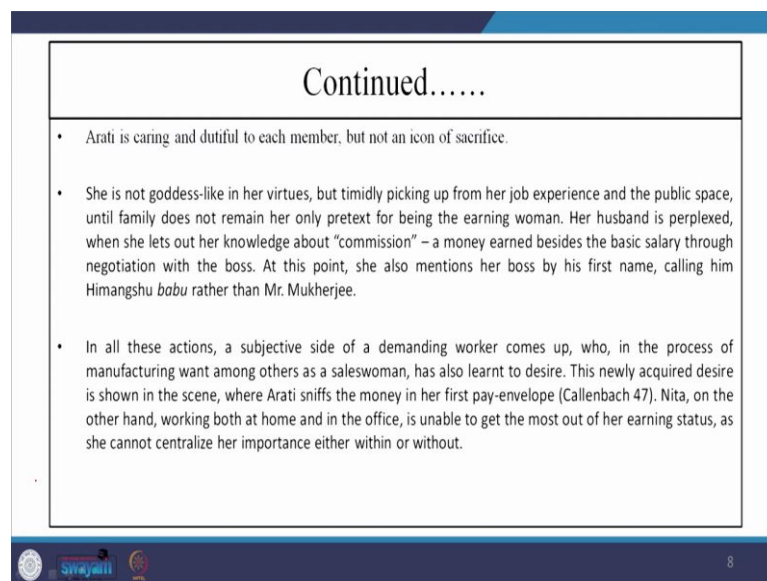
- Both Arati and Nita's working status summon an inversion of gender space and gender roles, as is reflected in significant moments, such as Nita returning after a day's work and Sanat serving her a glass of water, or Arati's mother-in-law serving her the lunch and afterwards cleaning away her dish, as if she were the patriarch of the household.
- Both Arati and Nita dispense their salary for their respective kinfolk's needs. Yet, Nita's act of giving is programmed and pressurized by her circumstances, hardly allowing the audience to inquire her will, whereas Arati, spending at least a part of her first income on buying gifts, is allowed a relatively greater room of independence.
- As a result, neither Arati's profession nor her household is able to wring out duties from her, as she ultimately does not compromise her self and is in charge of her own priorities. Contrarily, Nita becomes the utopia of the male idealist, devoting her wages for her family's prosperity, even as her obligatory job looms on her in the form of depression, disease and finally, death.

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So, both Arati and Nita's working status summon some sort of, some degree of inversion of gender space and gender roles, and there are significant moments in both the films, which subscribe to this. For example, Nita returning after a day's work and Sanat serving him a glass of water, and in Mahanagar we see Arati's mother-in-law serving her lunch and later even cleaning away her dish. And so, she almost occupies, she assumes the role of the patriarch in the household, as the only earning member.

However, we also see that Arati and Nita both dispense their salary for their respective kin's needs. However, Nita's act of giving is programmed; she is pressurized and she cannot do otherwise, she is forced by her circumstances and it, you know, hardly allows the audience to inquire her will, what she would like to do; whereas, Arati can spend at least a part of her first income towards buying, you know, gifts for her relatives, which gives her a relatively greater room of independence in terms of choice. So, neither Arati's profession nor her household is able to wring out duties from her, and she does not compromise herself. She is in charge of her priorities.

On the other hand, Nita is the utopia of the male idealist, the way the male would like to see a woman, devoting her wages for her family's prosperity and even her obligatory job looms on her in the form of depression, disease and finally, it takes away her life. So, Arati is caring and dutiful to each member of her family, but not an icon of sacrifice. (Refer Slide Time: 12:50)



Continued.....

- Arati is caring and dutiful to each member, but not an icon of sacrifice.
- She is not goddess-like in her virtues, but timidly picking up from her job experience and the public space, until family does not remain her only pretext for being the earning woman. Her husband is perplexed, when she lets out her knowledge about "commission" – a money earned besides the basic salary through negotiation with the boss. At this point, she also mentions her boss by his first name, calling him Himangshu *babu* rather than Mr. Mukherjee.
- In all these actions, a subjective side of a demanding worker comes up, who, in the process of manufacturing want among others as a saleswoman, has also learnt to desire. This newly acquired desire is shown in the scene, where Arati sniffs the money in her first pay-envelope (Callenbach 47). Nita, on the other hand, working both at home and in the office, is unable to get the most out of her earning status, as she cannot centralize her importance either within or without.

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So, she is a survivor in the end, she is not goddess - like, but she is instinctively/timidly picking up from her job experience and she is learning from the public space, and after a point, her family does not remain her only reason for going out and becoming an earning woman.

She has a vibrant circle of, you know, female colleagues in the office where they discuss makeup, fashion, sex and so, they have a lot of fun in the office; the office as a space is not oppressing them. In fact, the office... in the sales person's job it is a female majority; other than the boss most of the members, in fact, all the members in the team are females.

So, they discuss everything and she actually enjoys her office space; she emerges as a team leader. So, there is a point where Subrata is perplexed when she talks about commission. He never knew that she has a knowledge about "commission"- a money earned besides the basic salary through negotiating with the boss. And that is when she mentions the boss by his first name, calling him as Himangshu Babu rather than Mister Mukherjee.

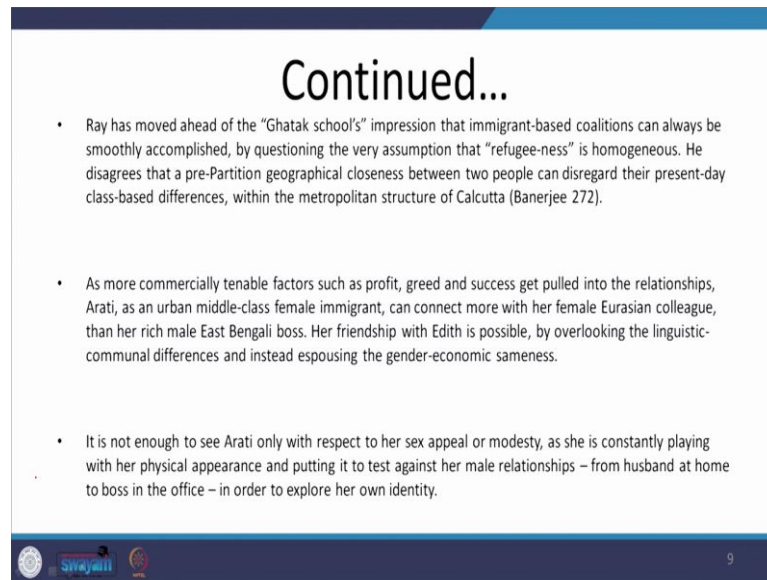
So, a subjective side of a demanding worker is coming up in this picture, in the scene, a very powerful one where in the process of manufacturing want in others which a sales person is supposed to do - (a salesperson manufactures desires, needs in others) - and in the process of doing this job, Arati has learned to desire, she has learned to negotiate and demand for herself.

So, she talks about commission and bargains. This newly acquired desire is shown in a scene once again very powerful, where Arati is sniffing her money, the money in her first pay-envelope. And Nita, on the other hand, works both at home and in the office; she is unable to get the most out of her earning status and so, she cannot establish her importance either within or outside.

So, in a way, one could see Satyajit Ray as having moved ahead of or away from the "Ghatak school's" impression that immigrant-based coalitions can always be smoothly accomplished or that the immigrants are a homogenous body. That is a very problematic assumption.. like we have been discussing in all our previous lectures, the refugee as a people are highly homogenous and assorted you know, people who cannot be understood outside of their caste, class, socio-economic, cultural realities.

So, there are all these grids that separate and segregate the experiences of the refugees; there is no one umbrella refugee experience. And this is something, I mean, that is established, that is reinforced by Satyajit Ray.

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- Ray has moved ahead of the "Ghatak school's" impression that immigrant-based coalitions can always be smoothly accomplished, by questioning the very assumption that "refugee-ness" is homogeneous. He disagrees that a pre-Partition geographical closeness between two people can disregard their present-day class-based differences, within the metropolitan structure of Calcutta (Banerjee 272).
- As more commercially tenable factors such as profit, greed and success get pulled into the relationships, Arati, as an urban middle-class female immigrant, can connect more with her female Eurasian colleague, than her rich male East Bengali boss. Her friendship with Edith is possible, by overlooking the linguistic-communal differences and instead espousing the gender-economic sameness.
- It is not enough to see Arati only with respect to her sex appeal or modesty, as she is constantly playing with her physical appearance and putting it to test against her male relationships – from husband at home to boss in the office – in order to explore her own identity.

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He questions the very assumption that "refugee-ness" is homogeneous. He disagrees that a pre-partition, you know, geographical closeness between two people could disregard their otherwise present-day class-based differences, within the metropolitan structure of Calcutta.

We realize there are points in the film, where Himanshu Mukherjee the boss is a little uncomfortable taking, you know,... he is uncomfortable inviting Arati inside his car, giving her a lift, and soon after Arati steps into his car, he talks about his wife being maniac and cleanliness freak.

So, he is thereby referring to the probable unsanitized conditions in which middle-class refugee families might live. So, it goes on to show that he is maintaining a distance with Arati. He talks about the fact that his wife cares a lot for sanitizing everything, and this is something he says once she steps into the car.

So, the difference is maintained and yet there is a point when he is trying to manipulate Arati by saying that we are both from Pabna. So, (he suggests) - "I am going to give you

some more advantage if we could throw out Edith from the job." So, he is constantly shifting his positions in the...throughout the narrative.

As more commercially tenable factors, such as profit, greed, success get pulled into relationships, Arati's urban middle-classness and her position as a female immigrant cannot really connect with her East Bengali boss. Just because both of them trace back their roots to the same place does not necessarily mean that they can connect in every way. Rather, she can connect more with her female Eurasian colleague Edith.

So, her friendship with Edith is possible through overlooking the linguistic communal differences, and instead you know looking at the gender and economic socio-economic sameness. So, they more or less belong to the same class, there is a glimpse inside,... there is a point where the camera covers the inside of Edith's home, which is very similar to Arati's.

Edith belongs to the lower middle-class middle class family and so, neither Arati nor Edith can actually identify with the position, with the rank and with the status that Mr. Mukherjee has in the society; rather, the two women can relate to each other more.

So, it is not enough to see Arati only with respect to her sex appeal or even her modesty. She is neither very appealing nor modest; she is constantly playing with her physical appearance. She is putting it to test against different male relationships - from her husband at home to her boss in the office - and she is thereby exploring her own identity. (Refer Slide Time: 20:28)

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- Paulomi Chakraborty- Arati's company's selling the knitting machine, which replaces hand knitting, her gifting her son a toy gun rather than telling him fairy-tales; the family's borrowing a thermometer from the neighbour or the intermittent flowing in of evening news from the radio – imply a touch of technology that conceals the past. Arati's image as the new woman is made possible by covering up her Partition experiences, wherein her entity as the refugee woman exists.
- While Arati is not a part of the utopian Communist dream as motivated by Ghatak's cinematic canon, she is also not crushed like Nita, under its ambiguously liberating forces.

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Paulomi Chakraborty comments that Arati's company selling the knitting machine, which replaces hand-knitting, her gifting her son a toy gun rather than telling him fairy tales; then there is a point where the family is borrowing a thermometer from the neighbor and there are intermittent flowing in of evening news from the radio - all of which imply a touch of technology, which conceals the past. So, Arati's image - all these you know, the aids of technology are important in shaping the new woman that Arati is; however, as Chakraborty would argue, it happens... the shaping of Arati as a new woman, as the modern woman in Calcutta is possible through covering up her partition experiences, wherein her entity as a refugee woman exists.

However, it is a little difficult and even problematic to claim such prelapsarian past because the Bengali refugee populace, the middle-class refugee populace did not entirely and absolutely belong to the geographical space of East Bengal. As has been argued by many critics and established by now, they would travel back and forth; they had many relatives and friends in Calcutta, in the parts that went on to become Eastern Bengal and part of India.

And so, it is a little futile and even problematic to ask, to seek for such pure identities. Even Chakraborty at a point says that the family does not use the East Bengali dialect, to which one could respond that for the same reason, for the fact that they had a strong connection with Calcutta in professional terms in terms of you know, in terms of the colleagues that they had, the relations they had, the you know assertion of a pure East Bengali dialect is not very important. What is important is rather looking at the motleyed presence, the motleyed meanings in a Calcutta, where all kinds of population live and in fact, Ray is showing that while a section like the Arati's family are marginalized, there are also East Bengalis represented by the boss. A very powerful figure, a person that is very successful who can give jobs to others, who can take away jobs from people, from you know women like Edith, who clearly belong to the fringes of the city. So, once again, refugee does not mean only one thing. (Refer Slide Time: 23:48)

### Narendranath Mitra's "Jaiba"

- Narendranath Mitra's short story "Jaiba," was first published in *Chaturanga* in the winter of 1948 and republished in a collection- Galpamala.
- Narendranath Mitra's story revolves round a young middle class couple, Mriganka and Sudatta. The structure of the household is very modern, nuclear, marked by the absence of parents and relatives.
- Mriganka is a Professor of Chemistry, whose wife had been abducted in Lahore and recovered later. In her days of abduction, she had become pregnant.

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So, next I am going to talk about a story by Narendranath Mitra. It is called "Jaiba," Jaiba or Biological. So, it was first... so, it was first published in *Chaturanga* in the winter of 1948 and republished in a collection *Galpamala*.

Narendra Mitra's story revolves around a young middle-class couple, Mriganka and Sudatta. The structure of the household is modern, nuclear and it is marked by the absence of either of the couple's parents and relatives.

And Mriganka is a Professor of Chemistry, whose wife had been abducted in Lahore and later recovered. By the time she had become pregnant. (Refer Slide Time: 24:17)

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- Mriganka has accepted her back into the folds of domesticity. The reader does not come across any character who messes with this order. Sudatta gives birth to the child and arrangements are made to put the child in an orphanage. However, there is one impulsive moment, when Sudatta looks at her child's face and at that moment it is her motherhood that dominates her being. She looks at her child with love. This does not go unnoticed and Mriganka decides to take the child home.
- Mriganka however, develops an obsessive interest in biology, heredity and the effect of genes. Sudatta faces the greatest crisis when she finds her husband looking at the child and making notes in his diary and she becomes desperate to abort the second child she now conceives with her husband.
- She is afraid that this would only make him interested in a comparative study.

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So, Mriganka initially accepts her back within the folds of domesticity and the reader does not come across any mess within this... within the order of or within the mundane order of life.

Later, Sudatta gives birth to this child, who is I mean... a child conceived through the abductor and so, arrangements are made to put the child in an orphanage. However, there is an impulsive moment... Sudatta constantly wanted to get rid of the child, to terminate the child, but once the child is born there is a moment, where she... her motherhood overrules everything else and so, Mriganka decides to take the child home.

However, subsequently Mriganka develops an obsessive interest in biology, he shifts from chemistry to biology and he starts reading extensively on heredity and effect of genes.

So, Sudatta faces the greatest crisis when she discovers that her husband is looking at the child as a lab specimen, as an object of experimentation, and making notes in his diary; and she becomes desperate to abort her second child that she has now conceived with her husband. So, she is afraid that he would like to, he would be interested in a comparative study [between her two children], like one does with you know other animals inside a laboratory.

It would render a sub-human status and position to both the children, and this is also an alternate way of you know realizing his his masculinity or experimenting with his masculinity in a way. Mriganka can be argued as, you know, comparing and competing with the unknown abductor to see whose child is better genetically, and it is severely oppressive. All these experimentations and clinical treatment of children and comparisons, you know, happen at the expense of severely oppressing the woman that has mothered both the children. (Refer Slide Time: 26:47)

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- “After a few moments of hesitating silence, [Sudatta] said, "Dactarbabu, you know I have conceived again. But this time it has not yet reached such an advanced stage. I am sure you can help me at least this time.” This proclamation portrays the condition of Sudatta and Mriganka’s marriage.

So, there is a point where Sudatta says, "Dactarbabu you know I have conceived again, but this time it has not yet reached such an advanced stage. I am sure you can help me at least this time." She indicates aborting the second child that was conceived of.. you know, conceived with Mriganka. So, this proclamation portrays the condition of Sudatta and Mriganka's marriage, which outwardly looks very normal. (Refer Slide Time: 27:19)

## Continued.....

- In the context of Partition violence, the abduction of Sudatta and the aftermath of it have serious consequences in the short story.
- Mriganka’s stand to accept Sutapa as well as her baby, yet after the birth his use of the ‘illegitimate’ child as specimen portrays the dichotomy of his attitude.



So, in the context of partition violence, the abduction of Sudatta and the aftermath of it have serious consequences in the story. Mriganka's stand to accept Sudatta as well as her baby is... later on, you know, one realizes... the story reveals that he has not accepted Sudatta's child as a human child as such, but he wants to use it for his own scientific experiments. So, his ambitions in his professional life actually determines and decides

his familial being, his person, the person he is in the family. So, he also wants to have a second child for the same purpose, in order to serve his experiments, where two children get to be compared.

What is the position of the narrator (the Dactarbabu)? He is also a doctor and a friend of Mriganka. He steers clear of the entire situation and that is his bhadra position; he is another.. he is also duplicitous/ hypocritical who is not helping the helpless woman; he is playing the silent onlooker who in a way abets the crime, the crime happening, the cruelty being enforced on the woman, on Sudatta. (Refer Slide Time: 29:04)

*Angapali (Embrace)* by Ramapada Choudhury

- *Angapali (Embrace)* by Ramapada Choudhury presents the return of Sabita, a formerly abducted woman, to the home deemed legitimate.
- Rather than penning a simplified reunion, Chaudhury exploits the possibilities of third person omniscient narration so that he can show not only the mixed reactions of her relatives, but also the persisting doubts and ambivalent attitude of that main character.
- Sabita is caught between the affection that should prevail in the private sphere and the adverse impact of her past in the public one.
- Sabita is aware that “so many changes had occurred within this short span” (2008a: 339) of one year and a half, making it impossible to come full circle after undergoing a deeply traumatic experience.

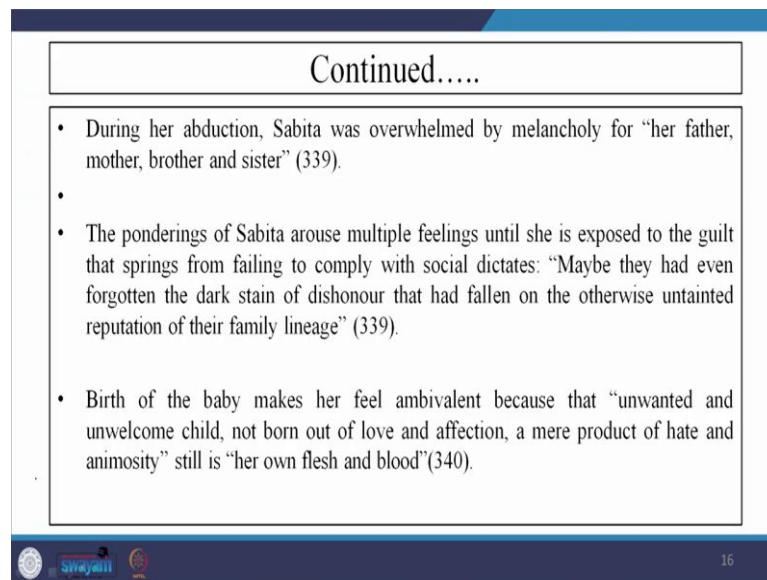
 Swajathi  15



Next, we are going to talk about "Angapali" or Embrace by Ramapada Choudhury. So, Angapali presents the return of Sabita who was formerly abducted and she comes back home with a child born of abduction. So, Choudhury exploits the possibilities of a third person omniscient narration, so that he can show not only the mixed reactions of Sabita's relatives in her natal home, but also persists and,... but also you know reflects on the persisting doubts and ambivalent attitude of Sabita, the main character.

So, Sabita is caught between the affection that should prevail in the private sphere and the adverse impact of her past in the public sphere. So, she is aware that "so many changes had occurred within this short span" of one and one-year-and-a-half, making it impossible to come full circle after undergoing a deeply traumatic experience." So, Sabita was overwhelmed by melancholy for "her father, her brother and her sister" during abduction.

So, this is very interesting how a woman does not feel sorry for herself as much as she does for her family when she is at a point... when she is abducted. So, she naturalizes and normalizes the fact that her body belongs more to the community; it is more of a shared possession than it is her own body, her own identity. She feels that others suffer more, they are humiliated more than she is [for her abduction]. (Refer Slide Time: 30:48)



Continued.....

- During her abduction, Sabita was overwhelmed by melancholy for "her father, mother, brother and sister" (339).
- 
- The ponderings of Sabita arouse multiple feelings until she is exposed to the guilt that springs from failing to comply with social dictates: "Maybe they had even forgotten the dark stain of dishonour that had fallen on the otherwise untainted reputation of their family lineage" (339).
- Birth of the baby makes her feel ambivalent because that "unwanted and unwelcome child, not born out of love and affection, a mere product of hate and animosity" still is "her own flesh and blood"(340).

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So, the ponderings of Sabita arouse multiple feelings until she is exposed to the guilt that springs from failing to comply with the social dictates. So, she says at a point "maybe

they had even forgotten the dark stain of dishonor that had fallen on the otherwise untainted reputation of their family lineage."

So, she has forgotten her own plight in a bid to think for her family, how she has caused humiliation to the lineage, to the family's reputation. So, birth of the legitimate baby so-called illegitimate baby makes her feel ambivalent because "that unwanted and unwelcome child, not born out of love and affection, a mere product of hate and animosity" still is "her own flesh and blood."

It reminds us of Lalithambika Antarjanam's story "A Leaf in the Storm" and so many other stories, where a woman becomes pregnant and she does not know how to deal with such unwanted pregnancy. Even we can compare this with the case of Sudatta who wanted to terminate her first child, but after experiencing motherhood she wants to keep the child.

This also takes us back to the statistics in history, the facts in history, the rehabilitation policies where many young mothers, many rape victims that had become mothers for the first time reported shattering experiences, when they were made to part with their children, they were taken back to their country of origin, whereas the child deemed as a child of the male rapist or abductor was given to the family of the abductor. So, if the woman had to go back to India the child was given back to the father, who was now a Pakistani, and it was a shattering experience especially for the first-time mothers who were very young. (Refer Slide Time: 32:56)

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- The insistence of the mother to wash Sabita throughout the story loses its anecdotal nature once her ulterior motives come to light. Additionally, religious and social beliefs—although generally unspecified—prevail for a woman who displays clear generational differences with descendants who do not share such a deeply-rooted idea of “cleanliness.”
- The mother seeks purification through her actions, which takes back Sabita to her traumatic past indefinitely. The worst punishment comes from the words that construct her as an outcast in her own home.
- The restoration of abducted women can only be effective on a geographical level, never on an emotional one; the combination of politics, faith and traumas is irreversible and hinders any possible demonstration of affection, whether bodily or verbal.

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So, the insistence of Sabita's mother to wash her, cleanse her throughout, and even cleanse herself throughout the story loses its anecdotal nature and the ulterior motives come to light. It is not merely her you know customary beliefs, traditional beliefs, why she keeps washing herself once Sabita return. One realizes that she is so obsessed with cleanliness owing to the presence of the child in home.

So, religious and social beliefs, although generally unspecified, prevail for a woman who displays clear generational differences with descendants who do not share such deep-rooted ideas of "cleanliness."

So, we see the mother seeking purification through her actions, which takes back Sabita to her traumatic past indefinitely. So, the worst punishment comes from the words that construct her as an outcast in her own home. So, we see that... we realize that the mother is not performing the ritual of cleanliness due to some customary habit, but because of the presence of the child, who is half-Muslim.

So, the restoration of abducted women can only be effective on a geographical level and not on an emotional level. We have seen this in the case of Lajwanti and Pinjar too, that the reconciliation is never organic. There is a crack that cannot be or a gap that cannot be bridged. And so, things never become like before. The combination of politics, faith and traumas is irreversible and they hinder any possible demonstration of affection, whether bodily or verbal. (Refer Slide Time: 34:59)

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- Chaudhury's short stories encapsulate some of the most conspicuous characteristics of what abduction and its subsequent trauma meant for women.
- Sabita's past is secondary to the variables that come into play after their return, which proves that there is no such thing as a single story when it comes to abducted women.

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So, Chaudhury's short stories have encapsulated some of the most conspicuous characteristics of what abduction and its absence and its subsequent trauma could mean for women. And Sabita's past is not as painful as her present. Her past is secondary to the variables that come into play after she returns to her natal home. And so, from this story we realize that there are so many different experiences, so many different ways, you know predicaments that women had to deal with once repatriated and brought back to their family of origin.

So, with this, I am going to stop today, and we will meet again for our next lecture.

Thank you.