CHAPTER - III
CREATIVE APPROACHES
TO THE CHARACTERS OF THE MAHABHARATA
BY NABINCHANDRA
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3.00 INTRODUCTION

During his tenure in office being himself a Deputy Magistrate, Nabinchandra Sen had to travel over different places in India. In this connection, he came into contact with various types of people. When he visited the Jagannatha Temple located at Puri or Srikshetra in order to pay homage to the holy images of the three deities there, i.e., Jagannatha, Balarama and Subhadra, during his official sojourn at Puri, a distinctive thought dawned upon his mind. He also became conscious of the role of Srikrishna in ancient India when he visited the relic of the kingdom of Jarsandha during his official tenure at Rajgir. Apart from this, his thought, contemplations, and observations in regard to the characters of the epic titled the Mahabharata were deeply influenced by all the factors like the ideal traits of his father’s character, the lover boy self of his own, his artistic self, his patriotism and above all his devout self. Besides, the contemporaneous backdrop and circumstances cast a long shadow over his thoughts and observations. The portrayal of the characters of the Mahabharata
in the literary creations of Nabinchandra Sen can be discussed on the base of this backdrop.

3.01 SUBHADRA

Subhadra is the wife of Arjuna and the sister of Krishna. In the second canto of the book of verses titled *Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas* composed by Nabin Chandra, Krishna describes her as an affectionate, generous, caring and serviceable woman who is worshipper of nature and far beyond the contact of self-interest and crookedness of the mundane world and ever-indifferent.¹ This revelation of her good heart draws us to her just the way Arjuna was drawn.

The book of verses named *Trayi* (trilogy) reveals various good qualities possessed by Subhadra. She is an expert painter too. In her own words, ‘আমি কত চিত্রী কত রূপে তাই’ [ I have painted myriad of pictures of different types.....]. Again, somewhere in that book of verses, she is seen² to discuss the traits of feminine virtues which are devoid of every vicious trait like selfishness, meanmindedness, cruelty and crookedness.

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² Ibid, P. 34.
³ Ibid, P. 147.
This protagonist named Subhadra created by Nabinchandra Sen is totally different from the way the same protagonist is portrayed in the *Mahabharata*. Unlike the Subhadra portrayed by Nabinchandra, the protagonist of the same name is depicted in the *Mahabharata* not as a device of disseminating the virtue of love. In the viewpoint of Vasuki, Subhadra created by Nabinchandra is —

‘... কি শান্তি মাধুরী
ভাসে বিস্ফৃক্তি নেত্রে, করে বরিষণ
সরলতা, কোমলতা, কিবা পবিত্রতা
প্রতি পদসঞ্চালনে। আম্বাহারা আমি
বসিয়া মহর্ষি!’

[Her eyes open wide, reflected the quiet and tranquil elegance; her every footstep showers the simplicity, tenderness and sanctity, your holiness, I was beside myself.]

In the book titled *Raivatak* Subhadra has been characterized as a teenager girl who is shy, diffident, bashful, coy, modest and inexperienced of love. And love comes to her life with stealthy footsteps. Yet, the trait of a devout female ascetic overshadows her self of an amorous ladylove. When Arjuna woos her, her reaction does not seem to be that of an amorous ladylove, rather all her words are twisted by her and found from Narayana, the God. She is always

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too placid and too exalted through her devout statements to get through our hearts; even in the warm moments of her amorous company with Arjuna, her devotional effusions make her a bit distant. She is only thrilled in the context of Krishna. In course of her conversation with Arjuna, she says:

“নারায়ণ! ভ্রাতঃ!” — পার্থ দেখিলা সে কঠ
তরলিত, উচ্চসিত—“করিলে অধিকত
dতে যদ্বে সেই চিত্র মহিমামণ্ডিত
dাসীর হৃদয়পটে, দয়ায় তুমি
মুছিবে কি সেই চিত্র, ভাঙিবে সে পট?”

[‘Narayana! My brother!’ Arjuna found that voice softened and effusive—‘The majestic portrait sketched so zealously by yourself in the core of the heart of this humble woman; the embodiment of kindness, would you tend to erase that sketch, or would you tear that canvas yourself?]

In the book of verses named *Trayi* (trilogy) Subhadra, in order to protect Arjuna in Dvaraka proves herself as valorous warrior in the battle which incident is absent in the original text. Subhadra is not only the better half of a valorous warrior, but also the mother of a valorous son. She blesses her son to establish a Millennium or

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holy state of justice in the world by carrying out the duties and obligations of a warrior-king.\(^7\) It can be mentioned in this context that in the *Mahabharata* too, Subhadra believed Krishna to be the All-powerful God.\(^8\) But, unlike the portrayal of Subhadra by Nabinchandra, that of Subhadra portrayed by Vedavyasa is not active enough to move forward for disseminating the new religious theory propounded by Krishna. Here, Nabinchandra succeeds in expressing his creativity through his fresh approach in the characterization of Subhadra.

The Subhadra in the book titled Trayi (trilogy) is introduced as the disseminator of the new religious theory propounded by Krishna; the guiding principle of which theory was to wish the well-being of all the human beings irrespective of Aryans or Non-Aryans. Subhadra never hesitated to send Abhimanyu to the battlefield, because it was a crusade. Therefore, unlike the character of Subhadra created by Vedavyasa, Subhadra is not too afflicted to be overwhelmed with the bereavement of her son. Because, the sacrifice of Abhimanyu’s life itself acts as the foundation of the novel and holy state of justice or the Millennium, the pinnacle of which is the holy name of Krishna.\(^9\)

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Time and again, this overrated fascination of Subhadra for Srikrishna and above all the complacent and unmoved state of her detachad mind\textsuperscript{10} even at the miserable death of her only son, seems unbearable and unnatural to us. But, we should remember that Nabinchandra has introduced a fresh approach in characterizing Subhadra by making her instrumental in the application of a particular theory. This female protagonist, i.e., Subhadra in \textit{Trayi} (trilogy) interprets the theory of happiness as propounded by Krishna to Jaratkaru:

\begin{quote}
'জগতের সুখনীতি, সুখনীতি আমাদের
মানবের সুখ, সুখ তোমার আমার।
সেই মহাসুখ প্রোতে, যাই তুমি আমি আমি ডাসি,
পাইব অনন্ত সিন্ধু, সুখ পারাবার।'\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

[Our policy of Happiness, is that policy of happiness to be accepted by the world, the happiness of mine as well as yours is not different from the Humanity as a whole; both you and me are drifted out by that great tide of happiness, and as a result we will be able to discover the sea of happiness which is limitless].

It is obvious that behind this characterization there is a particular, distinctively creative outlook of the creator here.


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, P.173.
According to an esteemed critic, there is an effort of sketching a pen-picture of the perfect nature of the social responsibility of women in a broader sense and also of the distinctive trait of womanhood. But, we should say that Subhadra should not be underestimated merely within the restricted periphery of a standard-bearer of Feminism; since herself being a believer in the omnipresent God, she is generous enough even to her enemies. In her words –

“শত্রু!—এক ভগবান সর্বমূলে অধিষ্ঠান,
সর্বময় এক অদ্বিতীয়।”

[Enemy!–There is a God who is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Peerless.]

During her conversation with Jaratkuru, she says,—

‘পাপিনী যে তাকে সমধিক ভাল-
বাসি আমি, তার তরে কাঁদে এ মরম।”

[She who is a sinner is much more loved by me, I am deeply touched and moved by her]

It may be mentioned here that unlike the religious fanatics, Nabinchandra himself was neither abhorrent to the sinners nor he used to sneer at the downfallen. He thus said,

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13. Ibid, P. 147.
God has a mellifluous name ‘Patitapavana’, i.e, one who delivers sinners from damnation. We are too trivial to abhor the sinners. Is there anyone among us who is not a sinner at all?

If we cast a glance at his biography, we would be aware of the fact that once he had attended upon a harlot to cure her of her ailment. Hence, the traits like compassion to all and love to every being in the character of Subhadra owe to the compassionate heart of her creator here.

In fact, Nabinchandra had a profound esteem for the women. During his tour at Mathura, he was cured of his ailment by the nursing of three affectionate sisters and that made him comment.:

‘ভূতলে রমণীহাসদয়ই স্বর্গ, বুঝিলাম, হাদয়ের এই প্রেমপ্রবণতা বুঝিলাম বাসিন্দারা শ্রীভগবানকে পাইয়াছিলেন, এবং ভারতের ধর্মেতিহাসে এ রূপ নিভাম প্রেমের জন্মই তাহারা পৃজিত।’

The heart of the womenfolk itself appears to be the paradise on this earth. Now I have realized that this heartfelt attachment enabled the female dwellers of Vrindavan to attain the Godhead; and no

15. Sajanikanta Das (ed.), Nabinchandra Rachanavali 1, P. 380.
wonder they are adored in the history of religion in India for such a
dispassionate love]. Hence, Subhadra too has been created by the
poet with his heartfelt esteem.

Drawn by this all-pervading and overflowing love for every
creation, this woman named Subhadra attends upon the wounded
ones in the battlefield of Kurukshetra irrespective of friends and
enemies. Because, according to her, it is her virtue to attend upon
the wounded soldiers.\textsuperscript{18} It may be mentioned that the discussions on
the philanthropic services extended by Subhadra have both the
positive\textsuperscript{19} and negative\textsuperscript{20} aspect.

But, we should say that Nabinchandra has created Subhadra as
an embodiment of service. In many places of the \textit{Trayi} (trilogy),
Nabinchandra has expressed the traits of nursing and kindness of
Subhadra.\textsuperscript{21} Obviously, this poetic imagination of an aristocratic lady
of noble birth offering social service such as attending upon the
wounded soldiers at the army camp seems a bit impractical. But this
must also be admitted that in response to that eternal voyage of Love,
the voyager has to transcend all the artificial discriminations of the

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\footnote{18. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, \textit{Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas}, P. 147.}
\footnote{20. Tarapada Mukhopadhyay, \textit{Adhunik Bangla Kavya}, P. 248}
\footnote{ii) Ibid, PP. 63 - 64.}
\end{footnotes}
society after braving all dangers and vicissitudes. And the character of Subhadra portrayed by Nabinchandra is the worshipper of that eternal, everlasting Love. From the very beginning, this Subhadra used to flow towards a feeling of universality, herself being liberated from the fetters of a restricted personality. And “অভিমন্যুর মৃত্যুতে তার বিকেন্দ্রিত নিন্দাম প্রেম এবারে ছড়িয়ে পড়েছে বিশ্বময়।” [The death of Abhimanyu disseminates her decentralized and dispassionate love throughout the world.]

The analysis of characterization of Subhadra by Nabinchandra makes us feel that the character is nothing but a ‘তত্ত্বের জড়পিণ্ড’ [A conglomerated mass of theory]. But, behind this character sketch, a distinctive way of thinking of its creator was active. During the author’s visit to the Jagannatha Temple at Puri, both the images of Balarama and Subhadra beside the image of Lord Jagannatha raised a question in the author’s mind, that is, for which reason, Subhadra and Balarama were placed beside Lord Jagannatha although they had done nothing worthy to get themselves worshipped by people. Nabinchandra substantiates his view by furnishing with the view of a renowned archaeologist Rajendra Lal Mitra that Srikshetra is not only a holy place of Hindu pilgrimage, it is a place of Buddhist pilgrimage too, and so, ‘শ্রীকেন্দ্রের ত্রিমূর্তি সেই ত্রিমূর্তির আকৃতি মাত্র।’

images of the Divine Trio indicate the shape of that Triune. The Triune refers to Buddha, Religion and Organization here. He thus explains the matter:

“শঙ্করচার্যের আক্রমণের পর যখন ভারতবর্ষে নিরীশ্বর অবস্থাপন্ন মূর্তিপূজক বৌদ্ধধর্ম অধঃপতিত ও বৈষ্ণবধর্মে রূপান্তরিত হয়, তখন বুদ্ধগুলো জগন্নাথে, ধর্মগুলো সুভর্বকেতু এবং সঙ্গে বলদেবে এবং শ্রীকেত্রি বিষ্ণুকেত্রে রূপান্তরিত হয়।”

[Subsequent to the uprising of Shankaracharya, when the atheistical and idolatrous Buddhism became degenerated and was transformed into Vaishnavism, the Buddhist Congregation was transformed into Jagannatha, Religious Congregation into Subhadra and the Organisational Congregation into Baladeva, while the Shrikshetra itself was transformed into Vishnukshetra].

Based on the aforesaid notion, Nabinchandra Sen laid the foundation of the characters of Subhadra and Balarama in his \textit{Raivatak, Kurukshetra, Prabhas}

When we discuss the character of Subhadra in view of the poet's notion, all our complaints regarding this novel depiction of the protagonist Subhadra are removed. In fact, the characterization of this protagonist may be identified as an expression of Nabinchandra Sen’s culture of intellect. As a result, although the deportment of this character sometimes appears disgusting, yet Nabinchandra should

\footnote{25. Sajanikanta Das (ed), \textit{Nabinchandra Rachanavali} 2, P.15}
be appreciated for his laudatory effort for making a great stir not only at that time, but in this time also. Through this novel estimation of the characterization of Subhadra in the *Mahabharata* the hallmark of his creativity can be discovered.

3.02 ARJUNA

In the *Mahabharata* Arjuna is "The third son of Kunti, believed to be the incarnation of Nara (one of the first two greatest sages), procreated by Indra, on behalf of Kunti's husband king Pandu of Hastinapura."\(^{26}\) Arjuna was attracted to Subhadra when he met her for the first time during a festival held on the bank of the Prabhas Sarovara.\(^{27}\) Yet, Nabinchandra’s writing indicates that long before meeting Subhadra, Arjuna had felt amorous attraction for Subhadra when Krishna had told Arjuna about the tender, compassionate and ever-indifferent nature of Subhadra.\(^{28}\) But, this amorous courtship of Arjuna lacks the absolute fidelity to the original text.

This protagonist, Arjuna was created in the romantic atmosphere of Nineteenth Century. So, his love is not merely physical, rather a mental or emotional one. And that emotional attraction too is auditory, which, according to the Vaishnavite terminology, is known as

\(^{26}\) Madhusraba Dasgupta, *Samsad Companion to the Mahabharata*, P. 152.
\(^{27}\) Haridas Siddhantabagish, (tr.) *Mahabharatam, Adiparva*, 212, 14-15, P. 2026.
‘Purvaraga’, i.e., amorous attraction during courtship. It may be mentioned in this context that the treatise titled *Srimadbhagavaata* too substantiates this courtship between Arjuna and Subhadra; although the treatise indicates that Arjuna was rather smitten with carnal desires.\(^{29}\)

This Arjuna, as portrayed by Nabinchandra lacks the carnal desire in this regard. However, in the definition of amorous courtship,\(^{30}\) there lurks a faint expression of sensual desire, whereas Nabinchandra’s portrayal is devoid of that. This trait of amorous courtship in the character of Arjuna is the distinctive innovation of his own. He did not characterize Arjuna according to the cliche definition of amorous courtship.

The deep intensity of this amorous courtship makes him visualize the image of Subhadra through his fascinating eyes. And being drawn by that human image instantly he felt an urge of renouncing his kingdom, wealth and thirst for valour.\(^{31}\) The Arjuna who makes a hut

   ii) Ibid, 6, P. 1681.

\(^{30}\) *Purvaraga is a kind of mental state of both the hero and heroine where they feel attraction to each other through the action of hearing or seeing before their final union*


thatched with leaves only to cast his glance on Subhadra, he is emotional. The ‘Careerist’ Arjuna of the Mahabharata\textsuperscript{32} is absent there. However, Vedavyasa’s epic too tells us about Arjuna’s sensuous nature and his emotional as well as carnal attraction for Chitrangada and Ulupi during\textsuperscript{33} the period of his celibacy.

But, that emotional attachment was not magnetizing enough to contradict his own nature. But the protagonist created by Nabinchandra is made to think that very contradictory thought drawn alone by the emotional attachment. Another point in this context should be mentioned that the distinctive mindset of the creator is active behind this trait of romantic love in Arjuna’s character.

If we go through the biography of Nabinchandra Sen, it can be learnt that he had a fervent passion for his wife.\textsuperscript{34} This romantic and Don Juanish character was active behind the love-periphery of Subhadra and Arjuna. Here the fresh creative approach of the character of Arjuna, reflects the distinctive and creative outlook of Nabinchandra.

This Arjuna seems to be a cowardly person to some extent. Sometimes he is afraid of the curse by the Brahmin.\textsuperscript{35}

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32. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Adiparva, 128.30-69, PP. 1413-1422.
34. Sajanikanta Das (ed), Nabinchandra Rachanavali, P. 61.
\end{flushright}
Sometimes he is also afraid of committing a scene. It may be mentioned in this context that, in the Dronaparva of the Mahabharata, Arjuna was bitterly mournful for his unrighteous practice, because of slaying Drona. In Raivatak Arjuna is anguished after slaying the Nagaraja, whereas it lacks the fidelity to the original text.

Besides, in the book of verses by Nabinchandra, Arjuna treated Shailaja with fatherly affection when he came to know her real identity that she was the daughter of Chandrachur and this trait of Arjuna reveals his soft, tender, humane and conscientious mentality.

Nabinchandra portrays a number of traits in the character of Arjuna. Firstly, he is a prominent advocate for the ideology of Krishna. It is mentionworthy in this context that this portrayal of Arjuna has fidelity to the original text while Vedavyasa too portrays Arjuna as a staunch supporter of Krishna.

A critic thus substantiates that portrayal of Arjuna: ‘তাহার সমস্তই যেন মহাপুরুষ কৃষ্ণে সমর্পিত।’[ His entire soul is dedicated to Krishna, the great and supreme soul] Secondly, Arjuna himself is the lover of

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37. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Dronaparva, 167. 43-44, P. 1758.
39. Ibid, P. 121.
41. Sukhamay Bhattacharya, Mahabharater Charitavali, P. 176.
Subhadra and her would-be-husband later. Thirdly, he is a father. Yet, in the *Mahabharata*, the prime identity of Arjuna is that of a warrior, whereas Nabinchandra portrays that epical warrior Arjuna from a different point of view. In regard to the romantic and amorous relation with Subhadra, that very great archer with his mythological bow named ‘Gandiva’ appears a bit frivolous through his jesting remarks at Satyabhama and Sulochana.\(^{42}\) And through his childlike conversation with his little daughter-in-law named Uttara at the infantile moments of playing with toys while accompanying her.\(^{43}\)

According to an esteemed critic, the portrayal of Arjuna in the anthology of verses titled *Trayi* (trilogy) lacks the trait of personality, ‘ব্যক্তিত্বের অত্যন্ত অভাব’\(^{44}\) [Badly in want of personality]. Only in the fifteenth canto of *Kurukshetra* the portrayal of Arjuna who is resolute\(^{45}\) to slay Jayadratha after the slaughter of Abhimanyu, in fact reminds us that great Arjuna of the *Mahabharata*. Still, here his vow of vengeance of Jayadratha is provoked by not only his affectionate self of a father, but also by taking arms against unrighteousness. But, the *Mahabharata* authored by Vedavyasa lacks this trait. In Nabinchandra’s verse, the vow of Arjuna is but one of


\(^{43}\) Ibid, PP. 160-162.


the means of the establishment of the ‘Dharmarajya’ (Millennium) envisaged by Krishna. Therefore, he thus says:

‘পারিল না পিতা, পুত্র করিল স্থাপিত
আজি ধর্মরাজ্য–দিয়া আত্মা-বলিদান।
বাজাও বিজয় শত্রু, মহারথি গণ।
কালি জয়দেবে বধি, ষষ্ঠাহ অতীত
না হইতে অরিকুল করি নির্মুলিত,
আমরা করিব সেই সাম্রাজ্য ঘোষিত।’

[The father could not; the son instead has established the ‘Millennium’ by sacrificing his life. Blow on the conch of triumph, O the great warriors fighting on chariots! Tomorrow by slaying Jayadratha, and also slaying the whole clan of the enemies within six days, we shall declare the inauguration of that Millennium]

The helplessness of Arjuna in absence of Krishna and his affliction of his egotist tendency. all these aspects make the characterization of Arjuna by Nabinchandra have the absolute fidelity to the original text. But, still in the final canto of the poetical work titled Prabhas, the swooning Arjuna on the bosom of Shailaja in no way reminds us the portrayal of Arjuna in the Mahabharata. In that

46. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas, P. 223
47. Ibid, P. 299.
48. Ibid, P. 300.
book, Arjuna is seized with over-mastering emotions like sorrow, bereavement etc. \(^{49}\) despite having been imparted a number of lessons. \(^{50}\) Vyasadeva chants God’s name uttering ‘Haribol’ repeatedly with Shailaja and Bhadra \(^{51}\) and subsequently swoons on the bosom of Shailaja. \(^{52}\)

This deportment of Arjuna is not befitting to that of Arjuna portrayed as the ‘Sakha’ (confidant) in the *Mahabharata*; rather this ideology is favourable to the Gaudiya Vaishnavite Ideology.

And this swooning fit of Arjuna with overwhelming and extreme emotion lacks the aesthetic beauty which is perceived in the *Mahabharata* by Vyasadeva in the nervousness of an excessively emotional Arjuna just before the commencement of the battle of Kurukshetra. However, in the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna perceived Krishna as ‘아त्म च परमात्मा च नमस्ते नलिनेक्ष्णः’ \(^{53}\) [I bow down to the soul, the supreme self and the Nalinaksha (lotus eyed)]. However, it is true that, through the devout outlook of a devotee, a fresh approach to the novel characterization of Arjuna by Nabinchandra is found here.

The portrayal of Arjuna that is present by Nabinchandra Sen

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50. Ibid, P. 301.
51. Ibid, P. 304.
52. Ibid, P. 304.
before us, although has a lessened link-up with the portrayal of the same protagonist in connection with the vow of killing Jayadratha, this portrayal of Arjuna’s character is the distinctive creation of Nabinchandra to a great extent. Instead of that reticent, compassionate, unrivalled warrior, evergreen and adventurous yet careerist Arjuna of the *Mahabharata*, Nabinchandra’s Arjuna appears to be an emotionalist, dreamer and too affectionate person who is not at all faithful and similar to the original text. And the personal life of Nabinchandra as well as the contemporaneous era are the factors that have exerted influence upon this portrayal.

Yet, Nabinchandra wanted to portray the character of Arjuna as a device of setting up the ‘Millennium’ as visualized by Krishna and also as an ardent follower of Krishna. And this very effort estimates the character of Arjuna in the *Mahabharata* with a new outlook.

### 3.03 KRISHNA

In the realm of Indian literature, Krishna is a common character who is mentioned in the scriptures like the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* the *Bhagavata* and the *Mahabharata* etc. In the *Upanishad* we find the mention of Devakinandan Krishna, the disciple of a sage named Angirasa.54 And in the *Bhagavata*, Krishna appears to be graciously

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affectionate God to his votaries.\(^{55}\)

In the *Mahabharata*, it is mentioned that,

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\text{`যষ্টি নারায়ণেো নাম দেবদেবীঃ সনাতনঃ।}
\]

\[
\text{তস্যাংশেো মানুষেয়াসীদ্বারাসুো প্রতাপবান।}^{56}
\]

[Narayana, who is eternally known as the God of Gods in heaven, Himself is born as the Mighty Krishna on earth]. And in the preface of the *Mahabharata*, it is mentioned that ‘ভগবান বাসুদেবক্ষ কীর্ত্যতেহ্র সনাতনঃ’\(^{57}\).

[In this *Mahabharata*, the name of the Bhagavana, i.e., God Vasudeva has been sung in praise who Himself is the Supreme Being, Truth personified, Purity personified and Holiness as well as Virtue personified].

In the Nineteenth Century Bengal, many of the contemporaneous intelligensia irrespective of Hindu or Brahma had analysed this incarnation of Parama Brahma, i.e., the Absolute Being from different points of view. Some of them wanted to realize the divine grace of Krishna as a human being.\(^{58}\)

Again, someone also of them had a high esteem for the divine

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57. Ibid, 1.218, P. 89.
sport of Krishna,\textsuperscript{59} whereas, on the other hand, another trend was in
vogue; that was the exponent of modernistic interpretation of the
theory of devotion to Krishna.\textsuperscript{60}

Bankim Chandra too was interested in this cult of studying
Krishna while Nabinchandra was Bankim’s successor in this aspect.
According to some critic, Krishna was the pioneer of setting up the
Millennium and Prime Alley in the crusade or Dharma Yuddha.\textsuperscript{61}
This clarion call of setting up the Millennium is heard in the voice
of Krishna, the protagonist characterised by Nabinchandra too.
Nabinchandra adorned the revolutionary role of an emancipator of
the world with human values.\textsuperscript{62} There is a story hidden behind this
outlook.

\textsuperscript{59} ‘শিশিরকুমার ঘোষ মহাশয়ের চোষ্টয় শিক্ষিত বাঙালির দৃষ্টি কৃষ্ণ চরিত্র ব্যাখ্যায় আকৃষ্ট হয়েছিল। অবশ্য
শিশিরকুমার কৃষ্ণের ভগবৎ লীলার প্রতি অধিকতর শ্রদ্ধা পোষণ করতেন।’
[The earnest effort of Sisir Kumar Ghosh had drawn the attraction of the enlightened
Bengalis to the interpretation of the character of Krishna.
However, Sisirkumar had a higher esteem for the divine sport of Krishna]
VIII, P. 234

\textsuperscript{60} ‘.... শিক্ষিত বৈষ্ণবীরাও কৃষ্ণের ভক্তিতত্ত্ব আধুনিক দৃষ্টিতে ব্যাখ্যার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন, যেহ বৈষ্ণব গ্রন্থ
(সংস্কৃত ও বাংলা) প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল; বৈষ্ণব পদদৃষ্টির একাধিক সংস্করণ সম্পাদিত হয়েছিল, ‘চৈতন্যভাগবত’
(বৃন্দাবন দাস) ও ‘চৈতন্য চরিতামৃতের (কৃষ্ণদাস কবিরাজ) অনেকগুলি সংস্করণ প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল।’
[The enlightened Vaishnavites too tried to interpret the Theory of Devotion from
the modernistic point of view. A number of books written on Vaishnavite literature
were published; more than one edition of the Vaishnava padavali (an anthology of
Vaishnavite lyrics) were published, many editions of the \textit{Chaitanyabhagavata} by
Brindavan Das and of the \textit{Chaitanyacharitamrita} by Krishnadas Kaviraj were
published too.]
Ibid, P. 234

\textsuperscript{61} Jahnabi Kumar Chakraborty, \textit{Prachin Bharatiya Sahitya O Bangalir Uttaradhikar},
P. 275.

\textsuperscript{62} Bhudeb Choudhury, \textit{Bangla Sahityer Itikatha} Dvitiya Paryay, P. 300.
Once Nabinchandra was engaged in the Govt. affairs at Rajgir, and there he had studied the *Mahabharata* again. At that place, the relics of the palace of Jarasandha were scattered and those were indicative of the emancipatory way of the ensuing revolution envisaged by the poet himself. He realized that the God Vasudeva Himself had appeared to guide the damned Mankind the way of redemption. In the words of the poet himself,

"বুঝিলাম অতিমানুষিক শত্রুবলে ও কৌশলে শ্রীকৃষ্ণ একসঙ্গে ধর্ম, রাজ্য ও সমাজ সংস্কার করিয়া এবং তিন-ই নিকামতের উপর স্থাপিত করিয়া এই মহা ধর্মরাজ্য স্থাপন করিয়াছিলেন। এইজনোই ভারতীয় শাস্ত্রে সকলে অবতার। কিন্তু কৃষ্ণের ভগবান স্বয়ং" [63]

[I understood that the superhuman power and tactics enabled Srikrishna to set up this great Millennium by reforming the religion, kingdom and society and setting up all three on the dispassionateness. That is why, everyone is Avatara or incarnation whereas Krishna Himself is described as the only God in the Indian scriptures.]

This Krishna dreams of a nice and wholesome sovereign Millennium where a unifying force will harmonize the small and scattered kingdoms and unite all the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion. [64] Besides in that dreamland of future envisaged by him, the four castes and orders of the Hindu society will be

63. Sajanikanta Das (ed.) *Nabinchandra Rachanavali* 2, P. 461.
determined by the virtue and work instead of birth. He thus says:—

‘মহর্ষি, বিপ্লবকারী আমি, কি তাহারা?
নাহি দিবে যারা, প্রভো! ভবিষ্যৎ ব্যাসে
ব্রাহ্মণত্ব, ক্ষত্রিয়ত্ব কর্ণতুল্য শুরু,
নাহি দিবে জ্ঞানালোক ক্ষত্রিয়ে কখন,
বৈশ্য বাহুবল!”

[O great sage! Am I a revolutionary or are they who will not allow the Brahmins like Vyasa to enjoy the traditional characteristics and special powers common to them; or will not allow the valiant hero like Karna to enjoy the chivalry and the traditional obligations and duties of a Kshatriya; who will not allow the brilliance of wisdom to the Kshatriyas or allow the Vaishyas, i.e., the members of the third caste of the Hindus to enjoy might, the physical strength]

This policy adopted by Krishna, i.e., to establish a Millennium founded on the inseparably uniform race, religion and imperial policy, was the outcome of the desire cherished by the poet himself. Nabinchandra endeavoured to place his countrymen on the lofty and exalted land of Millennium by resuscitating them with the motto of equality and thus to regenerate them from their degeneration caused by the inequality, discrimination and disintegration. And for that

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reason, he felt the need of ‘পূর্ণ মনুষ্যতের ভাস্ত্র আদর্শ’⁶⁶ [The radiant ideal of the perfect humanity] to inspire the people belonging to his own race. Krishna was the embodiment of that ideal.

It is true that, during the conversation of Vyasadeva and Krishna, stress was laid on the point of Aryan principles or ethics of religion and that of an Aryan kingdom. They discussed how the Aryans had dislodged the Non-Aryans by striking them down, and also the outcome of it. However, Vyasadeva has suggested for great kingdom to idealize a universal empire; and it is linked with the dream of Krishna of setting up a Millennium which is devoid of any discrimination. In the words of Vyasadeva—

‘বিশ্বরাজ্য শ্রীতিরাজ্য, রাজত্ব দয়ার।
বিশ্বরাজ্য ন্যায়-রাজ্য, রাজত্ব নীতির।
ক্ষুদ্র কন্ধপুষ্প হতে অনন্ত গনন—
সর্বত্র অনন্ত জ্ঞান, অনন্ত কৌশল,
সর্বত্র অনন্ত প্রীতি।’⁶⁷

[That universal kingdom will be a region of kindness, that of justice, that of ethics and from the tiny wild flower to the boundless sky will there prevail the infinite wisdom, artistry and love]

The viewpoint of Nabinchandra in regard to the character of

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⁶⁶. Srimantakumar Jana, *Bangla Sahityer Itihas* Adhunik Yug, Pratham Parva, P.608
Krishna is much more broader than that of the *Mahabharata* because the viewpoint of Nabinchandra is universal while the viewpoint of the author of the *Mahabharata* is restricted within the periphery of India alone. Here the scope of the character of Krishna is widened by Nabinchandra.

When Krishna did not agree to the proposal of marriage of Bhadra when she was merely a child, therefore, through the remark of the protagonist Krishna created by him reflects the attitude against the social practice of child-marriage prevalent even in the Nineteenth Century, the indicates his modernistic outlook. Going through the biography of Nabinchandra, it is learnt that in his youth, he joined the progressive and reformatory movement against the evil practice of child-marriage and also for supporting the Women’s Liberation Movement.  

Krishna opposed the bloody Vedic rite of sacrificing animals, through his entering into an alliance with the Non-Aryan race called the Nagas and also through the act of prohibiting the sacrificial rite offered by Indra. Because, he notices that [The simple Vedic religion, the worship of Nature] has turned into

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69. Ibid, (intro.) P. 5.  
70. Ibid, P. 77.
‘পৈশাচিক যজ্ঞ’ [A sacrificial rite of heinous and ghoulish nature] And Krishna withstood this perversion of Vedic religion. This oppositional stance of Krishna against the Vedas is also faithful to the original text.

The creative mindset of Nabinchandra is reflected in the characterization of Krishna when in aspect of mankind, Krishna comments thus:

“মানব! চেতনাযুক্ত, বিবেকী, স্বাধীন,
জড় ওই সূর্য হ’তে কত শ্রেষ্ঠতর !”

[The human beings who are blessed with awareness, who are conscientious and independent, and far superior to that inanimate sun]

Two outlooks are revealed here. Firstly, to declare human beings as the superior one; and secondly, to consider the sun as something elemental and bound by Natural Law instead of considering it something supernatural.

In fact, Nabinchandra had thought the sun as an inanimate thing since long. His biography evinces the fact that once his Brahmo friend Umesh advised Nabin Chandra to imagine a huge luminous object like the sun and to worship the same after paying close attention to

it, and then Nabinchandra retorted that

‘তাহা হইলে আমরা সূর্য-উপাসক, কি পারিশ্রমিকের মত অগ্নি-উপাসক হইয়া জড়
পদার্থের উপাসক হইব।’

[Then we will become the worshipper of either the sun or the
worshipper of fire like the Parsis, and worship the inanimate objects].

This Krishna is also portrayed as a person cherishing animus
against the Brahmins. He says thus to Arjuna:

‘দেখ ধনন্ত্র !
ব্রাহ্মণের অত্যাচার। কথায় কথায়
অভিশাপ; অভিমান অন্ধের ভূষণ।’

[See Dhananjaya! The exploitation by the Brahmins! They often
curse whilst talking; and egotism adds to their embellishment.]

Rabindranath Thakur too had supported the aforesaid conflict.

It has won the favour of another critic too.

Therefore, in his book of verses named Traya (trilogy) the
conflict of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas shown by Nabinchandra Sen
has fidelity to the original text.

In the poetic work of Nabinchandra, despite the plenty of dreams

73. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas,
PP. 4-5.
74. Rabindranath Thakur, Rabintra Rachanavali, Vol. XVIII, PP. 426-430.
75. Tarapada Mukhopadhyay, Adhunik Bangla Kavya, P. 222.
dreamt by Krishna, we are pained to see the lack of active habit. The magnanimity of Krishna is known by us indirectly\(^76\) in the light of conversation between Vyasa and Subhadra and in the light of their ideology also. However, he consoles\(^77\) bereaved Arjuna after the slaughter of Abhimanyu. But, despite being aware of the utter destruction to be faced immediately by the Jadava clan, he says, ‘নহে মানবের, আমি যাদবের স্বামী’\(^78\) [I am the master of the entire world not of the Yadavas alone] And some critic has observed the lack of epic dimension, pace of activities or the domination of male energy is the character of Krishna, in view of the aforementioned tendency of dispassionateness and inactiveness in his character.\(^79\) This character-sketch of Krishna is denominated as ‘আধুনিক স্থপতিলাভী দার্শনিক জননায়ক’\(^80\) [A modern popular leader who is a dreamer as well as a philosopher.] However, sometimes he is seen opening the map of India and gathering information of different places of the country through espionage.\(^81\) But, he still killed much time in dreaming. Sometimes, he envisages the setting up of the Millennium\(^82\) and that


\(^{77}\) Ibid, PP. 139-141.

\(^{78}\) Ibid, P. 243.

\(^{79}\) Ibid (intro.), P. 76.


\(^{81}\) Ibid, PP. 75-76.

of the ‘Rajarajeswari’ (empress) or sometimes else, he visited Vyasa’s hermitage in order to philosophizing the theories of fatalism\textsuperscript{83} and the doctrine that action is the chief end of life. Again, sometimes this protagonist is seen in a lighter mood while cutting jokes\textsuperscript{84} with Satyabhama and Sulochana.

Finally, it is seen that Krishna breathed his last embracing Jaratkaru\textsuperscript{85} whereas this information is in no way has fidelity with the original text. In the poetical work \textit{Prabhas}, Krishna appears as the God who is graciously affectionate to the votaries. Sometimes he shows his Vishvaroop (the divine body in which the entire universe is reflected or exhibited) to the mythological sage Durvasa (who was notorious for his quick temper and harsh words), making the sage wavered between hesitation and indecision and then he is enshrined in the heart of the sage\textsuperscript{86}, while sometimes he makes Vasuki a devout follower of himself.\textsuperscript{87}

While Krishna appears as the Incarnation of the Supreme Being in the epic \textit{Mahabharata}, the same protagonist appears as the graciously affectionate God to the votaries. Here Krishna appears

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, PP. 70-74.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, P. 284.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, PP. 289-290.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, PP. 293-295.
as the embodiment of love in the *Bhagavata*. On the shore of the Prabhas, Krishna is embosomed by people irrespective of the Aryans, Non-Aryans, children, women and men who are chanting the glory of Lord Hari’s name with great devotion—

‘কারো পিতা, কারো পুত্র, কারো সখা,
কারো প্রাণপতি, প্রণয়ী কাহার’

[He is treated here by someone as his father, or by someone as his son, or by someone as his confidant, or by someone as her loving husband, or by someone as her lover-boy]

Hence, it is rightly said,

‘নবীনচন্দ্রের কাব্যের সূচনায় কৃষ্ণের মানব-রূপ, অতঃ দেব-রূপ। ..... মানব আপনাকে দেবতে রূপান্তরিত করে নাই। কবির অন্তরের ভক্তিভাব তাঁহার নায়কের মানবদেহে দেবতের প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়াছে।’

[In the introductory phase of the poetical work by Nabinchandra, Krishna is endued with human traits, whereas in the concluding phase of the same, he is endued with divine traits.... however, the human himself has not assumed the divinity, rather the sincere devotion of the poet has endowed the divine trait on the human body of the chief male protagonist of the poesy].

Apart from the portrayal of the character of Krishna in the *Mahabharata*, the novel dimensions added to the portrayal of the same in this poetic work by Nabinchandra are his fondness for books, fondness for study and his fine taste. Besides, here he appears to be graciously affectionate to his votaries and eager to set up the Millennium.

It is probable that traits of bibliophily and study of Krishna were influenced by the contemporaneous era. However, the original text too mentions Krishna as a wise person.\(^90\) And the fine taste of Nabinchandra’s Krishna\(^91\) is reflected in the dignified decor of his room in Dvaraka, which is described in the *Bhagavata*\(^92\), Apart from this, the typical mindset of the writer with a dignified taste is also active behind this tasteful decor.

Although the poet was stirred by different contemporaneous Movements, he was resolute to achieve his goal. Thus, Krishna as well as Jagannatha appeared as the Congregation of Gautama Buddha\(^93\) Hence, the character of Krishna portrayed by Nabinchandra Sen, bears both the traditions of Orient and Occident.

At the end of the discussion, it may be said that the novel

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observation made by Nabinchandra in regard to the protagonist named Krishna of the *Mahabharata*, is a laudatory and truly creative effort. However, his conception of the character-sketch has still been remained in the imprecise stage, his visualization lacked the right strokes in sketching the character according to the previous contrivance.

### 3.04 BALARAMA

Balarama in the *Mahabharata* is described as 'The person clad in blue and incited by wine] and he is ‘The elder brother of Srikrishna and the eighth incarnation of Mahavisnu.

In the poetical work titled *Trayi* (trilogy) by Nabinchandra, Balarama appears an alchoholic, short-tempered yet who calms down instantly by flattery. The traits of obstinacy and foolhardiness and arrogance in the character of Balarama remind us of the young members of ‘Young Bengal.’ Even in an inebriated state Balarama is seen to bash Krishna. It is also mentioned in the *Mahabharata* that Balarama became furious as soon as he became aware of Subhadra’s elopement by Arjuna. It can be mentioned in this context that in the

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94. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), *Mahabharatam, Adiparva* 213.20, P. 2033.
97. Ibid, P.84.
98. Ibid, P.85.
poetical work of Nabinchandra, Balarama approves Duryodhana as the chosen suitor for Subhadra and this information owes its source to the *Mahabharata*. Even the Bengali rendering of the epic by Kashiram Das too, Balarama sends an envoy to bring Duryodhana, just the way the Balarama portrayed by Nabinchandra Sen does.

In the *Mahabharata*, Balarama is seen absorbed and withdrawn in Yogic practice and at the last moment of his life, an "সহস্রশীরঃ পূর্বাংকুরবর্ষ্য রক্তাঙ্গানাত্মান।" [Immense serpent like a mountain with thousand peaks and crimson countenance slides slowly out of his mouth and then glides majestically into the sea, where the other celestial Nagas alongwith Varuna Deva welcomes that brilliant Naga.] Nabinchandra Sen, in his *Trayi* (trilogy), discovers a different meaning of this final consequence and interprets the incident with a distinctive viewpoint. According to him, when the divine sport of Krishna was over, Krishna had sent Harikulesh (Hercules) Balarama to propagate the novel religion propounded by Krishna at the north-eastern shore of the 'Laban Samudra' (saline sea).

In the book *Prabhas* Krishna tells Balarama:–

``যাও দেশ দেশান্তরে, পতিতপাবন।
সৌরাষ্ট্রের উপকূলে সজ্জিত অর্ধব্যাম।``

[Do set out for the distant countries, O the deliverer of damnation! The well-equipped fleet of vessels are waiting for you at the coast of Saurastra. The noble and virtuous train of the Yadavas await your solemn presence. Hence, do set out for your voyage to the distant countries in order to deliver the people on the earth from damnation].

Nabinchandra evinces a reason in favour of this novel and distinctive outlook in regard to the character of Balarama. He delved deep into the history of the Greeks and the Jews and substantiates his claims in favour of the journey of the Pandavas towards heaven and the final consequence of Balarama.\textsuperscript{104} This view of Nabinchandra Sen although may seem to the people of modern era as something ‘ঐতিহাসিক রাজকথা’\textsuperscript{105} (historical fairy-tale), yet, we must assert that, this effort of his at that contemporaneous era is really a laudable one and also evinces the hallmark of his creativity.

According to the view of Nabinchandra, Balarama appears as

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item 104. Ibid, (appendix) PP. 306-307.
\item 105. Ibid, (preface), P.97.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the congregation of Gautama Buddha. Hence, from that point of view, it seems to us that the poet conceived the voyage of Balarama bound for the north-eastern coast of the saline sea in order to disseminate the novel religion of love as propounded by Krishna himself. However, his outlook fails to draw the favourable support of the modern historians. Long before it, however, Nabinchandra said:

‘এসকল সাদৃশ্যের মধ্যে কোনও ঐতিহাসিক তথ্য আছে কি? না থাকে, কব্যকারের ক্ষুদ্রত নাই। তাহার পথ মুক্ত। প্রভাসের কবির পক্ষে মহাভারতের দুইটি ইঙ্গিতই যথেষ্ট।’

[Is there any sort of historical theory in these similarities? If not, the poet has nothing to lose. For the poet of the *Prabhas*, both the hints of the *Mahabharata* are adequate.]

Delving deep into the Bible and the Chronicle of Todd and also the Greek history and mythology, Nabinchandra interprets the ultimate end of Balarama as it is described in the *Mahabharata* and substantiates his claim with a strong logic. Quite unintentionally, the yellowed pages of the history and the personal thoughts of Nabinchandra have coincided with each other. Instead of arguing the veracity of this decision, we may thus conclude that the thoughts and observations of Nabinchandra reflected through the character of Balarama are like the offerings placed on the altar at the time of

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worshipping Krishna with devoutness, and an exclusive as well as a novel estimation of the character of Balarama of the *Mahabharata*.

### 3.05 Karna

In the tenth canto of the poetical work *Kurukshetra* composed by Nabinchandra Sen, the poet has portrayed Karna, the heroic and generous protagonist of the epic, as a base and vicious character who conspires with the sage Durvasa. As a result, the solemnity of the epical protagonist has been marred.

The protagonist, sage Durvasa, as he is portrayed by Nabinchandra, says that Karna is his ‘महायात्रेः,’ i.e., his son born by dint of the force of the prescribed mystic words of prayer or incantation. But this fact has not been substantiated by the epic titled the *Mahabharata* The poet himself has explained this matter to us. According to him, Krishna wants to establish the Millennium and it is mentioned in the epic the *Mahabharata* whereas Durvasa represents a Brahmin community highly opposing this view of Srikrishna. Durvasa is the spokesperson of those Brahmins and since Karna is the Kanina, (born of an unmarried woman’s womb) son of Kunti and Durvasa, Karna is expected to develop a hostile attitude towards Krishna hereditarily. Hence that a person endowed with

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many virtues like Karna will strongly oppose the supposed Millennium visualized by Krishna goes without saying. This very strain is quite perceptible in the writing of Nabinchandra.

From an exclusively creative outlook of the poet, the character of Karna of the *Mahabharata* has been portrayed here.

Again, this protagonist named Karna is portrayed by Nabinchandra as an affectionate person showing fatherly care and affection towards Abhimanyu who is the son of Arjuna. Hence, Karna is shown here unwilling to involve himself in the conspiracy of infanticide. This generous hero who is aware of his sins and misdeeds, is seen to be suffering from pricks of conscience when he says:

‘শিশুরক্তে কলঙ্কিত করিও না আর
দাতাকর্ষ নাম যার, বিশ্বাসযাত্রক
নরহস্ত আততায়ী সেই দুরারাচার! ’

[Please don’t tarnish the name of that great charitable person named Datakarna by bloody infanticide and thus by turning him in to a traitor and murderer and an assassin by his base acts!]

However, ultimately Karna is compelled to yield to the base act of infanticide, since Durvasa extended his support in Karna’s

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favour when Karna in his adolescence had committed the sin of introducing himself falsely as a Kshatriya to the son of Jamadagni.\textsuperscript{109} That very trifling misdeed committed long ago in his adolescence, has drawn him towards this vicious misdeed now. Since then, in order to carry out the order of Durvasa, he has entered the stage of life to play the role of the blazing fire of the Kauravas, and he has been playing his pseudo-role till now.

The ultimate consequence of this Protagonist named Karna as he is portrayed by Nabinchandra, contradicts the original text, since the poet intends to portray the character of Karna as someone totally different from the Karna of \textit{Mahabharata} by his creative outlook.

We come to know from the words of Shailaja that,

\begin{quote}
‘दुई दिने कर्ण आर,—कर्ण करे नाहि रण,
शिशुहत्यागपे प्राण करियाहे बिसरजन।’\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

[And Karna having ceased to fight any longer, sacrificed his life to expiate his sin of committing infanticide]

The great creative potential possessed by the poet perpetuates Karna in his literary realm by making this protagonist a magnanimous soul though his suffering from the pricks of conscience for slaying


\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, P. 230.
the son of his arch-enemy Arjuna and thus through the sacrifice of his life goaded by self-condemnation.

3.06 YUDHISTHIRA

We come to know from the *Mahabharata* that Yudhisthira is a virtuous and good-natured person. The poetical work of Nabinchandra too portrays the character of Yudhisthira through the reflection of Arjuna’s view in the words of Arjuna:

‘জ্যেষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা ধার্মিক সুশীল,
পিতৃগুণে অলঙ্কৃত, না দিবে কখন
জ্ঞাতিরক্তে কল্পিতে পবিত্ব বসুধা।’

[The eldest brother is virtuous and good-natured; he is adorned with the fatherly virtues and he won’t allow anyone to vitiate the holy earth by the blood-bath of kinsmen.]

In the *Trayi* (trilogy) the words of Yudhisthira told to the bereaved Arjuna after the demise of Abhimanyu have no fidelity towards the original text, are congruous with the characterization of Yudhisthira by Vedavyasa. Again, another character named Jaratkaru opines that Yudhisthira’s dharma of virtue is but a ‘স্বার্থের আবরণ’ (veil of self-interest). Not only that, she calls Dharamraja mockingly

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112. Ibid, P. 52.
as ‘বিড়ালতর্পণী সুবর্ণ’, \footnote{Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, \textit{Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas}, P. 52.} \(^{113}\) i.e., a hypocrite feigning piety and saying words of wisdom, while she is going to substantiate her objection to refuse Yudhisthira as her suitor.

The above mentioned correspondent requested Nabinchandra to explain and point out those particular misdeeds done by Yudhisthira considered as the covering of self-centreness interest. But no such explanation in reply to that request of the above mentioned correspondent is found in the writings of Nabinchandra himself. Despite the inarticulateness of the reply, the words of Jaratkaru indicates to a subterranean effort of the poet to analyse the character of Yudhisthira in the light of a modernistic view. The poet whose prime objective was to raise the standard of triumph of the characterization of Krishna in the epic titled the \textit{Mahabharata} with a novel approach combining the poet’s self enriched by the enlightenment of Nineteenth Century Renaissance and also that of a devout imbued by the overwhelming spirit of devotion, yet the little effort of the poet to analyse the protagonist named Yudhisthira is obviously laudable. Here Nabinchandra is creative.

\section*{3.07 UTTARA}

This protagonist named Uttara is introduced in the epic the
Mahabharata as

“ইনি মৎস্যরাজ বিরাটের ক্রন্তী তন্ত্রে কন্যা এবং অর্জুন-পুত্র অভিমন্যুর কন্যা।”¹¹⁴

[She is the beautiful daughter born to Virata, the king of Matsya kingdom and his queen named Sudeshna.]

Different critics have made various comments¹¹⁵ in regards to the portrayal of Uttara of the epic titled the Mahabharata as well as the portrayal of Uttara in the book of verses titled Kurukshetra. Nabinchandra’s portrayal of the character of Uttara evinces the fidelity to the original text through her traits of the reverence to the elderly persons¹¹⁶ and her play with the dolls¹¹⁷; but the portrayal of Uttara in the Trilogy by Nabinchandra totally different from that of Vedavyasa.

In the book titled Kurukshetra, her character arouses our sympathy when she is stunned, scared and mournful by her sudden bereavement of her husband Abhimanyu.¹¹⁸ Our hearts are melted with pity for her by her unuttered wailing caused by not only the bereavement of her husband, but also by the bereavement of her father.

¹¹⁴ Sudhirchandra Sarkar (compiled) : *Pauranik Abhidhan*, P. 59.
¹¹⁸ Ibid, PP. 224-231.
and brother creating a void surrounding herself. In the Mahabharata, this daughter of king Virata expresses her bereavement through a prolonged wail that is revealed through some Verses. Uttara states that following the death, Abhimanyu will now set out for ‘Pitriloka’ (the lunar heaven) beyond this mortal world and talk softly and reticently to some young woman like Uttara and will attract the attention of the Apsaras, the voluptuously beautiful nymphs of paradise with exceptional gifts in music, dance etc., through his charms and handsomeness there. Besides, she adds that Abhimanyu should remember her good behaviour in paradise even in the company of those heavenly nymphs during the amorous frolic there.

This queer fascination of Uttara of visualizing some of the heavenly nymphs getting charmed by Abhimanyu as well as of visualizing some woman hailing from the lunar heaven getting allured by Abhimanyu’s charms, reveals her insatiable desire through her wail. But, the bereavement tinges her with a hue of greatness, as she is portrayed by Nabinchandra. Our eyes are moistened with tears by her groaning wail before Narayana, i.e., Krishna when she says:

“দয়াময়! কর দয়া দুঃখিনী কন্যায়।

নাহে যুগ, নাহে বর্ষ, কেবল ছয়টি মাস”

120. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Streeparva, 20.5-28, PP. 119-123.
121. Ibid, 20.25-27, P. 123.
O the merciful Lord! Take pity on your poor daughter. Have you written in the prescript of destiny for herself the short-lived happiness only for six months, instead of even a year or of an aeon? Am a subject to such an ill-fate?

This terrible ocean of bereavement caused by the fierce battle fought at Kurukshetra, brings her to a grave philosophical question—

[Many more Uttaras, i.e., married girls or wives of the warriors will have to meet their fate because of the ongoing battle.]

When she prays to Krishna with a great ardour while standing beside the pyre of Abhimanyu which is about to be extinguished.

[Where are you, O Hari, with your eyes as large as lotus-petals? Give your lotus-feet as the last resort and boat to cross this vast ocean of bereavement!]

At that time, she appears before us as a devout woman or a

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123. Ibid, P. 230.
female votary while the character of Uttara portrayed by Vedavyasa says that before the destined moment, nobody is able to die and hence a wretched woman like herself is still alive in front of the slain Abhimanyu while the characterization of Uttara by Nabinchandra indicates (in the book titled Kurukshetra) to the advancement by one more quantum leap through her following remark—

`ছয়মাস পরে, নাথ! ছয় যুগ উত্তরার—
উত্তরা আসিবে অকে, স্যর্গে তার তপস্যার।
পতির চিঠিয় এই মৃত প্রাণ সমর্পণ
নহে মৃত্যু, অনাথার দীর্ঘ মৃত্যু এ জীবন।
কর আশীর্বাদ, নাথ! এ অন্ত মৃত্যু-ব্রত
হয় যেন উদ্যাপিত, হয় পূর্ণ মনোরথ।’  

[After six months, my Lord, the following six months will appear like a prolonged period of six aeons for Uttara, she will reunite with you in the Paradise as a result of her ascetic practice. Dedication of this lifeless spirit to the funeral pyre of her husband is not the act of dying, rather dragging this life of a helpless widow is but a prolonged death. Bless me, my Lord, so that this infinite vow of death could be celebrated and my desire be fulfilled as well.]

125. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Streeparva, 20.24, P. 123.
This protagonist named Uttara, being enriched with the virtues like sacrifice and forbearance and being mellowed by devotion to her husband appears revivified with the creative strokes of the genius like Nabinchandra.

3.08 ABHIMANYU

Elsewhere in the *Mahabharata*, the following is said about Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna and Subhadra—

“ইহীমানমর্যী সৌভাগ্যে মানকৃৎ গ্র্যুদেশনঃ।”¹²⁷

[Abhimanyu is unreasonably shy, hot-tempered, respectful to elders and having handsome looks]. Not only that, that son of Arjuna was endowed with supreme manly qualities and he was dauntless.¹²⁸

Resorting to this portrayal of Abhimanyu in the epic, Nabinchandra creates a novel portrayal of Abhimanyu in the light of setting up the idealized Millennium which was dreamt by Krishna. This Abhimanyu draws picture, remains indifferent to the verses while remains engaged in amorous conversation with Uttara,¹²⁹ whereas the Abhimanyu in the *Mahabharata* is not an artist drawing pictures. Hence this artistic trait of the son of Arjuna is not at all

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¹²⁸. Ibid, Adiparva, 214, PP. 2048-2049.
faithful to the original text. In fact, the artistic trait of Nabinchandra himself has influenced the rejuvenation of this epical protagonist. His biography reveals the fact that he used to play flute since his student life 130 and continued this practice even in his service life too.131 This heart-touching pursuit of the creator has influenced his creation to a great extent. Hence, despite being confident of his valour, Abhimanyu is a compassionate person; above all he is against the violence while following the path of virtue, as is done by his father as well as his maternal uncle.132 Even at the dying moment also, Abhimanyu preaches the motto of ‘the emancipation of the sinners from damnation in the Millennium visualized by the Narayana’.133 However, this confidence of Abhimanyu in the valour of himself134 has absolute fidelity to the original text.

Hence, it may be noticed that he appears as a proud and valorous hero from Vedavyasa’s portrayal to the portrayal by Kashiram Das, and with the creative genius of Nabinchandra Sen, that very protagonist Abhimanyu is projected as a magnanimous one with the tender trait of deep compassion and affection. Therefore, the

130. Sajanikanta Das (ed), Nabinchandra Rachanavali 1, P.143.
131. Ibid, P. 249.
133. Ibid, P. 222.
134. Ibid, P. 144.
characterization of Abhimanyu differs from that of the *Mahabharata*; unlike the epical Abhimanyu, Nabinchandra does not project Abhimanyu as a mere braggart, rather this compassionate trait is absent in the original text. Nabinchandra, being imbued with the ideal of humanitarianism, has made Abhimanyu give water to a dying soldier.135

The characterization of Abhimanyu by Nabinchandra projects the protagonist to be a person who is a bit much attached to the family and this deep familial attachment makes him express his fraternal affection to the son of Duhshasana even in the battlefield and thus he says:

‘ভাই রে লক্ষ্মণ! 
আমাদের ক্রীড়াক্ষেত্র নাহে এ প্রাঙ্গণ। 
পিতার দুলাল তুমি, আদরে পালিত 
সুখের শ্যাম, শত সঙ্কোচের কোলে। 
যে অনল ঘোঁড়, কর্ণ, কূপ, অশ্রুখামা 
না পারি সহিতে গেল পলাইয়া ত্রাসে 
বার বার, তুমি ভাই ননীর পুতুল 
কেন ঝাঁপ দিলে সেই ঘোর দাবানলে? ’136

[O dear brother Lakshmana! This battlefield is not our

136. Ibid, P. 220.
playground. You are brought up in a bed of roses provided by your worthy father. Why did you dare to plunge into the scorching heat of that forest fire, the heat of which was unbearable to even the great warriors like Drona, Karna, Kripa, Ashvatthama etc. and made them flee out of terror repeatedly, in comparison to whom you are but a mere delicate toy unable to stand any physical toil.]

Rather, the same protagonist portrayed by Vedavyasa does exactly the reverse. He pierces the son of Duhshasana with seven arrows and with bloodred eyes he thus utters:

‘পিতা তবাহবৎ ত্যত্রা গতঃ কাপুরূষো যথা।
দিষ্টা তৃমপি জানীষে যোদ্ধং ন তথ্য মোক্ষে।’

[Like a coward, your father has fled from the battlefield. Fortunately, although you know the tactics of warfare, yet you will never be able to escape me].

Both the characterizations by Vedavyasa and Nabinchandra thus differ in their views to a great extent. The portrayal of Abhimanyu by Nabinchandra is the creation distinctive of the poet himself, although there is a probability of being influenced by Kashiram Das too in this regard. Because, in the Bengali rendering of the epic by Kashiram Das too, Abhimanyu appears himself an affectionate brother preventing his brother Lakshmana from joining the war:

137. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Dronaparva, 42.35, P. 360.
“হিতবাক্য কহি শন ভাইরে লক্ষণ।
এমত কৃপুদ্ধি তোরে দিল কোনজন।।
বাপের দুলাল তুই, বড় প্রিয়তর।
না করিহ রণ ভাই, মোর বাক্য ধর।”¹³⁸

[O dear brother Lakshmana, listen to my good advice. Who is that wicked person counselling you to join this war? You are the affectionate son of your father and also dearer to me. Pay heed to my benignant advice, my dear brother, don’t get involved in this war.]

Not only the influence of Kashiram Das, but also the mindset distinctive of the author has also been active behind the characterization of Abhimanyu here. To realize the dream of Krishna by setting up the Millennium, is the ideal of Abhimanyu here and this ideal issues from the devout heart of Nabinchandra himself that idealized Srikrishna as the Godhead. This child of Subhadra appears as the first step of the foundation of the proposed Millennium as was dreamt by Krishna; thus Abhimanyu’s character draws our attraction by the coalesce of all the various traits such as his service, valour, conjugal love, reverence for the elders and his keenness to practise his own functions etc. This portrayal of Abhimanyu reveals the immense creative acumen possessed by the creative genius like Nabinchandra.

3.09 SATYABHAMA

Satyabhama was ‘রাজা সত্রাজিতের কন্যা ও শ্রীকৃষ্ণের স্ত্রী’ [The daughter of King Satrajit and the wife of Srikrishna]. In the *Mahabharata*, this wife of Krishna, i.e., Satyabhama, attracts our notice in particular during her conversation with Draupadi in the *Vanaparva*, where she flippantly expressed her eagerness to satisfy her ‘দীর্ঘকালীন কৌতূহল’ (a prolonged curiosity) by knowing the weird and mysterious process to bring the Panchapandavas under her control; although later on she managed to identify that flippancy by covering that up as ‘সন্ধীনাং হি সোপহাসঃ’ (i.e., the frivolous comment by a glibtalker confidante, however, that overshadowed the gravity of her demeanour to some extent in her characterzition. In the *Trayi* (trilogy) by Nabinchandra we could hardly find any such mentionworthy trait reflected in the portrayal of the character named Satyabhama. The portrayal rather reveals the natural and typical commonplace traits of a wife who often goes into the sulks and often gets placated by her husband.

3.10 RUKMINI

It is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* that Rukmini is the divine

incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi who was born to the king Bhishmaka as his daughter Rukmini while making her divine advent on earth.\(^{142}\)

It is mentioned in the *Mausalaparva* that following the death of Krishna, Rukmini made pyre to immolate herself.\(^{143}\) In the poetic work of Nabinchandra, Rukmini appears an unassuming, simple woman of tender nature who is devoted to her husband. Hence in the *Mahabharata* by Vedavyasa, Rukmini meets the same fate like the same protagonist portrayed by Nabinchandra and has the same trait in keeping with the protagonist created by Vedavyasa and this fact is expressed in the words of C. Rajagopalachari– 'whose heart was wholly Krishna's.'\(^{144}\) The portrayal of Rukmini by Nabinchandra hardly reveals any novel and distinctive trait.

### 3.11. JARATKARU

Jaratkaru is introduced in the *Mahabharata* as the sister of Vasuki, the serpent king and the wife of the sage named Jaratkaru. The meaning of both the same names is given in the *Mahabharata* as ‘জরেতি ক্ষয়মার্জনীদারণা কারুসংজ্ঞিতম’\(^{145}\) –[The word 'Jarat' means 'decay' and the word 'Karu' means 'intense' or 'great'. Jaratkaru, the sage, had a great physique in his youth and that wise and great sage had

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gradually made his attractive physique decayed through great austerer
practice.] It is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* that

’जरङ्करारिति ब्रम्हाणाः! बासुकेशगिरिनी तथा।’\(^{146}\)

[And that's why he was named Jaratkaru and Vasuki's sister too
was named Jaratkaru for that reason.] Vasuki himself thus introduces
his real sister:

’सनामी तब कन्यायं सबा में तपस्विताः’\(^{147}\)

[The name of this girl is similar to that of you, she is none other
than my sister and she is also practising asecticism].

Jaratkaru, the protagonist in the book of verses by Nabinchandra,
too says:

’जरङ्कारु पत्नी आमि; भर्गी बासुकिरी;
नागराजकुले जय।’\(^{148}\)

[I am Jaratkaru's wife and sister of Vasuki; I am born in the
lineage of the Serpent King]. The information that Jaratkaru got
married to Durvasa and Jaratkaru's amorous passion for Krishna
provided by Nabinchandra cannot be found in the *Mahabharata*. Yet
in the book of verses composed by Nabinchandra, Jaratkaru has been
portrayed as the wife of Durvasa and the ladylove of Krishna. Both

\(^{146}\) Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), *Mahabharatam, Adiparva*, 35.4, P. 484.

\(^{147}\) Ibid, 42.1, P. 541.

these traits of the protagonist named Jaratkaru are not at all faithful to the original text. In the *Trayi* (trilogy), the book of verses authored by Nabinchandra Sen, from the book titled *Raivatak* to the book titled *Prabhas*, this protagonist named Jaratkaru plays a vital role, i.e., in the end of the Yadavas and in the death of Krishna. A detailed analysis of this character reveals the fact that the blossoming of her amorous passion at the core of her heart in her pre-adolescent age was not a fruitful one and this frustrated love regulated her activities later in her life. Various critics have made different remarks on this character portrayed in the *Trayi* (trilogy) by Nabinchandra.\(^\text{149}\)

In the *Trayi* (trilogy), it is seen that Jaratkaru dedicates herself to Krishna from the core of her heart when she is magnetized by the ideology of dispassionate life led by Krishna, although the cause of her attraction for Krishna was selfless. Although she is not seen frequenting and rambling and preaching the ideology of Krishna, sometimes her conversation with Durvasa echoes the ideology of her preceptor, Krishna.\(^\text{150}\)

At the end of the poetic work, this very Jaratkaru strikes Krishna with weapon and ultimately dies after being embraced by Krishna.

However, this end of Jaratkaru is not mentioned in the *Mahabharata*. Despite the incongruity between the portrayal of this character in the *Mahabharata* and the one portrayed by Nabinchandra, similarity can be found with the Jaratkaru characterized in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* (Prakriti Khandha, Adhyayas 45, 46) and *Devi Bhagavata* (Ninth chapter, Adhyayas 47, 3814; 1-145). In both the Puranas, i.e., *Brahmavaivarta Purana* and *Devi Bhagavata*, the same narrative of Manasa can be found, where it is mentioned that Manasa acquired the celestial knowledge (mahajnana) the knowledge of the *Vedas* and the mantra of Krishna and then she visits the Pushkara at the instance of Shiva—'.... she prayed to Krishna, who finally appeared before her. Krishna was so moved to see the emaciated Manasa and he himself worshipped her and made others do so.'  

This protagonist of Jaratkaru portrayed by Nabinchandra is evidently influenced by the characterization of Jaratkaru as the ladylove of Krishna in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*. This character is very much regulated by the desire of gratification of her senses and that is why she becomes revengeful after being deprived of her love for Krishna; even she involves herself in the act of killing Krishna. Yet, according to the *Bhagavata*, the attainment of Krishna is possible also by worshipping him as an antagonist.  

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according to this trait, she finally succeeds in perceiving Krishna everywhere in every animate as well as inanimate things, just like the maidens of Braja. Here the poet seems to be inspired to a greater extent by the devout spirit of the Bhagavata. In the Prabhas we have seen the protagonist Jaratkaru who is the ardent lover of Krishna and she became revengeful after being deprived of her love for Krishna. Consequently, she antagonized Krishna by aiding and accompanying Durvasa at the instance of her brother Vasuki. But, this antagonism too was motivated by her ardent love for Krishna. The lovelorn Jaratkaru says to Shailaja, 'कृष्ण बिना दिदि! ए देहे हादये किछु मम नाही आर'।[O my elder sister. without Krishna, there is nothing in my soul and body]. Here Jaratkaru appears as a truly ardent votary just as the maidens of Braja appear in the Bhagavata who are afflicted with their sundered hearts in absence of Krishna. And her motivation is guided by the devout heart of her creator, the poet here. In the words of his own,

"প্রভাসের 'বীণাপূর্ণতান' সর্গলিখিতা যেখানে জরৎকারু ভগবানের শ্রীঅঙ্গে অত্মত্যাগ করিতেছে, সে স্থানে আসিয়াছি। অনন্ত ভক্ত-সেবিত কৃসমকোমল শ্রীঅঙ্গে অত্মপাতের কথা আমি পাণি-হাদয়ে কেমন করিয়া লিখিব। আমার হাদয় ফাটিয়া যাইতেছে, আমার").

When I was about to write about the hurling of the weapon at the holy body of the God by Jaratkaru, after completing the canto titled *Veenapurnatan of Prabhas*, I was too non-plussed to have the heart to write about the hurling of the weapon at the tender and delicate body of God which is adored by the myriads of devotees. It was so heart-rending; tears rolled down my cheeks as I burst into tears; the writing-papers were made wet, the letters were blurred.

Hence, Jaratkaru who is Manasa, who is the mother of Astika and the sister of Vasuki in the epic titled the *Mahabharata* is emerged repentantly before through the writings of Nabinchandra by breaking the long-cherished notions and concepts about herself and her past tradition. This characterization is a novel creation by Nabinchandra, resorting to the trail of the portrayal of Jaratkaru in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* and also under the influence of the *Bhagavata*. The poet duly deserves the entire credit of this novel.

155. Sajanikanta Das (ed.), *Nabinchandra Rachanavali* 3, P. 309.
156. ‘পবিত্র মনসা-কথা করহ শ্রবণ।
বৈষ্ণী যোগিনী তিনি পতিগত-মন॥
... ... ... ... 
প্রথমেত জনাঙ্গন করেন পৃথিবী।
জর্তকারু নাম তাই করেন ধারণ।’
Kalikishore Vidyabinod (tr.), *Sri Sri Brahmavaivarta Purana*, Prakriti Khanda, P. 190.
creation.

3.12 VASUKI

Vasuki of the *Mahabharata* is prudent and pious by nature. He is pious because he consulted with his [All the virtuous ones] brothers including Airavata, when Vasuki was eager to get released from the curse of his mother. And he is prudent too, because he did not agree to the proposal of killing Janamejaya offered by some Naga present there who unduly assumed an air of superior wisdom. Again, he is also seen to be frightened at the sight of realization of his mother’s curse.

In the book of verses by Nabinchandra, Vasuki’s appearance is described as ‘দেখিলে হৃদয়ে হয় ভীতির সঙ্গার’ [The very sight of his appearance is a frightening and dreadful one]. It seems that the description of his dark complexion and short stature and physical strength originates from the word ‘মহাবল’ (mighty) is very much appropriate. In this book of verses, Vasuki appears as a valorous, simple and truthful person.

This Vasuki is a lover too. His agony caused by frustration turns

158. Ibid, 32.27-30, PP. 471-472.
him hostile to Krishna when the former fails to achieve his desired and adored lady, Subhadra. Yet this trait of his amorous attraction towards Subhadra as well as that of his antagonism towards Krishna is absent in the original text. This trait is devised by Nabin Chandra’s fancy and this creative device is distinctive of the author himself, which is obviously reflected through the portrayal of this character. Yet, whenever he happens to meet Krishna, his overwhelming devotion simply reflects his boyishness, when says,

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[I can’t understand whether Krishna is a God or a human being]

Subsequently, through this porous trait of Vasuki’s devotion to Krishna, the gush of a sudden spate of keen perception of Krishna in himself and everywhere in the Universe is manifested. At that moment, Vasuki perceives Krishna too in Subhadra whom he once admired amously and wanted to marry her and later whom he regarded to be his mother. It may be mentioned in this context that, this devout trait of Vasuki and his admiration to Krishna can also he found in the Mahabharata authored by Kashiram Das. When Arjuna reaches the netherworld to invite Vasuki, the king of the Nagas, to

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162. Ibid, P. 293.
163. Ibid, P. 293.
164. Ibid, P. 293.
the ‘Rajasuya Yajna’ (a sacrifice performed by a monarch in order to establish his suzerainty or supremacy over other kings) to be organized by Yudhisthira, then the king of the Nagas said thus:

‘হাসিয়া কহেন শেষ, শুন ধনঞ্জয়।
তব ষষ্ঠে আছেন গোবিন্দ মহাশয়।।
হর্তা কর্তা সেই প্রভু বিধি বিধাতার।
সর্বষষ্ঠ ফল পায় দর্শন যার।’

[A smiling Sheshanaga says, “Listen to me, O Dhananjaya! The magnanimous and noble soul like Govinda is involved in your sacrificial ritual, and he himself is the absolute authority of the Providence and his very sight paves the way for the success of the sacrificial ritual.”] We can realize the obvious influence of Srichaitanya Mahaprabhu in the ‘Mahabhava’ (the highest aspect of maddening delight)\(^{166}\) manifested in Vasuki just after hearing the name of Krishna, caused by the intensity of the surging waves of devotion for Srikrishna.

The portrayal of Vasuki’s character by Nabinchandra in comparison to that of Vasuki in the Mahabharata is different to a great extent. In fact, the main objective of the poet was the dissemination of the holy name of Krishna, himself being

\(^{165}\) Kashiram Das (tr.), Mahabharata, Sabhaparva, P. 295.

\(^{166}\) Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas, P. 292.
overpowered by the overwhelming devotion for Krishna. The portrayal of the character of Vasuki in the *Mahabharata* was instrumental in the dissemination of the holy name of Krishna – here the creative hallmark of the poet, Nabinchandra and it reflects the credit of the poet.

### 3.13 DURVASA

In the *Mahabharata*, Durvasa in a mythological sage notorious for his quick temper and harsh words and a person highly irritable by nature. He gets infuriated by trifling matters and curses anyone. In the poetic work of Nabinchandra, that short-tempered sage named Durvasa appears as a self-conceited person, who opposes Krishna in regard to the issue of sun-worship. According to Krishna, the rising and the setting of the sun are subject to the Law of Nature and those who chant hymns is praise of the sun, they too are the blind followers. On the other hand, Durvasa himself is a worshipper of the sun, and here lies the conflict between him and Krishna for the first time. When Krishna and Arjuna hardly pay heed to Durvasa’s benediction, the self-conceited nature of Durvasa is reflected in his consequent words of curse coming upon Krishna and Arjuna:

(227)
I curse you—the Yadavas and the Kauravas will be totally ruined.

The *Mahabharata* does not contain this episode of curse uttered by Durvasa, yet in the *Bhagavata*, Durvasa’s name is included in the list of the Brahmins whose curses paved the way for the utter ruin of the Yadavas.¹⁶⁸

It can be noticed that in his *Trayi* (trilogy) Nabinchandra mentions about the antagonism between Durvasa and Krishna, although his view could not gain support from all;¹⁶⁹ rather it gained support from a few critics in favour of it.¹⁷⁰

In one of the narratives of the *Mahabharata*,¹⁷¹ Durvasa’s activities against the proteges of Krishna and his subsequent reverence expressed towards the proteges of Krishna due to his fear of Krishna can be found, when he remembers of king Ambarish¹⁷² described in

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(ii) Ibid, 9.5.1-17, PP. 973-975
the Bhagavata. Besides, in one place of the Mahabharata, Durvasa himself is seen at first to be active against Krishna himself although he subsequently surrenders to Krishna.\textsuperscript{173}

It is seen that both the narratives indicate that the fear of Durvasa for Krishna caused the surrender of Durvasa to Krishna; but the hostility between them was obviously the root cause in this aspect.

It can be mentioned in this context that the writing of Rabindranath\textsuperscript{174} evinces the antagonism between the warrior-caste and the Brahmins as a fact recognised by history. Hence, it can be said that although there was no personal animosity between Krishna and Durvasa,

‘...দুর্বর্ভা প্রমুখ এক সম্প্রদায় ব্রাহ্মণ শ্রীকৃষ্ণের ঘোরতর বিরোধী হইয়া ছিলেন। এবং অনার্য জাতির সঙ্গে মিলিত হইয়া সরংশ তাহার বংশের এবং সমগ্র ক্ষত্রিয় বংশের ধ্বংস সাধন করিয়াছিলেন?’\textsuperscript{175}

[A Brahmin community named Durvasa was at daggers drawn with Srikrishna and in alliance with the Non-Aryan race, caused the utter ruin of Krishna and his clan and also ruined the entire warrior-caste.] We can take Durvasa as the representative of the Brahmin community here. In the Trayi (trilogy) by Nabinchandra, we see

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{173. Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabhartam, Anushasanaparva, 137.14-51, PP. 1731-1737.}
\footnote{174. Rabindranath Thakur, Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol. XVIII, PP. 426-431.}
\footnote{175. Sajanikanta Das (ed.), Nabinchandra Rachanavali 2, P. 465.}
\end{footnotes}
Durvasa in many places playing the role of a slanderer, crooked and conspirator. 

Apart from this, in the poetic work of Nabinchandra Sen, the conspirating and shrewd traits of Durvasa, which is absent in the *Mahabharata* by Vedavyasa. In the *Mahabharata*, in the episode of Kunti as a virgin, Durvasa has not been portrayed as a crooked and deceitful person, instead, the epic makes us informed of the fact that Durvasa was “তমুঢ়ঃ শংসিতাত্মাং” [Hot-tempered and magnanimous]. Hence it is obvious that despite being a short-tempered and foolhardy person by nature, Durvasa was not portrayed as a conspirator in the *Mahabharata*. And he was not projected as a slanderer even in the fancy of Vedavyasa. Some critics have made negative comments on the portrayal of the character of Durvasa by Nabinchandra. Yet, even this person who puts his wife in torment psychologically, psychological thought in regard to woman’s heart suddenly flashes through his mind. He becomes conscious of the truth that a hermit

(ii) Ibid, P. 18 
(iii) Ibid, P. 19 
177. (i) Ibid, P. 259. 
(ii) Ibid, PP. 86-87 
178. Ibid, P. 116 
practising ascetic austerities is ignorant of ‘নারী হৃদয়ের জ্ঞান’¹⁸¹ [Any knowledge of women's heart]. He tries his best to abhor the married wife of himself and in spite of that, he becomes greatly allured to the resort of the peaceful abode of the feminine heart too. Vedavyasa did not disclose this crisis of the conjugal life of Durvasa. The *Mahabharata* does not contain the information of Durvasa’s wedding to Jaratkaru. Rather we come to know that ‘স্ত্রীমূর্তির কন্যা কন্দলীকে ইনি বিবাহ করেন’¹⁸² [He was married to Kandali, the daughter of Ourbamuni]. Here the creative acumen of Nabinchandra is reflected through the unveiling of the fresh fact of Durvasa’s conjugal life. These conflicting traits are also observed in this protagonist elsewhere the *Trayi* (trilogy); Durvasa does not like Krishna, yet he is moved by devotion at the sight of Krishna which is expressed in his words:

‘কি পাপ! দেখিবামাত্র কাপিছে মম গাত্র;

নাহি জানি কি যে ইন্দ্রজাল

জানে এই দুরাচার, দেখিয়া আমারো মনে

উপজিছে ভক্তি, কি জঙ্গাল!’¹⁸³

[What a pest! My body began trembling whenever I saw him; I

don’t know what conjuring tricks are applied by this wicked person, even my mind too is overwhelmed with devotion; Oh! What a trouble!]

And this feeling has thus been sown the seed of devotion in the heart of the sage named Durvasa and subsequently took the shape of a huge tree in the poetic work titled Prabhas.

To sum up, in the portrayal of the protagonist named Durvasa, Nabinchandra has been influenced by the character-sketch of Durvasa in the treatise named the Bhagavata. Besides, this portrayal represents the acme of the creative hallmark of Nabinchandra through a fresh perspective in sketching the character of Durvasa differently from the portrayal of the same as done in the Mahabharata.

3.14 VYASADEVA

The authentic author of the epic the Mahabharata named Vyasaeva, has been projected as a fatalist in the practical work of Nabinchandra, where Vyasaeva once instructs Krishna to believe in fatalism. In the delineation of the battle of Kurukshetra, sometimes he plays the role of a commentator, while in some other place his role is that of a foreteller. We notice in Raivatak

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185. Ibid, p. 139.
Kurukshetra Prabhas that he foretells some true facts about Arjuna and Subhadra.\textsuperscript{187} However, this portrayal of Vyasa is faithful to that of the character as sketched in the original text. That Vyasadeva is “ভূতভ্যাভিবিবিং”\textsuperscript{188} [Well-versed in the art of foretelling about what to happen in the future and what happened in the past] is also mentioned in the original text.

According to the protagonist named Vyasadeva portrayed by Nabinchandra, the huge creation created by the creator himself is not run by the arbitrariness, since “কিবা জন কিবা জাতি উভয় সমান দুর্লভ্য নিয়মাধীন”\textsuperscript{189} [Every race and every individual are equally bound by impassable laws or systems].

The afore mentioned ‘law’ or ‘system’ itself has been indicated as the ‘Kal’\textsuperscript{190} (time) It may be mentioned in this context that this very concept of a universe regulated by the mechanized and artificial system has been originated by Western influence. The view of an esteemed critic can be cited as a testimony in this aspect–

\begin{quote}
‘পাশ্চাত্য দেশে প্রতাক্ষাবী, হিতবাদ বা বিবর্তনবাদ প্রভৃতি তত্ত্ব বহিঃগতের মতো অস্তুর্গতকেও এমনিভারে ছাঁছড় ফেলেই ব্যাখ্যা করেছে। অনৌক্ষিতা বজ্রিত রহস্যাশূন্য।
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{187} Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas, P. 125.
\textsuperscript{188} Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Bhishmaparva, 2.2, P. 10.
\textsuperscript{189} Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, Raivatak Kurukshetra Prabhas, P. 16.
\textsuperscript{190} Haridas Siddhantabagish (tr.), Mahabharatam, Moushalaparva, 8.37, P.71
[In the western countries, the theories like Materialism or Positivism, Welfare, Evolution etc. interpreted the realm of the mind just the way they interpreted the external or the material world casting in the same mould. The mechanized form of a universe, that was devoid of any supernatural or mysterious trait, had just erased the feelings of wonder and awe. The way of life is pre-destined or determined—and the creator himself is snared by the laws and systems here].

In various parts of the poetical work of Nabinchandra, the impression of the devotion to Krishna has been reflected in the character of Vyasa deva.¹⁹²

However, it is also mentioned in the Mahabharata that of the Vedas, of the Ramayana and of the Mahabharata, “আদী চাতুঃ চ মধ্যে চ হরিঃ সর্বত্র গীয়তে”¹⁹³ [The name of Narayana has been glorified and extolled in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of these books].

Hence, the devotion of Vyasa to Krishna is faithful to the original

¹⁹². (i) Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), Nabinchandra Sen, Raivatak Kurukshtetra Prabhas, P. 139.
(ii) Ibid, PP. 140-141.
(iii) Ibid, P. 197.
text. But that Vyasa who is overpowering by devotion, and out of excessive devotion to Krishna who terms himself as ‘दरिंद्र बामन’194, i.e., the wretched priest, in an overwhelmed state of chanting the holy name of Krishna, is absent in the Mahabharata. The individual devotion to Krishna of the devout Nabinchandra is active behind this portrayal of Vyasa. Besides, the trait of that Vyasadeva who was the creator of the Bhagavata shadowed this portrayal. The author of the Bhagavata considered himself ungratified even after composing the Mahabharata just because of lacking in ‘भवतानुदितिप्रायं यशु भगवतोहमलम्’195 [Pure and unblemished singing in praise of the God, narrating the glory of the God]. Hence, although in some aspects the characterization of Vyasa by Nabinchandra follows the original text, the origin of this character remains in the Bhagavata. Undoubtedly, the novel and fresh approach to the characterization of Vyasa by Nabinchandra reveals the author’s creative genius here.

3.15 SATYAKI AND KRITAVARMA

Both the characters of Satyaki and Kritavarma are the minor characters of the Mahabharata. We came across both of them for the first time in the wedding ceremony196 of Abhimanyu, while both

of them are the followers of Krishna. Satyaki was one of the prominent warriors of the Yadava lineage, about whom Bhishma comments: ‘यं तं कार्तिक्षप्रतिमाहरेकं’ [Who is called a matchless hero like Pradyumna by the people.]

And also Kritavarma, who was the commander of one Akshauhini soldiers, is termed ‘Atiratha’ by Bhishma. Again, Kashiram Das says: ‘কৃষ্ণের পরমপ্রিয় সাত্ত্বিকী উক্তন’ [The dearest ones of Krishna like Satyaki and Uddhava].

Nabinchandra’s poetic work presents Satyaki as the victim of the foul conspiracy by Durvasa. In order to carry out the order of Durvasa, a Non-Aryan woman named Jaratkaru causes to build a wine-shop and that is why Satyaki takes a vow to kill Kritavarma. in the book titled Mahabharata it is seen that under a state of intoxication, both Satyaki and Kritavarma were roaring drunk and there was an eruption of all the pent-up grievances and afflictions during the battle of Kurukshetra, both blamed one another and both Satyaki and Kritavarma met their fate in consequence of it.

198. Ibid, Udyogaparva, 22.24, P. 147.
200. Kashiram Das (tr.), Mahabharat, Mausalaparva, P. 1155.
Nabinchandra’s poetical work reveals two distinctive traits of both the characters of the two protagonists named Satyaki and Kritavarma because of their attraction for Jaratkaru; and these traits are absent in the original text of the *Mahabharata* authored by Vedavyasa. One of them is the amorous self of Satyaki whereas the another is the lascivious self of Kritavarma. Here Satyaki, the impatient and hot-tempered follower and disciple of Arjuna, has been transformed into a romantic lover. This lover-boy Satyaki is beside himself with excitement, and then he tells his ladylove named Jaratkaru the following words:

‘প্রভাসের সিঙ্গু-সম অনন্ত অতল
আজি প্রেম-সাগর আমার;
তব পূর্ণচন্দ্র-মুখ তীর আকর্ষণে
করিছে কি লহরী সঞ্চার।’

[Today, the ocean of my love is like the infinite, unfathomable sea at Prabhas; your face like the full-moon that causes the surging tide in that ocean of love]

On the other hand, having been attracted by the charms of the same woman, Kritavarma offers a proposal to that unknown woman:

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[If you accept me as your suitor, I will save your life instead of taking your life after ravaging your chastity just the way a nectared and beautiful flower is crushed after being robbed of its honey].

The way Nabinchandra differentiates both these characters distinctive traits to distinguish one from another by showing clearly the merits and demerits of both the characters, is absent in the characterization of both these characters portrayed by Vedavyasa. Both the portrayals of the characters of Satyaki and Kritavarma are distinctive of Nabinchandra’s own. To sum up the estimation of both these characterizations, it can be said that, in the poetical works of Nabinchandra, their ultimate consequences have the fidelity to the original text although their activities are not in tune with the original text. The delineations of both these minor characters too reflect the hallmark of creativity possessed by Nabinchandra.

### 3.16 SUMMARY

Reaching the penultimate moment of this evaluative discussion

to reflect the clarity of Nabinchandra’s thoughts and ideas centering round the characters of the *Mahabharata* have been projected afresh in the novel light of a different perspective before us by Nabinchandra himself. Sometimes his pen illuminates those characters in the backdrop of contemporaneous zeitgeist. In the words of the protagonist named Vyasa, the concept of the creation which is impassably bound by system reflects the contemporaneous westernized zeitgeist. Again, sometime the characters touch the glorious height of magnanimity being inspired by the enriched idea of humanism.

Sometimes his thoughts faithfully follow the original text of the *Mahabharata*, whereas on the other hand, he is far from the fidelity to original text. He has been influenced to a greater extent by the Bengali rendering of the *Mahabharata* by Kashiram Das in comparison to the influence of the original text of the epic the *Mahabharata* by Vedavyasa on himself. Sometimes he also happens to be influenced by the *Bhagavata*. Yet, the mellifluous impact of his personal as well as familial life often has mellowed the epical characters also. The effusion of joy in the domestic life of Arjuna, Subhadra, Sulochana and Krishna centering round Abhimanyu and Uttara is but the reflection of bliss brimming over the personal life as well as the familial life of the poet.

The profound wisdom of Nabinchandra in regard to the *Mahabharata* and Gautam Buddha has been manifested through the
novel approach of the poet in portraying the characters of Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra in the distinctive lights of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha respectively. Such an effort to estimate the characters of the *Mahabharata* with a wholly new perspective is truly a laudable one. Thanks to the creative acumen reflected through the pen of Nabinchandra the individual who was personally an emotional and also an inveterate romantic individual, highlighting the novel nature of the novel creator of the new era, time and again in the poesy, and enabling us to experience those epical characters with a totally different taste from that of the original text.

It is the midas touch of the creative genius of Nabinchandra that makes the minor characters of the *Mahabharata* such as Satyabhama, Rukmini, Satyaki etc. animated with the fresh and enlivening spirit of revivification. Yet, these characters are synonymous with those of the original text in aspect of their consequences. In the backdrop of fresh and contemporary zeitgeist, Nabinchandra embodies those unspoken words of those unsung characters ignored by the pen of Vedavyasa.

Above all, the pen of Nabinchandra has been thoroughly imbued with the gushing downpour of the poet’s pure devotion to Krishna. And that devotion itself makes Krishna engrossed in the amorous sport at Braja on the bank of the Prabhas, and also makes Krishna interested in setting up a Millennium, irrespective of any discrimination between
the Aryan race and the Non-Aryan race. Not only that, the devout poet also involves the Nagaraja Vasuki and his sister in the purpose of dissemination of the holy name of Krishna–and in this aspect, his devout nature reveals his ecstatic devotion to Srigauranga. The concluding phase too contains the manifestation of divine beatitude in the devout delight of Srichaitanya. The poet’s creative genius thus circumambulates the whole world and without confining the religion of love to Krishna, the indwelling spirit of India only within Buddha and Gauranga of India alone; but he disseminates it to the Arabian countries, Greece and Judaic countries too. He estimated the different deportments of various characters of the Mahabharata with the vision of a wandering ascetic who has completed the peregrination of the whole world.

Without arousing any controversy regarding the issue of this novel approach of Nabinchandra's thoughts and ideas we would like to state that Nabinchandra visualized the dissemination of India as well as Indian religion in the whole universe, in the light of the character-sketches of the Mahabharata and his thoughts related to India, originate from his patriotism.