CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Buddhadeva Bose was the most versatile literary figure after Tagore and a great literary critic. As a full-fledged modernist writer and as a powerful exponent of modernism, he has immensely influenced our contemporary literature and literary criticism.

Buddhadeva Bose is a name synonymous with the modern trends in the field of Bengali literature. He has to his credit a vast store of critical writings, both in Bengali and English, a few of which have appeared in book form while many are stored in different journals.

Buddhadeva Bose was born in the city of Comilla of the then East Bengal on the 30th November, 1908. His father's name was Bhudeb Chandra Bose. His mother died twenty-four hours after his birth. He was reared up by his grandfather. He passed his first thirteen years of his life at Noakhali. Then he came to Dacca. Practically his first literary life started in Dacca.

Buddhadeva Bose and Ajit Kumar Datta were the joint editors of the 'Pragati' monthly magazine, which was first published in the month of Asharh, 1334 B.S. from Dacca.

He was a poet, a novelist, a dramatist, an essayist, a short story writer, an autobiographer, a travelogue writer and a translator. Sudhindranath Datta said that there had been few writers in the country as fluent as Buddhadeva Bose.

1. N.K. Ghosh (Ed.) Studies in Bengali poetry. P-383
2. Buddhadeva Bose - Buddhadeva Basur Rachana Sangastra (4 volumes 1980) P-567
He was an illustrious M.A. in English of the Dacca University. He came to Calcutta in 1931 and started his career as Lecturer in English in the Ripon College. Later on he was the founder and Head of the department of Comparative Literature in the Jadavpur University. He delivered speeches on Rabindranath and comparative literature in the Boston University and Bloomington University.

He edited the 'Kabita' in 1935 and continued it for twenty years. After becoming an editor, he had to write criticisms on the poems of the then young poets, which were published in the 'Kabita'. From that time onwards, he was not only writer but also a critic.

Buddhadeva Bose opened the door for the then young poets to come to the 'Kabita'. He was so enthusiastic that in one issue of 'Kabita' (December 1956), he published his translation of ten poems of Holderline, the complete Uttramegha of the 'Meghdutam' and the poems of Arthur Rimbaud and Pole Eluer and correspondence of letters with Amiya Chakraborty about Pasternaik.

Buddhadeva Bose in the first and last part of his life had to go to court on the allegation of obscenity.

No other editor before him dared to continue a literary magazine solely for poetry and poetic criticism in Bengali.

As a critic Buddhadeva's intention was to make the Bengali writers and readers acquainted with not only the English literature but also with the other western literatures.

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4. Ananda Roy (Ed.) - Buddhadeva Basu : Nana Prasanga (1973), P-172
From the era of *'Kallol' and 'Kali-Kalam'* Buddhadeva Bose discussed about the changes of modern Bengali poetry on the backgrounds of European and American poetry. In his criticism his eyes were fixed on the international literary world.

Bose gave importance to the comparative study of eastern and western literature.

He was the first man to make us well acquainted with Rilke, Holderlin, Baudlaire, Pasternaike and many others through Bengali language.

Buddhadeva Bose has indicated in the introduction of *'Sharl Baudlaire: Tnar Kabita'* that the book was written for the general readers who love poetry.

He said, in India, we, since last one hundred and fifty years, have cultivated the English literature only. In this connection, we did not get any opportunity to discuss the other western literatures and as a result, our universal feeling has been lifeless and therefore the knowledge of English literature was not complete.

A commentator said, Buddhadeva Bose was the author for the authors only. Hence his literary criticism developed traits of maturity from the beginning.

Thus a critic says that in the essays and literary criticism of Buddhadeva, the skill and maturity is exposed. Buddhadeva himself said, "A powerful and brilliant ideal of literary criticism is the characteristic of a matured literature."

6. Ananda Roy (Ed.)- Buddhadeva Basu : Nama Prasanga (1978) P-34
7. Sukumar Sen - Bangla Sahityer Itihas volume-4 (4th Ed.) P-348
(samalochanar sudrirha ujjwal adarsha parinata sahityer ekta pradhan lakshan)\(^8\).

Because Bengali literature is relatively new, no lively and active ideal is felt in it and this is an obstacle for complete growth of this literature.

Buddhadeva Bose said that one of the remedies is to judge the writings of other writers. But he reminded us that in the case of 'rasa' which the literary criticism deals with, nothing can be proved because it is static as well as dynamic\(^9\).

Hence Buddhadeva called, the literary works as the 'Kaler Putul', an epithet derived from Rabindranath which means 'Dolls of the Time'.

Buddhadeva Bose chose to remain aloof from the undits and scholars while practising his pen in literary criticism. He felt that most remarkable critical works in literature are done by the writers themselves. It can be remembered that Bose himself is a literature and critic combined.

According to him, Bankimchandra introduced the literary criticism in Bengali literature and afterwards, Rabindranath's contribution is maximum in the field who had realised that contemporary literature can not be viewed in the perspective of time which may change and therefore only successful way is to transform criticism into literary work\(^10\).

Buddhadeva Bose relied on this Tagorean concept. According to him, only those criticisms have been permanent which had got literary value.

9. Ibid. P-134
10. a) Ibid. P-135
   b) Rabindranath Tagore : Sahityaswarup
      (Reprint 1365 B.S.) P-34
Literary criticism is never dependent on opinion only rather it derives its life from literary appeal. Criticism is written in language and not in definition. It is not science but it is an art. So a critic should be an artist of language.

Though dependent on literary appeal, criticism is not abstract and it has got certain permanent source of pleasure and sense of duty. The critic said, "We will do a great mistake if we expect that criticism should give us a final word about literature, because literature or art is a subject on which nobody could say or can say the last word." (samalochanar kachhe shesh katha yadi kakhano asha kari tahalei amara bhul karbo. sahitya ba shilpakala - eman bishay, ya niye shesh katha keu kakhano balte pareni, balte parena)

Although there had been an attempt to bring literary criticism into the realm of systematic science by discovering fixed rules but the attempt has been again and again foiled by unexpectedness of living and new literature. The nature of criticism is just opposite to the nature of exact science. Here everything is relative, probable and general.

By criticism Bose meant a kind of unfolding of literature and the critic himself.

The critic awakens the indifferent mind of the reader and expresses eager mind and enlightens the matter of literature on a great prospective. Criticism is a work of art and

12. Ibid. P-138
Buddhadeva Bose has not given us any particular method of criticism but his critical writings, his opinion about literature and criticism have been expressed.

We find in Bengali Rajendralal Mitra (1822-1891) first initiated pure literary criticism in western style in his journal 'Vividhartha Sangraha'.

Bose's criticism is based on western method. So let us discuss what is the function of criticism on western method. In time of Dr. Johnson criticism meant fault finding. But now a days the function of criticism is not to pick holes but to make a just evaluation of an artist's works dispassionately.

Again in view of Addison the true critic will dwell on the excellences rather than imperfections. This is appreciative criticism and its main function is to provide aesthetic pleasure to the reader by gleaming out the spots of beauty and loveliness from literary works.

This is a romantic approach to criticism. This laudatory and appreciative criticism does not help in arriving at a real worth of an artist.

So the function of criticism is the analysis of a writer's experience of life as revealed in the way he uses words. The main business of a critic is to examine the words on the page. It is in the words of the writer, in his choice and ordering and organization of language, that his worth

13. a) Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay - Bangla Samalochanar Itihas (1372 B.S.) P-15
   b) Asit Kumar Bandopadhyay - Bangla Sahityer Samourma Itibritta (3rd Ed. 1378 B.S.) P-569
shows itself.

Criticism has its own importance in the evaluation of literature. Helen Gardner says that elucidation or illumination is the critic's primary task. A critic is the ordinary reader's philosopher and guide in initiating him into the mysteries of art. Without the critic's guidance, the reader will not be able to grasp the full meaning of a literary work.\textsuperscript{14}

It is the great function of criticism to evaluate properly the works of great critics so that the common reader may be able to arrive at the real worth of an artist. Evaluative criticism seeks to arrive at the real worth of an artist.

Closely allied to the evaluative function of criticism is its interpretative function. The writer sometimes, hurries through his works without clarifying his vision. Much of modern poetry is difficult and obscure. It is the function of the critic to interpret the works of literature according to his own understanding and vision of life.

Interpretative criticism will bring new streaks of light, which had not been thought of by the creative artists themselves.

Analysis, evaluation and interpretation are the main functions of criticism.

A critic should possess an intuitive and instinctive power to discover what is worth-while in a piece of literature.

\textsuperscript{14} Helen Gardner: The Business of Criticism, OXFORD, 1959, P-17,-18
and should be able to convey the benefit of his discovery to others effectively.

Helen Gardner says that the critic's task is to assist his readers to read for themselves, not to read for them. Secondly, the critic should be a well-read person, a man of deep learning, a man who knows not only the literature of his country but of other countries also.\(^\text{15}\)

I.A. Richards writes in the principle of literary criticism that the real critic must be both scholarly and sensitive, and if he himself is the practitioner of art he criticises, it is all the more good.

T.G. William says that the qualities required in a critic are primarily sensibility, imagination, knowledge and judgment.

Forms of criticism:- Among English critics Dryden was the first critic who used the word 'criticism' in the sense of any formal discussion of literature and so he loosely applied criticism to three different types of critical endeavours that have nothing in common except they are concerned with works of literature.

Watson in his book 'The literary critics', has divided criticism into three main kinds:- 1) Legislative criticism, 2) theoretical criticism and 3) descriptive criticism.

1) Legislative criticism, which includes books of rhetoric, is the earliest form of criticism. It assumes that the critic is a law giver and the writer's job is to put

\(^{15}\) Helen Gardner : The Business of Criticism, OXFORD, 1959 P-17
those rules into practice.

This type of criticism was practised by the Eliza-
bethans.

2) The theoretical criticism which is also known as
aesthetic criticism, is concerned with the principles of
beauty in a work of art.

3) Descriptive criticism is the youngest child of
Mopus, the god of criticism. It is the art of analysing
works of literature that actually exist. It is based on the
discussion, analysis, appreciation and interpretation of
individual literary works. Its main concern is to interpret
or analyse existing literary works for a reader's enjoyment.

The three main forms of criticism, have assumed
several distinctive forms in the hands of different critics:-

a) Impressionistic criticism attempts to represent
in words the felt qualities of a particular work. It expres-
ses a critic's own experience or impression of the work of
art and literature.

Subjective method:- It is a method in an intensely
personal manner the inner convictions, beliefs, dreams or
ideals of the author. Also it means impressionistic type,
recreating with imagination and feeling the meaning of the
author's work 16.

b) Judicial criticism judges works of literature in
the light of set rules and conventions of art which have been
derived from the ancient Greek and Latin masters like Aristotle.

c) Inductive criticism does not admit of set rules and principles in judging works of literature.

d) Evaluative criticism - In evaluative criticism, an attempt is made to assess for evaluating the merit of a work of art and literature in the light of standards which may be aesthetic, moral, or purely personal. In evaluating literature it takes account of all the elements, which form literature: Questions of rhythm and movement, thought and emotion, imagery and suggestions, words and meanings.

e) Historical criticism - Historical criticism is based on assumption that the appreciation of a literary work is possible only when we keep in mind the tradition in which it was written. It assumes that all the works of art are historical objects. They cannot be treated as autonomous and self-explanatory. A literary artist works under the pressure of the age in which he lives. Various factors influence his mind.

Historical criticism tries to explain a work of art taking into account all the various factors which influence the mind of the writer.

f) Comparative criticism, which was popularised by Mathew Arnold, seeks to evaluate a work of art by comparing it with other works of the same type either in one's own language or in other languages. The only primary condition of such criticism is that only comparables should be compared.

For example Homer's 'Iliad' may be compared with the
'Mahabharata', Shakespeare may be compared with Kalidas. The function of true criticism is to establish a definite hierarchy among the great artists of the past, as well as to test the production of the present.

A critic has rightly said that it is a method of criticism based on comparative and scholarly study of the works of two writers in order to trace their similarities and dis-similarities. It's popularity is increasing to remove the narrowness of mind.17

Buddhadeva Bose was in extremely favour of this criticism.

Psychological criticism analyses process in the mind of the poet while he is composing his poem and processes in the mind of the reader, while he is reading it, in the belief that before we can judge and evaluate a work of art we must know what it is and how it has come about.

It also seeks to interpret the value or significance of a piece of writing in psychological terms. It enables the critic to study motives, impulses, 'the interior life of the writer and then to study his works with reference to it.

The most prominent practitioner of psychological criticism is I.A. Richard.

Buddhadeva Bose's criticism of the character of Yudhisthir in his 'Mahabharater Katha' is an example of psychological criticism. Bose exposed the conflict of

17. Asit Kumar Bandopadhyay - Samalochanar Katha (3rd Print 1971) P-24, 26
Yudhisthir's mind in a brilliant way.

Psychological method is based on psychology dealing with motives that impel the writer to compare the book and probing into the subconscious not only of the writer but also of his created characters.\(^{18}\)

Criticism is often condemned as being secondary, parasitic and inferior to creation. It is a common belief that criticism is inferior to genuine creation. A possible explanation of this feeling, we find in Plato's theory of ideas. Ultimate reality, he held, lies in the world of ideas and all worldly things are mere copies of that ultimate reality. An artist's work, which is a mere copy of earthly things, is twice removed from the ultimate reality. A critic's work, which is about an artist's work is three times removed from the ultimate reality.

In the light of Plato's theory of ideas, criticism is inferior to the creation.

Buddhadeva Bose has indicated the same notion in his essay 'Rabindranather Prabandha O Gadyashilpa' in 'Sanga Nihsangata - Rabindranath'.

He said, "In respect of literature, the creative work is main and primary criticism is its follower". (saḥitya-byapare sristikarmai pradhan o prathamik, somalo-chana tar anugami matra)\(^{19}\).

The remark indicates how Buddhadeva was influenced by Rabindranath for, this was first uttered by Rabindranath.

Aesthetic Method: This method is based on the principles of 'art for art's sake'. It evaluates the work or art from the point of view of aesthetics, that is, whether the work of literature satisfies the test of creation of beauty and produce unalloyed joy to the reader.

Sudhindranath Datta said that Buddhadeva was a believer of 'art for art's sake' all his life²⁰.

Buddhadeva was definitely in favour of the theory of 'art for art's sake' in the field of literary creation as well as criticism.

²⁰ Sudhindranath Datta - Prabandha Sangraha (1981) P-279