The pride and glory of Bengali literature of this day is the fruit of all the efforts and endeavour of the whole century. Because whenever a great philosopher, a poet or a novelist appears in the society he should not be regarded as a self-contained and self-sufficient creative power whose only task is to be himself a segregated unity standing alone and giving expression to the nature of his own being; but whatever a man does in literature as in everything else is in relation to others; and thus the intertwined history of his people, the family, the society, the education that he had received, and the people to whom he addressed himself is also a part of his constitutive nature. Similarly, we deem the creations of Tarasankar as outstanding art expression of Bengalee culture and thoughtfulness. Particularly, in his novels he is sometimes found to look at the women from a standpoint of our traditional views, for, as a writer, he was at heart the follower of tradition. As such, it is essential at the


beginning to have a glance at the Bengalee tradition with special reference to the marks that it left on our literature for the better understanding of the women of his novels.

The history of religion, culture, and literature of Bengal is very interesting and curious. In the searching eyes of historians the spontaneous variety of the Bengalee lives though included into the greater "Indian-unity" yet it maintained an individuality which manifested even at the early stage of history and when two streams of civilization of Aryan and non-Aryan mixed together in the greater unity. In the early stage of history the errant thoughts of Aryans infused itself in the native customs and concepts, and such complex infusion revolving again and again resulted a special pattern of custom and convention that rooted the Bengalee culture. The patterns of livelihood of the Aryans naturally suffered many changes in this special pattern of culture, as far example, the hermitages of the Aryans here took the form of noisy villages and the serene appearances of "Risis" into fierce-looking Tantriks. But though initiated to worldliness, the Bengalees did never forget the nobility of divine-soul. In short, this history shows an unique combination of degradation, brutality and prejudices in the Bengalees on one side and self-confidence, self-development and upliftment on the other. But above all, the romantic impulse of the heart always won a victory in the minds of Bengal.

developed under the coarse spirit of the age. In Iaydev, Vidyapati and Chandidas, we find the Spiritual and social lives of Bengal following the coarse spirit of the age. The normal and super-normal lives in Bengal were conducted on the basis of some partisan religious beliefs. So, the literature was also marked with each of these partisan religious concepts. In the reign of Turkeys when artistic creations happened to be rare in the country, Sri-chaitanya appeared as an awakening light to the nations. His thoughts and activities struck roots so deeply in the national sentiments that, thereafter for several centuries our literature cried a victory of Vaishnabic devoted attachment and the Five Rasha of Vaishnabs controlled the inner urges of our literature. But the earthly love though was expressed in form of devotion, yet the impulse of lover's heart was comprising with the worldly hankerings and the Bâtshalya-rasha could never triumph over the Madhur-rasha in our literature. In course of time the Vaishnabic wave on the literature hackneyed due to several repetitions and the litera-


*6. In this Vakti-rasa God is imagined as the child of devotee and the devotee brings him with fatherly or motherly affection.
ibid P.67.

*7. In this Vakti-rasa God is imagined as the lover of devotee bestows best love and affection to him.
ibid, P.68.
ture itself lost the spontaneity for the cause. At the juncture of such crisis Ramprasad appeared with a new light of thinking. His *Saktapadabali* added a new enthusiasm to the monotonous trend of literature. The famous Bangalee again revived the life-force through mother-worship. Culture of Tantras introduced Dehabadd in our literature and Bharatchandra may be considered as the pioneer of this branch. Thus the flow of romanticism along with the idea of devoted love and effection began to flow simultaneously in our literature. But, though the nation was initiated in the Mother-worship, yet at the even of nineteenth century it again lost the right path of thinking and engaged itself in various improper activities. So, our history just before the 19th century was crowded with various chaos, superstitions, and improper activities.

(2) 

So long the Bengali literature had been marked with spirituality or rationality with the rise and fall of corresponding feeling in the society. But the loving feeling based on Madhura-rasha and the feeling of love and effection based on Batshalya-rasha were not set aside even in the age of Tantras. A modified form of these trend we find in the literature of 19th and even in the 20th century. In the previous concepts Prakriti, the divine nature represented the Lady-love, but in the age of

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*8. Doctrine that the Universal mystery lies within the material body.

Mother-worship she was propitiated as divine Mother in the adoration of the Saktas. Thus a dignified position of womanly self was accepted in the literature through the gradual transformation of previous thoughts and concepts.

In the later age, great changes occurred in our social set-up. The previous aristocrats being opposed by the Britishers lost their pride and supremacy, whereas new classes of small Zaminders and officials appeared with full vigour. Both the classes were obliged and imitative to the foreign rulers. Moreover, the illusive western education allured many of our youths to forsake their religion and cast and to adopt that of foreigners. So, a cry raised from the society to check this exotic influences. Raja Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar came forward to stand in the way of this blindly foreign imitations. Rammohan resumed the glory of Sanatana-Dharma and Iswar Chandra revived the sense of respect to the women in the nation. The teachings of Sri Sri Ramkrishna and Vivekananda successfully led the nation to a path of humanity. All these occurrences cast definite shadows on the literature of the day, because literature always associates the society hand in hand and affixes every marks of society on its pages.

Not only in the social set-up, but 19th century brought about great changes in the social mind also. It denied the supremacy of fatalism and super-naturalism, whereas

humanism struck roots in the social and literary minds. In every sphere of national life there arose a spirit to manifest the greatness and humanity. The youths of the day proceeded not only to observe the life from outside but to have a share on the every good and evil of it equally. So the literature of the century conveyed the similar spirit. In Bankim Chandra we find, this spirit of magnanimity and nobility in his literary characters. As for example Hem Chandra fought and sacrificed his life in the battle for the sake of ideals, Pratap and Sutaram were the founder and protecters of Hindu-state. Such great ideas were included in his literature. But the imaginations though were vast in Bankim Chandra, yet his literary characters suffered much due to the mental conflicts between their predilection and renunciation. Their sensuality dominating over their self-restrainty caused downfall in personality. Sitaram, caused the destruction of himself and his state under the illusion of beauty.

After Bankim Chandra the superfluous emotions and activities in the literature lacked lustre to some extent. Rabindranath set up our sentiments and emotion on the delusive bac-


*12. The hero of the novel Mrinalini of Bankim Chandra Chattarjee.

*13. The hero of the novel Chandra Sekhar of Bankim Chandra Chattarjee.


kground of reality. His talent added thoughtfulness in the litera-

ture. Henceforth a trend of psychological treatment of the

behaviour of men and women ran fast in the literature. We find

how the mental agitation of Bihari destroyed every peace of his

own life. In the stories of Galpa-Guchha Rabindranath vivified

the events with the soft sentiments of men. Romance, super-romance

all the feeling of love and beauty played more or less in these

stories. With boundless sympathy he looked at the lives of our

villages and the pangs of their separation, mystery of their lo-

ve, happiness and sorrows of their everyday lives effervesced

into bunches in his writings. This wonderful lyrical stories im-

mediately bring the readers to a dreamland where men move around

the men and all their activities revolve on the background of na-

ture and go deep into the human heart.

Thereafter, in Sarat Chandra the lyrical

trend of literature took an eventful course. The vast imagina-
tion of Rabindranath in connection with rural picture here Shriv-
elled to some extent and village-lives appeared to him as it was

with all its immutability and narrowness. Here the greatness and

meanness of village-lives were deeply expressed on the background

of their limited locality. Going to picture his practical experi-

ences of women Sarat Chandra himself was charmed at their glory


*17. Hero of the novel *Cokher Bāli* of Rabindranath Tagore.

and hence he offered supremacy of the women in his novels. To him, women are the embodiment of various opposite qualities—as a devotee of love and affection they are sweet, but vigorous while they worshiped the "Sakti". In the novels of Sarat Chandra the women exhausted all their affection and tenderness for the sake of lovers and society. In their loving-impulse Sarat Chandra found an unique combination of possibility and desertion. Thus the innate nature of women took its place in the literature of Sarat Chandra.

(3)

The modern writers have come-forward to analyse further the loving feeling of men, and minutely going through found the existence of sensuality in it. So, there developed a trend in the modern literature to go deeply through the original instincts which cause this sensuality. Tarasankar also postulated the mystery of this instincts in men. To him, men differ in nature and behaviour as this factor plays with them and variegates the lives with different colours. But he did cast no scientific look to the human lives, rather very sympathetically observed the behaviour of men and life-truths spontaneously appeared to his inward eye. With keen intuition he could find, an inscrutable ways of fate in every life. As this way of fate is inevitable in every

*19. ibid p.44.


*22. ibid p.
life, so, every act of good and evil, beauty or ugliness, must go after it, and hence, he postulated the supremacy of this all-ruling power in his literature. In fact, if we consider everything in life, whatever ugly it may be, as the unimpeached game of fate, then we can't reject anything of men. Tarasankar firmly believed the fact and hence, the tenderness and cruelty, sensuality and upliftment, stood side by side in his literature. This total picture of men irrespective of their qualities, we think, is the unparallel mark of his literature.

(4)

In Tarasankar, man himself invites his fate and none can get rid of it. The tragedy of his literary characters mainly resulted from this helplessness of men. But this mysterious game of fate in life is not necessarily visible and connected with immediate link of cause and effect. Sometimes it is quite incognizable like a subterranean flow of water. It: a searching eye Tarasankar went far beyond the superficial surface of human life and disclosed the truths that lay under it. But never he proceeded to analyse the lives in the touchstone of psychological tests and arguments but only cut-purse the complexities of the mysteries of fate and drew a consistancy between the life-long activitives and final end of men. It is really the path of a great man who cannot but move at the sufferings of human beings. In this world men are always accompanied by the fear of infirmity and death and the thoughts and ideals of

*23. Loc. Cit.*
of great authors always shine in the world of turbulence and turmoil as light-houses to guide the destinies of the ship-wrecked humanity. Tarasankar being an author of that kind, conveyed the similar great messages to the pusillanimous men of the world.

Everywhere in short-stories or in novels Tarasankar observed the lives very closely. In the vast-volume of his novel he presented the overall picture of men and women, and in the limited sphere of short-stories, the glorious suggestions of lives came out through his writings. He felt more encouragement to revive the values of past than to introduce new ideals in the society. But he did not accomplish any particular form of life as he personally experienced, rather the eternal spirit beyond the livelihood of our country automatically appeared at his poetic intuition. It appears that, he is as if an expression of all the latent feeling of the nation which spontaneously gave birth many of the village-poets, kabivals, story-tellers and year after year maintained an unceasing flow of wit in the social minds. The revival of the folk-culture was successfully done in his creations. Far from the touch of western influences he looked at the Indians with Indian attitude of life and thereby revealed the real spirit that acts in the livelihood of this country.

The parallel of Tarasankar in describing the


*25. Ibid P.55.
conflicts between the tradition and spirit of the age in rare in Bengali literature. Though the pomp and splendour of the previous aristocrates were set in the 19th century yet it left an after-glow, a fading splendour and decaying warmth on the social mind. The aristocracy of birth was being rejected by the aristocracy of wealth. This conflict between the spirit of the age and decaying customs occupied a dignified position in his novels. None wishes to leave this world willingly though we are sure to die. It is the love and affection which make the lives so charming to men inspite of their all sufferings. In many of his stories Tarasankar nicely expressed this eternal feeling of men, and the range caused there from.

Tarasankar had the advantage of being born and rared up in a society in which old custom and tradition along with its merits and demerits still acted upon. In his autobiography he mention that, a contradiction between the different religion and caste alway turned round in the air of Lovepur, where he was born. There lived "Saktas", "Vaishanabs", the supporters and opposers of Hindu caste-system, the conservative social leaders, and the liberal youths, the previous aristocrates and newly born riches in the same village and all of them possessed opinions of their own and it would always take air violently in a competitive mood. The literary animation of Tarasankar took light and air at the beginning from such a combative society and got the

*26. ibid P. 577.

valuable knowledge of human nature. The social setup and religious bindings under which our all-round development was possible in the past, attracted him all the more and hence it occupied a vast area of his novels. His literary world rarely included the self-centered, separated, antitraditionalists of the city. His literary characters though living in the age took breath from the past and hence traditional. Their personality caused from the religious and social tradition of the nation. So, the illicit love which is rare in our culture was rarer in his literature also. The adultery which is not supported by any higher feeling is not frequent in his literature also. Of course, in course of events he sometimes drew the pictures of illicit love to point the furious result caused from it or to find out the greater truth that lay behind it. It appears that, most of his literary characters and observations are faced backwards. He picked up some of the fading glow of decaying conventions and fixed them firmly in Bengali literature. In his literary characters those who are not honest at heart, at least maintained a crease of it out worldly in their thinking and behaviours. Srikumar Bandyapadhya rightly thinks— he is an artist, lives to whom did not appear only as a delightful playground of instincts or a field of inner strifes. But it conveyed greater significance to him.

As a novelist Tarasankar emphasised mainly on the subject matter and literary art is a secondary issue to him, and


*27. ibid P. 577.
it is needed only for the best representation of the theme. As a result spontaneity of his writings sometimes seems to be disturbed. In most of his novels he is realistic, superfluous and emotional. He felt a tendency to supply the various facts and information in the novels and at the same time spiritual-meditation, hades, religious-thinkings accompanied the matter. As regard language, he used the various proseic-style of conversation, description etc. Haraprasad Mitra finds the style of kabival in his eloquency. These were not always harmonised with the table of his novels. Of course, the writer is at liberty to use any proseic-style as his intuition demands. Because his main function is to create a situation, though the magic of language, its order, its trailing history of allusions, the sonorous effect and the imaginative shadows and the like, such that the reader may interpret the linguistic or pictorial situation in such a manner as to give rise to his mind experiences more or less similar to that of author. We are to judge whether the communications are of synthetic nature and whether they synthetically produce in us any aesthetic joy or reveal the truth he wishes to convey. In the process each writer will definitely differ from another. As Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee in "Pather-Pancia" showed his individuality, similarly Manik Banerjee shone the speciality

*29. ibid. P.3.
*30 Famous novel of Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee.
of his own in padmānādir Mājhi. In the field of creations Bibhuti Bhusan is not like Manik Banerjee and Manik Banerjee is not as Tarasankar. All of them are single-star in the field of creation. So, when Tarasankar is viewed from the angle of his own vision, all his merit and demerits combine in his uniqueness which is unparallel in our conclusion.

*31 Famous novel of Manik Banarjee.