CHAPTER III

BENGALI CHRONICLE PLAYS

GIRISH CHANDRA CHUGH!

Girish Chandra has found a permanent niche in the realm of Bengali theatre ever since public theatre was established. Nobody could show his kind of ability in bringing out reforms in theatre. He was a playwright, actor, theatre reformer and director - all rolled into one. His era represented the golden age in Bengali theatre. Blessed by the saint Ramkrishna, Girish Chandra brought new life to Bengali dramaturgy. Girish composed all kinds of plays ranging from mythological, social to historical. No other Bengali dramatist wrote as many or as diverse.

The plays written at time used generally to draw on the Paranas as their source material. There was also some farces and vulgar satirical plays. As the nation imbibed the spirit of the nineteenth century renaissance and was looking out for new directions, the writers came forward to inspire the countrymen into involving themselves in the struggle for independence. It may be mentioned here that many great men were born in the Nineteenth Century Bengal. Influenced on the one hand by the spiritual renaissance and on the other contd.....
by patriotism, the contemporary art and culture broke new grounds.

The era was one of religious nationalism. It has its share of influence on his plays also. While this enhanced the overall effect in his mythological plays, it harmed the cause of the dramatic aesthetics in his social and historical plays. This religious fervour subverted the historical authenticity of some of his history-based plays.

Inspired by nationalist ideals, Girish Chandra started writing historical plays. While his pre-Swadeshi Movement plays reflected his personal views generally, but in the plays written in the context of the Swadeshi Movement, he spoke of sacrificing self for the cause of motherland.

It could thus be observed that the historical plays of Girish Chandra became a vehicle for patriotic sentiments. But of course Girish Chandra remained faithful to the spirit of history, as well. Imagination took over only to fill in the gaps in the information called from the pages of history. Sometimes, however, imaginary characters and backdrops were introduced to heighten the overall mood of patriotism.

Girish Chandra's historical plays, however, were not as popular as his mythological and social contd........
One of the factors responsible for this involved nostalgic attachment to our ancient religion and culture which was all the rage at the time. Nationalist sentiments, given expression for the first time in Jyotirindranath's plays, remained quite subdued for a while. It is only after Khirodeprasad's famed play 'Pratapditya' was written (1904-05) that historical plays came back on the scene with all its former glory. It is around this time that Girish Chandra composed his well-known play 'Siraj-ud-doulla'.

People took instantly to heart the heart-rending fate of the sunset of Indian independence. Along with 'Siraj-ud-doulla', 'Mirkashim' and 'Chatrapati Sivaji'- the two plays that he subsequently wrote are his most successful creations in this particular genre.

A sense of nobleness and high dignity which are the hallmarks of historical plays are amply evident in Girish's plays too. He had a natural genius for projecting heroic sentiments which was further heightened by a succession of climaxes and anti-climaxes and a felicity with the pen which was all Girish Chandra's own. He made clever use of both poetic and prosaic format in his plays. The real genius of Girish Chandra lies in the fact that his
plays expressed the desire for political independence and concomitant love for one's motherland in a way that captured the imagination of his people. Historical plays written by him include 'Chanda', 'Haranti', 'Hatam', 'Ashoka', 'Sivajendoulla', 'Mirham in', 'Chatrapati Sivaji'. They are being dealt with briefly below:

**Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1912)**

Girish Chandra was born in Bageshwar, Calcutta. He received his education from a Pathshala in the beginning, and afterwards from the school founded by Cour Mohan Adhi and Hare School. Even though unsuccessful in the Entrance Examination, he proved a diligent reader in his later years. He was married in 1869. He entered the Atkinson Tilou Co. as an apprentice book-keeper and subsequently made a name as an efficient book-keeper. He made his debut in the world of plays as a lyricist for the play 'Sharmishtha' produced by the Bageshwar Amateur Dramatic Company in 1867. He was made a manager of the Great National Theatre in 1880 and 'Agamani', the first original play written by him was dramatised in this theatre. He was associated with all the major theatres of Calcutta like Star, Emerald, Minerva, Classic, Kohinoor etc. at one time or other. The saint 'Namasrishna' blessed Girish Chandra and Hrudini after seeing their performance on one night in 'Chaitanyalila' in 1884. His attachment to religion begins to grow from around this time and he became a disciple of 'Namasrishna'. He will also be remembered for introduction of 'Gairish Chanda' - a unique rhyme all his own.

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CHANDA:

'Chanda' happens to be Girish Chandra's first really successful historical play. He based the play on the tale of 'Chanda' described in the seventh chapter of 'The Annals of Mewar' in Todd's 'Rajasthan'. Girish Chandra beautifully exploited the dramatic possibilities of the story. The theme of the play involves animosity between the two Rajput clans - Mewar and Rathores. Composed mainly in blank verse, the play has occasional prose patches as well. Events unfold swiftly in this play. There are few dramatic scenes as exciting as the one where Chanda is seen mounting an attack. The protagonist of the play, Chanda, is invested with exemplary virtues of heroism and sacrifice. He arranged marriage for his lusty father and administered the state on behalf of his younger brother. Though the character is given qualities of greatness and thus put beyond the reach of mere mortals, the vengeful spirit portrayed in his climactic scenes makes it easy for us to identify with the man within.

Chanda, in this play, is pitted against Manamilla, the chief of the Rathore clan. In a terrible show of courage and vengeance, he wanted to annihilate the entire Mewar clan. Courage and heroism remains the hallmark of his character. Though Saghudevji contd.....
appears only briefly in the play; his memory inspires the rest of the characters. The dramatist has shown his originality by creating the character of Vijayrao and the show of his love and vengeance. His character by being instrumental in the death of Jaghadev and the fall of Ranamalla, fits snugly into the playwright's scheme of things.

**MARANTI (1992):** 'Maranti' cannot be termed a historical play. Historical theme does not pre-dominate here and what more, the historical basis, too, is rather loose and incoherent. This may better be called a romantic play based on love and jealousy. Characterisation, dialogue, delineation of events - or none of these counts is the play worth much of a mention. Even the confusion, that is at the base of the play, is quite bald.

**SATNAM (1984):** The rebellion of the Satnami sect against the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb constitutes the theme of this play. The playwright has used it as a vehicle for spreading the message of patriotism. Thinly disguised behind the tale of the Satnami rebellion against the Mughals lies the call to countrymen to fight the British. But even on the apparent level, too, the play superbly catches on to contd......
the changing moods of hope of frustration in the sect's bid to seek independence. Girish Chandra beautifully sketches how a great effort fails inspite of a display of burning patriotism because of problems of the heart. The character of Banandra in this play resembles that of Habanenda in Bankim Chandra's 'Amaradhith' to a great extent. Habanenda, greatly troubled by inner conflicts, made final amends for his weaknesses by sacrificing his life for the cause of freedom. But Banandra kept surrendering to the weaknesses even on the eve of his death. A profusion of deaths is a major flaw of the play. The central character - Vaishnavi - even though created on the heroic mould, has not been able to retain much individuality beside the characters of Banandra, Fakirram, Charandas etc.; the character of Charandas is full of life and verse. The love and vengeance of Guisana has been mise nicely portrayed.

BASAR (1906) : Basar tells an interesting story interestingly. The playwright chooses not to reveal the identity of Vikramaditya to Minakshi - a dramatic device that succeeds in making the desired effect. The play abounds in songs. The comic characters manage to raise laughs.

ASHOKA (1911) : Without distorting in any way the...
historical basis, Girish Chandra brings into it his imaginative genius and thus we get 'Ashoka', based on the life of the great emperor. All the important events in the emperor's life have been accommodated at the cost of dramatic unity. The generic characteristics of the play take some beating on account of the religious overtones. The play traces the evolution of Chandashoka (Ashoka the fierce one) into Dharmashoka (Ashoka the saint). The struggle of the forces of religion with those of hatred and desire is given the thematic focus. Murder, cruelty etc., have been so incoherently described that these fail to evoke any reaction. The character of Hitashoka has been brilliantly portrayed.

**SINAJUDOUILLI (1906):** This is regarded as the best historical play to come out of Girish Chandra's pen. It occupies a pre-eminent place in the history of Bengali drama. Siraj-ud-doullla, in fact, begins the golden age of historical plays in Bengal. Girish Chandra could not remain indifferent to the source of resurgent Bengali nationalism and thus we find him concentrating on historical plays at around this time. The tragic nationalism of Siraj had a great influence on the dramatic tradition of the future generations.

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The diligence with which Girish Chandra researched into Siraj's life was indeed a rare phenomenon in the sphere of Bengali plays of those days. In doing so, he gave more credence to the views of native writers than to those of the Europeans. The source-material for the play came mainly from the works of Akhoy Kumar Maitrey and Nikhil Nath Roy, and to some extent from those of Shibnath Sarkar etc. In his zeal to remain faithful to history, the entertainment value of the play has often been put to a premium. There had been instances of historical plays having been used for conveying patriotic messages even earlier too, but this was the first time that historical events have been so correctly and carefully set out.

Girish had chosen Siraj as the protagonist of the play and Bengal as its backdrop. Siraj has been portrayed as one of the major figures of the national fight for independence. While playwrights such as Dwijendralal Roy, in choosing the subject matters for their theme that hinted at aspirations for freedom, focussed mainly on Rajput-Mughal fends, Girish Chandra was bold enough to give a vivid description of the confrontation of British with the Bengali state power in his play.

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The drama begins with Siraj's ascension to throne and ends with his defeat and annexation of crown by Mirza Mahur. The play graphically glows the tragic end of the last independent Nawab of Bengal and his desperate bid to retain independence. The story of Siraj is also, in a sense, the story of the coming of British into India. The story thus assumes significance in the context of newly awakened spirit of nationalism and national self awareness. To recount the story - after Siraj, the grandson of Alibardi Khan, ascended to throne, many of his courtiers got involved in the conspiracy to overthrow him. The political atmosphere of the country, too, was murky and full of ominous portents. The British traders took advantage of this to spread their influence in Bengal, a process which culminated in Siraj's defeat in the Battle of Plassey and establishment of British military hegemony over Bengal. Siraj's reign therefore marks a watershed in the Indian history. The character of Siraj assumes importance and pre-eminence because of the two-fold reasons. An era came to a close with him and the grim determination with which he sought to upkeep the country's independence against the alien onslaught.

The protagonist of this play is Siraj, around whom the drama revolves. He became a contd.....
helpless prey of the conspiracy between the British
and the powerful Zamindars patronised by Ghaseeti
Begum, Siraj's aunt.

Even though the principal
historical incidents such as the conspiracy between
Ghashti, Rajballabh, Mirzafer etc., against Siraj,
the fall of Saukat Jang, the feud with the British
with its tragic consequences, the terrible death of
Siraj etc., have been by and large properly described
in the play, the three principal characters viz.
Siraj, Karimshaha and Zabura lack historical
authenticity to a large extent.

Siraj, the benevolent King of
the playwright's imagination, establishes his
credentials when he says:

"rajkarya maha veschasar
Nabab-Kajar miritya, prabhu prajagana;
prajar mangal-karya satata sadham,
Nababer uddesya jibane"

(To rule the country is not despotism,
Nabah-Kings are the servants of their subjects,
The sole aim of the Nababs should be to work
for the welfare of their subjects).

But this goes contrary to
historical facts. It seems that nationalist sentiments
contd........
led the playwright to re-evaluate the character of Siraj. Actually, this is what Natakhshiran says about Siraj: he was stupid, pompous, and irresponsible. It further suggests that Siraj went into the battle of Plassey with utmost reluctance and began to beat a most cowardly retreat when he found out that most of his generals had deserted him. But the playwright had to obscure certain historical truth in order to etch the tragic consequences of the character.

But the other two principal characters of the play are purely fictional. The playwright's apparent sympathy with Jahura has somewhat unbalanced the play. She is shown as omnipresent and omniscient; possessed of almost supernatural powers. As a result, the authenticity of the play suffers.

Another such fictional character is Karimshacha. In spite of the apparent, Jahura-bibi omnipotence of the character, the sympathy with the ill-fated Nawab, tinged with sadness, that comes through a humorous surface, touches us. Particularly, in the end, when to save the Nawab, Karimshacha is swapping cloths with him, the desperate yet sincere efforts of a friend for a friend fills our heart with sadness.

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In retrospect, the play seems
to be a by-product of the mood of that particular
era, when the Bengali has woken to the call of
nationalism and the idea of achieving independence
through the joint efforts of the Hindus and the
Muslims is taking shape. The following dialogue of
Siraj represents the sense of communal amity that
the play strives to establish:

"Banger santan hindu musalman
baslar sadhaha kalyan
toma sababar yaha bamsadhargan
ahi hay phiringi anphar."

(Sons of Bengal : Hindus and Muslims
Work for the welfare of Bengal.
So that your descendants do not
turn into slaves of the whites).

(1st Act, 6th scene)

The clarion-call given by
Siraj in the play to drive out the British must have
provided tremendous inspiration to the countrymen
at the time

"Satru gia phiringire kara parikar
bidesi phiringi kahnu nahe apanar
swarthapor eho matra rajya adhikar.

(Discard the British as your enemy. The British
will never be your own men. They are selfish;
they want only to capture the state power)

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Besides in his appeal to the countrymen we also see that Siraj has stated: "yadi kakhane jannabhumi anurage hindu-musalmen dharma bidwesh tyag kare - ei durdam phiringi takhan damaa sambhab" (if at any time, for the love of the motherland the Hindu-Muslim community can discard their religious hatred, it is then only this invincible British can be suppressed). In the dialogue given to Mohanlal, Mirmadan also, we get a glimpse of intrinsic love for the motherland. The character of Karinchakha, though seemingly passive, is symbolic of Hindu-Muslim patriotic unity - the symbolic significance heightened by the fact that Karinchakha was born Kaminikanta, a Hindu.

Latsumessa, Siraj's wife, is an epitome of patience and kindness.

Among the major weaknesses of the play could be listed a surfeit of characters and incidents. The familiar relations of Siraj, the account of Baukatjang, the rebels and the English have been described in such detail that it affects dramatic unity. In spite of being endowed with great patriotism and Anglophobia, the character of Siraj does not quite pass the aesthetic test.
Sirajuddoulla was written at a time when the country was on a tumult following the British domination. In composing this, Girish Chandra showed exemplary patriotism and courage. The play sets down the Bengali's direct confrontation with the British on the issue of independence. A rare instance under any circumstances, we may consider what Aparash Mukhopadhyaya said about the play.

*"Bengali yaha dekhite sahiyachila, erwastha Girishchandra yena tahar abhas bujhini subhakshane Sirajuddoula likhibar janya lekhani charan karilen". (It is as if Girishchandra the creator had an instinctive understanding of what the Bengali craved for, and so set out to compose Sirajuddoulla) (Sangalaya Tirish Bhatbar - Thirty years in theatre).

**Khirodeprasadd Vidyavino**

Even though his play-writing career started in the 19th century, it was in the beginning of the twentieth century that Khirodeprasadd became professionally well-known. His writings could be said to have served as link between the middle and the modern ages. His plays generally fall into three major categories - romantic, mythological and historical.

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*Rongalaye tirtha batiran - Aparash Chandra Mukhopadhyaya*
Khirodeprasad's genius found its truest expression in composing historical plays. It is significant that Dwijendralal Roy and Khirodeprasad were contemporaries. Early twentieth century Bengali plays were mostly historicals, that were given a modern idiom. Khirodeprasad, as did most other playwrights at the time, put the focus on the internal struggles of the character than on the spectacle. His plays, however, leans on the romantic. It has been said that he failed, maintain the delicate balance between the influence of the nineteenth century and inspirations of the twentieth century. It might be true, but it may also be argued that in his plays, 20th century rationalism has a distinctive edge over the 19th century sentimentalism. The subdued sentimentalism is a major characteristic of his plays.

Whatever there might have been in his plays, it must be recognised that nationalist sentiments in the early 20th century received dramatic expressions for the first time through Khirodeprasad's "Pratapaditya". As a play qua play, it may not be much to write home about, but its importance as propagator of nationalism cannot be minimised. As a patriotic playwright Khirodeprasad's name can be placed alongside that the Dwijendralal though as contd....
dramatists, they were vastly different from each other. The sobriety and compactness seen in Dwijendralal's plays are absent in Khiredeprasad's. Often in his plays the casual use of language has failed to do justice to the high emotions of the situations.

Another major point of departure was in the way Khiredeprasad imaginatively used history to suit his own needs. He was the first author to write a play on Pratapaditya of Jessore, a Bengal hero. His plays underscore his conviction to place the emancipation of the country above everything else. Through his plays he has also pleaded to his countrymen to keep away from communal strife. The major triumphs of his plays lie in these. The historical plays Khiredeprasad authored include: Pratapaditya, Palashir Praysschitta, Padmini, Ashok, Chandbibi, Banglar Banad, Alamgir and Sidurath.

Khiredeprasad Vidyabinod (1863-1927) was born at Khardaha in 24 Parganas. After passing B.A. examination in Chemistry from Metropolitan Institution he took M.A. degree (1889) in Chemistry from Presidency College and served as a teacher of science in General Assemblies Institution from 1893 to 1903. Though he was a student and teacher of science, he was interested in literature from his student life. He was a member of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad from its birth. He translated Shrimad Bhagabat Gita in 1900 and from 1916 to 1922 he edited a monthly magazine named 'Aloukik Mahashaya'. contd......
Khirodeprasad based his play on the life of the legendary Jessore King. The heroic exploits of the Bengali hero assumes a large dimension in the context of the independence movement gaining ground at the period. Though Pratap achieved freedom for his Bengal and restored its lost glory, he ultimately failed because of inherent meanness of his character. Khirodeprasad dealt with on both these aspects of the Bengali personality: his heroism as well as his weaknesses. Thus at the beginning of the play we hear the Mughal emperor tell us that though the Bengali excel in learning, intelligence and heroism, his genius cannot properly take off because of his failure to achieve unity.

Though a hero, Pratap did not possess a great soul. Thus he killed his uncle on a doubt even though he assisted Pratap in expanding his kingdom. In the play we see Pratap time and again doubting his uncle's honest intentions. His friend, Shankar could not succeed in pursuing him otherwise. The Goddess of fate turned away from him and so Bengal fell enslaved again, this time the enemy was from within.

Pratap's love for his motherland comes off quite touchingly in some places. Thus when after a long

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absence, he returns to his soil, we hear him exclaim:

"Ma Bangabhuuni, tomar ei pranomdakar namer bhitar eta madhurata, eman komalata, erup aisarya, soundarya chaifane ache ta to juntumna, mai tomake namaskar, koti kiti namaskar - abar namaskar, kintu ki kari? keman kare yasorer maryada raksha kari? kartaei habe - yeman kare hok kartaei habe, man yak, yas yak, tathapi Banga bhumike satrupadadalal theke raksha kartaei habe."

(Mother Bengal! I didn't know uttering a name that could give one feelings of such sweetness, pleasure, richness and beauty! Mother! I just cannot hail you enough, but how do I keep alive the glory of Jessore? But it must be done; even at the expense of my fame and reputation, I must secure Bengal from its enemies) (3rd Act, 1st Scene).

Among the other characters, mention must be made of Basanta Roy, the King's uncle. Basanta was generous, big-hearted and possessed sharp intelligence. He was very affectionate towards Pratap and used to protect him often from paternal wrath. He played a major role in the growing prosperity of Jessore. Another significant character is Shankar, Pratap's one of the ardent followers. He assisted Pratap in the arduous task of restoring Bengal's freedom. Shankar has been depicted as one of the sincerest well-wishers of Pratap in the play. The character of Bikramaditya, Pratap's father, however, lacks in royal dignity. The

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selfishness and meanness of the character has adversely 
affected the dramatic seriousness. Heroism and 
loyalty - the twin qualities have been represented 
through Suryakanta, bundar etc. The character of 'Koda' 
the Firingi pirate, also comes alive in the playwright's 
graphic description.

Among the women, the characters of Kalyani, 
Katyayani, Chhoterani etc., deserves mention. The 
character of Vijaya has been depicted not as a mere 
mortal but a source of inspiration to humankind. In 
dramatic terms, she represents Jashoreshwari, the 
guardian-deity of the Kingdom. It also brings out the 
latent romantic strain in Khirodeprasad. The message 
that the play conveys - Pratapaditya of Bengal dies in 
the hands of the Mughal after defying them on the unified 
strength of the Hindus and the Muslims of the Kingdom. 
gained tremendous popular acceptance at the time 
because of the milieu in which it was staged. Another 
winning feature of his plays has been emotion-laden 
dialogues. The exchange of head-dress by Isha Khan 
and Basanta Roy, and the greatness of Kamal also help 
propagate the message of communal unity, the 
impertative need for which was felt acutely by 
Khirodeprasad. The character of Shamanna has been 
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portrayed as men who had a major share in the subjugation of his motherland. The historicity of the play has been affected by an excess of romance and hence, it cannot be called a historical play in the truest sense of the word.

But despite all these flaws, Khirodeprasad must be given due credit for inculcating a sense of patriotism in his countrymen through introduction of an authentic historical character in his play. In a sense, the play Chronicles our national heritage.

PALASHIA PRAYECHITA:

The play was written at the height of the Swadeshi Movement and was an offspring of it. It really portrays the sequel to the great battle of Plassey. By introducing nationalistic sentiments through structuring of incidents and dialogues in the play, Khirodeprasad has shown exemplary courage.

PADMINI (1902):

Khirodeprasad based the play on the legendary queen of Chitore. However, the nationalistic strain present in an earlier verse version by Kagalal Bandopadhyay is absent in the play. Even though the play is named after her, we don't get to see Padmini contd.....
on the stage for more than twice or thrice. Even the
dramatic elements and complexities are also not
centered around her. The play rather revolves round
the moods and the tragic fate of Nasiban, a woman.
The vengeful attitude of Nasiban towards her husband,
Allaeddin, cannot be logically explained. The way the
woman dominates the play, lacks credibility. Other
characters are flawed, too. In the absence of proper
sequential direction, the dramatic unity was affected.
Only the character of Gora comes out witty and alive.

ASHOKA (1966)

Khiredoprasad's Ashok came out two year's
before Girishchandra wrote his version of the play.
But Khiredoprasad failed to make a dramatically
coherent whole of the various incidents in the life
of Ashoka. The play does not of course faithfully
follow history. The character of Ashoka has been made
insignificant by giving undue emphasis on the
character of Hitashoka, Bhundhumara and Chitra. The
playwright failed even in establishing his characters.

CHANDRIBI (1967)

The play is based on the legend of Chand
Sultana, the daughter of the Sultan of Ahmednagar. The
play depicts the heroism and valour of women of
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medieval India. Earlier, a play, Tarabai, was written in a similar vein by Dwijendralal. Tarabai, 
and Chandbibi were written with the same 
motivation. But the play, because of a surplus of 
dramatic incidents, lacks coherence. Though she is, 
seemingly the protagonist of the play, Chandbibi has 
not been given her due importance in it.

Owing to several detached historical incidents 
the character of Chandbibi could not be fully revealed. 
The virility in her character as found in history has 
been reflected in the play of Khirodeprasad, but the 
natural characteristics of a woman have been neglected. 
The central figures of the play are all women. The 
characters of Chandbibi, Yashoda, Mariam and other 
female characters have been given prominence. The 
stream of events have been governed by these 
characters. The male characters have been conducted 
mainly by them. The influence and dexterity of 
Chandbibi are not shown before the fifth act. A lot 
of room in the play has been covered by Akhlas Khan, 
Nehang Khan, Mian Manju and other characters. So 
sudden is the death of Chandbibi that it fails to 
touch the chord of our heart. Inspite of this, the 
organisational powers of a woman and the smooth 
movement of events and the maintenance of unity of 
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time have made this play fairly successful.

**BANGLAR MASNAD : (THE THRONE OF BENGAL):**

Banlgar Masnad or the Throne of Bengal is one of the famous historical plays of Khirodeprasad. The playwright culled the materials for his play from the annals of Bengal written by Late Nikhil Nath Roy and Late Kaliprasanna Bandopadhyay. The playwright has shown a good deal of sincerity in gathering the materials of the play. Before this Girishchandra composed the plays of Sirajdoullah and Mirkasim with the political themes of Bengal. Khirodeprasad's play is concerned with the occupation of Bengal by Alibardi Khan. Banglar Masnad has become a remarkable play in so far as the artistic arrangement of events and skillfulness in the creation of characters are concerned.

When Sarafiras Khan, grandson of Murshid-Kuli Khan, sat on the throne after the death of his father Suja Khan, a conspiracy began to be hatched against him. The leaders of this conspiracy were the Nawab's minister Ahmed and his brother Alibardi Khan who was Naib Subedar of Patna. The object of this plot was to put Alibardi on the throne of Bengal. Nawab Sarafiras was of upright nature and a man of integrity. But he was unable to hold the reins of administration with a

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firm hand. So when Alibardi proceeded against him, he was easily defeated at the treachery of the Prime Minister Ahmed and Alibardi took possession of the throne of Bengal. Though the main theme of the play is the conspiracy of Alibardi, the real hero is Sarfras Khan. As Alibardi's success was gained not by the gradual growth of his own intelligence, his personality in the play was not revealed at all.

In delineating the character of the hero Sarfras the dramatist gathered materials from history with great care. Sarfras Khan, though endowed with keen intellect and had a glimpse of the conspiracy against him, could not protect himself. The main defect of his character was the lack of firmness in discharging his responsibilities. His well intention and the keenness of intellect never stood him in good stead in his life. Herein lies the tragedy of the drama.

Another noteworthy character of the play is the Nawab's wife Kabeya. A clear influence of the character of 'Dalami' in Bankimchandra's novel 'Chandrashekhar' is felt in the character of Kabeya. But Kabeya's character has been biased with the fire of sorrow. Magnanimous though Sarfras was, Kabeya was deprived of the love and magnanimity of her husband. The Nawab's anger was seen only against Kabeya, and contd....
he was not hesitant in throwing her out of the Palace like a shelterless ordinary offender. The character could not be developed fully as the Nawab's attitude towards Babeya was unjustified. One of the main female characters of the play is Maleka, but the purpose for the introduction of this character has not been made clear.

The picture of social peace and prosperity of the time shows the dramatist's love of his native land. The songs of the village women bring home this fact -

"esā somār barānī rānī ge sāmkha kamāl kāre
esā mā lakshmi, bāsa mā lakshmi
thāka mā lakshmi gharē"

(Comes, golden colour queen with comeshell and lotus in hand.
Comes, goddess of plenty, be seated and stay at our home). X X X X X X

"tomārī anā annapūrṇā diha mā tomārī kāre
sājānā tomār somār anga somārī kamāl kāre"

(We shall offer your food at your hand,
Oh, Annapurna,
We shall deck your golden body
with golden lotus).


This play is crowded with many characters. Long descriptive soliloquies in some places cause vexation.
but on the whole the language of the play is apt and helps to maintain the glory of the subject matter. The object of the play is to show the truth that the throne of Bengal is a cursed one. The curse descended upon the person who chanced to touch the Throne of Bengal. This terrible curse became true in the life of simple, guiltless and truthful Nawab Sarfraz.

ALAMGIR (1931)!

Alamgir, written against the backdrop of history, is a famous play by Khirodprasad. An intimate picture of the Moghal Emperor Aurangzeb is found in the drama. The outer side has been given equal prominence along with the minute, inner picture of the Emperor. The complexity of the introspective character of Aurangzeb has been depicted deftly in the play. In the face of the complexity of events the dramatic story glides on. The character of Udipuri Begam has been enlivened in the light of the inner analysis on the part of Aurangzeb. The picture of the inner conflict of Aurangzeb is based on this character. The improbability of the placing of incidents is a great defect of the play. The contest for power between Alamgir and Udipuri has been rendered very fascinating. Khirodprasad has shown superb skill in

contd......
delineating the character of Aurangzeb. On the one hand he is tremendously powerful, on the other hand he is weak as a reed. This oscillation between the two extremes has confused him very often.

In the play a strain of patriotism is heard in the speech of Bhim Singh when he describes the glory that was Mewar -

"Ai debi Padmanibr cira - prajwalita kirtinikutam, ce raktaka kalebar balak badaler ranaranger artiyabumi. ce -ce - ce asanubhaa soundaryaar stare stare aschadita meharer kirti-kahini. aar aher, amake ar akarsan karama. aamar hrdaye eso mehar - ce samasta debatär mahatma niye tumi aamar hrday simhasan adhikar kara".

(Behold, the ever-burning house of glory of Devi Padmimi, blood-besmeared body of the youthful Badal fighting cheerfully as if in a dancing ground - look at Mewar covered with fold by fold of beauty of the glorious tales of her sons and daughters. No, Mewar, don't attract me - come into my heart - taking the glories and nobilities of all the gods come and occupy the throne of my heart). (Act. IV, Scene-V).

In the last scene of the drama we hear about the importance of the Hindu-Muslim unity in the speech of Alangir:

"tabu e milaner abhiläs - ho kabi, bachar yak, yug yak, bahu satābdām e alē yak, satābdār pare, ekdīn tomar tulika Alangirer contd......
st. thare's the desire for unity - Oh Poet, let
the year, the decade, century after century pass-
onesday at the point of your brush let Alangir's
desire for unity - unity of the Hindus and
Muslims - speak out. Come, brother, let us - a
Hindu and a Muslim - embrace each other in
presence of this(pointing at Bham Singh) even
wakeful seeker after truth in this mysterious

contd....
The advent of Dwijendralal in the domain of Bengali drama is an epoch-making event. He heralded a new era by introducing a novelty in dramatic creation, an emotionally charged dialogue, charming but robust music and realistic analysis of character. All the outstanding marks of modern drama are found in his works. A mark of originality is discernible in his dramas.

His dramatic career may be conveniently divided into four parts - such as farce or burlesque, poetic drama, chronicle plays and social plays. Among these he showed distinctive marks in creating chronicle plays. After Girishchandra it was Dwijendralal who carried the torch of patriotism in the Bengali play and Bengali stage. The first decade of the twentieth century was the age of creating historical plays. Dwijendralal displayed the characteristics of the age in his dramas. The highest and the smallest form of chronicle plays seemed to have waited for the magic touch of Dwijendralal. He created chronicle plays by exhibiting the struggle and sacrifice of the heroes of history to give inspiration to the freedom fighters. Being themselves affected by the high surge of emotion of the nation, the playwrights of the age depicted in their plays the glorious tales of the national history.

contd.....
Dwijendralal followed the same course. The main features of Dwijendralal's chronicle plays are nationalism in Bengal in the 19th century and a strong bid for communal harmony.

Dwijendralal was attracted by the Western style of playwriting. That is why a western influence is felt in his dramas. The agony of the country pained him. He took up chronicle plays to express his strong feeling for the country. He began to express his love of country and nationalism through the checkered rise and fall of historical stories. He transformed the Rajput tales into the stories of the national life of Bengal by dint of his power of lively description and sincerity of feelings.

Dwijendralal's chronicle plays were not limited in being a mouth piece for preaching patriotism. He was impressed by a liberal universal love irrespective of caste or creed. Universal love has been preached in his dramas. If we follow the sequence of writing of his chronicle plays, we feel that he was warmed-over with the glow of nationalism. This noble mentality has led him to select such historical events as enact a life-staking struggle to establish self, a sincere desire to preserve honour and to discharge the

contd....
responsibility of a large interest ignoring personal squabbles. In his dramas a unique synthesis has been established between nationalism and internationalism.

His dramatic career can be divided into two periods. The first and the second periods of dramatic composition. The patriotic plays belong to the first period. There are three such plays - Pratap Singha, Durgadas and Mewar Patan. The other historical plays belong to the second period.

Dwijendralal has given more importance to the creation of characters than plots. He deeply felt the pains of humanity. So he revealed the dignity of sorrow in Pratap, Sagar Singha's burning of heart, inner conflict in Mahabbat Khan and death of Yashowanta Singha.

Another distinctive feature of his plays is the creation of songs. His patriotic songs like - "bharat amar" (My India), "dhao dhao samarkhetre" (Dash to the battlefield), "dhamadhanye puspe bharã" (This our earth full of riches food and flowers), "yedin sunil jaladhi haite" (The day when India rose from the blue ocean) and others have surpassed the bound of the age and have attained the glory of becoming the songs of all times. Society and contd.....
secularity and nationalism are the main features of his historical plays.

There are clear evidences of Western influence on his dramas. In creating dramatic movement, inner conflict and tragedy he was much influenced by the western drama. There is no dearth of irregularity or over-dramatization in his chronicle plays. Though his

* F.N.- Dwijendralal Roy (1813-1913):*

Dwijendralal Roy was born at Krishnanagar in the district of Nadia. His father Kartikoya Chandra Roy was the Dewan of the Maharaja of Krishnanagar. Dwijendralal became known as a singer from an early age by the influence of his father, who was a sweet-tempered singer and a composer of songs. In 1878 he passed the B.A. examination from Krishnanagar College, and got his M.A. degree from Presidency College in 1886. After he had served as a teacher for some time in Sevalganj Mukherjee Seminary in Chapra, he obtained a government scholarship to go to England to study Agriculture. In England he gathered much experience from the famous actor and actresses about acting and stage craft. This experience stood him in good stead when he engaged himself in writing dramas. In 1886 he joined the government service. In his service life he served as Deputy Magistrate, Settlement Officer and was appointed to many other important and responsible posts. But his service life was not happy as he was independent-minded. He married in 1887. His first practical work "Arya Gatha" was published in 1882. His songs of laughter became a source of joy to the Bengalis. The seed of patriotism was laid in his heart from his boyhood days. Bengali literature gained a new vigour with his songs of nationalisms and historical plays.

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*contd.....*
dramas are overburdened with excessive emotions and sentimentalism, the age in which Dwijendralal belongs may be called the golden age of Bengali drama. In this connection the remarks of Nabakrishna Ghosh may be cited—"Dwijendralal antyaanta guliike bellabasar haite amandabajar para manta haibar prakrta path pradarsan karilena" (Dwijendralal showed the proper path to transform the Bengali stages from the markets of profligacy to the store houses of joy). A brief review of his chronicle plays are given here:

**TANA HAI (1903)**

With Tara hai Dwijendralal opened his series of chronicle plays. Todd's Annals of Rajasthan is the source of the play. When this play was written, the touch of Swadeshi Movement was not felt in the country, so no influence of nationalism is traced in this play. Written in blank verse many defects are found in the play. Dwijendralal failed to give dramatic shape to the disconnected events of history; but as a first attempt to write a chronicle play with an unknown character of Rajput history deserves credit.

The three sons of Rana Malal - Sangram Singh, Prithviraj and Jaymal - were aspirants to the throne,

*Dwijendralal - Nabakrishna Ghosh.*
and with the same end in view their uncle Surajmal rose in revolt. Being disgusted with the disgraceful conduct of his brothers for the throne at the death bed of his father, Sanga gave up his claim to the throne and left the kingdom. Dwijendralal gave a unity to the stories of the three brothers through the character of Tara Bai. The love episode between Tara Bai and Sanga in the play is the dramatist's own creation. The character of Sanga has been brilliantly lit by his sacrifice and nobility. One of the chief characters of the play Surajmal is a historical personage, but his wife Tamasa is a creation of the dramatist. Her character has been drawn with the image of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth. But the complexity, brightness and depth of Lady Macbeth are not found in Tamasa.

The protagonist of the play is Prithvi. He has been drawn as an impudent person. He is courageous but lacks modesty. He does not attract our notice till the last scene. Though a minor character Dwijendralal's creative ability is found in the characterisation of Tara Bai's father Surtan. Behind the mask of his comic frivolity we find the detached viewpoints of a philosopher.

contd.....
Though Taradai is not very attractive, she possesses self-respect. She depends on others for the recovery of her paternal kingdom. Though her name bears the title of the play, she herself fails to get prominence in the play. The dramatic story, too, does not rotate around her, but does so about the throne of Mewar. In this play many actions and counter actions of diverse interests of diverse characters are found. We find banishment of Prithvi, world-weariness of Sanga, revolt of Surajmal and finally application of poison on Prithvi. The effects of this vicissitudes of fortune can be traced even in the minor characters of the play. No originality in the creation of any character can be found except Surtan. But the characters have attained a sort of individuality. The female characters of the play have become animated with their own personal traits.

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Pratap Singh (1908):

With Pratap Singh began Dwijendralal's period for the production of chronicle plays. from this time his plays began to be tinged with the ideas of Swadeshi Movement. We find a faultless picture of the unparalleled heroism, sacrifice and patriotism of contd.....
Pratapsingha, the most celebrated hero of the struggle of freedom.

In the main the plot has been taken from Todd's tales of Rajastha. Having lost his Kingdom Kama Pratap prompted the Rajput Chiefs to take vow before God to recover Chitore. Though Mewar was under Moghal occupation the people left the kingdom at the direction of Pratap. When Akbar sent Man Singh to subdue Pratap, the latter fought bravely with a small army at Haldighat and was defeated. Pratap, riding on his horse Chaitak, fled the battlefield and took shelter in a forest with his family. The Moghals despite of their best efforts failed to capture him. Pratap went through unbearable misery in the forest, and though he succeeded in recovering some parts of his kingdom with the help of his faithful followers, he could not reconquer Chitore. This in short, is the story of the play.

Having been insulted once by Pratap his younger brother Sakta Singh went to the Moghals and fought against Pratap at Haldighat. By the side of the main plot a romantic love story between Sakta Singh and Akbar's sister Daulatunaisa is found. Another picture of disappointed love of Akbar's daughter Meherumaisa is also found in the play. This has no organic

contd.....
connection with the main plot but one side of the character of Pratap has been brought to light with his contact with Meherunnisa. From this point of view the presence of Meherunnisa in the play is valuable.

The three main characters of the play - Pratap Singha, Man Singha and Sakti Singha - are historical persons. The main character of the play Pratap Singha could not be enlivened. Owing to too much fidelity to historical facts human qualities in Pratap could not be fully developed. Having been shrouded with muddled ideas he has become merely a symbol. No development of Pratap's character is found in the play and no variety is found in the experiences he passed through. Inspite of this his sacrifice for the native land, his heroism and his sorrows and sufferings cannot but touch our heart.

In depicting the character of Man Singha the playwright depends on history, but in some places his own comments are added. The position of Man Singha becomes lowered in the Majput society as negotiations of marriage going on between his sister and the Crown Prince Salim. Taking advantage of this situation a speech has been given to Man Singha that exposes the narrowness of the conventional Hindu society. Here the contd....
playwright's own views that, if social barriers are not removed, mere patriotism will be useless, has been expressed. As both Man Singh and Sakti Singh enter into matrimonial alliances with the Mughals, Pratap Singh forsakes all relations with them. The playwright tries to show that this narrow outlook of Pratap is at the root of his fall.

Pratap's brother Sakti Singh is one of the most remarkable characters in the play. The dramatist tries his best to preserve the historicity of his character. An originality has been shown in the portraiture of this character. His character is a bit complex. He is brave, arrogant, scholarly and at the same time fond of fun. He has no attachment to life, nor has he any respect for society and religion. He is a whimsical person without any definite aim of life. He has no feeling for his native land Mewar or for his brother Pratap Singh. His conscious does not pric him when he joins the Moghal Camp, again no hesitation prevents him from protecting his brother from the Mughals. His dealings with Daulatunnissa appear to be unseemly. But in the end this capricious character has to submit to all. In the crucial moment of life and death he realises the true nature of Daulatunnissa's love and admits that he loves her.

contd.....
The playwright could not portray the inner self of Sakt Singha, yet it must be admitted that as a specimen of complex psychological character Sakt Singha is a noteworthy creation of Dwijendralal.

Daulatunnisa and Meherunnisa are two vivacious characters. The two girls belong to the opposite poles, one is blithesome, the other is grave. The influence of Meherunnisa's love of Sakt Singha is not felt anywhere except in her own words; and no proper reasons for her quarrel with Akbar and taking shelter with Pratap Singha are found in the play. Akbar has been painted as a liberal, apprehensive and a misogynist.

Through 'Pratap Singha' is a drama of patriotism, there is no dearth of light situations in it. The presence of Daulatunnisa and Meherunnisa at Haldighat has diminished the ghastliness of the battlefield.

Something may be said about the language of the play. It is in this play that Dwijendralal uses prose dialogue for the first time and continues to do so in the rest of his plays. Only in 'Simhal Vijoy' or the Conquest of Cylene he uses both prose and verse.

In "Pratap Singha" Pratap's love of Mewar and the self-sacrifice of the Rajput heroes have been contd....
related. Dwijendralal has described the helpless feelings of the country in the first decade of the 20th century through Pratap - "jannabhumi, sundar mehar, birprasu ma, ekhan ei besei tomake saje ma, tomake abar ma bale dekhte parite temay sahaste bhusan pariyo debe. maile tomake umasangarini tapaswini besei rekhe deba ma. ma amarik tomake mogoler dasi dekhe amar pran phote yey ma." (My motherland! beautiful Mewar, mother of heroes! this attire now besits you. If I can address you as mother again, I'll dress you up with my own hands, otherwise I'll keep you in a nurse's dress and as a frequenter of burning ghats. My mother! my heart bursts with pain when I see you as a slave of the Moghals).

A call to arms against slavery of the country has been sounded in the drama when the Rajputs go to battle against the Moghals -

"dhāo dhāo samarkshetra gāe ucese
ramajay gāthā,
raksha karite piṭāta dharmo sana dake
ee bhāratmātā".

(Mash to the battlefield, sing the songs of victory,
Mark, mother India calls you to protect religion maltreated).
(Act.IV, Scene-VII)

--------- contd.......
DURGADAS (1906)

After 'Pratap Singhा Dwijendralal wrote the play of Durgadas with eajput history. But the authenticity of history has been violated in the play. The unity of play has been destroyed with the assemblage of too many incidents.

The synopsis of the play is like this -

After the death of Yashovanta Singhा, king of Jodhpur, Durangseb tried to capture his widowed wife Mahamaya and minor son Ajit Singhा but at the outstanding bravery and courage of the Marwar general Durgadas they were freed and took shelter with the Rana of Mewar. In order to achieve his object Aurangzeb sent two successive expeditions against Mewar, but on both occasions the Moghals were defeated and Aurangzeb's son Akbar was captured with his family. After this Aurangzeb entered into a treaty with the Mughals and proceeded towards the Deccan to put down bhivaji's son Shambhuji. In Mewar the wife of Yashovanta Singhा after putting her son Ajit Singhा on the throne killed herself in a funeral pyre. As Durgadas gave asylum to Akbar, the Mughal Chiefs abandoned him to escape the anger of Aurangzeb. When Durgadas prayed for asylum to Shambhuji, he was captured at the treachery of a Muslim follower of the Maratha leader. The contd.....
Empress Geolneyar was rejected by Durgadas when she accosted him for love. Being charmed at the strength of his character Aurangzeb's general Dilir Khan set him free. At the invitation of the Majput Chiefs Durgadas went back to Majputana. Akbar became an ascetic and proceeded on a pilgrimage to Mecca. At the instance of giving away Akbar's daughter Musia to Ajit Singh, Durgadas was banished and became an ascetic. In the Deccan Shambhujia was defeated and killed at the hands of Aurangzeb; and after some time Aurangzeb himself breathed his last there.

The want of any central unity is the main defect of the play. Though the object of the play is to show the heroism and sacrifice of Durgadas, no symmetry is maintained. Durgadas dreams to build a new empire in India with the united strength of the Rajputs and the Marathas. Dwijendralal tries to develop his plot round this theme, but it loses coherence.

The character of Durgadas has ceased to be human, as the dramatist draws him as an ideal character above all faults and frailties. The dramatist has shown only the good qualities in him—such as—idealism, patriotism, heroism, self-sacrifice etc. But man Durgadas is absent in the play.

contd......
Another defect of the play is the planning of the character of Empress Geolmayar. Even though she is insulted by the queen of Jodhpur, she falls in love at first sight with Durgadas. The seriousness of a historical drama is lost by this action. In the characterization of Kasin, Dwijendralal's originality is found. As she grew up in Bengal she acquired a love for art and music. She has no passion for empire or warfare. But she is not light-hearted. In the face of danger her conduct and speeches show the depth of her character.

The portrait of Aurangzeb in his falling years has been shown in the play. The failure and the sadness of his life has been made prominent here. The character of Rama Maj Singh of Mewar has been drawn with masterly strokes. Through Dilir Khan the playwright has expressed the message of Hindu-Muslim unity. The character of Kasen, though unhistorical, is charming. The futility and hopelessness of the characters have deepened the tragic nature of the play.

In the character of Durgadas the dramatist has shown that genuine patriotism does not hanker after any reward. Durgadas sacrificed all for the sake of the country - not for any gains. Herein lies the fulfilment of his character. In this play the struggle contd....
of the Hindu power against the Moghal imperialism
has been depicted. Durgadas is the hero of the
resurgent Hinduism. His dream is to establish a
Hindu state. He fails in his attempt to make this
dream real.

The message of freedom has also been expressed
through the speeches of Mahamaya, the widowed queen
of Jodhpur. She tries to inspire all to defend
freedom and to rouse the spirit of patriotism. Her
firy speech is an example to the point — “tomader
dür kare dalita kare moggles ei tomader
swarnabhumi adhikar karbo, tai tomara aribikar
bhabe shariye dekhaba? ha dhik ! ...... othe
ei oudsimya purityag kara, ekbar drapan kare
ote, othe yeman turi sabbe simha jege othe;
ote yeman damara dwani sume sarpa phana bistar
kare othe; othe yeman hajradwani sume parbater
kandare kandare pratidwani jege othe, yeman
jhnjar nispeanse samudrer taramge kalol othe.
ote, rajasthan jnuk, ourangeb jnuk ye, tomader
sourya – supta chila mata, lupta hay mai. ......
Yadi karo janmabhumi prati tām thāke, yadi
karo swadharmar prati sammāner āgan thāke, yadi
keu swadhinatār janya pran utsarga karte prastut
thāke – se eso. se ekai ekia, ekbar sakalo ek
haye janmabhūmike dāka. ‘mai ji ki jay’ “
(The Moghals will drive you away and tread on you
and occupy your country — and you will be silent
spectators to this. Alas! how shameful it is! kise
contd...
up and shun this indifference. Take a firm vow and awake and arise as the lion arises at the sound of a bugle, the snake spreads its hood at the sound of a damaru, the sea raises its waves at the touch of the tempest. Let Raja Sahib and Aurangzeb know that your prowess was only asleep and not lost. If you have love for your Motherland, if you have respect for your religion, if you are ready to lay down your lives for freedom - then come forward. Such a person will be a host in himself. Unite and call your mother in one voice. (Victory to Mother)

(Act-III, Scene-III)

NOORJAHAN (1908) -

Noorjahan, Sajahan and Chandragupta are the three historical plays on which the stamp of Dwijendralal's genius is clearly marked. About Noorjahan the playwright says, "I have engaged myself more to show the inner conflict than the outer conflict in this play". As a matter of fact this statement of the playwright is true. Many characters have been introduced in the play, but unlike other plays of Dwijendralal, tragedy did not flow through different characters - its source is the central figure of Noorjahan. Shakespeare's influence is clearly seen on this play. The attempt is undoubtedly unique.

The play narrates the story of the life of contd....
Noorjahan from the beginning to the end, that is, to the death of Jahangir. In this play Dwijendralal has made for the first time judicious selection of historical materials. Besides Noorjahan Dwijendralal has composed only another chronicle play, viz. Sajahan, with such unblended historical materials. Though Noorjahan was written during Dwijendralal's period of composition of patriotic dramas, the exuberance of patriotism has been wholly avoided in the play. The main theme of the play is the rise and fall and inner struggle of the life of Noorjahan.

The first character to be mentioned is that of Noorjahan. Her life may be divided into two parts. In the first part she is the wife of Sher Aigan. Noorjahan is the empress of India in the second part of her life. Her married life with Sher Aigan at Sardhaman is a picture of complete happiness. But that picture of contentment with her husband and daughter in a happy home is not found again anywhere in the play. But even in her unalloyed happiness she is fearful lest she should lose that blessedness. The memory of the crown prince Selim who was enamoured of her when they had met momentarily was stored in her heart. So doubt arises whether she had genuine love for Sher Aigan. But there is no proof contd...
of her love for Selim when she marries him after
the death of Sher Aigan. In this period of her life
Noorjahan captures Selim with her beauty and
intelligence. In the imagination of Dwijendralal,
Noorjahan becomes the wife of Jahangir only to
satisfy her lust for power and influence. After the
murder of Sher Aigan Noorjahan comes to Agra to take
revenge. The attraction which she had for Selim in
her sub-conscious mind is lost after the murder of
Sher Aigan. She loved neither Sher Aigan nor Jahangir,
but was burned with the intoxicating desire to obtain
power and to take revenge. She got power but no
peace. Her motherhood could have been bloomed with
her daughter. At first her daughter Laila followed
her, but when she found that she was going to lose
her object of love she began to hate her. Her brother
Asaf began to pour oil into the flame of her ambition.
The ambition to become the empress of India that lay behind the veil of Sher Aigan's wife gradually
began to grow. Sometimes, when she was pricked by
conscience. She was repentant, but was unable to free
herself from the dangerous game of gaining power. In
this play her ambition and desire for revenge have
been shown as acting and reacting against each other.
The contention that she contrived to kill the sons
of Jahangir one by one like a maniac is unhistorical.
contd....
The dramatist has also brought about a lot of change in the struggle for power between Noorjahan and Sajahan. Noorjahan wanted to put on the throne her good-for-nothing son-in-law Shahariar rejecting the claims of Sajahan or Khurram. Here, though possessed of extraordinary intelligence, she committed a blunder. The woman in her died gradually, and the fire she lit to burn others consumed herself. The tragedy of this woman of unbounded power and intelligence awakens terror and pity in us. Noorjahan's daughter Laila has been shown as a power rivalling her mother in the first part of the play, but she is not merely a spectre of revenge. She is a woman full of milk of human kindness. Surpassing everything her womanhood has become prominent in the play. In the last part of the play she has become the mainstay of her blind husband and lunatic mother.

The character of Jahangir is well planned. His aristocratic nature and high position have remained intact throughout the play. We find him in the play as a man who loses himself in the pit of passion for a glamorous woman. In an exciting state of mind he passes death sentence on Noorjahan, and in the next moment requests Mahabbat Khan to pardon her.

contd....
Sher Khan is a hero and has deep love for Noorjahan in his heart. Though Sher Khan and Jahangir are two characters who oppose each other, there runs a similarity between the two. These two powerful men are burned with love for the same woman. One, in spite of his being a man of limitless prowess, dies by the axe of a executioner, the other passes into oblivion by slow degrees. Apparently Jahangir seems to be inactive, but there is an imperceptible conflict in his mind. His justice has been overshadowed by his thirst for beauty. Knowing fully well that it is wrong to covet the wife of another man, he could not desist himself from the crime of killing the innocent Sher Khan. Again being infatuated with the beauty of Noorjahan, he could not control her even when he is aware of her contrivance for seizing power. His sense of justice has been hurt again and again by the ghastly crimes committed by Noorjahan, but he looks helpless against her. So he takes shelter in the confines of wine, music and beauty, and this he does only to sink himself into eternal oblivion.

The external side of history has been kept intact in the characterization of Mahabbat Khan. From the very beginning he is at feud with Noorjahan. In order to capture power both Noorjahan and Bajahan have to depend on him. But this woman of keen intelligence contd...
due to her capricious nature helps to unite her two deadly enemies together and brings about her own ruin.

The play is written wholly in prose and as there is no comic relief in the play the intensity and importance of the subject matter remains intact.

MEWAR PATAN (1908) - THE FALL OF MEWAR

This play was written and published after Duryodana. This is Dwijendralal's last drama based on the history of Rajasthan. This a didactic drama. In the preface of the drama the playwright writes - "ei natako ami ek mahaniti laiya aisiachhi. se aliti biswaprem" (I want to state a great ideal in this play - and that ideal is universal love). The movement of the play has been arrested because of this heightened ideal. As in Pratap Singh, no picture of a historical age is found here. Still it may be said that after Pratap Singh, Mevar Patan is the only noteworthy play based on the history of Rajasthan. Once this play was very popular. In writing out this didactic play Dwijendralal changed, according to his needs, many things in the story told by Todd and also introduced many new episodes. His inventiveness has found a place in the creation of the women characters.

The story of the play, if brief, is like this.

Amar Singh, son of Pratap Singh, set up his capital
at Udaypur. From the play of Pratap Singh we come to know that he could not recover his dear Chitore from the hands of the Moghals. During the time of Amar Singh the Moghal general Midayet Ali Khan invaded Mewar but was repulsed by the heroic Rajputs. After this the Moghals under the leadership of Prince Harven again invaded Mewar. With this expedition came Sagar Singh, elder brother of Pratap Singh and father of the Moghul general Mahabbat Khan. But this time too the Moghals were defeated. In the third expedition Mahabbat Khan was the general, and this time the Rajputs were defeated and the Moghals captured the fort of Udaypur.

Judged from the viewpoint of the story Mewar Patan is the epilogue of the play Pratap Singh. What Pratap Singh achieved by his life-long struggle with the Moghals was lost by Amar Singh— and that is the subject matter of the play. The fall of Mewar is the central point of the play, and the main reasons of this fall are disunity and hatred among the Rajputs. Dwijendra Lal's attitude towards religion has found a place in the drama. Having been converted into Islam Mahabbat Khan harboured a deep hatred for his former religion. He could not tolerate the religions sect that forced him to embrace Islam. In the play Dwijendra Lal wants to make it clear that no good will...
be achieved until the narrow religious outlook and
dated social customs of the Hindus are removed.
Dwijendralal has shown in his nationalistic dramas
how noble ideas imbied with the spirit of patriotism
are shattered to pieces dashing against the rock of
narrow religious and social customs.

About the characters - mention to be made first
is the character of Man Amar Singh. In his character-
ization the playwright has retained his fidelity to
history. As in history so in the play Amar Singh has
been shown as feeble-minded and a man averse to war.
He wants to make peace with the enemy - he goes to war
only at the instigation of the Rajput chiefs. After
Amar Singh the next important character is Mahabbat Khan. Mahabbat Khan hands over the freedom of his
country to the Moghals because of illiberal and cruel
conduct of his countrymen towards him - a renegade.
Nevar loses her freedom not for the enmity of the
Moghals but for the high treason of Mahabbat Khan.
Mahabbat’s wife Kalyani loves him even after his
conversion. This infuriates her father and Kalyani is
driven away from home. At this Mahabbat becomes all
the more hostile towards his own people and own country
and is firmly determined to take revenge, Mahabbat has
been shown as a symbol of treachery.

contd....
Govinda Singha, comrade of Nana Pratap Singh, has been portrayed as an ideal Majput character. In order to carry the late Nana's ideals he surrenders his daughter and loses his son. Still he tries till his last breath to preserve the freedom of the country.

Among the women characters - Muktamini, Mamasi, Kalyani and Satyavati deserves mention. Mamasi is the daughter of Nana Amar Singh. She devotes her life to service to the needy. The character is idealistic. Mahabbat's wife Kalyani is also inspired by some ideals. A realistic touch has been given to the character of Muktamini. Sagar Singh's daughter Satyavati is unreal. Though Mamasi has got a prominent place in the play, Satyavati is the real heroine. She is the symbol of the fiery spirit of Mewar. She has inspired the soldiers of Mewar. Under her leadership the bands sing the songs of wars between the Majputs and the Mughals and of the glory that was Mewar -

"mehr pahari, mehr pahari
yajehila yetha pratap bir
birat deonya dukhe tahar
sringar sama atal sitir"

(Mills of Mewar, hills of Mewar,
Where Pratap the hero fought,
In the face of great poverty and sorrow
She is firm as the mountain peak)
"jágo jágo nanamári
jiniya samar, ásiche ámar
bírkul tomarí"

( Awake, you men and women
The immortal heroes are coming back
after victory in war. )


Satyavati inspired the Rajput soldiers to fight
against the Moghals and Manasi in her noble work.
Even after the defeat of the Rajputs the bards sing-

"Kiser sók karis bháí
ábar torá manus há
giyeche des duhkha náí
ábar torá manus há"

(What do you grieve for?
Be a man again.
Why cry for the lost country,
Be a man again).  


Dwijendralal has shown in the play how racial and
religious disharmony bring in sorrows and sufferings.
He has preached the dictum that humanity is greater
than nationality.

At the end of the play the startling finish
that has been drawn through Manasi is not only
unhistorical but also meaningless. Despite many
blemishes Mewar Patan has a poetic beauty. A add
contd...
tune is heard in the unbending but futile strength of old Govinda Singha, in the heroism and death of youthful Ajay Singha, and even in the last efforts of Rana Amar Singha. 

BAJAHAN (1909):- 

It is admitted on all hands that Bajahan is the best among the chronicle plays of Dwijendralal. Bajahan can claim the first place not only among the chronicle plays but also among all the plays written by Dwijendralal. This drama is the product of the blending of poetic and dramatic talent of Dwijendralal. The fidelity to history which he has shown in this drama is rare in the whole range of Bengali chronicle plays. The last eight years of Bajahan's life is the subject of the play.

Bajahan relates the story of the revolt of the offsprings against their old father. The central theme of the play is the ingratitude of the children and the agonised cries of the oppressed father. An affinity with Shakespeare's King Lear is discernible in the play. A historical drama is both history and drama - this view of Aristotle has been successfully illustrated in this play. The expression, variety and unity of the historical play are discovered in the play when its subject matter is reviewed.

contd....
The news of Sajahan's illness started a commotion among his four sons for the throne. The eldest son Dara was at Agra with Sajahan, Aurangzeb, Suja and Morad were respectively in the Deccan, Bengal and Gujrat. As soon as they heard about the news of Sajahan's illness, Suja in Bengal and Morad in Gujrat declared independence and marched with armies towards Delhi. Returning from the Deccan Aurangzeb joined Morad. With Sajahan's permission Dara went forward to suppress his rebel brothers. By the valour and trickery of Aurangzeb both Dara and Morad were made captives. Suja with his family was driven to Arakan. Under the protection of Aurangzeb's son Mohammed Sajahan was imprisoned at the Agra fort, and Aurangzeb himself sat on the throne of Delhi. Aurangzeb put both Dara and Morad to death, and Suja met his end in Arakan. Sajahan's daughter Jahanara accepted captivity of her own accord to remain by the side of his old and infirm father at Agra fort. At last the repentant Aurangzeb prayed forgiveness to his father, and Sajahan forgave him.

'Sajahan' is a great tragedy. The human sensibilities that are found in the drama have raised it to the height of a classic from the world of history. The conflict of the play exists in the heart of the Indian Emperor Sajahan and the sad end of his life constitutes the tragedy of the play, Sajahan, and contd....
not Aurangzeb, is the hero of the play. The chief reason for popularity of the play is that the fated man sees a reflection of his own life in it and feels the sorrows of Sajahan with all his heart. The vastness of history and the qualities of literature are both found here. In this vast and complex story he has discarded many parts and added several new scenes. This rejection and addition of materials testify to the artistic skill of the dramatist.

The Indian Emperor Sajahan, who possessed boundless power and who built the immortal Tajmahal in memory of his deceased wife, had to witness helplessly the mortal fight of the sons of his beloved elfs against one another for the possession of the empire. In his captive state he had to hear the cruel news of the death of his sons one by one. What greater tragedy can happen in a man's life than this? In the life story of Sajahan is heard the sad music of humanity. That is why its appeal is so universal. The lack of firmness in his character is mostly responsible for his tragic end. He had to atone for the error he committed by handing over the mandate of the emperor to Dara to punish his rebel sons. Love of children made him quite inactive. Aurangzeb, who committed most heinous crimes time and again, got his forgiveness. Despair, insult and pain ate his heart out. His daughter Jahanara failed to rouse him and take the...
role of the ruler. The father in him came out victorious over his role of the Emperor of India.

As a historical play 'Sajahan' has occupied a permanent place in Bengali literature and as Dwijendralal has shown wonderful power of artistic skill in this play. In history unrelated events take place at different places at the same time. In order to maintain unity in the play the playwright selects one event. In his play Dwijendralal describes the necessary events of the reign of Sajahan very skillfully. Above all his skill in construction has nowhere allowed to slacken the central unity of the play.

Although the central character of the play is Sajahan, there is no scope for his active role. Sajahan is sick, helpless and a prisoner at the Agra fort. Repeated blows have sickened his soul - he has nothing to do to avert this. The vast empire earned at the cost of his own prowess has become a curse as it were. The blows given by his sons, who recall the memory of his beloved wife, strike him with amazement. In him he find the picture of a helpless but loving father.

Aurangzeb is the pseudo hero of the play. But the plot revolve round him. Aurangzeb's cruelty, hypocrisy and his simulation have been reflected throughout the play. With the help of his duplicity contd....
and hypocrisy he removes his two elder brothers and sits on the throne of Delhi. Aurangzeb was in the Deccan during Sajahan's illness. At the news of Sajahan's illness Aurangzeb wins over his younger brother Morad with the allurement of the throne. One by one he removes Dara, Suja and Morad and makes the throne free from any obstacle. He makes his father a captive at the Agra fort. These incidents of the play are true to history. In the name of religion he passes from one crime to another, but in the play he has been shown as a man of keen intelligence. His double-dealing and ready wit are praiseworthy. His histrionism enables him to deceive one and all. In the fifth scene of the play at the court in Delhi when Jahanara accuses him before the courtiers, Aurangzeb with his natural power of histrionic bewitches them and the courtiers shout the victory of Aurangzeb. By means of this power of intellect and histrionism he has obtained forgiveness from both Sajahan and Jahanara. The picture of Aurangzeb we find in history is full of satanic evil deeds. Dwijendralal has added personality and intellect to this picture and shed new light on it.

The character of Dura in the play is loyal to history. Dura is philosophic minded, wise and has no desire for the empire. Only for the sake of duty and at the instigation of Jahanara he tries his utmost to defeat Aurangzeb without success. Love of dance and...
song in the character of Suja is in accordance with the truth of history. The youngest son Morad is good-for-nothing and a conceited. Alluring him with wine and dancing girls Aurangzeb arrests him.

A partial characteristics of the Rajput character are found in Jay Singha and Yashowant Singha. The political lives of the Rajputs of the times have been expressed in the personal idiosyncrasies of these characters. Jay Singha is a realist. Yashowant Singha is a brave soldier, conceited, out-spoken, albeit a man without backbone.

The way in which the character of Mohammad has been portrayed is not only unhistorical but also smacks of romanticism. Mohammad has been drawn as a conscientious and dutiful son. At the Agra fort a Sajahan promises by teaching the Ustaan to make him Emperor of India, but dutiful Mohammad is not allured. But in the last chapter of his life it is found that his belief in his father is slackened. When he is sent to fight against Suja, he marries Suja's daughter, and for this breach of trust he spends the rest of his life in the prison of Aurangzeb. In the planning of Mohammad's character the playwright's power of inventiveness has gone a long way to shape it; and though it has short-comings, the character has given a sort of variation to the plot and has revealed the contd....
intolerant and amoral nature of Aurangzeb.

Dildar, one of the greatest creations of Dwijendralal, is semi historical. The original of this character is Daneshmand Khan, the wisest man of Asia. By changing the name Dwijendralal has christened him Mirza Mahammad Niamat Khan. He has been shown as a man who has put on the mask of a balsoon only to gather knowledge. Aurangzeb himself respects him. His wisdom comes to light in his soliloquies and in his dialogues with Aurangzeb. Dwijendralal portrays him not only as wise but also brings home to us his mobility by setting a scene where he is ready to sacrifice his life to save Dara.

Among the women characters Jahamara, Piyara and Mahamaya deserve mention. Jodhpur queen Mahamaya has emerged with all the glories of a Rajput lady. When Yashowant Singha comes back from the battle field being defeated, she rebukes him for his cowardly nature. She believes that a Rajput lays down his life in the battle-field when he is defeated. In her we find the spirited nature of a 'Khatriya' woman and indomitable patriotism. The character of Jahamara is the same as we find her in history. She has been balanced with spiritedness and a feeling of love and pity for her sick, captive and helpless father. She stings Aurangzeb with her harsh contd....
words for the unlawful captivity of her father. The fact that the captive bajahan fully depended on Jahana is approved by history. There is an apparent lightness in the conduct and dialogues of Piyara. But her songs and words have an inner significance. Her artistic self wants to forget wars and political imbroglio. She is aware of the coming bad days, so she wants to divert Suja from the storm realities by her frolics and fascinating songs.

Although 'bajahan' is free from the influence of Swadeshi Movement, a streak of patriotism can be detected in Piyara's adoration of Bengal -

"ki habe samrājya math? amader kiser abhāb? cye dekha ei āsaya-syamala, puspabhūṣitā, sahasraśirjhar jhanakrita amardhāti - ei bangabhumi".

(What shall we do with the empire, my Lord? Have we any wants? Look at Bengal queen with corn, decked with flowers and resonant with thousands of springs - this is the very heaven)

(Act II, Scene IV)

Besides in the mouth of the minstrel boys we hear a song glorifying motherland. Against the backdrop of Swadeshi Movement this song helps to rouse a sense of nationalism in the heart of the people -

"dhūmadhūnya puspe bharā amader ei basundhara tabar majhe ache des ek sakal deser sera. O se swapna diye teerī se des smriti diye ghera."

contd....
From the viewpoint of popularity Chandragupta can be placed next to 'Sajahan'. The chronicle plays of Dwijendralal before 'Chandragupta' are based on the history of the Moghals and the Rajputs. Chandragupta is the first play of Dwijendralal written with materials taken from the Hindu period of Indian history. After this he composed 'Simhai Vijay'. The Hindus did not care to keep a record of their history, not to speak about their great victories. So Dwijendralal had to take the aid of imagination in writing out the play. Of course he took some materials from the Greek history and the Hindu Purans. According to Purans, Chandragupta is the son of Mahapadma by his 'Sudrani' wife and the step brother of Nanda. After defeating Nanda he ascends the throne and with the help of his minister Chanakya establishes contd...
his suzerainty over India. Greek history approves this. But the accounts of Chandragupta's war with Seleucus and his marriage with the daughter of Seleucus are not found in Puran. 'Chandragupta' is an amalgamation of history and Puran.

Being banished from the kingdom by his step brother Nanda, Chandragupta, son of a Sudrami wife of the king of Magadh, went to the Greek camp of Alexander on the Indus with a view to learning the Greek method of warfare so that he might take revenge upon Nanda. There he met Alexander the Great. Alexander having been charmed at his valour prophesied that he would be able to recover his lost kingdom. For the fulfilment of this task he got the help of a brahmin named Chanakya. Chanakya too was once humiliated by Nanda. Mara joined the alliance. Malayraj Chandraketu readily agreed to help them. Katyayan, Nanda's minister, being disgusted with the oppressive rule of Nanda began to help them secretly. With the craftiness of Chanakya and military help of Chandraketu, Chandragupta sat on the throne of Magadh. Nanda was made a prisoner, and at the direction of Chanakya was killed by Katyayan. After this Chanakya became the minister, and with the help of his intelligence Chandragupta established a vast empire. After the death of Alexander his general Seleucus became the heir to the conquered countries...
in Asia. Being frightened with the power of Chandragupta, Selucus invaded India. But the diplomacy of Chanakya brought about a treaty between the two kings. In accordance with the terms of the treaty Chandragupta married Selucus' daughter Helen. With this main plot two sub-plots - one dealing with Chaya, sister of Chandragupta and the other of the Greek hero Antigonus, are found. Antigonus loved Helen, but Helen did not respond to it. Towards the end of the drama it was discovered that Antigonus was the son of Selucus and Helen was his step-sister. The sub-plot resembles the story of Sohrab and Rustem. Chaya loved Chandragupta, but when Chandragupta married Helen, tragedy descended upon her. This has saddened the atmosphere of the play.

The important characters of the play - Chandragupta, Nanda, Mura and Chanakya - are all historical persons. The playwright has taken such facts as are found about them the remaining part he has filled up with his imagination. In some places too much dependence on imagination has destroyed the dignity of a historical play.

The title of the play is Chandragupta and the main plot deals with the expansion of his empire. But the chief character of the play is contd......
Chanakya. It is owing to the craftiness of Chanakya that Chandragupta gains the throne. Dwijendralal was influenced by the Sanskrit drama "Mudra kakshas" in describing keen intellect, deep political knowledge and uncommon power of Chanakya. He is a unique creation of Dwijendralal. In history we find Chanakya as highly intelligent and a perfect diplomat. With this Dwijendralal has added his seal for Brahmanism and a thirst for taking revenge. Some reasons are also given for this revengeful attitude. A loving heart remained concealed behind his stony personality. His banishment from the kingdom, death of his wife and the abduction of his daughter by a robber make him fierce and revengeful. The fall of Brahmanism has pained him, and his aim is to restore it to its pristine glory. In the preface of the drama Dwijendralal says that the caste system is the basis of the play. But this is not wholly true. Chanakya has a hawking for family life. In the effusion of affection for his daughter when he gets her back, we notice in him a loving father's heart. In the play he is nowhere found as a healthy normal man. He takes his exit from the play as soon as he gets back his normalcy just after the restoration of his long lost daughter, Atreyee. A serious defect is observed in the portraiture of Chanakya. Chanakya contd.....
has been called a skilled politician. But in the play the politician is mostly covered under highly emotional speeches and patriotism.

The hero of the play is Chandragupta. But the character does not exert itself in the play. We find the proof of his firm determination when being insulted by Nanda he goes to Alexander to learn Greek war tactics. Except this only scene nowhere in the play do we come across of his determined mind. He establishes and empire but the power behind this is the craftiness of Chanakya. He is always led by his minister Chanakya. The firm stake of mind with which he went to Alexander to learn the Greek tactics of war to take revenge upon Nanda is not found in the actual field of work. When he comes back from the battle field, his mother Mura and Chanakya send him there again. Little of his own credit is found here. He oscillates between the affection for his brother on the one hand and his own insult and insult to his mother on the other hand. In history he has been shown as a good ruler, but no proof of this is found in the drama. An ununiformity of conduct in him is observed too. He does not hesitate to insult Malayraj Chandraketu who helped him to regain his Kingdom. At last he realises his mistake, but his dealings with Chandraketu's sister Chaya is rather abnormal. A contd....
great part has been played by politics rather than love in his marriage with Helen. Falling under the influence of two dominant characters of Mura and Chanakya, Chandragupta fails to exert himself.

After the death of Alexander, Seleucus became the master of his Asian empire. But no royal marks are found in him. In him the loving father gets the upper hand over the Greek hero. Instead of a stern emperor we find the picture of a Bengali father. His constant companion is his daughter Helen. The scene in which Helen takes farewell from her father after her marriage with Chandragupta is very touching. Antigonus captivates us. He is brave, proud, large-hearted and noble. The burning pains of his unrequited love for Helen is forgotten when it is discovered that Helen is his step-sister.

The planning of the character of Katyayana seems to be irregular. No resemblance is found between the grammarian Katyayana and Katyayan in the play. No adequate reason is found for the killing of his seven sons by Nanda and for his own assignment as Nanda's minister. Katyayan has been painted in the play as a coward and a man without personality. He has got inspiration from Chanakya to take revenge upon Nanda for the murder of his seven sons. It is true that he has killed Nanda, but that act is prompted by

contd......
the desire of Chanakya. The historical character of
the play has been hampered to a large extent
because of this character.

Among the female protagonists Helen is quite
poteworthy. She is an accomplished lady. In her we
notice a fine admixture of strength and softness. She
loves and respects her father. She feels for the
sorrows of others. Though she could not place
Antigonus in her heart, she feels for him. She becomes
extremely happy when it transpires that Antigonus is
her step-brother. Thus she has been relieved of her
mental sufferings. She loves Chandragupta, but no
external expression of that love is manifest. She has
become interesting on account of her restraint and
beauty.

In Chaya the simplicity and radiance of a
hill girl is revealed. She loves Chandragupta but
expresses no weakness before him. She could not forget
Chandragupta even when she finds that he is in love
with Helen. Her plain speech has enhanced the beauty
of her character.

In Mura deprivation of motherhood and tender
feelings of a mother have become prominent. Her
motherly feelings have been stirred violently by the
insult of Nanda whom she brought up with mother milk.
It is true that she has taken an awful revenge of
conta...
that insult, but her heart cries out that the attempt to forcible suppression of her mother’s love.

Dwijendralal has raised his voice against the difference and inequality of castes in this play. The playwright has glorified the feelings of oppressed humanity through the dialogues of insulted Mura. Various human feelings like mother’s love for her son, daughter’s for father and many such sentiments have found a considerable place in the drama. This is one of the main reasons for the popularity of the play.

Though Chandragupta is a historical play, Dwijendralal has separated the characters from the domain of time and place and have made them all Bengalis. The sentiments expressed through the dialogues of the characters have easily earned the popular sanction. Another cause of popularity of the play is that it has expressed the spirit of the age. The basis of Dwijendralal’s chronicle plays is love of country. Its influence is felt in 'Chandragupta'. In the dialogue of Chanakya a dream for the establishment of a united India has been expressed. Chanakya visualises - “śrī pradūmitā, prajwalitā, prabāhita

vākta srotasvati bhoomi bhāratahūmīr pariñāte ek

ratanālakāraya, puspājvalā, sangīt sukhara hāsyamāji

janāri” (A bejewelled, resplendent with flowers, contd.....
sonant with music and a all smile Mother in place
of murky, burning, blood-flowing and horrible
India) (Act-I, Scene-IV).

The idea of enmity of mother and motherland
is expressed in the dialogue of Guandragupta - "tumi
yai kara, tumi amar kache siradima ma, - janna
janaadhanisea swargadapi gariyasi" (Whatever you do,
you are my mother, - mother and motherland are
superior to heaven itself) (Act-III, Scene-VI).

Besides this the hymn to Indian Nature in the speech
of Alexander is nothing but the dramatist's own
tribute to the motherland.

In some places in the drama we find a
tendency of overdramatization, but this does not
hamper the smooth movement of the play. The language
of the play is lucid and free from any blemishes.

SIMHAL VIJOY ON THE CONQUEST OF CYLANA (1915)

Simhal Vijoy is the last chronicle play of
Dwijendralal. Basically the story is historical, but
prominence has been given to inner conflict. The
conquest of Clyana by the Bengali hero Vijoy Singha
is the subject matter of the play. The incidents of
the play have been formed with the evolution of
Vijoy's character. The accounts of Vijoy Singha's
leaving home owing to the oppression of his father
contd...
and stepmother and his ultimate victorious return to his own country after many adventures are described in the play. Dwijendralal took much help from Pali 'Mahavamsha' in writing out the play. The inclusion of supernaturalism in the play has spoiled its historicity. The drama that begins with the palace intrigues in Bengal ends with the preaching of Buddhism in Sinhal. As in Mewar Patan the message of universal love has been preached in the drama. Imagination has played a much greater part in the play than history.

contd....
SACHINDRA NATH SENGUPTA:

*Sachindra Nath Sengupta is famous among the notable dramatists of the modern times. Among the dramatists of Rabindra Age he achieved the greatest fame. He was associated with theatrical stage for long periods and composed many plays suitable to the stage. He saw history through modern eyes. He was influenced by Dwijendralal, the greatest artist of chronicle plays. The dialogues of his plays are emotive.*

*S.

Sachindranath was born at Seabati in Khulna in 1892. He joined the freedom movement in 1905 and left school. After passing the Entrance Examination from a National school he continued his studies upto B.A. He was engaged as a professor at the National College. Sachindranath edited weekly 'Hitabadi', 'Bijali' and 'Atmasakti'. He was the assistant editor of daily 'Krishak' and 'Sharati'. But his fame rests on his plays. The sole object of his plays written before independence was to insculcate patriotism in the mind of the audience. After independence he was associated with the new trends in drama.

contd.....
GAIHIK PATAKA (THE RAFFISH FLAG)-1930:

Sachindranath wrote this play with the glorious story of the Marhatta hero Shivaji. The main thing in the play is to see how the hopes and aspirations of the Marhatta people were fulfilled under the leadership of Shivaji. History is the main source of this play. But in some places he has changed the names and introduced new characters. Inspite of this minor deviations his fidelity to history is not questioned. The main tune of the play is patriotism. His nationalistic bent of mind find full expression in the creation of a fighting and patriotic character like Shivaji against the background of freedom movement.

The main character Shivaji in the play remains the same as we find him in history. The playwright has shed brilliant light on the manliness, softness and bravery of Shivaji. To Shivaji's love of country and love of mother are the one and the same thing. In giving away his kingdom to Swami Mandalas his ideal of sacrifice has been brought into focus. His love of friends, kindness to the sheltered and respects to the women have made him idealistic on the one hand, and again on the other hand when necessity arises he becomes as hard as thunder. Between two extremes of softness and hardness the character of Shivaji has been finely delineated. Even at the cost of his personal
safety he preserves his self respect at the court of
Aurangzeb. His ingenuity is fully revealed when he
leaves the prison of Aurangzeb in a basket of fruits.
His dream to achieve freedom and form a single nation
is found in his speeches. Anger against the injustice
of the British rule has found an expression in the
description of oppressions of the Moghals. So we hear
from Shivaji - "asahay ei jatir prati sansaner nama ki
upadrabai nitya anusthita hasche, ar keman karei
jatir pratiti manus manasyatma bisarjan diye nirabe
nitya tai nabha karche. ........... ami tai saktir
aradhana karchi, ami tai teerli karte caichi ami ekta
jati, yar pratiti sabal manus adhikar ayatwe kare
dharanir buke beje utthe pare" (In the name of
administration what oppression the nation is suffering
everyday, and how every man belonging to the nation
is endearing silently at the cost of his humanity. So
I worship power, so I want to create a nation everyday
member of which will attain his rights and grow up on

After Shivaji mention may be made of the
character of Tanaji. This character has become unique
in his obedience and friendship to Shivaji and in his
unflinching love of country. He has paid the price of
freedom by sacrificing his life in the battle field.
Besides Tanaji, Kama Kao, Maghubir and others have
contd....
become immortals for their love of country. In Shivaji’s preceptor Swami Mandas we come across the picture of mobility itself.

Jija Bai is remarkable among the women characters. Jija Bai is not only the mother of a brave son, but also the very image of strength and softness. Her affection for the freedom-seeker heroes at Maharashtra knows no bounds. She is even ready to give up her own happiness if and when necessity arises. She is not perturbed even at the news of her husband Sahaji’s imprisonment, rather she advises her son to do his utmost and fight for freedom for all. When Shivaji asks for his mother’s permission to free his father, Jija Bai replies: “Bandi ke nay sibba? durbhaga ei dese karagarer bhitare ba baire - ye yekhane rayeche sei bandi. sei ta lançhane saiche, nityatan bheg karche. santān tumi pitar muktir janya byākul hare uthebe; kintu bhulona tumi sudhu santan nae. tumi rājā praja sādharaner muktir byābasta tomakei karte habe”. (Who is not a prisoner, Shibba? In this luckless country whether one is inside or outside a prison is a prisoner, and is suffering neglect and oppression. You are a son, and so there is nothing unnatural in your being anxious for the release of your father. But don’t forget the fact that you are not only a son but also a King. It devolves upon you to make arrangements for freedom of your subjects). (Act-I, Scene-II).

contd....
Sachiadranath has shown his deit in painting the character of Jija Bai. The character of Shyamali is radiant with the glory of patriotism. In Bira a sad note of fruitless love is heard, but towards the close of the play her union with her lover has been made with dramatic effect. In this play emotionalism and piling up of events do not always become a hinderance to its appreciation, but in some places insurmountable irregularities are found. In the battle field scene in which Rana Dae and Bira come to life from their dying condition seems to be unreal. In the songs of the play adoration for the country is found. The songs have been composed by Sachindranath's friend Hemendra Kumar Roy. The songs of nationalism are -

"janaatar majhe janaganpati baksher
majhe dripta man,
jagraata hae swadhin bharat jago
jago marathar putragen.
bhimarjuner swades hayeche prithvirajer
karmabhumi,
jana moder sei matitei sata bir
pada cinha cumi;

(The leader of the people is in the throng
the mind is in the chest,
Awake free India, awake the
the brave sons of Marhatta.
This country once belonged to Bhima
and Arju
And was Prithviraj's field of action,
We are born in the same earth
Kissing the foot prints of hundreds
of heroes).

(Act. IV, Scene-II)
(National Anthem). contd....
Chorus

"Bharater cahi nutan somit sakal prener
amarata sudha,
bharater buke nabajibaner bismugrasani
bipul kshudhen,
artyute tar atma marma, karagare tar
swadhin man
youban tar nitya kariche jibana pathare
santarar.

(India wants new blood and nectar of
strong love,
An earth-devouring great hunger for new life
in the heart of India.
Her soul dies not in death, nor her free mind
in prison,
Her youth even swires in the scen of life).

(Ast.V, Scene-V).

SIRAJDULLAH (1936):

Among the dramas of Sachindranath
Sirajdoullah stands apart. This is the most popular
of his plays. He play deals with the life of the
last free Nawab of Bengal. On the one hand it is
brightened with the glory of freedom, on the other
hand it is a painful picture of losing that freedom.
The playwright has drawn Siraj as a seeker after
freedom, and upright and a broad-minded man. But in
the play the emotional side of his character is more
apparent than his manly side. His helplessness is
manifest when he appeals to the people of Bengal -
contd....
"Bangle bhagya kase aj duryog ghana bhata, tar syaam prantare aj vakter alpam, jatir southagya surya aj astacalgami, sudhu supta santan siyare rudyaanam jananir nisabasaneer spekshay praheera ganamay rata. Ke taoke asa debe? Ke taoke bharasa debe? Ke sonabe jikam diye rodh karba maw snesur abhiyan." (A storm is brewing in the sky of Bengal's destiny. Prints of blood are in her green meadows, the nation's sun of fortune is about to set, only the weeping mother sitting by the bed of her sleeping child is waiting and counting time for the night to pass by. Who will give her hopes? Who will stand by her? Who will am sing - we will oppose the expedition of death by life?)

When he is defeated in the field of Palassy at the treachery of his generals and when he is humiliated by the crowd, at that time - just before his death - in a piteous tone he appeals - "esa bhaisab, esa ar ekhar cesta kare dekhi palasir prantare ya amra helay kariye eseeji, banga jananir kanak hirite abar ta pariye dite pari kina". (Come, brothers, come, let's try whether we can put the golden crown we lost in the field of Palassy on the head of Mother Bengal again). In this play Sachindranath has put stress on the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims.

contd......
Both Girishchandra and Sachindranath wrote plays with Sirajdoullah, the last sentinel of Bengal's freedom. The two plays were written with a separation of thirty-two years. Both the dramas achieved extraordinary popularity on the stage. The same emotional appeal that we find in Girishchandra's Sirajdoullah has been repeated in Sachindranath's play with the same effect.