



poems

Song-Lyrics of Autumn by Rabindranath Tagore

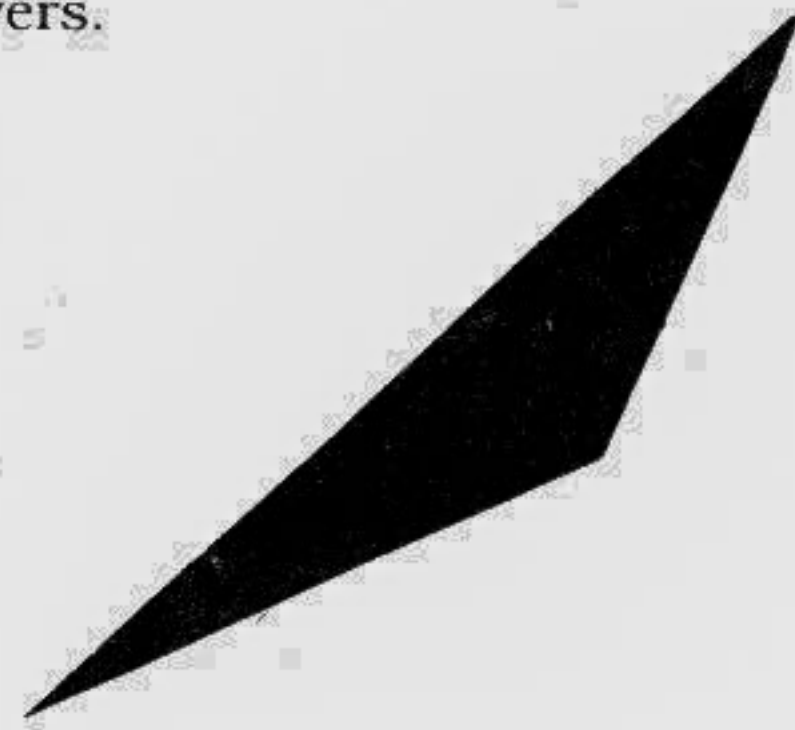
Amar Raat Pohalo

My night gives way to an autumnal morning. My flute, who will I hand you over to now? On many a Falgoon or Sravan morning You had cried out soulfully Weaving welcoming notes out of parting tunes. Thoughts hidden in the depth of the soul You stole away then in song after song. Like the stars at the break of day Your time in now at an end — Bring it to a close with the shedding of shiuli flowers.



Tomra Ja Bolo Tai Bolo

Tell what you all will, I won't mind, My time flies, and the hours pass, aimlessly. The wild wind stirs me to a song And spreads its tune across this deep-blue sky. That song has stuck in my mind. What nectar do I seek in the humming of bees? Whose sky-pervading gaze seeks me out And settles on my eyes thus this day!



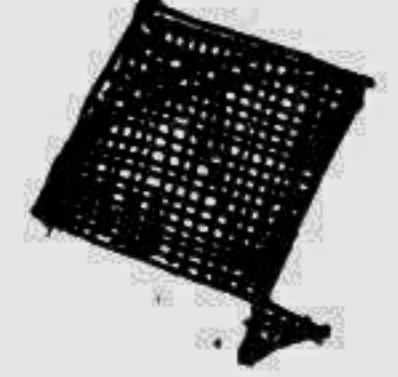
Hridoye Chile Jege

You were wide-awake in my heart, But now you are part of the autumn sky. When did you depart this morning, Wetting your dress's border in the dew? What song could I sing now? I can't find the right words. Song, you scatter over groves with shiuli flowers, You stream into air with the gusting wind.



Megher Kole Roadh Heseche

The sun smiles on the cloud's lap, the rainy spell is gone, tra-la-la-la-la! Time to take a break, friends, time to celebrate, tra-la-la-la-la! What should we do this day, what woods wonder into, What fields should we boys romp about, tra-la-la-la-la! We'll build boats out of keya-leaves, decking 'em with flowers — We'll float 'em on palm-fringed ponds, seeing 'em sway with the waves. With cowboys we'll drive herds of cows to the tune of our flutes, We'll smear ourselves with pollen stolen from champak groves, tra-la-la-la-la!



Aaj Dhaner Khete

In paddy fields this day sunlight and shadows play hide-and-seek Who floats a raft of white clouds on the sky — playing hide-and-seek? This day bees flit about, heedless of honey, drunk with light. This day ducks and drakes flock to sand-banks in droves. For sure, this day I won't go indoors, won't turn in at all For sure, this day I'll raid the sky and rob what's outdoors. Like a wave foaming in the tide, the wind breaks into a smile. All day long I'll play my flute, and the hours beguile.

Shorate aaj kon athithi

Who waits outside my soul's gate this autumnal day? Heart, sing out in joy, striking a festive note. Let silent thoughts of blue skies and dew-daubed desire Resound from every string of your lyre. Tune into songs singing of golden harvests. Float a raft full of melodies into serene seas. Gaze in deep contentment at the guest who waits outside. Then open the gate and amble with him outdoors.

Translated by Fakrul Alam



essay

Ernest Hemingway and the Spanish Civil War

By Parvin Sultana Shumi

"Hemingway ... is obviously the person who can write the great book about the Spanish war." — Cyril Connolly.

THE Spanish Civil war broke out in 1936. The rebellion by general Franco's Right-wing army against the Left-wing Spanish government provoked a full-scale civil war. It was viewed by British liberal intellectuals at the time as a testing struggle between fascism and democracy. Ernest Hemingway's relationship to that war was intimate and varied. Therefore, he treated this historical fact in his works according to his own views. For him the Spanish Civil War was a struggle waged by men close to the nature of a primitive society against men who had turned away from it and to the destructive mechanical order. Clearly then, for Hemingway, Spain is an elemental symbiosis of men and nature.

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From his earliest stories, from Nick Adams episodes of In Our Time to the fable of The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway deals with man in the natural landscape. Remembering the proverb about Europe's being cut off at the Pyrenees, Hemingway looks upon Africa and Spain as a unit. In The Green Hills of Africa, he shows how the mechanized world destroys the uncorrupted world of nature. The book opens with a hunt ruined by the passing of a truck. This is put into the simplest possible language: "The truck had spoiled it."

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The Spanish Earth, a documentary film written by Ernest Hemingway is an assertion of an intimate relationship between men and the land: "This Spanish earth is dry and hard and the faces of the men who work on earth are hard and

dry from the sun." The land is defended and the film ends with the waters rushing through the newly constructed irrigation ditch, bringing life to the sun-baked soil. In For Whom the Bell Tolls also, there is a similar structure in that it begins and ends with the "pine-needled floor of the forest". In the novel as in the film, there is a struggle between men and machines. We can say that Hemingway dramatizes the conflict between the values associated with the natural landscape and the values associated with the tank and machines. Both in his film and in his novel, we find that a symbolic struggle between men and machines forms an important part of Heming-

way's vision of reality, a vision which is primitive and is based upon the historical facts.

What Ernest Hemingway has done in For Whom the Bell Tolls and in The Spanish Earth has been to make a central theme which runs through scores of other writers and artists. But he has turned various images of value into his drama and version of the Spanish Tragedy. We see, in For whom the Bell Tolls that Maria, Raberto's beloved "Rabbit", is identified with the Spanish earth that was then violated figuratively as Maria, taken prisoner, raped, rescued from a troop-train and finally saved by Roberto from the approaching tanks of

the enemy, parallels certain aspects of Spanish history from 1936 to 1939.

Men like Reglar, Bates and Malraux are representative of the mainstream European radicalism, a tradition which has, for the most part, rejected the strong element of primitivistic anarchism found in American and in Spanish radicalism.

Of all the writings on the Spanish war, Ralph Bate's short stories are closest to Hemingway's in tone and theme and diction. The protagonists are usually close to the land; their antagonists are associated with mechanized authoritarianism. In "The 43rd Division" Pere, the undisciplined peasant hero insists

on fighting the war on his very individualistic terms. He fights alone and is in constant trouble with his commanding officer.

And in Andre Marlaux's L'Espoir, Hemingway's theme of primitivism — the affirmation of the natural man in the natural landscape — is sounded with a marvelous sense of the ambiguous overtones and then subordinated to another theme. No other European novel contains so much of the complexity of the Spanish Civil War. It, at the same time, suggests the differences between the European and the American views of the Spanish war.

At any rate, the extraordinary thing about the Spanish war is that the historical facts seemed almost of themselves to dramatize the conflicts of the age.

Hemingway's vision of the Spanish war has its roots in a very American tradition of thought and feeling. The Spanish war was, among other things, a fight against the desecration of the relationship between man and nature.

theatre

Present Situation of Amateur Theatre in Bangladesh

by Liaquat Ali Lucky

BEFORE going into the present situation of amateur theatre in Bangladesh we should have an idea about the past of this cultural media. It has been explored that the ancient Bengal never followed the aryan shanskrit theatre tradition of elite class. In his 'Natyashastra' Bharat Muni narrated that a kind of popular emotional exciting oral theatre form had been there in the eastern part of India that is in Bengal named 'oudra Magdhi' in two hundred years BC. It was apart from the Ten major theatrical form of Shanskrit culture. Once it was a minor theatrical activity of the common people. But this musical and dance performance mixed with poetry became very popular in later centuries.

Among the ten different forms narrated in 'Natyashastra' 'Vaani' is distinctively the form which closely resembles the 'Katha Natya' (oral theatre) of Bengali. 'Vaani' was a kind of monopoly. Moreover on 'Natyashastra' there are references of an one act play 'Bithie' consisting of two or three characters which is similar to the 'Natyaa geet' (Musical Drama) of Bengal. In 'The History of Bengali literature' it is described that Rama-Krishna story based Shanskrit theatre were woven with ancient Bengali songs. In the later part of twelve century Bengal was being ruled by Raja Laksman Sen. Then Joydev was the court-poet who enriched the Shanskrit and Bengali literature with his masterpiece 'Geetgovinda' which is one of the richest inscription of Shanskrit drama. In the thirteenth century a reknown poet Biddapoti wrote a manuscript of drama 'Goraksha Bijoy' in Bengali and three other languages. So it is evident that we have a thousand years old theatrical cultural heritage.

Following the path of this tradition the forms of our indigenous theatre such as Jatra, Mymensingha Geetika, Leela Kirton, Dhop Kirton, Naam Kirton, Jaari Gaan, Palagaan, Kabir Lorai, Padabali Kirton, Gombhira, Putul naach (Puppet theatre), Puthipath, Gajir gaan etc are still illuminous. These indigenous theatre are still staged mostly in the villages. We also have about twenty clans of aboriginal cultural heritage in Bangladesh.

From the middle ages, four main religions i.e. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity with some other minor religious sects existed in Bangladesh. The harmonious coexistence of these diverse religious group contributed to a new and colourfully blended culture. So in Bangladesh we find lots and lots of rituals from indigenous, religious and aboriginal cultural heritage. In the later part of 18th century during the British rule we entered into the realm of proscenium theatre. It is a paradox that the proscenium theatre was introduced in Bengal not by a British but by a Soviet tourist in 1795. During the two hundred years of British rule the proscenium theatre produced mythological plays, historical plays, adapted and translated western plays and social dramas. In the course of time the social dramas started presenting the picture of oppression of British regime. These dramas played an affective role in the political movement which led to the imposition of 'Dramatic performance control Act 1876' by the British government. Under this Act no play could be performed without the censor and prior permission of the police authority. This 'black act' existed in Bangladesh till 1998. Only the present government, in the cabinet meeting de-

ecided to repeal the Act which still awaits the approval of the parliament. All through the British rule Calcutta was the dominant power in proscenium theatre and Dhaka too played an almost parallel respective part in the movement. It is said that the tickets for watching play were introduced in 1872 in Dhaka even before Calcutta.

During Pakistan period (1947-1971) theatre of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) started to revolt against autocratic attitude of western part in 1947 Pakistan was separated from India on the basis of religion not on the basis of culture. Under the shelter of religion Bangladesh was being exploited by the alien master all through 24 years rule. Socio-politically conscious play written by the teachers of Dhaka University and by the conscious theatre worker were staged in the area of educational institutions at that time. In general the theatre was mostly festival and entertainment oriented not having a regular nature. The historical and social melodramatic plays were staged at that time. But the indigenous and folk theatre activities on the other hand resounded the skies of this land.

Regular staging of plays started in Bangladesh in 1972, immediate after the independence of country. During the period the theatre workers put in all their efforts to initiate a new start in the world of performing arts. The trend persisted steadily for almost two decades and with the independence in 1971 theatre in Bangladesh emerged as an unprecedented artistic potential. How much the political freedom of a country can influence the cultural activities of a nation can be seen from the tremendous development of theatre of the country. At the beginning the war of

liberation worked as a vital force and with the independence of the country theatre has been able to gain the most flourished position among all the performing arts. About 50 groups from all over the country stage the play regularly at least 2-3 performances in a month and another 150 groups perform irregularly but at least once in 2-3 months. The theatre has proved to be the most popular form of art in Bangladesh and among amateur theatre workers there prevails the zeal of professional attitude which can be named as Professional Amateur. Within the period of 28 years the wide variety of plays that have been staged in Bangladesh can be categorised as world classics, Bengali classics, translations, adaptations, originals, folk, dramatisation, improvisation, indigenous etc.

The audience of theatre in Bangladesh are well acquainted with the versatility of drama from Greek classics to local plays. About 10 Greek classical plays have been staged in the past 28 years. Some other world classic were also staged with the same zeal. Among Bangla classics, plays of Robindranath Tagore have found new fervour on the stage and thus gained applause and acknowledgment. In regard of translations and adaptations the most popular playwrights happen to be Shakespeare, Brecht, Moliere, Chekhov and Shaw. Brecht and Moliere are being most liked, admired and enjoyed by the audience. Next to them stands William Shakespeare. Bangla theatre has got some potential playwrights but they are not enough to meet up the demand of the stage. In the recent years our stage produced many of our folk theatres and received applause from the audience. To fill up the

scarcity of plays our stage also dramatised many Bengali novels and improvised many short stories. The modern treatment of indigenous plays are also seen in the theatre of Bangladesh.

There is also powerful Children's and Youth theatre movement which have been established in the recent years by the People's Theatre Association. A theatre bank has also been established by PTA. This theatre bank collects all the materials of theatre i.e. posters, leaflets, booklets, photos, audio-video materials etc and arranges the exhibition for the theatre lovers from time to time.

Besides the proscenium theatre we have a tradition of street theatre activities. The street theatre becomes very powerful when society faces the tyranny and oppression by any autocratic ruler and when fanaticism tries to thrive. Generally street theatre activities booms in winter. There is also "Graam Theatre" (village theatre) movement which organises folk theatre festivals in the various part of the country. The 'Mukto Natok Dal', another type of theatre movement is also there in Bangladesh. This group arranges the performances by the oppressed people in different villages or industrial area who produce the play without any written scripts but they compile their experience and dramatise what they have undergone for the oppressive measures. For removing illiteracy and spreading consciousness among the innocent people, a kind of theatre movement have been established in the country which is called 'Jono Natya Aandolon'.

In spite of all these it is really an incomprehensible paradox that Bangladesh has no permanent theatre

stage or national theatre as such. Theatre groups stage their play in the normal seminar hall and in the auditorium which is mainly made for meeting or cultural shows. Most of the auditoriums have no air cooler and acoustics. Recently the government is building a theatre hall which will be ready within some months. Our National Theatre hall is under construction which may take another 2-3 years to be ready if everything goes well. Besides, in the country there does not even exist a single professional theatre group. This form of art receive least attention and patronage from the state. Most of the groups are facing severe financial problems now a days. Committed and dedicated young theatre workers are not coming to the group for long time. They are more interested in television acting than on stage. Recently the stage of Bangladesh facing rigorous problems of drop-down of audience may be for the 24 hours satellite channels of sky media.

We have seen the ups and downs in the history of our theatre. But this media survived with its own power and stamina. After the liberation war the theatre workers of Bangladesh took this media as a movement. They struggled to establish this performing art in the country all along. Stage protested on the street against the 'Dramatic performance control Act 1876. Even they played an important role to establish democracy in the country. Since the theatre workers are well aware of everything and the democratic government has been established in the country and this government is very fond of art and culture, we are optimistic about the bright future of theatre in our country.