

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Syed Ali Ahsan

DR. NURUL ISLAM

SYED Ali Ahsan is no more with us; he has been dead for two months or so now. He died in his sleep at the dead of night - his family sources said. It must have been a lonely but peaceful death. His wife had been dead a long time. What it mattered whether somebody was or wasn't there beside when one died. It has been said of Pushkin that at the time of his death, his physician realizing the poet was succumbing to his duel injuries and that the end was near said to him, "My Lord, take leave of your dear and near ones." The great poet, instead of looking at his relatives and friends who were there around his death-bed, looked at his bookshelves and said, "Good-bye, friends and life-long companions."

I knew Syed Ali Ahsan through his writings long before I came to know him personally. His "Amar Purbo-Bangla" fascinated me specially, perhaps because of its reverberating verbal music, its loud and wide-ranging picturesque imagery. In those passing days of adolescence in the late fifties and early sixties when I was going through college and university education I read his poetry a lot.

I came in personal contact with him when I joined Chittagong University in April 1967. He was then Professor and Head of the Department of Bengali and also the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The faculty being small in those initial days was a closely knit academic community. During this time I translated an English article on him by Razia Khan Amin for a Bengali literary magazine run and edited by Maniuzzaman at the time. Professor Maniuzzaman is still in the Bangla Department at Chittagong University. The translation must have pleased him much, for he urged me to practice writing - which unfortunately I hardly ever did perhaps for lack of determination.

I came to know Syed Ali Ahsan better in 1968 in connection with the celebration of President Ayub Khan's Decade of Progress. I don't remember clearly, but there must have been a celebration committee in the university, and Professor Syed Ali Ahsan must have been its head, for he asked me and Abdul Momen - we were both in the English Department (Momen later was in England, married Salman Rushdie's sister having divorced his first wife, and is now in America) to write the foreword for the celebration brochure. We were not politically and morally willing to provide what was expected of us. We drafted the foreword in a non-committal way. When we gave it to Syed Ali Ahsan he said our write-up wouldn't do adding that we stood committed to the idea of the Decade, but sensing our unwillingness to go along with, he took upon himself to infuse our draft with the necessary zeal and enthusiasm.

As history would have it, the fire-emitting days of sixty-nine were not in the distance but round at the corner of the so-called Decade of Progress. The people of East-Pakistan viewed the whole exercise as yet another cover-up for West-Pakistan's exploitation and injustice, and as such the Decade seemed to have served as the spark for people's resistance and revolt. Sheikh Mujib who was already by then Bangabandhu in the making, with his single-minded devotion to the cause of the people, his extraordinary charismatic oratory and great organizing power roused the people to such collective action that there was no option left but to join in the seamless continuum of struggle and fight. Sheikh Mujib visited the campus on one of these days, and after meeting teachers and students informally stopped at Mahbub Talukdar's house for a while. We in the university - students, teachers, employees, officers - left our respective work and duty en masse and joined the ongoing mass upraise. We wore black badges, brought out bare-foot procession in respect of those killed in different parts of the country. Syed Ali Ahsan himself, bare-foot and wearing a black badge, led the procession as the President of the Teachers' Council. I still remember the brief speech he gave at the start of the procession. The right thing to do, he said, at this crucial juncture of our history, was to throw our lot with the masses in their progressive struggle, to take pains with them; that, he said, was the need of the hour, in that he said lay our greater good. It was amazing how he could use equally evocative eloquence for clearly opposite situation and stand. The words he used were 'jantrana', 'kalyan', 'mongol', 'ashirbad', etc.

Those who knew Syed Ali Ahsan personally and from close quarters know that he was a superb speaker. In class-rooms, seminars as elsewhere, it was always joyful to hear him speak. He loved using deep-toned words and vigorously evocative turn of language. His own voice was deep and profoundly evocative. Whether his love of deep-toned words gave rise to his evocative voice or his voice made his words and language sound deeply resonating - whatever the case - his art of speaking was so enthralling that at times it seemed not easy to see which he cared for more: the embellishment of language or the integrity of the sense and meaning that language in the first place was supposed to register. There was certainly an element of irony and opposite pull in his character. His overall bearing gave him a reverentially ancient and classical look. But behind this exterior profile

he was really a man of lusty sensibility and an unsullied zest for life. Our wedding gift from him - the marriage having taken place in September 1969 in Chittagong - was a collection of his own books. His hand-written greetings message put in "Kabitar katha O annayanya Bibechana" which was one of them ran thus: "Ekhon rajya bahubandhan/ Ekhon Prohor milanayatan; Ekhon progaro ichcha shakasha/ Bidhut jeno akasmat." We the freshly wedded couple were thrilled by such youthful and passionate lines, more so because they came from such a sage-like, ancient-looking senior personality.

Another aspect of Syed Ali Ahsan's personality was his lively sense of humour. He enjoyed narrating anecdotes and personal experiences with ironic slant and undertones, more often than not at the cost of others. But he was never malicious or vituperative. He was a man of expansive nature. He laughed heartily, but not loudly; his laughter used to come in a gleeful way as if in broken waves of low-toned guttural voice. One of his quips is still fresh in my mind. Once while speaking of philanthropic activities by Hindu Zamindars he said: "mussalmanera teg kare shudu molmutra, annaya kichu tara teg karte janena" and gave his usual gleeful laughter.

In the middle of December 1970 I left Chittagong and came to Jahangirnagar. I didn't meet him again until late 1973 when he joined Jahangirnagar University as its Vice-chancellor. Earlier in 1971 he crossed over to India and joined the liberation front there. Other prominent members of Chittagong University to cross over were Dr. A.R. Mallick, the vice-chancellor, Dr Anisuzzaman of Bangla and Dr Shamsul Hoque of physics who later held many high national positions. In September 1973, within a few months of his joining Jahangirnagar, three teachers of the university including myself went to Britain for higher studies. The vice-chancellor treated us to a best-wishes dinner in his office-cum residence which was then in Dhanmondi. The sumptuous duck-roast delicacy was prepared by himself. The culinary expertise of male members was part of their family tradition. His brother Professor Syed Ali Ashraf I heard, also excelled in cooking. I have had many personal experiences of the pride and delight that Dr Syed Sajjad Husain used to take in treating people to delicious dishes that he prepared by his own hand.

I met Syed Ali Ahsan again in the late seventies when I returned from Britain and he was already there back at Jahangirnagar as Supernumerary Professor of Bengali. In English also there were two supernumerary teachers: Professor Abu Rushd Matinuddin and Professor Azhar Hussain. They each had their own rooms in their respective Departments. But they almost always gathered at Abu Rushd's room for a chat. My own room was adjacent to Abu Rushd Matinuddin's. The rooms were actually cubicles, mine being on the outside and his inside. Occasionally I used to join them. The quip I mentioned earlier was made on one such occasion.

Sometime during this period the case of my promotion to Associate Professor came up. Syed Ali Ahsan evidently out of good wishes for me suggested that I see the members of the selection committee and mentioned that there was hostility towards me in certain quarters and that there had already been some move against me. Without telling him I decided not to go to see anybody basically because of my aloof and withdrawn nature but also because of a precedent of similar promotion in the Department. A batch-mate of mine who was in the Department was promoted to Associate Professorship about three years ago in my absence when I was in Britain working on my doctoral thesis. I was senior to him as Assistant professor and in fact I was on the selection committee with Syed Ali Ahsan as Chairman as the vice-chancellor when he was first recruited. The university's practice to consider in absentia the case of a senior colleague at the time of the promotion of a junior one was ignored in my case. I didn't mind because the colleague promoted was a batchmate and a friend. I thought I would get my due when I returned. In addition to my D. Phil I did post-graduate Diploma in English Studies in a separate program about a decade ago at Leeds University. This diploma was really a very effective teaching course having been specially designed with intensive language and literature components in order to train university teachers of commonwealth countries, and there were cases that with it alone people got promotion. My D.Phil thesis was considered "eminently sane" and "most perceptive" by eminent British Professors such as Professor Arnold Kettle, Professor A.W. Thomson who were on the thesis Examination committee, not to mention my supervisor Professor Andrew Waterman who was equally renowned as a scholar and a creative writer. My batch-mate's overseas higher qualification was an M.A. There was no reason why I should not have felt more than confident. But the inevitable happened. My case was turned down.

I can still remember my feelings. I was not sure whether to feel amused or disheartened. The sense of outrage in the university, however, was quite wide-spread, so much so that the case was elaborately discussed in the Teachers' council meeting as an example of malice, victimisation and miscarriage of justice. The vice-chancellor who was the chairman of the

selection committee was a nationally reputed figure. Nobody normally would think such a person could be a party to any hostility or unbecoming move. But for me it made no difference; the end-result was one and the same. There was then a long-drawn group tussle between the vice-chancellor and the registrar and the registrar happened to be my father-in-law. People thought the criteria used to consider my case were not my qualifications but my relationship with the registrar.

Near around this time there was another development for us that seemed to lend credence to this view. My wife having just finished her education applied for lecturership in Bengali with more than requisite qualifications. She was similarly turned down by the committee headed by the vice-chancellor. However, soon enough she applied at Chittagong University and got the job there. A tremendous person that she ever is, she accepted the offer, and leaving our one and a half year old youngest child behind at Jahangirnagar campus joined Chittagong University against the will and reasoning of all of us - her parents included. For her it was a challenge and self-vindication. For the next three or so years before she could come to Jahangirnagar she commuted between Chittagong and Savar every fortnight.

It is not from any motive of self-vindication that I have drawn on this unhappy episode - I have reached the plateau of retirement, beyond the hills and dales of grudge and desire. I have done so in order to get a glimpse of an aspect of our present-day university situation.

It was interesting as it was significant that after the debacle of my promotion effort had happened, Syed Ali Ahsan came to Professor Matinuddin's room, he was in his usual cheerful sociable mood and I also joined them occasionally, but the matter was never mentioned. Syed Ali Ahsan definitely loved a nice conversation but was never gossipy. He had the quality of the detachment of a classical temper, at least so I thought, to know that when a thing was done it was done, neither analysing nor commiserating mattered.

Having said all these I cannot avoid broaching something which when it happened caused me immense distress. In December 2001 or there about, not many months before his death, Syed Ali Ahsan had written an article dwelling on the most evil-minded contrivance of a debate of our time: who declared the independence. Others who sought to falsify the independence history at least mentioned Sheikh Mujib, if only to heap calumny on him, to say that he didn't make the declaration. Here I am not thinking of the BNP variety; we all know they have been hand-picked and are being raised to do the ordered made-to-measure job. I am thinking of those who think they are leftist and of the similar kind. I refer to their denouncement of Sheikh Mujib and consequently of the independence history. Syed Ali Ahsan took altogether a different road. He didn't even mention the name of Sheikh Mujib. Major Zia, he said, did everything, made the declaration, but suddenly a new name cropped up. What can one do in the face of such utter nonchalance. One can perhaps have recourse to T.S. Eliot's impassioned line conceived more or less in the similar political and moral context: After such knowledge, what forgiveness. We were never unaware that among Syed Ali Ahsan's peers there had been different opinions about him. But we held him in great respect because of his erudition and the personal atmosphere of culture that he embodied thinking that one is entitled to one's view of things, however extreme or wrong-headed. To believe in religion-based politics and statecraft is one thing but to falsify history in such a blatant way is altogether another matter.

Earlier I mentioned a personal matter of mine, and as said, not from a self-interested motive. I have done so in order to indicate the mental and attitudinal quality of our high profile personalities in whose guardianship our higher academies and institutions function to build the intellectual and moral foundation of the nation. The superstructural mainframe is important for a house, but its integrated solid foundation is made of nuts and bolts, bricks and mortar, and if these essential inner materials are not in place or become adulterated, the structure is doomed to degenerate and decay in no time. No wonder our country has slipped into the hands of history falsifiers, not excluding political thugs and swindlers.

When Syed Ali Ahsan's body was brought to Jahangirnagar university campus for burial in honour of his wish, I was there. As the dead body was being laid down to the grave, to my mind came Auden's lines for W.B. Yeats: "Earth, receive an honoured guest/William yeats is laid to rest/Let the Irish vessel lie/Emptied of its poetry" but, then, I balked at the idea, and thought, "No, I'll read these lines whenever I do only for W.B. Yeats, and for none else." After the burial, as I plodded along for home alone, there was a great gloom in my heart, I felt deeply sorry for myself for having to change my mind.

The writer is a former professor of Jahangirnagar University. He presently teaches at King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia.

POETRY



Euphemism

HERMAN DE CONINCKWYN

It's already happened so many times, in this second-hand reality that even on this day of days Christ would have to say: Look, I'll make everything as good as new.

It's already happened so many times, that people feel, we are somebody as they once again have been together amounting to as much as nobody.

I would almost say: this is love, but it is too true to be beautiful. And yet, a euphemism treats us so gently,

just about like you who take all my flaws into your arms and lovingly caress and call them Herman.

Herman is a leading Belgian poet who died in 1997.

in history

THIS WEEK

September 7

1907: In Châteaufort, France, the first recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, (René-François-Armand) Sully Prudhomme, dies. He was a leading figure of the Parnassian movement which sought to restore elegance, balance, and aesthetic standards to poetry.

1911: Guillaume Apollinaire is put in jail, suspected of masterminding the sensational heist of the Louvre's Mona Lisa. Five days later his innocence will be proved.

1939: Kyoka Izumi, Japanese short-story writer, dies in Tokyo. Id.

September 8

1830: Frédéric Mistral, French poet who will lead the 19th-century revival of Provençal language and literature, is born in Maillane, France. He will share the Nobel Prize in 1904 for his contributions in literature and philology.

1915: D. H. Lawrence watches the zeppelin raid on London: "So it is the end-of-world is gone, and we are like dust in the air."

September 9

18128: Novelist, philosopher, and religious mystic Count Leo Tolstoy is born in the province of Tula. In 1908 his admirers organize a Tolstoy fund and a grand jubilee to celebrate his 80th birthday; he responds angrily: "When there is nothing left to think about but death, they want to bother me with that!" The committee subsides, but the public is already aroused. Presents are received; messages of congratulation arrive from Thomas Hardy, Bernard Shaw, George Meredith, and H. G. Wells; crowds gather outside his house, along with a brass band and photographers.

1898: Stéphane Mallarmé, leader of the Symbolist movement in poetry, dies in Valvins, near Fontainebleau. By 1868, he had concluded that, although nothing lies beyond reality, within this nothingness lie the essences of perfect forms; it was the poet's task, he felt, to perceive and crystallize these essences.

1999: American poet Richard Wilbur, in an interview, speaks of writing, "If a good poem has an air of spontaneity, it has that air because the poet has been careful, in his slow and choosy writing of the poem, to keep in touch with its original impulse."

September 10

1890: Franz Werfel, expressionist poet, dramatist, and novelist, is born in Prague to Jewish parents. He will write *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and *The Song of Bernadette*.

September 11

1700: Scottish poet whose best verse will foreshadow some of the attitudes of the Romantic movement, James Thomson, is born in Ednam.

1862: O. Henry (William Sydney Porter), master of the surprise ending, is born in Greensboro, North Carolina. After his release from prison for embezzlement as a bank teller, he will go on to write such stories as "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Last Leaf." Vachel Lindsay will compliment him: "He always worked a triple-hinged surprise/ To end the scene and make one rub his eyes."

1885: Novelist, poet, and essayist D. H. (David Herbert) Lawrence, is born near Nottingham, England, the fourth child of an illiterate Nottinghamshire coal miner and an educated mother.

September 12

1846: Elizabeth Barrett, 40, and Robert Browning, 34, are secretly married at London's St. Marylebone Church. Muses William Wordsworth, "Well, I hope they understand one anotherbody else would."

1931: African-American novelist who will examine black life and racial relations in the United States in both children's stories and works for adults, Kristin Hunter, is born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her writing career begins at the age of 14 with a contribution to *The Pittsburgh Courier*, an important black newspaper, which she will continue writing for until her graduation from the University of Pennsylvania.

1943: Michael Ondaatje, Canadian novelist and poet who blends myth, history, jazz, and memoirs to create his musical prose and poetry, is born in Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka). His 1970 pastiche, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left-Handed Poems* will draw on his fascination with the American west, and his 1992 novel, *The English Patient*, will be made into an award-winning movie.

1977: In New York, American poet noted for his complex, confessional poetry, Robert Lowell, dies. His later poetry collections include *The Dolphin* (1973), which won a second Pulitzer Prize for the poet, and *Day by Day* (1977).

1981: Dead today, 1975 Nobel Prize for Literature winner, Eugenio Montale, Italian poet, prose writer, editor, and translator into Italian the poetry of Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, and Gerard Manley Hopkins, as well as works by Herman Melville, Eugene O'Neill, and others.

September 13

1592: Michel de Montaigne dies at his family chateau while preparing another edition of his *Essays*. He had been living the life of a country gentleman since 1571, when he succeeded to the estate near Bordeaux.

1876: Sherwood Anderson, novelist, poet, and short story writer (Winesburg, Ohio) is born in Camden, Ohio. F. Scott Fitzgerald will characterize him as "the possessor of a brilliant and almost inimitable prose style, and of scarcely any ideas at all."

1894: Critic, playwright, and novelist (The Good Companions; *Angel Pavement*) J. B. Priestley is born in Bradford, Yorkshire.

Source: Internet

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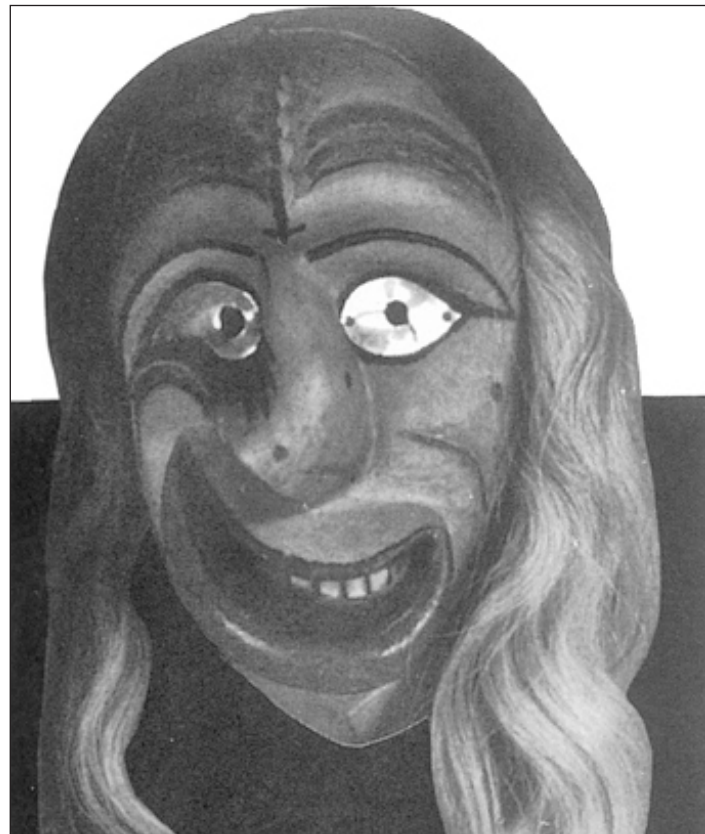
Cultural Studies: A Fashionable Diversion

FAZLUL ALAM

THERE cannot be anything absolutely certain, not even the meaning of the word certain in that certainty must be relating itself to something uncertain, and if we can find the uncertain, only then we may find what is certain. Probably with that in mind, Professor Richard Johnson of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (better and fondly known to many as CCCS) at the University of Birmingham refused to offer a definition of culture. CCCS did not live in certainty either. By the time I was leaving Birmingham University in 1995, the Centre had already been devoured up by the Faculty of Commerce and Social Science and got a new, simplistic and traditional name Department of Cultural Studies, (later Department of Cultural Studies and Sociology) curiously confirming that nothing was certain. I still do not know the reason why the adjective Contemporary could not be retained in its new name!

Cultural Studies did not arrive at the academic scene from nowhere. Culture has always been an attractive and reader-pulling expression. Many literary and academic giants, such as Matthew Arnold, TS Eliot, FR Leavis, EP Thompson, Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams along with many distinguished academic figures of the New Left regarded the concept of culture uncultivated, and they all strove in their own ways to cultivate it. However, the above named scholars and writers were not seeing everything from the same angle of vision, rather they were arguing, sometimes to the point of bickering about the very interpretation and meaning of culture. Their debates had had far-reaching effect, and in that process, they created a body of knowledge and writings on which a systematic academic discipline could be based on. The establishment of the pioneering Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in 1963 at the University of Birmingham, UK headed by Richard Hoggart (author of a seemingly harmless yet seminal book *The Uses of Literacy*, 1957) was academically possible due to the existence of those writings, not just to fit them into an academic vacuum, but also because the debates demanded further studies to settle, in a changed and changing social and political backdrop, what should be regarded as British culture.

What was this changed and changing socio-political backdrop? British society since the days of Industrial Revolution was changing fast, but this did not produce any difference at the top dominated by the elite and higher social classes, nor at the highest seats of learning such as Oxford and Cambridge. At these levels, culture was being described as a privilege of the elite, an idea to which the public seemed to have succumbed to without much thoughts or resistance. The Industrial Revolution brought some major changes in the way the British public was to be educated to meet the demands of the industries and related works. Since not everyone was equipped, nor were there enough opportunities for everyone to gain access to the university education, adult education programmes at higher level known as extra-mural courses were introduced. Towards the same aims, Workers' Educational Associations (WEA) came to be established. Richard Hoggart started teaching at the WEA and Raymond Williams were teaching at extra mural courses. Curiously, both of them attained distinctions respectively from Oxford and Cambridge universities where traditional concepts and ideas reigned. They did not agree with each other but their opinions and ideas about the way English literature was being taught are regarded by many as complementary. They, in their separate ways, criticised the traditional view of culture as the privileges of the higher social classes. The most well known spokespersons of the traditional views were TS Eliot and FR Leavis. TS Eliot recognised the need for elite "to ensure general continuity, we must retain social classes, and in particular a governing social class, with which the elite will overlap and constantly interact". Similarly FR Leavis maintained that a privileged elite minority would be capable of appreciating art and literature, "...it is only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgement...the minority capable not only of appreciating Dante, Shakespeare, Donne, Baudelaire...but of recognising their latest successors constitute the consciousness of the race...at a given time Upon this minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of



the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition...."

The above quotes reflect well what is known as Eliot/Leavis tradition that Raymond Williams ridiculed as 'minority civilization'. The idea of developing a new discipline of cultural studies would not have begun without an invitation from the University of Birmingham to Richard Hoggart then teaching at a Workers' Educational Association at Hull University. He gained first hand knowledge of "how it felt to move from working class to university circles in a country where a sharply differentiated system of public and private education bifurcated the population, normally along class line". This means that the real origin of British cultural studies was in the non-traditional classroom teaching experience.

The concept of culture in Cultural Studies is diametrically opposed to the Eliot-Leavis idea of culture. Generally speaking, culture is a key concept in sociology along with the concept of socialization. Culture is used to refer to values, customs, practices and styles of behaviour of a society or a social group, or even of the individuals. All these are part of the socialization in the process by which people learn certain norms, values, and roles approved by the society. People discussing cultural activities tend to dwell on their descriptive parts and try to establish how much they conform to or diverge from the approved practices. Discussions about how these approved practices have developed and been made acceptable to the society or the community at large do not usually take place. Moreover, we do not hear to what extent these practices are used by the society for replicating its social institutions and thereby to create apparatus to control the masses.

One explanation is that they develop because of the society's necessity to hold itself together. In other words, a kind of solidarity is developed in the society so that the parts that create the society are not disintegrated. The

solidarity is strengthened by accommodation of all differences at the core as well at peripheries. The solidarity in the society persists because 'differences' are accommodated with a general consensus. These differences may be of varying nature, but one very basic difference is the unequal treatment of the citizens in the society. Such unequal treatment may be based on historical situation (e.g. ruler and the ruled, nobility and the commoner, caste system) or may be newly determined (job stratification, status ascription, ethnicity). People have accepted such inequality, however inhuman, since ages. How could this consensus be created and retained? Cultural studies aims to find an answer to this obstinate question.

In other words, a consensus either covert or overt about the social asymmetric becomes acceptable to the people and which it strives to maintain. This accommodation is made possible since the basic human needs of material (such as food, shelter, health care etc) and non-material (such as love, affection often expressed in the Arts) elements are common to all. The material and non-material needs help the creation of social consciousness, the totality of which is glorified by the societal apparatus of varying nature. Another well-known explanation can lie in the superstructure of the society, which is based on an economic foundation. Common, divergent and conflicting ideas are all accommodated within an approved conceptual framework. Even then, not all ideas can be acceptable. There are always other norms, values and roles outside the approved ones, and the society, in order to sustain its 'approved' character must stifle any attempt to switch to 'the other'.

So far, literature and media are the two major vehicles for ensuring continuation of the consensus about the social asymmetric. These two disciplines and their practices use the Eliot/Leavis meaning of culture. On this simplistic statement, the study of culture may become a study of the social asymmetric. The social asymmetric will most certainly refer to the practice of domination and subordination. Cultural studies in this way may try to determine how the inequalities, dominations and subordinations become acceptable. A society that is deeply divided between various social classes and in which the necessity calls for changes can be the focal point of cultural studies. Contributions are taken from political writings as those of Marx and Gramsci and from language/semiology theorists like Roland Barthes.

I find that my doctoral degree in cultural studies is a non-event in Bangladesh, since there is hardly any platform to discuss the subject, or engage in discourse/debate for exchanging ideas. I have recently discovered that a number of faculty members involved in teaching literature (specifically English literature) and Journalism at university level have been referring to cultural studies in their taught courses. This is indeed very encouraging, and I feel something more definitive may come out of their interest in the near future. Still I have doubts if their interest is superficial.

May be the novelty in the expression Cultural Studies and the introduction of new departments/centres for cultural studies at many advanced universities worldwide have drawn some scholars, particularly historians, litterateurs, and media professionals of Bangladesh to this arena. They have not really dipped themselves into cultural inequalities and asymmetric of our society since there is really no material need or urgency to overcome them. We read TS Eliot and Leavis admiringly, and find the western media as our pathfinder. We also read Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart to get a sniff of philistinism in the western world. But have we, the culture bearers really delved into the social asymmetric in our society? Have we engaged ourselves in any debate about the meaning of culture and how traditional views are subscribed by the masses? Do we have any scholars dealing with the meaning of ideology?

If the answers to the above questions are 'no' or even 'yes, but', I am afraid Cultural Studies will only be a fashionable diversion, an interesting academic pursuit of the privileged few who at heart remain elites or upper class while denouncing social inequalities, like many of our friends in the Left. Can I say this with any certainty?

The writer is Librarian, Planning and Development, Dhaka University Library