

# Mamunur Rashid's Oeuvre

PROFESSOR SHAFI AHMED

Shakespeare found the world a stage. Similar comments could be found in literatures, oral or written, of places across the globe. Theatre, by its original root, is a fleeting place. A great tragedy may follow a high comedy on the same stage on the same day. Theatre, with all its props, music, light and design and the charm of acting as well as the high volume of pomp and grandeur is simultaneously glorious and transitory. Even in its documented form in celluloid, it gets regrettably metamorphosed, never the same thing as it was in its performance. The portrait gallery that we see in some theatre houses of the great actors, directors and producers remains only images that may persuade us to delve into the past to excavate the works with which they were involved. And it can be treated as a petty something but nothing more.

About a month ago, I got hold of a pictorial biography, very sketchy though, of Mamunur Rashid, one of the very important contemporary theatre

school where he had his early education. At the same time, we get the social scenario. The reference to teachers speaks of a traditional educational environment that we nostalgically miss today. That's the beauty of the story. We are not supplied with many details but the construction of a social system can be understood with hints and references provided in the book. That way, the book may claim to be an apology for a standard biography. But the narrators have a design. They want to serve a dual purpose. The story of the making of an actor is there. And they have a very thoughtful plan to overdress the words with pictures putting the readers to a problem of categorising it, whether this is a biography or an album. The clever answer would be it is both.

The book does not allow us any opportunity to concentrate absolutely on Mamunur Rashid. The narrators do intervene at frequent intervals to remind the readers that they reserve the authority. So they sometimes create a space of

in the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 is not much known even to his admirers like me. But hailing from Tangail, a place which became so famous for the resistance put up under the leadership of Kader Siddiqui, Mamun could not be just a fugitive from the wrath of the Pakistani soldiers or a calm and quiet and good-for-nothing obedient citizen. Mamun played his role as best as he could to contribute to our freedom.

Mamunur Rashid is generally known to us as a powerful actor and director. But he does stand apart. We all can understand that. We can easily trace the evolution of his career. And the evolution is not mono-dimensional. Mamun walks with the theatre, the narrator emphasizes on that in the very title of this book. But from the book again, we form an idea of the making of that theatre person, which is not unilateral. He made some brief experiments with writing verses; he could have ended up as an expert technician if he could have survived as a good student in the polytechnic; he felt attracted to be a



personalities of Bangladesh. The story has two narrators: Faiz Zahir and Hasan Shahriar. They go on telling Mamunur Rashid's story right from his birth to his latest production. This is a bilingual work; the English translation is done by Shahidul Mamun. They are very conversant about Mamun and moreover, the three are heavy frequenters to theatre space. Hasan Azizul Huq, a veteran fiction writer of our country has made some brief prefatory remarks, more from a private perspective than any graphic evaluation of this thespian's work.

This is a fine work with pictures competing with the words for occupation of space. Interesting information has been furnished about Mamun's premature birth and birthday, and the nomenclature of his theatre group-Aronyak. We get to know his nickname, which possesses some connotation that proper names usually do not. The narrators artfully take us to the village Mamun was born and brought up, the

suspension saying that the references made here will be dealt with later in a more elaborate way. However, the readers can have some sound idea of the person who constitutes the thematic unity. As we get to know some important literary figures like Rafiq Azad, Ashraf Siddiqui, Abul Hasan and Nirmalendu Goon who are relatives, mentors and friends to Mamun. The story takes us to unfold the critical times of history when Hindus are silently leaving their homes to some strange destinations. And we get the cultural scenario of rural Bengal with some fantastic performances based on great myths. We can fairly understand the making of Mamun, the child, the boy now stepping in the threshold of youth. With the passage of time, the rural boy gets the taste of urban life that naturally not only plays a vital role to construct his emotional and intellectual maturity but also generates in him to find out way that will be meaningful both at the personal and social levels. Mamun's involvement

scholar in English literature but he was primarily discouraged, finally he got a degree in political science, which was not much for the academic reason. Rather, he just appeared at the exams to earn a degree to add very humbly to his credentials. Mamun would probably like to forget those earlier days with a silent blush. He added so many feathers to his feat later as a person dedicated to arts. But as we all know and this book also wants to underline that his ceaseless attachment to theatre arts has been unquestionably connected with commitment to people. His association with the student wings of political parties, his preference to be in constant association with political, social and cultural personalities would clearly suggest that he is conscious of his role as a theatre person. His vocation for art as the explicator of life took him to writing of film scripts. But he could quickly understand that was not his cup of tea.

To be concluded in the next issue.

## PRIMAL KNOWLEDGE

ABUL HASAN

Translated from the Bengali: SM SHAHRUKH

So many years gone by, but oh! wonder, yet to learn  
Why a forest needs different array of trees to become a forest?  
Torrents of transparent water needed to make a rampaging river?  
Blood requires so much bloodshed for freedom?

So many years gone by, but oh! wonder, yet to learn  
Why the woods stay so far away from localities?  
Why teenaged girls are so indifferent, why do they prefer  
aloofness?  
Why the river cannot flow in tune unless it has immense depth?

So many years gone by, but oh! wonder, yet to learn  
Why so much thirst at the sparrow's beaks?  
Why so much fire intrinsic in hay, such burning?  
Why a rose is still a rose with all the pestilence, all the filth?

So many years gone by, but oh! wonder, yet to learn  
Why an infant is engulfed by sleep, why so deep the snooze?  
And why our eyelids won't shut, then, in slumber like the baby?



## The Investigative Report

REZAUDDIN STALIN

Translated from the Bengali: Gulshan Ara Kazi

The dead body of a seemingly unknown young man  
Came floating in the river  
So began the investigation.

All media, newspaper, internet, television  
Began spreading the news like roots of a tree  
Someone posted a selfie of a handsome young man  
From the memory of his mobile phone  
Who was this young princely looking angelic man?  
What was his religion?  
His identifiable body part was eaten by the sea creatures.

Most of the young women of the city  
Fantasised him as a romantic lover  
Someone thought he was her missing husband  
An older couple cried out in grief  
Thinking he was their lost son.

For his funeral  
Widows began to weave silky muslin  
Someone went to buy t-shirt & jeans  
Someone got pure cotton "Dhuti" and another got amber cloak  
Facebook & twitter was flooded with Rumours and suspicious comments  
Camera, media & laptops  
Was following the investigators closely.

A woman came pushing through the crowd claiming  
The body is not of an unknown person  
He was my husband  
Another woman cried out saying he was my boyfriend  
An old lady screamed out with heart rending cry  
The young man was my missing son  
Another person screamed, this is the body of my one and only brother  
Someone said this is my son  
Who was taken in by white uniform clothed men!

Even the invisible leaves of treeless city began whispering  
The young man's identity was not unknown  
Everyone said, there was no need for an autopsy  
No need to torture him further with cruel knife.

Political leaders came forward by public demand  
How should the body be treated?

Some said he should be cremated with fragrant sandal wood fire  
May be his saintly body should be buried wrapped in a white "Kafon"  
Some put a cross on his chest & said  
He should get the blessings of Mother Mary  
And buried in a wooden coffin.

An elderly lady came running saying  
He is immortal, ever pure  
He should be floated in a floral bed on the river

Just the way Moses was floated on the Nile River by his mother  
And Lakhindor was floated by Behula  
He will be greeted as a hero at every coast  
A righteous man humbly proposed "Now he needs a name  
Which would be totally unique and acceptable to everyone".

May be his name should be Mohammad, the most pious one  
May be David, the most innocent one  
Since he turned blue probably due to cruel torture, he should be named Krishna  
Looking virtuous like Buddha, maybe he should be called "Borua".

Everyone prayed for his soul according to their faith  
Wishing that since he was deprived of his worldly pleasure  
May he be blessed with eternal peace and tranquility of heaven!

Accordingly, the investigative report was released  
The body was not of an unidentified young man  
His name was Mohammad David Krishna Borua.

“ব্যঙ্গ-সৃষ্টিতে অসাধারণ প্রতিভার প্রয়োজন। ... বন্ধু আবুল মনসুরের হাত-সাহায্যে দেখে বিস্মিত হলাম। ভাষার কান মলে রস সৃষ্টির ক্ষমতা আবুল মনসুরের অসাধারণ। এ যেন পাকা গুস্তাদী হাত।”

-কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম



আবুল মনসুর আহমদের  
শ্রেষ্ঠগল্প

সম্পাদনায়  
ড. নুরুল আমিন

Home Delivery Service

www.rokomari.com

16297



Scan this QR CODE

আজিজ সুপার মার্কেট, শাহবাগ: প্রথমা (৯৬৬৪৮২৫), পাঠক সমাবেশ (০১৭১৩০৩৪৪০)  
কাঁটাবন: প্রকৃতি (০১৭২৭৩২৮৭২৩), বেইলি রোড: সাগর পাবলিশার্স (৯৩৫৮৯৪৪)  
বিমান বন্দর: বুক ওয়ার্ম (৯১২০৩৮৭), নরসিংদী: বই পুস্তক (০১৮১৮৫৩৪৮৯৩)  
কুষ্টিয়া: বইমেলা (০১৭১১ ৫৭৫৬০৬)।

চট্টগ্রাম: বাতিঘর (০১৭১৩৩০৪৪৪), প্রথমা (০১৭১১৬৪৯৪২২)