

EXPLORING TARASHANKAR BANERJEE'S LITERARY LEGACY: REALISM, MYTHOLOGY, AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

Dr. Md Siddique Hossain

M.A.(Bengali & in Education), B.Ed., M.Ed., M.Phil., Ph.D.(Bengali & in Education), D.Litt.

Assistant Professor, Department of Bengali, Bangabasi Morning College

19, Rajkumar Chakraborty Sarani, Kolkata- 700009, West Bengal, India

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3912-7101>

Email: mdsh803@gmail.com

Introduction: Tarashankar's Literary Foundation

In Tarashankar's literature, the tragedy of the degenerate human being in the face of ever-changing times—the defeat of the dilapidated old in the competition with the new—is prominent. Tarashankar Banerjee (23 July 1898 – 14 September 1971) was the leading poet and lyricist of the sceptical and restless disbeliever era. Sharp observation power, sharp experience of time, real life's obstacles, and a resistant mentality are the foundations of Tarashankar's stories and novels, which span a period of forty-five years (1926–1971), marking a significant turning point in the history of modern India.

Origins and Societal Observations :

He was born and raised in the zamindar clan of Lovepur in Birbhum. Tarashankar witnessed firsthand the rise, fall, decline, and decay of the feudal system, which enriched him with diverse experiences. Thus, Tarashankar became Rajabanga's orator. Despite being self-reliant and devoted to life, this fiction writer is not entirely 'Kallole'; he is not a citizen writer. He is a simple talker about soil and people. Because of this, he didn't have to search for the materials needed for his creation. The source of the material was the people and nature rooted in Birbhum's village environment.

Cultural and Religious Diversity :

In the Perspective of Literature, Society, Art, and Tradition: The Heterogeneous Alchemy of Tarashankar's Creation, Shri Vinay Ghosh asserts in his 'Textbook of Culture of West Bengal' that 'the great region of Bengal' is dominated by the tribal chief. Tarashankar observed the existence of various religious groups such as Vaishnavas, Bauls, Tantrics, Fakirs, Vedas, and Ojhas. This explains why it's evident that "all the distinct forms and remnants of the primitive tribal culture and the folk culture of the foundation of the royal society are like pebbles embedded in all parts of the village society." (Literary and Social Environment of Tarashankar).

The Artist's Social and Natural Environment :

In addition to the geographical and natural surroundings, the artist's mind also shapes the social and state environment. Whether the author is an objectivist or an artist is a matter of long-standing debate. But the fact is, no writer, poet, or artist can create without being aware of society. They write for people. Belinsky's belief is that "every work of art must be regarded as a product of the social struggle...every work of art is considered

as a reflection of society." Just as Gustav Flaubert thinks that the heart and intellect are inseparable, Tolstoy says in his book *What is Art?*

Tarashankar's Inspiration and Realist Vision :

That's right, Tarashankar was inspired to write by reading stories in the newspaper 'Kallol'. What was there? Literary writer Narayan Gangopadhyay wrote in his essay 'Atmdeep Tarashankar' that the work of Kalloliya was the revelation of the cruel, difficult life, the ironic failure of human service, and the realist vision of the source of uncovered primitiveness. Tarashankar felt real attraction there. As subjugation and the Swadeshi movement stirred him, he also saw and painted the forms of human instincts. All are related to society and individuals. According to Mohitlal Majumdar, Tarashankar is "the narrator of Bengali society and the ethnic life of the Bengali nation."

The Realism and Vision of Tarashankar's Art :

When we delve into Tarashankar's artistry, we discover that he struggled from the very beginning to match the shape of a 'living body' with the needs of 'life'. However, his experience with life and living organisms is unique—the village life of Birbhum Lovepur, his birth land, near Raja Pratyantar. In a life of illiteracy, social neglect, financial emptiness, and superstition, the primitiveness that was deeply embedded in it was far away, his experience in the degraded urban landscape was far away, and his dreams were unimaginable. Tarashankar saw this life and its crises with the feeling of a rural landed aristocracy. He was the ultimate champion of the fragile Zamindari system.

Tarashankar's Distinct Style and Composition :

Be that as it may, in fact, the spirit of the new age was manifested in his being to a distinct degree. That is why he did not have a heart match with 'Kallol'. There have been some debates on both sides. However, there is no way to avoid the swadharma of self-made internal churning in the coming time. Rather, his impression is self-printed by Tarashankar. Tarashankar's style was spirit-inspired; the artistic value of Tarashankar's stories lies in the combination of the artist's inclination and preparation with the writer's desire and intense intention. Not only that, the level of sense of this art value. His different compositions are different in composition. The novel 'Story of Nagini Kanya' is also painted in the color of this consciousness.

Synopsis of 'Story of Naginikanya' :

The novel begins with the monstrous form of the Hijal Bill, and gradually evolves into a serpentine narrative. Ultimately, this narrative is considered a rich chapter in Raja's folk culture. This novel tells the tale of how the two protagonists, Shabala and Pindala, liberated themselves from the confines of folklore, beliefs, and myths, transforming into human beings and human maidens.

Manasa-Mangalkavya Tradition and Modern Perspective :

In the story of Naginikanya, Tarashankar skillfully re-created the tradition of Manasa-Mangalkavya, combining a unique writing style with the careful fluency of a modern perspective. Meanwhile, he skillfully composed epics detailing the life of Vishveda. Not only did the peculiarities of the Vedic community, as described in 'Naginikanyar Kahini', come to his attention, but they also emerged in the same way in the novel.

Even within the detailed description of Nagini Kanya's story, the author lucidly draws the reader's attention to the characteristics of the particular Naga sects, such as the Stishveda, the Vishveda, the Islamiveda, and the Metelveda.

In-depth Analysis and Character Exploration :

Before getting to the heart of the intimate reading of the novel, it is necessary to say something more about Tarashankar's literature, and it is very important to review the character analysis of Nagini Kanya. Man has no freedom from this instinct; he has no power to avoid the inevitable consequences of an unfathomable destiny. The character of the tragedy of his literature lies in the feeling of helplessness of man toward that instinctive destiny. The beauty of that destiny in life is sometimes visible, sometimes immeasurable. Sometimes it is rooted in the tradition of performance, and sometimes it is entirely the antarlavartini of the Krishna-yabnika of the stage of life.

Tarashankar's Visionary Depth :

Tarashankar has delved into the depths of visionary life in search of this fate-controlled eternal mystery. not analysis; neither explanation; nor the solution to the mystery. This book opening is the eternal effort of the artist of life. The pursuit of great literature is the pursuit of conquering the great fear that is the constant companion of people in the life of decay, disease, and death—by witnessing the inevitable fate of the common man and melting in supreme compassion for the unfortunate people. Tarashankar's literature is characteristic of this great literature. A prime example of 'Story of Nagini Kanya'.

Realistic and Mythological Elements in 'Naginikanya' :

In the novel, we see that the narrative begins with the monstrous form of Hijal Bill and that the narrative gradually becomes serpentine. Ultimately, this narrative is considered a rich chapter in the folklore of Raja. The beginning of the novel's inner world is specially decorated. Thus, the spiraling rhythm of the female body combines with the boisterous movement of the Rudrani form of nature. Especially those social-family-environmental-lifestyle diverse reforms and diverse lifestyles—some mundane, some ultra-mundane or super-natural meditations and beliefs fertilized in the closed ground—are alive in the self-expression of new life inquiries.

Descriptive Imagery of Nature :

At the beginning of the novel, one can notice the impeccable narrative of nature. As if the picture were drawn in the artistic beauty of the picture, arranged in cotton. On the foothills of Ma-Bhagirathi, there is a procession of grasses and grasses in the grasslands, and in the midst of it, a collection of large cedar trees. Taller than a man's head is the Ulughas Kashsar, and the Siddhi tree is tied to the trees. In the meantime, separated from the flow of the Ganges, the Hijal Bill (the main plot of the novel along with the stream) draws various shapes.

Seasonal Changes and Symbolism :

The morphology of the Hijal Bill also varies according to the season. During the rainy season, the Hijal Bill expands and becomes deeper due to increased rainfall. In winter, the water level in the Hijal Bill decreases as a result of the Ganges' gravitational pull, and the heat from the sun causes the water to evaporate, causing the

Hijal Bill to break into smaller pieces. The Nala Shatanari converges with the flow of the Ganges at the Hijal Bill. Since Ashwin's arrival, the incomplete bills have resembled the sound of black rubies clinking together, as if they were part of a necklace.

Tarashankar's Poetic Depiction of Nature :

Tarashankar's depiction of the natural state of Hijal Beel in the supreme inspiration showcases his inherent poetic sensibilities. He describes the water in Hijal Beel as being intensely black, with the blue sky appearing to rest upon its surface, resembling a slumbering entity. Flora blossoms in the adjacent prairies. The flowers, referred to as Kashful, bear a resemblance to sharfuls and are embellished with delicate white plumes, similar to Rashi. From afar, it appears that the white autumn clouds have descended upon the banks of the Hijal Bill, blending with its dark black hue that dissolves, merges, and gathers in the water of the Hijal Bill.

The Sound and Scent of Hijal Bill :

The distinctive feature of the Hijal Bill's call lies not only in its fragrance but also in its singular sound. Hijal Bill emitted an unusual noise. Should the rider be in a state of slumber, the auditory stimulus will rouse him. The volume of that sound is equal to its peculiarity. Amidst the act of elevating the volume to its maximum level, it resembled the piercing sound of a verinad echoing through the sky: The repeated sound "Kar Kar Kar Kar Kar Kar Kar." The resounding noise, reminiscent of thunder, extended across the expanse of the Hijal horizon.

Interaction with Nature's Wonders :

The equestrian awakens and displays a bewildered expression—what transpired? Where and by whom is the trumpet played? Is the trumpet audibly emanating from the sky? Who is participating in the activity? The boatman chuckles at the rider's astonishment, gazes at the nocturnal sky, and declares, "I am Bird Babu, the 'Gagan-Veri'; soaring with delight." Observe the colossal avian creature soaring in the atmosphere, propelled by its immense wingspan. The call resembles the sound produced by a beri, which is why it is called Gagan-Beri. As a descendant of Garuda, Garuda himself soars through the sky, bearing Lakshminarayana on his back. The offspring leave before the execution of this verinad melody. The driver will inform the rider. They possess knowledge of this celestial information.

Social Power and Traditions in the Narrative :

The other avian species beneath also emitted vocalisations. They are also ecstatic about the deity's presence. The duck fair is situated on the chest of the bill, while the month of Kartika remains unexplored. A multitude of ducks, displaying a diverse array of shapes and colours, have arrived and settled into their nests. Drifting in the water, submerging, ascending, colliding with the aquatic vegetation around the beak and consuming it, plunging and collecting the mollusks, growling, contorting and rotating, circling, leaping, and once again buoyant in the water. Many species of ducks produce vocalisations that resemble a caw. The sound consists of repeated calls, with a combination of "call," "caw," and "caw-o." He bears the resonance of the verinas within him.

Fear and Danger in the Grassy Forest :

But fear is not enough. A wild boar's stick fatally struck the leopard. The Goalara farmers of this country teamed up to find and kill the tyrannical leopard wild boar. However, the tiger-pig is not the only threat to be feared. Tigers and Shuyors are also terrified of them. As they walk along a narrow path in the grassy forest, the danger of a sudden encounter with death appears in their eyes. Startled by the slightest sound, he stops and listens for a soft growl. From somewhere—perhaps from the bough of a sycamore tree, or from among the dense undergrowth of a cedar, or from the web of vines spread over the head of a thick forest—a stout long rope would come whistling like a whip upon his body, and a slit would dangle before his eyes. In a moment, the thin tongue will fall like a fiery needle. Immediately, a feeling of electric shock will run through the veins and nerves of the body from head to toe. The world will shake, and the entire body will tremble. Then he can't think anymore; he retreats a few feet in fear.

Mythological and Realistic Fusion in Hijal Bill :

Ma-Mansar Atan in Hijal Bill. Padmavati is nesting in the lotus-shell forest of Hijal Forest. Chando Madhukar drowned Ben's seven dingas in the stormy ocean, brought them here, and hid them. During Kalidah's time in Vrindavan, Kalo Thakur left Kalidah, wearing a stick on his head, and settled here. Khaliag said, You punished me and exiled me from here; but tell me where to go? Tagore said, Hijal Bill, there are no people living on the banks of Bhagirathi; go there. If you're not convinced, consider taking a boat ride on the Ganges during the monsoon season, when the Ganga floods and the Hijal Bill merge into one. You will see water, water, and water. From north to south and from east to west, there is no land but water. The heads of the zhau and the cedar rise above the water. Look at the birds flying in the sky.

Folk Tales and Mystical Elements :

Wings flutter, yet he does not sit on the tops of the trees; occasionally, a very tired bird twists around the tree and tries to fly again, emitting a desperate cry as if it were dying. Why do you know? Stare at the tops of the trees. Your body will shiver. Maybe he will collapse in fear. Mother Mansa's mortal daughter, Vratkatha, will recall the image she saw on her mother's south side. Mother told Ben's daughter to 'look in all directions; don't just look south'. Ben's daughter hails from the southern region and arrived in the mortal world from Naglok. I couldn't help but look at it. Upon closer inspection, I observed that it had collapsed. The monstrous image depicts Ma-Mansa Bishari sitting on the padmasana of python coils in front of the dark pylon of Mrityupuri on the south side. He is wearing his raktambar, a pingal jattajut on his head, a pingal naggers entwined on his head, snake ornaments all over, Gokhura holding a fana umbrella on his head, Chitrita, i.e., a ring of Chiti snake on his wrist, and Sankhini Maninaga wears a snake conch on his arm, while Haridrak adorns his neck like a green emerald necklace, symbolizing the Laudga snake. Kalnagini drapes his indigo Aparajita necklace across his chest, Takshak adorns his ears, Chandrachitra, akin to Chandrabora's moon necklace, adorns his waist, and a golden-colored, slender snake encircles his legs. like: The serpent has become a chamar; the serpents are giving wind to that chamar—poisonous wind.

Mystical Elements and Human Emotions :

She's gazing at the wind. The Bishakumbha rests on the mother's shoulder; from this Kumbha, she pours poison into a conch cup, drinks it, and then swallows the poison to fill the Bishakumbha. On the Mritupuri pillar near the mother's seat, darkness is falling. He is always ready to repel the attacks of Shakuni-Gridhini. He is always ready to repel Shakuni-Gridhini's attacks. Next, look at the branches. You will see that everything is moving, swinging, and sometimes standing up. Snakes—all snakes. The Hijal grass forest is drowning in floods, and snakes are climbing on tree branches. How many new eras and countries are floating in the Ganges? Be very careful! Pay close attention to the water current surrounding you; it's possible that a snake, floating in the current, may approach the boat's edge. Avoid tree trunks carefully; snakes may jump from above. It's possible that the snake will land on your head. "Where is Bandhibi, who is inside your head?" Hijal Bill has eight pages of Ma-Mansa; the rumour is not false.

Ancient Narratives and Symbolism :

Shivaram Sen, an ancient poet, tells the story of Hijal. The famous Dhurja was born in the Dhanvantari dynasty of that period as Shivaram Sen, the disciple of Kaviraj. The story of Naginikanya can be found in Tarashankar Banerjee's 8th edition of Prakash Bhavan, published in April 2013, on pages 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Long passages of quotations clarify the dramatic environment of fables, legends, folklore, myth, dialectical reality, and the pace of the story. Looking at the tree reveals what you can see. Maybe you will see a big hooded cow holding the highest controls that dictate the fate of the two human girls' dreams: love, desire, sexual desire, and the ultimate limits of biological instinct.

Character Introduction: Shabla and Pingla :

In the depth of the character, we find the matriarchal society, or the glory of the patriarchal society, established on it before the complete disappearance of the matriarchal society: The novel Naginikanya features two main characters from the Vedic society of primitive, barren, dark marginal-class women: Shabla and Pingla. In their Shirveda, two figures stand out: Mahadeva and Gangaram. Additionally, Pingla's uncle Bhadu and Bhairav Nagu Tagore are prominent figures. Shivaram, the disciple of storyteller Dhurjatit Kaviraj, also makes an appearance. Tarashankar presents Shabla to the reader in the following way:

The Hijal Bill Setting and Encounter :

"Shivaram and two other students disembarked. The Acharya said, Be careful! Move with a careful eye. According to legend, Hijal's bill contains Visahari's atan. After eating and drinking, the boat entered a canal. The dense, tall grassy forest swayed on both sides of the boat. Shivaram said the grass forest concealed the greatest surprise. A coiled rope emerged from the nearby grassland. a snake Black—absolutely black as the clouds of the new moon night, her complexion as long as the oily braids of a beautiful beauty—and so is her black complexion. With the swiftness of an arrow, he plunged into the water and swiftly made his way across. When he dipped his face into the water in the middle, his faith gushed forth like a fountain. The boat then stopped. Shivram watches in bewilderment as there is a stir in the grassy forest behind him. Something more terrifying than a large snake is coming through the grassy forest with arrow speed. Shivaram was taken aback, but it wasn't a terrible sight. A girl came out of the grassland. The girl's body color resembles that of a black

snake. Following the snake, the girl jumped into the canal's water. However, a strange, acrid smell entered her nostrils, and a harsh, indignation-filled, shrill voice spoke in her ears. The voice's language and enunciation style were peculiar, yet they conveyed the meaning of the most wonderful sentences. labi? Run away and survive. Mui tur yam. Will you escape from my hands? Said to that snake. He jumped into the water and swam away. Snake Yama? Chasing the snake? Who is this girl? The canals are strangely crooked. At the edge of a curve, he vanished from sight. The story of Naginikanya, as recounted by Tara Shankar Banerjee in the Eighth Edition of Prakash Bhavan, was published in April 2013.

Religious Conflict and Social Power :

Shabla is known as the Prathama 'Naginikanya, while Brahmacharini adheres to the Naginikanya religion. Samajpati Shirbeda is vigilant about protecting their religion. In the primitive and dark world of the Vishwaveda, they are the epitome of 'virtue' amidst all the vices and lawlessness, so in the last state, the maidens are the most powerful in the society. The shirvedas The shirvedas, fearful of the natural and indomitable movements of the naginikanyads' biological instincts, are determined to bind them to the strict discipline of their time. The conflict between human beings and goddesses makes their stories more powerful, alive, and realistic.

Shirveda's Control and Shabla's Defiance :

However, when a woman becomes a nagini and sheds her human shell to become a lecher, Shirvedera, noticing the tension in her every breath through the secret passageway, prescribes a "strangely cruel and inhuman composite process" to appease her. sitting in the temple. But once she leaves the house, she forgets about her vows. She wants to find her human nature. However, society doesn't want him. His forbidden race is his mortal enemy.

Shabla's Internal Conflict and Love :

When the body and soul are both tempted, the sound of the flute resonates in the ears. A young boy from Bedepara played the flute in the life of Nagini's daughter, Shabla. The intention was not to lead him astray, but to inspire dreams of emigration and home construction. As the wise sage Shirvede says, Vedyuvaka explained to Shabala, with his healthy and simple sense of life, that people are never nagini. He waited night after night for Shabla, sometimes on the village's edge, sometimes on the Ganges' banks. Shabla did not leave. Bishahari's displeasure is his greatest fear. However, the crisis arose. One day in Achambi, Veda's son died of a snakebite. Stunful moans of pain. To Shivaram, Shirvede neatly explained the whole incident as an accident.

Mahadev's Intent and Social Conflict :

And then, in a fit of rage, Shabala explained in no uncertain terms that it was Mahadeva who had deliberately invited danger by leaving the unshaven Rajgokhro alive. Not only was Joan Bede the target of his wrath, but so was Shabala himself. Shabler's assumption is not wrong. Mahadev himself could not hide his true intention from Shivram in his careless speech: "God's will, please understand, Lari Baba, it is not only about the food of Rajagokhura, but about the food of sinners and sinners." Needless to say, social power belongs to Shirveda, even if truth and justice are on Shabala's side. In the final episode of the Mahadeva-Shabala conflict, a new

maiden unexpectedly discovered the nagachakra on her forehead on the day of the Vedic awakening festival. Vadu Shirvede, motivated by selfishness, forced his niece Pingala into a life of idle glory in order to keep Mahadev's mind at bay. According to the rules, the old nagini-kanya Shabla had to leave."

The Cyclic Conflict in Pingala's Story :

Shabala knows how painful this position is. Shabala was aware of the sexual lust and addiction that lurked beneath the cover of Shirveda's protection. So he warned Pingla. On the final night, Shirved, resembling a reptile, infiltrated Mahadev's boat, sexually assaulted Mahadev's bare body, and pierced Mahadev's chest with a deadly poisonous thorn as a form of revenge. Furthermore, after Vishvede's departure from society, Shabala opened the eyes of the next maiden, Pingla, with the words, "You should not read like us; read like us; do not love Shirvede." Upon becoming a full-time young woman, Pingla's face radiated determination and strong conviction. Her eyes are like those of wild cats in the dark. After Mahadev, he fears the eyes of the jailer; more crooked in intellect than Mahadev, Gangaram is skilled in food preparation.

Pingala's Love and Conflict :

Another narrative of conflict and hatred begins as Pingala freely identifies Gangaram's sins. The narrative retraces the history of Mahadev-Shabla, but the events change slightly. Love comes into Pingala's life. Pingla's life takes a dramatic turn when Naguthakur makes an unexpected appearance in Bedepara. Naguthakur wants Pingla; he thinks his life is in vain without her. Pingla also pursued Naguthakur's path. Gangaram prepares for Naguthakur's death. Pingla stood up. However, the conflict between Naginikanya and Manavikanya began to work for him.

Tragic Conclusion :

In the end, Pingla's love did not end. The self-deprecating Pingla chooses the path of self-immolation, following the cunning Shirved's tricks. In both Shabla-Pingla stories, love ends in blood and death. Conclusion: "Santali's story is over; Nagini Kanya's story is over. Let those who hear it shed two drops of tears!" Even after the maidens' transformation from deity to femininity, the hope of creating a new narrative remains dormant. The pulse of the new life-and-death struggle carries the promise of new questions and unquestionables in the tone of the author's final melancholy."

Reference Books:

1. Banerjee, Tarashankar: The Story of Naginikanya, 2013 April, Prakash Bhavan.
2. Mukhopadhyay, Dhruvakumar, Edited: Tarashankar's Naginikanya Kahini Textbook: 1414 Falgun, Ratnavali.
3. Bhattacharya, Dr. Vishvabandhu: Chotagalpe Aye Tarashankar-Vibhutibhushan-Manik Banerjee: June 2000, Granthvikash (Bama Pustakalaya).
4. Basu, Dr. Nitai, Shilipmanas of Tarashankar, April 1988, Day's Publishing.
5. Mukhopadhyay, Arunkumar, Seventy-Five Years of Kale Pratima Bengali Novels: 1923-1997, April 1974, Day's Publishing.

6. Mukhopadhyay, Arunkumar, The Bengali Novel of the Twentieth Century from Madhyahn to Syahne, July 1994, Day's Publishing.
7. Banerjee, Tarashankar: The Story of Naginikanya, 2013 April, Prakash Bhavan.
8. Mukhopadhyay, Dhruvakumar, Edited: Tarashankar's Naginikanya Kahini Textbook: 1414 Falgun, Ratnavali.
9. Bhattacharya, Dr. Vishvabandhu: Chotalalpe Aye Tarashankar-Vibhutibhushan-Manik Banerjee: June 2000, Granthvikash (Bama Pustakalaya).
10. Basu, Dr. Nitai, Shilipmanas of Tarashankar, April 1988, Day's Publishing.
11. Mukhopadhyay, Arunkumar, Seventy-Five Years of Kale Pratima Bengali Novels: 1923-1997, April 1974, Day's Publishing.
12. Mukhopadhyay, Arunkumar, The Bengali Novel of the Twentieth Century from Madhyahn to Syahne, July 1994, Day's Publishing.
