



Research Paper

Feasibility Of Using Colonial Undertones In Nonsense Poetry: A Study Of Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol*

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of colonial undertones disguised under the attributes of literary nonsense had long been in vogue in Western literature for children. In Bengali literature, the genre of comic poetry gained impetus with the witty imaginative verses of Sukumar Ray, whose poems were studded with the socio-political satire of the colonial era, as well as reflecting the application of postcolonial literary theories of Bhabha, Spivak, Kipling, Fanon along with Michael Heyman's observation of Ray's spirit of whimsy (Kheyal rawsh). The paper aims to unravel the intended satire behind Ray's highly political nonsensical anthology Abol Tabol, trying to evaluate the core aspects of colonialism, thereby commenting on the viability and reasonableness of using the genre of children's literature as a tool for colonial resistance. The paper explores Ray's parody of the bhodrolok or Babu culture in the bilingual colonial atmosphere of urban Calcutta in the early decades of twentieth century, through the meeting of the magical and the real, fuelling the nationalist movements and political consciousness and envisioning unrestricted freedom and liberation from the shackles of the so called civilized white man's burden.

KEYWORDS: Colonial undertones, Bengali literature, Socio-political satire, postcolonial, spirit of whimsy, Babu culture, political consciousness, children's literature.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nonsense poetry, in Western Literature, has had a long and gradual evolution from the early 13th century to its maturity in the 19th century in the works of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. Literary nonsense, as a subgenre of children's literature, can operate at different levels. Scholars argue that literary nonsense is an interrogation of reality with children's literature being a tool of socialization, where nonsense exists for the sake of questioning the sense. It is a way of upsetting reality for the purpose of interrogating it. In India, children's literature through its subgenre of literary nonsense largely implies colonial undertones to expose the socio-political scenario of the colonial times, which turns out to be the most feasible form of camouflaging the protest against the colonial rule and exposure of the pseudo bourgeoisie Babu culture. In Bengali literature, Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol*, translated by Satyajit Ray himself, stands as an immortal work of nonsense literature with an incisive wit and vivid imagination. The presence of absurd and eccentric characters unobtrusively offers to the adult reader a parodic exposure to the socio-political issues of the time, particularly in the light of the colonial ideology and the strong resistance against it in the early 20th century. The poems illustrate the futility of human endeavour and the scorn it causes in the process in a comedic deliberation. Including an oblique satire, it becomes a masterpiece amongst the children's literature (literary nonsense) of the time, thus agreeing with the opinion of the 17th-century nonsense poet, John Taylor, who observed "For nonsense is rebellion and thy writing is nothing but rebellious, Warres inciting."

Although Trailakyanath Mukherjee had given his Bengali readers comedic aspects in his creation before Sukumar Ray, and Annadashankar Ray as well as Premendra Mitra had made their imprint in the post-Ray literary realm, they lacked Sukumar Ray's incisive sight into parodying the contemporary colonial culture and the deceit in it. Sukumar Ray grabbed on what Trailakyanath left unfinished, satirising the Babu culture imposed on the rising middle class by British imperialists and eventually by the colonisers themselves. In this way, his nonsense poetry becomes laden with anti-colonial ideas that float around in a shimmering haze beneath the garb of an apparently innocent nonsense poem. Ray, being interested in emphasising anti-colonial and educational techniques, likely authored children's literature in order to generate critical consciousness, particularly through questioning the function of reason. Nonsense literature, which is characterized by

'impossibilia', reversal, the ironical contrast between the serious and trivial, absurdity, exaggeration finds its way through the innocence and lucidity of children's literature and rhymes, which serves as a camouflaging tool for the resistance and protest that is being concealed under the 'nonsense'. In the introduction to his book *The Tenth Rasa*, Michael Heyman points out the fact that the tenth rasa is the 'kheyal rawsh' (rawsh refers to rasa) or the spirit of whimsy. The paper aims to look at how Sukumar Ray efficiently uses the spirit of whimsy and the concepts of nationalism, decolonization, identity crisis and others to analyze the colonial influence of the British imperialism in India, putting forward several theories and concepts, which reveal the feasibility of concealing protest against the contemporary socio-political milieu through children's nonsense rhymes. Sukumar Ray satirically puts forward the theory of the white man's burden, as well as key ideas of Spivak and Bhabha, thereby parodying the misgovernments and unleashing of their colonial aggression, under a humourous veil which becomes the main reason why nonsense literature is often chosen to disguise the real intent and symbolism, away from the notice of the ruling powers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper is mainly focused on Sukumar Ray's immortal creation *Abol Tabol*, an anthology of nonsense rhymes, translated by Satyajit Ray into English, which consists of 46 titled and 7 untitled short rhymes falling under the category of literary nonsense.

Studies on *Abol Tabol* provide a clearer picture of Sukumar Ray's techniques in employing certain concepts and themes that add to the charisma of the masterpiece. *Colonial India in Children's Literature* by Supriya Goswami assesses the prevalence of the colonial influences in children's literature by several authors over a long span of time, which includes Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol*. This supports the fact that nonsense literature, as a sub-genre of children's literature, have always been the first pick for such satiric expressions. A larger detail about children's literature and its area of representation has been explored in Peter Hunt's book *Understanding Children's Literature*, which provides a wide range of array about the various aspects of children's literature, and addressed the theoretical questions and the most important approaches to the field. All the authors in this book share their implicit belief of children's literature, which is worth reading and pondering for the adults. Since *Abol Tabol* is concerned with the white's powerful subjugation and treatment of the Indians and the protest against it, a lot about such issues can be learned from Donnarae MacCann's book *The White Supremacy in Children's Literature*, which blends the literary, political, personal and institutional history to show the range of white supremacist ideology. This study reveals that adult and child cultures overlap in parallel with how books for adults, schools, churches and government agencies similarly embrace black identity, culture and intelligence shows that many children's stories have political, social and literary contexts. This book shows how the link between the socialization of children in the 19th century and their conservative tendencies predicted the neglect of social justice in American welfare policy in the 20th century. *The Tenth Rasa: An Anthology of Indian nonsense* by Michael Heyman provides the idea of the spirit of whimsy which is employed effectively in Ray's poems. This wonderful collection of poetry and prose has been expertly translated from seventeen languages of India. The writers create doorways to wonderfully creative worlds filled by unusual characters and magical animals, where only gibberish makes perfect sense. The tremendously hilarious compilations amuses the readers from start to finish, cracking with humour, wordplay and wild rhymes, and frequently revelling in utter nonsense. Other than this, Asmita Mukherjee's work *To Laugh or not to laugh : An analysis of humour in Sukumar Ray's Abol Tabol* provides clarity over the elements of parody, satire and other nonsensical elements that build up the inconclusiveness and linguistic play, enabling the poems to be enjoyed as a perfect example of 'nonsense'. Shinjini Sarkar's *Sukumar Ray: The Power of words* examines the politics of the time of Ray, which tried to parody the colonial dominance and the rising middle class that was growing at the moment. In similar context, the growth of nationalism through the concept of childhood in Indian literature has been studied by Sreemoyee Dasgupta in her Phd thesis paper *Nationalism, Genre and Childhood in Colonial Indian Children's literature*. All of these vividly puts forward a sneak peek into Ray's world of nonsense, and his methodology of implying tools of literary nonsense to portray severe ideas and notions.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How the feasibility of using colonial undertones in children's nonsense literature is evident in Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol* which applies the elements of literary nonsense and theories of postcolonialism to parody the British Raj and voice an opposition to a violent, unfair, dismal and mechanized socio-political environment, through incongruity, exaggeration, absurdity and distortion of reality.

ANALYSIS

In colonial Bengal, the Indian children not only had access to the Victorian literature penned by the British, to enrich them with the culture of the ruling class, but also had access to children's texts written in vernacular by Indian authors. The growing incorporation of topics like the nation, nationalism, patriotism

accompanied the rapid growth of children's literature. This politicisation of children's books coincided with a rise in interest in folklore, fairy tales and fantasy. The importance of fantasy and imaginative play became acutely felt in the decades post Vidyasagar, when fictional texts were published alongside educational texts, and children's books comprised primarily of excerpts from English texts to be supplanted in popularity by original compositions by Indian authors. In the early twentieth century, fantasy and Carrollian nonsense became popular as a form of literary political protest when the act of defying the colonisers by creating a topsy turvy world of fantasy and nonsense reached its apogee in the works of Upendrakishore Ray Chowdhury, and his son Sukumar Ray, along with Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar's '*Thakumar jhuli*.' Children's fantasy works should be placed in this politically charged continuity of debate about literary forms, cultural indigenization and creative play as a form of resistance. The ideological benefits were amplified by the additional benefits made possible by the genre's formal qualities. The unique potential for the imaginative fantastic displacement allowed for the expression of political and social commentary that would otherwise have resulted in huge penalties for inciting discontent and rebellion. Authors who wrote about the radical and impossible in a fictitious environment that was not legally Bengal or India, could not be punished for their symbolic political expressions.

In the year 1887, Sukumar Ray was born. Upendrakishore Ray, his father, was a multi-talented genius who expressed himself via his poems, music, and paintings, as well as his profession as a printer. Sukumar grew up under his father's influence. He formed the Nonsense Club with his friends and relatives shortly after graduating from college. The club's name foreshadows the path his brilliance would go in the future years. He wrote two plays for the club, Jhalapala (Cacophony) and Lakshmaner Shaktishel (Lakshman and the Wonder Weapon), but neither of them offers any sign of Sukumar's peculiar sense of comedy. This was initially seen in the *Sandesh* magazine. In May 1913, Upendrakishore became the editor of the children's journal *Sandesh*. Sukumar returned home from England a few months later, where he had gone for further training in printing technology, and his articles and photographs began to appear in *Sandesh* as well. Sukumar Ray's comedy lacked malice, but not satire. He possessed two unique abilities: a keen sense of observation and an inexhaustible reservoir of creativity. And it is because of these two attributes that his characters (regardless of their arbitrary nature) take on a life of their own in front of our eyes.

The "indigenized" wonderful stories in children's books also served to instil in young readers a feeling of cautious hope and promise for the country's future. I believe that the ideological and formal conveniences provided by children's fantasy made it a perfect genre for depicting both the patriotic possibilities of decolonization and the reformatory and self-critiquing procedures required to be a liberal and self-determining society. Bengali children's writing from the early twentieth century is a great example of the force of Indian resistance, which emerges from the most subaltern of origins, to defy colonial oppression. As a result, Bengali children's books contribute significantly to the ideological disintegration of the colonial effort. Bengali children's authors were able to release their young readers from the shackles of colonial control, at least temporarily, by depicting the Bengali kid as the designated protagonist who was able to destabilise colonial mechanisms of power and authority. S. Ray, for example, depicts ravenous small toddlers who are capable of devouring British control in *Abol Tabol*. If Indian nationalists were increasingly willing to challenge British rule through agitation, boycotts, picketing, and other forms of civil disobedience by the early twentieth century, it can be argued that early Bengali children's authors like U. Ray and S. Ray contributed significantly to fanning these flames of nationalism, particularly among their young reader.

A fundamental component of nonsense poetry is 'impossibilia'. Noel Malcolm in *The Origin of English Nonsense* tracing the long history of impossibilia to Archilocus, Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Lucian and Rabelais, explicates the term as impossible natural phenomenon, inversions of animal behavior or reversal of relationships between animal and men. This is reflected in the list of beastly conjugation in the poem 'Khichudi', vivified visually by Ray's sketches. In the poem, mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects lose their innate natural qualities, becoming outlandish crossbreeds like Porcuduck, Stortle, Whalephant, Parakizard, Liontelope (translation by Satyajit Ray) amongst others. Though such loss of intrinsic behavior, habitat and food habit may sound nonsensical, it satirically reflects the cross cultural discrepancy- the peculiar hybrid class of Indian Babus, created by the British, to act as a link between the colonisers and the colonised in the 19th century. It is an oblique comment on the 19th century colonialist agenda of creating a class of Indian loyalists who were imparted with English education and initiated into the British way of life to act as a brick between the colonizers and the colonized populace, as manifested by the guidelines of Lord Macaulay's educational policy of 1835. Though this created a foundation for Bengal Renaissance, its offshoot was the Babu culture, comprising the Bengali sycophants of the British, blindly imitating the lifestyle and conduct. 'Baburam Sapure' also features nonsensical impossibilia in the speaker's expectation about the reversal of natural behavior of snakes. The snakes in the poem are expected not to "hiss", "butt", "whistle", "bristle", "slink about" or "show their fangs", but to feed on milk and rice. The speaker's cruel intention of bashing the head of such an intimidated snake is a satiric comment on the colonisers' expectation of a smooth and strifeless handover of power from the disempowered Indian rulers after which they would unleash their colonial aggression. Here the speaker's voice echoes that of the imperialist and Baburam represents the 18th century rulers of princely states who willingly

agreed to grant The East India Company the rights to purchase large areas of land and even collect taxes from the inhabitants. This can be observed in some decrees of the tenth Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar, later followed by the Nawab of Bengal and the Nizams of Hyderabad and Oudh.

In her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak claims and asserts that no critical perspective of imperialism can turn the other into a self, because imperialism's project has always historically refracted what might have been the absolutely other into a domesticated other that consolidates the imperialist self (Spivak 253). 'Bapuram Sapure,' reflects the British's attempt to domesticate Indians. The poem depicts a circumstance in which the poem's narrator - an unknown entity- asks Baburam, the snake charmer, to obtain two completely innocent snakes just so that the narrator might beat them and render them cold. In the colonizer's perspective, the snake, which is a sign of fertility in Bengal (and is even revered), is nothing more than Satan. The narrator wants to bash the head of the snake. His goal indicates the colonizer's brutal hegemonic power, which utilised violence to create dominance. The poem shows the terrible oppression and exploitation of the colonial subjects by the strong colonisers, as seen by the unwarranted aggression against the innocuous serpents.

Rudyard Kipling's concept of the 'White man's burden' refers to the idea that white people have a responsibility to control and pass on their culture to the nonwhite people, which is frequently used to justify European colonialism. Sukumar Ray in his poems, critiques this very idea by obliquely exposing the follies of the white bosses, triggering the political and nationalist consciousness among the patriotic Indians. Reversal, in several forms, is another unmistakable ingredient of nonsense literature. This too is abundantly present in *Abol Tabol*. Whatever is mighty queer elsewhere, is natural in the land of Bombardia. Somersaulting, as a peculiar Bombardian cure for the common cold, is a vivid physical inversion of the normative, such as framing chocolates or sticking nails in custard pies instead of eating them, using woollen wrappers when it is hot, immersing silver pocket watch in boiling butterscotch instead of consulting time with it, playing cricket with a pumpkin instead of a ball and dancing mazurkas, wearing garlands of hookahs instead of flowers. The poem '*Bombagorer Raja*' (translated as "*King of Bombardia*") parodies misgovernance through a non sensical picture of a topsy turvy world. Here food is wasted by the elites for frivolous pursuits like framing chocolates or sticking nails in custard pies. This king is shown to be engaged only in the trivial entertainment, with the ministers on his lap. The mockery of nepotism occurs in the encouragement given to the queen's brother, the king's aunt and the king's uncle. Progress in the land of Bombardia is arrested as the silver pocket watch is being boiled in butter scotch. The reversal of human behavior achieves incredible nonsensical appeal in '*Ramgarurer Chhana*' (translated as '*The sons of Rangaroo*'). Here the fundamental human instinct to laugh and be happy is contradicted by an obsessive commitment to melancholy, grieving and permanent despair. The poem is a light chastisement of those who condescend on laughter as frivolous or superficial. The solemn sons of Rangaroo end up in living an unnatural life, avoiding even the simple beauties of nature, such as the summer breeze, the autumn sky and the fireflies. '*The Sons of Rangaroo*' and '*The Old Tickler*' (*Katukutu Buro*) are studies in contrast. The latter satirizes the fellows who bore others with insipid jokes and the former derives fun over the over solemn 'bhodrolok', many of whom Ray had seen at the prayer meetings of the Brahma Samaj. Ray's sketch that combines a human face with a reptilian body, lends itself to the psychological metaphor of the forceful repression of instinct and spontaneity, signified by laughter. It is a chastisement of those whose mistake laughter as frivolity or superficiality. Metaphorically, however Ray maybe referring to the universal urge to laugh uncontrollably often for no reason. In the psychological sense, the tickler and its victim are the same person though in the narrative he is a strange and eccentric person. Nonsense poetry often includes mock catalogues and mock recipes, such as in Martin Parker's "*Bill of Fare*" and John Taylor's "*Taylor's feast*". Fanon's traumatic identity crisis comes to mind in this aspect. Psychic trauma, according to Fanon, occurs when a colonial subject realises that he can never achieve the whiteness he has been taught to crave, or lose the blackness he has been taught to disdain. Bhabha expands on this, claiming that colonial identities are always in flux and suffering. We are confronted with a strange circumstance in which a species' restriction of laughing causes the readers to laugh. The enjoyment comes from a crack in an intrinsic inequality, where one's horrible powerlessness leads to the amusement of the other. The laughter elicited by these phrases is far from light-hearted, and even borders on black humour, emphasising the colonial people's fragility.

In '*The Old Woodman*' (originally *Kathburo*), Ray satirizes the eggheads of his time, whose painstaking scholarship was of no pragmatic use. This nonsensical effect is achieved through a ludicrous list of the tastes of the inedible. The obsessed Woodman flaunts his vast knowledge of different categories of wood and enlists them. Nonsensical reversal appears in the poem too, through the anthromorphising of objects which, according to Malcolm, is a characteristic feature of Nonsense literature. Here, wood is shown to exude human states of mind when the woodman speaks about wooden villainy, wooden woes and wooden smiles. Absurdity and irony are complemented by exaggeration to evoke a sharp sense of nonsensical hilarity in many of the poems *Abol Tabol*. In '*Uncle's Invention*' (*Khuror Kawl*) the contraption strapped to the shoulder is mock praised as an everlasting boon on humanity. It is depicted as a brilliant incentive provided by a morsel dangling close to the mouth of a person, generating the urge to eat which makes a five mile walk seem like only one. Ironically, the walker never reaches or savours the nourishment, though he walks miles enticed by it, just as the

incentive driven worker never gets to win the reward or promotion. It focusses attention on duplicitous policy begun by the bourgeoisie imperialists but continued even in the postcolonial corporate culture. Ironically they realised too late that the high posts are reserved for the British and elites only, and the hungry person never gets to eat the food. In 'Missing Whiskers' (*Gonf Churi*), sheer nonsensical absurdity lies in the concept of the theft of something that can never be stolen. The Boss babu's anger and his abusing of his office subordinates, therefore acquire an air of pure nonsensical impossibility. Nonetheless, the poem realistically registers the power relationship between domineering authority and the submissive subordinates. In 'Odour in the Court' within the realistic framework of the King's court and the process of judgment, Ray introduces the nonsensical exaggeration of passing a verdict on a perfume, representing misgovernance. The poem also reflects the coloniser's inability to appreciate Indian perfumes like 'atar' in preference for western resources.

Michael Heyman recognizes Ray's skill for establishing or reinstalling the tenth rasa whimsy-if postcolonial critics discover politics lurking in his nonsense. He defends his position by first meditating on the significance of the nine existent rasas, claiming that any genuine art must elicit a mixture of these rasas. However, Ray's "creation of the rasa of whimsy" "revises nearly 1800 years of fundamental aesthetic philosophy, mandating the acceptance of nonsense as a serious, even conservative art form." This is because, despite the fact that Bharata identified the 'comic' mode, he devalued it by associating it with 'happy, a link that any modern theory of comedy, such as Freud's jokes, would call into question. Ray's restoration of the tenth rasa thus has some rather innovative and revisionist elements. The inclusion of 'whimsy in the pantheon of rasas and the assumption that it is the principal feature of nonsense legitimizes the genre in the view of all but the most artistically and traditionally conservative judges. In addition, combining whimsy with some other rasas provides a disruptive and perhaps hazardous idea.

The poems in the collection of *Abol Tabol* appreciate how the individual identity has been managed with the postcolonial discourses. It's worth noting in this context how Bhabha brilliantly integrates structuralist or post-structuralist and psychoanalytic research to construct his theory of postcolonial identity formation. Bhabha's 'hybridism' thesis is a strange mix of Lacan's and Fanon's theories of the 'other,' underlining the inherent ambiguity of White and Black binaries. This formation of stereotypes in colonial discourse foreshadows the master narratives' subversion through a counter-narrative that destabilizes the self/other binaries of whiteness and blackness. When English authorities attempted to turn 18th century Bengal into a collection of colonial subjects, what they actually wanted to do was create a new breed of mimic men who would be similar to Englishmen in spirit but not in substance. This stereotyping process is characterised by a visual metonymy that seems to mock and undermine colonial empire's biased pretensions: this sets the way for a dark laughing through forced cultural mimicking and transcendence. This imitation, in turn, shows the distinction between politeness and purposeful misrepresentation of it. At this moment, Sukumar Ray's "*Aye re Bhola, kheyal khola/ Matto madol bajiye aay*" becomes increasingly relevant. The reference to 'Bhola' might relate to either a 'forgetful and casual individual living a carefree life of pure bliss' or a simplified version of Maheswara Shiva (Bholanath) with his frantic knowledge gesture. Thus, right from the start, with the introduction of Bhola, Ray takes us beyond the sphere of all sense experience; to the region of a nonsensical worldview, which eventually leads to the opening of an alternate option.

Sukumar Ray projects how the subalterns have already spoken via a space of liminal in-betweenness of negotiated identity, much as Bhabha's hybridity gives a positive response to Spivak's "Can the Subalterns Speak?" We meet the traditional 'Boss-Babu' in the poem *The Missing Whiskers*, who is content in his presumed security: "*Dibyi chhilen khosmejaje chair khani chepe*" until he realises who he is: "*With muffled screams he rolled his eyes/ And threw his arms about, / Alas I'm sick. Come save me quick/ Was what he sputtered out.*" (Ray 1984, p. 3) He is even reduced to a confused, soulless status: "But careful he might bite yet." This 'otherization' comes as a shock to the prototypical Babu, who can no longer connect with his local people, the clan to which he was born, and carefully 'otherizes' them. "Man is slave, Moustache is master/ Losing which Man meets catastrophe!" (Ray 1984, p. 3) he says as he purposefully wears the mask of mistaken identity, a grand-narrative of the master class, and his face progressively expands to match it. This anxiety of losing one's moustache relates, in a subtle manner, to the babu people's entrenched fear of losing their place in the colonial era's hierarchic socio-political system; it is an extreme state of paranoia that pushes them to cling to their posts and importance in the eyes of the white rulers.

The relationship between nationalism and decolonization has received a lot of attention India's historical highlights are only about nationalist efforts for independence from British control People were only talking about a for greater political agenda, movements, and the fight for freedom. The majority of the songs and poems were about nationalism. To think about it, Sukumar Ray's ability to make sense of meaningless rhymes for youngsters was truly innovative. Ray grew up in colonial Bengal and had anti-colonial feelings. Although he wrote for youngsters, his poetry reflected nationalist ideas and frequently criticised his Bengali babu contemporaries what has already been analysed before in this paper.

Sigmund Freud wrote a paper titled *Uncanny* in 1919, where he defined uncanny as class of terrifying things that pulls us back to what is known and comfortable. The oppressed making a comeback Sukumar's

paintings, particularly *Abol Tabol*, are spooky in nature. As Sigmund Freud points out, fiction will provide innumerable examples of the eerie that the reader would not see as *unheimlich* because it adapts to the fictitious reality. This effect is felt if the author fabricates it as a pretence to reality and leads the readers to feel that the story is true. Sukumar's creations might be interpreted as a sign of power when the animals are seen via these lenses, an unsettling sensation arises. The Age of Reason, according to Foucault, corresponds to a period of oppressive authority, in which logic dictates what is normal and what is abnormal. He says that the Enlightenment, in addition to discovering liberty, founded disciplines. Logic is a powerful instrument for decision-making and a product of enlightenment. The facility is maintained not just by the proletariat and bourgeoisie, but also by the entire cognitive process. As a result, illogicality is darkness, and it poses a threat to human existence since it disturbs the smooth operation of power. Something that defies rationality is referred to as insanity and is treated with distrust. Logic serves as a weapon for homogeneity, prohibiting Madness from encroaching on its domain. Ray glorified this insanity in his works and criticised the manifestation of power via logic.

III. CONCLUSION

Ray celebrates a festival of violating boundaries in his poetry, and he also frees the idea of pictures" from the confines of written word, allowing the reader to savour the illustrations as they complete the image of *Abol Tabol's* universe. Despite the fact that Ray's illustrations are tidy, there is still enough room for the reader's imagination to place the characters in their familiar surroundings. Whatever Ray's intentions were, his works unmistakably gave an alternative meaning of logic and reason. They supplied exhilaration to youthful brains about the idea of an other world of absurdity, and relaxation to weary older minds about the dismal reality. In his article "*Defence of Rubbish*," Peter Dickenson said that living only on plums is difficult, and that any sensible reading method needs to incorporate a fair quantity of pap or roughage Nonsense, in other words, is the roughage required to digest the bits of logic. Ray's words were particularly effective in this regard.

Ray was a member of the Brahma sect, but he couldn't seem to get used to the rules. Naturally, this led to an unavoidable collision with his surroundings, for which he concealed his wounds behind the "life full of vitality" curtain until his death. He could derive the "*bhalo*"(good) out of everything and this "*bhalo*" (good) might be nonsense, but "*hethay nishedh nai re dada/ nai re baandhon nai re dhadha/ hethay rongin aakashtole/swapan dola haayoyay dole/surer neshay jhorna chhote/ aakash kusum aapni fote/ rongive akash, rongiye mon/ chomok jage khone khon.* (Translation: There are no limitations, no barriers, and no puzzles here Dreams float in the air beneath the colourful sky, waterfalls run under the power of music, flowers grow Every instant brings a fresh marvel that colours the sky and your imagination...) Sense, nonsense, fantasies, and realities on the path to adulthood, we progressively learn to govern the everlasting kid who lives within us. *Abol Tabol* dismantles walls and transports us to a dreamlike yet real realm of "*aaloy dhaka ondhokaar*" (light that penetrates darkness).

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