

Tribute to Buddhadeb Dasgupta

Suresh Goduka

**Realistic Imagery of The Dreamers***(A Shot from Mando Meyer Upakhyam)*

Cinema is not merely audio-visual but also an intellectual medium; it is also poetic for Buddhadeb Dasgupta. Like modern poetry he wants to leave some space to be filled by the imagination of the audiences. This is since he is a poet; or that is why he is a poet. An artist who wants to rejuvenate our burdensome sensitivity with unconventional plots and innovative treatments. Questions are more important to him than answers to questions; therefore, his films do not aspire to offer answers, rather emphasise the continuity of conflicts between timidity and bravery in contemporary socio-political backdrops.

The journey started with an abandoned Rolleiflex camera. The house was sleeping in the afternoon. With a viewfinder, he looked from room to room, floor to floor, napping man to the cat and caught himself in the frame forever. He left a teaching job to make his first film *Dooratwa* with a teacher protagonist in it; a small plot encircling the responses to personal confusions, loneliness, isolation and worries. *Neem Annapurna* portrays the different worlds made of uneven development, and

accentuates the helpless poor who have infiltrated into the cities. And yet, in presenting poverty, Dasgupta's role is not judgmental, rather artistic. He makes reality an art. This process is supported by emotional participation of the audiences. The child stealing food from the captive parrot's container is part of the process. The villain in his films is not a person, but a cycle of circumstances or twists. So many people are in their own battles at the personal level in *Grihajuddha*. The opponent is absent in the film, but the opponent has a position.

His films are presented from the perspective of ideology or identity. Time moves them who take stake to make time move. Cut off from time, the protagonist in *Tahader Katha* too astonishes himself by the metamorphosis of time. The rebel has rejected the post-revolutionary environment once he is free from prison. The liability to the old times is insanity in the new times. Dasgupta wants to help the protagonist in *Bagh Bahadur* in the last battle of existence of a traditional art form. The artist works in a stone quarry, and his positioning amidst the aggression of the commercial *tamasha* is captured by

the interplay of actions and reactions of the elements of the film, as if the stage of reality and dreams is the same. Even the artist who captures folk theatre and the spirit of the masses with an epic character in *Phera* is also off-time and unfit for time. He will get buried in the dust, but would not get swept away in the stream. This conflict is eternal for a creative artist. How much pain will he suffer for ideological thoughts and keep his identity intact?



(Anwar Ka Ajab Kissa)

The protagonist of *Charachar* is captured in the dreamy emotions of the captive bird. Dasgupta surprises everyone with the story of meaningful or meaningless communication between the inner world and the outside world. The skill to break through external layers and delicately expose the pain of human intuition is one of the driving forces of his films. He does not support naming his film imageries with symbols or anything else either. *Ami*, *Yasin Aar Amar Madhubala* also examines and deconstructs the thoughts of a person that the world is a failure. *Andhi Gali* has similar effort. A magical impression is created in the confluence of the past and the present in *Kaalpurush*. Sarcastic shade and parallel sense of mystery. It is because of the meeting of the poet and the teller that reality has expanded, meaning has expanded, new meaning has been created.

With minimal dialogues and contrasting imageries, *Lal Darja* inflicts upon the materialistic world with a crisis of identity. *Mondo Meyer Upakhyan* has the same contrast in the paradoxical story of the prostitute's daughter. Rescuing her from the present is her dream as well as Dasgupta's. The plot of *Swapner Din* is a person who exhibits educational documentary from village to village. In *Janala*, the school window is the protagonist with multiple camouflaged layers of politics, corruption and memory. Despite the sufferings of the good meted out by the wicked, life sustains and the good man is not downright invisible— the resonance of what is heard in *Uttara*. Three psychological stories in *Tope* have created magical reality by unfolding at parallel pace. In *Anwar Ka Ajab Kissa*, the detective snoops on himself and looking at what he recovers or rescues, we realize that we have remained undiscovered ourselves while chasing others. The latest *Urojahaj* has an abandoned dilapidated aircraft as a metaphor and the indomitable dream of a common man on the pretext of that. The opponent of that dream is the entire power structure.

Not idealism or any other doctrine, rather human empathy is the foundation of Buddhadeb Dasgupta's cinema. His main theme is people who fall into the ploy and seeks to be rescued and who tries to keep the candle burning even in the night breeze. He wants to give more emphasis to the dreamers than the dreams. So, he does not portray dreams as dreamy, neither does he manipulate dreams. Even converting dreams into reality is not his goal. In most of his films, he has highlighted the plight of the so-called failed dreamers. Perhaps these people chase him and he wants to get rid of them through films.

■ *Mr. Suresh Goduka is a Research Scholar, Mass Communication Design at IIT Guwahati.*