
BHULE THAKA GOLPO: FORGOTTEN TALES ABOUT THE PREFERABLY FORGOTTEN PEOPLE A BOOK REVIEW

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Bhule Thaka Golpo is a collection of short fiction by Syed Manzoorul Islam. This Bangladeshi literary genius achieved the Ekushey Padak and Bangla Academy Prize and others for his outstanding contribution to the academic world of Bangladesh. This book has no story resembling the title, but it bears excellent meanings in this collection. *Bhule Thaka Golpo*, forgotten accounts in English, is all about the stories that the storyteller has likely overlooked. Here I am addressing the storyteller instead of the fiction writer, as Mr. Islam has not written but told the stories. He writes in the format of speaking and gossiping. He was about to forget these stories but has saved them in this collection by remembering. Another meaning can be bored with the title, that is there are lots of stories shattered around us, and we hardly recognize them, or even if they come to our eyes, they are preferably neglected or not heard as these are the stories of the unvoiced, as these are the tales of the subaltern, as there are the voices against the patriarchal oppression prevailing in our societies, countries and above all our lives.

Bhule Thaka Golpo contains fifteen stories. Oporahner Golpo, the tale of Afternoon in English, is the first story that

deals with the journey of the narrator of the story, his meeting with a woman beautiful enough, and finally facing Abdul Kader, who knows the past. The narrator raises a question about Abdul Kader, but we can understand that this signifies the forgotten identity.

Goni Mia Pathor, the stone of Goni Mia in English, is about the belief of ordinary people to rock as a life-changing and controlling force. But Mr. Goni knows the ins and outs of this stone, but nobody can deny him, even cannot accept him. In Bangladesh, stones are treated as holy, so "holy things are beyond examination." It is said that people even got promoted in the service sector by touching this stone. This stone was inscribed with the Arabic alphabet people thought to be Islamic, religious, and antique something and urged for their advancement in life. This stone is mighty as this self-made stone helps Goni earn around two lacs each month. This story signifies the common sympathy and blind faith in sacred things. People think that every Arabic writing is holy and start worshipping to be blessed.

Ferighater Rannabanna, Cooking of Ferighat deals with the implied power-play of our society. And a retired Police officer

wants to give Sultana a great lesson, but instead, he is cooked, and his people are treated with his flesh. This is a total power play. If one is in power, one can do anything. This story also speaks for the emancipation of women as Sultana would not be suppressed and controlled by Amzad. Still, she managed, manipulated, and even killed him for her sake, for her safety.

Paritasher Payer Nicher Mati, Ground under the feet of Paritash, tells the story of an unvoiced who is constantly losing ground under his legs. He cannot stand firmly and comfortably as a subaltern with no voice and wealth can do.

Apekkha, Waiting in English, is about the waiting of Bakul Farazi for a white-dressed man with a box who will rescue him. He keeps waiting for this dream-like person though his wife learns about him. Finally, his wife, wearing a white dress with a box, knocked at the door. He took her as the rescuer, though not as a friend but in the form of his wife. Here the box signifies prosperity and progress.

Astra, weapon, is another exciting story of *Bhule Thaka Golpo*. The protagonist of this story is Panir, a very young boy who had a book containing the greatest speeches of the most incredible people, and he had a weapon. At the end of the story, he threw the text into the drain and started walking with the gun. He was going to his destination with the weapon as the book failed to provide him with success.

Lash, A dead body in English, is about the dead body of Raju. He has been shot, and his parents have come to the Police Station to get his dead body. Here his mother cried out by thumping her breast. Her cry was not a matter of concern but her nude breast to the journalist. By the way, finally, students gathered to take the dead body, and they wanted to slant slogans, but his father tried to get him. Finally, Raju's mother finds out that this is not the dead body of Raju but his friend. She started to cry out again. Here dead bodies can be an element of politics and rights, but to parents, all these are useless, and they would like to bury them with comfort and last prayer.

Ferguson Dinnerwalar Golpo is about a cooperator of Razakar, a supporter of Pakistan during the liberation war of Bangladesh. But finally, what is seen is that Ferguson dreamt a dream that his father ordered him to dive into the water. While descending the river, he found freedom fighters were there. Thus the life of a Razakar was lost in vain. This also gives voice to the subaltern and natural punishment to the Razakar.

Kanch Vanga Rater Golpo deals with a family where conjugal love is the prime concern. Paroloukik is another famous story dealing with the justice of the subaltern and unvoiced. Maya, a village girl, was beaten up heavily and killed finally, but it was announced that she died of getting beaten by town people as she was involved in an extramarital affair.

Her father is good for nothing in this regard and starts to sit beside Maya's grave and keeps crying and praying all day

long. When Shahid, the younger brother of the house owner where Maya worked as a maid, came to visit the grave of Maya with bonalim chocolate, he noticed with surprise that it had vanished. He wandered and said to his elder brother.

Along with his brother, he came, and the same thing happened. Then the hand of Shahid vanished, then another hand, leg, and finally the entire body of Shahid. No earthly law could do justice for Maya as no one could raise their voice against this superpower and elite. But the narrator of this story used magic realism and did justice to the exploited. It is one sort of protest against oppression.

Again let me connect this theme with the title of the book. *Buy* or working maids in the cities are thus facing oppression for ages, but there are very few, almost no, people raising voices for their justice. People preferably forget or pretend to forget these happenings around us.

Syed Manzoorul Islam is one of the practitioners of magic realism in Bangla literature. He wrote in several articles and even said in interviews that magical realism is not just an escape; it is instead a means of doing justice. All the time, what he wants is to end a story optimistically.

Another significant issue about Syed Manzoorul Islam and his book *Bhule thaka Golpo* is that he is a storyteller. This

tradition of oral literature is not common in our literature; instead, it is the primary way of literature in any literature of the world. He said recently in an article published in *Golpopatra*, "I am not demeaning the fiction writer as they follow the writing trend but as telling stories is the basic and primary source of our literature. I try to do so." Thus he has told stories. When readers read, they mainly listen to the stories.

Another criterion is that Syed Manzoorul Islam has demolished the distinction between the storyteller, characters, and readers. All are present even at the same time in his stories. So everyone feels the dire urge to be a part of his stories.

To sum up, all the stories compiled in *Bhule Thaka Golpo* have different levels with different crises, but almost all end with an optimistic view. In the forgotten accounts, Syed Manzoorul Islam has done justice for the subaltern, unvoiced, marginalized, and preferably forgotten and neglected people in this collection of stories. So, it can be said that *Bhule Thaka Golpo* is the forgotten tale about the preferably forgotten people.

References

Self authored