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A Defamiliarized Study of Saikat Majumdar's Novel *The Firebird*

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Abstract:

Any artistic creation is the result of the artist's imagination, efforts and hard work. What attracts our attention about any art work is its novelty and distinctiveness. To bring these characteristic into the work of art, many artistic devices have been developed. Defamiliarization is one such literary technique, particularly used in literature to make it novel, vivid, artistic, impressive and more appealing to the reader. It gives way to the conventional mode of ordinary writing. Saikat Majumdar is a renowned novelist, critic, academic scholar, educationist and columnist of post-millennial era, who with his writing has left an indelible impression upon his readers. His works are praised for his intrinsic writing style, narrative structure, figurative language and rhythm. For this, he has made ample use of 'defamiliarization' technique introduced by Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky in 1917. The present research paper is based on his use of defamiliarization technique in his second novel 'The Firebird' (2015). In the present paper, the researcher is going to explore the characteristics of defamiliarization technique and its implementation by the author in the text of the novel to make it remarkable.

Keywords: Defamiliarization, The Firebird, Russian Formalism, Narrative, Plot, Figurative Language, Point-of-view.

Introduction

Art has many forms and faces. Any artistic creation is the result of the artist's imagination, efforts and hard work. But some attract our attention while some fail to make any impression. What strikes our mind and senses about any artistic creation is its novelty and distinctiveness. Art reflects human life, society, the universe we are surrounded by. Hence, every time we can't expect that something novel, strange or unfamiliar would be expressed or created by an artist. Art is not only about what is presented more precisely it is about how it is presented and how the audience/readers perceive it is more important. Subject is often same, still the output varies. It depends upon the individuality and the style of the artists. If we talk particularly about literature, on the same topic and theme we have hundreds of books, each varying from the other. It depends upon the writing style of the author. Hence, to make the writing more enriching and impressive to grab the attention of the reader 'Defamiliarization' technique of writing was proposed by Victor Shklovsky, the Russian Formalist. Shklovsky in 1917 wrote an essay "*Art as technique*" (Art as Device) in which he introduced the technique of defamiliarization which advocates the idea of presenting familiar everyday things in an unfamiliar and strange way to prolong the perception of the reader.

"Defamiliarization is the poetic technique with the function of forcing the readers to make new perceptions out of familiar, everyday concepts. When the poet/writer defamiliarizes the familiar concepts and actions, we will no more perceive them automatically". (Pourjafari, 3)

Saikat Majumdar is one such novelist of post-modern era who has exploited this technique in his novels to make the most out of it. He has written five novels so far. In his novel *The Firebird* he made use of the defamiliarization technique to present the familiar and ordinary things of routine life in a strange and extraordinary way that stuns the reader. We find defamiliarization at both semantic and lexical level. His intrinsic writing style- the use of figurative language, narrative

structure, complex plot, flashback technique, symbolism, imagery, everything is a deviation from conventional writing enforcing the readers to spend more time to perceive the story and the ideas presented by him. According to Zamtrio Purbo, “in a good story writing there are abundance of literary elements that make a story is well written intrinsically. The intrinsic elements help to construct a story that is worth reading and thus giving an immersive experience for the reader”. (Purbo, 7) Hence, the object of this article is to study the novel “*The Firebird*” in the light of Victor Shklovsky’s defamiliarization technique. It aims to find out the elements and characteristics of defamiliarization, its implementation in the said novel, the aesthetic pleasure derived out of it and how far the novelist is succeeded in sustaining the atmospheric tension to achieve the desired result through this technique.

What is Defamiliarization

Defamiliarization is a literary technique originated in the early 20th century. Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky first coined and introduced the term ‘Defamiliarization’ in 1917 in his seminal work ‘*Art as Technique*’. Originally the term is a loan translation of Russian word ‘Ostranenie’ means ‘making strange’. Hence defamiliarization believes in presenting the literary work or art in an unfamiliar and strange way to change the perception of the readers/audience. Shklovsky was the founder of OPOJAS Literary School, one of the two leading schools contributed to the development of Russian Formalistic Movement. Russian Formalism was a literary movement in Russia, originated around 1910 and was suppressed near about 1930s. it is a counterpart of American literary movement ‘New Criticism’. It believes in the sovereignty of text and advocates the scientific study of literary text and opposes the subjective element of literary work. It focusses on the form and structure of the text, its literariness rather than its social or biographical context. According to Victor Erlich cited by Sophie Raine,

“Russian Formalism keeps the work of art itself in the center of attention: it sharply emphasizes the difference between literature and life, it rejects the biographical, psychological and sociological explanations of literature. It develops highly ingenious methods for analyzing works of literature and for tracing the history of literature in its own terms.” (Raine, 2023).

Defamiliarization is one of the core element of Russian Formalism. As Shklovsky says in '*Art as Technique*', "Perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic". (Shklovsky, 19) To elaborate his point, Shklovsky gives the example of holding a pen or speaking a foreign language for the first time and performing the same act for the ten thousandth time. This habituation leads to do thing automatically without conscious. This over-automatization kills the spirit of everything. We recognize things from their characteristics rather than how they actually are or look. To put it in the words of Shklovsky,

“Habitualization devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife and the fear of war. If the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been. And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known.” (Shklovsky, 20)

In his essay, Shklovsky cited the examples from Tolstoy who defamiliarizes the act of flogging by not actually mentioning the word. In his other novel '*Kholstomer*' Tolstoy defamiliarizes the story by presenting it through a horse's point of view. Hence, what Shklovsky urges is that, “the technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be Prolonged.” (Shklovsky, 20)

The Firebird

The Firebird is Saikat Majumdar's second novel. The novel's story is set in 1980's Calcutta ruled by Communist Government. It is the story of the fall of Bengali Commercial Theatre Culture seen through the eyes of a ten year old child Oritro/Ori whose mother Garima Basu is a passionate theatre artist. It is a portrayal of a bond between a mother and a child and the resulting conflict out of a woman's quest for self-identity. A dysfunctional middle-class family, turbulent childhood and teenage life, orthodox hypocritic ideology against women, the interference of political parties in personal lives of people, the undercurrent of passion and madness flowing through the theatre world, misguided directionless youth darken the world of *The Firebird*. What stuns the reader is the protagonist child's fascination for the dark and death. Ori becomes both the perpetrator and the victim for his mother's ultimate demise which metaphorically represents the death of the commercial theatre culture in Bengal.

As the readers go through the novel, the story directly touches our heart which left us sad and bruised. To add up to it what strikes our attention is the language and the presentation of the author that make it a wonderful reading experience. Majumdar's writing style, complex plot, rhythmic language decorated with numerous figures of speech, carefully chosen words; raw and colloquial, affect the readers feelings and sensibilities so strongly to make them think twice about every situation. It not only enhances the difficulty level of readers perception, but most common and familiar things feel novel and unfamiliar that remove the monotony of routine life and refresh our perception. The disruptions in the narrative style make us go back to the previous pages to clear our confusion. The semantic use of words add extra charm to make the narrative enjoyable, while the philosophical descriptions heighten the difficulty for reflective gesture. According to *LARB* "The novels most impressive qualities are Majumdar's knack for literary, artistic nuance, and his

ability to capture humanity in all its complexity merging raw, intense emotions with a subtle, resilient profundity.” (Haske,2016) All these things are a clear indication of Majumdar's application of Shklovsky's Defamiliarization technique which needed to be studied thoroughly. Hence, the researcher based her argument on the exploration of finding various elements of Defamiliarization in the chosen text and analyzing them for further interpretations.

Complex Narrative Structure

A narrative is a story describing the sequence of events. Narrative can be spoken, written or in pictures or images. A narrative generally has three stages; beginning, middle and end. The Oxford Dictionary defines it, “a telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events recounted by a narrator to a narratee”. (Baldick,2008) A narrator can be first-person, second-person or third-person. Plot occupies the narrative. Plot is the pattern and sequence of events in the text. A plot has beginning, complication, climax and resolutions. As cited by Siti Rusdi, Barry (2002) states that “plot may begin somewhere in the middle of a sequence of events, and may then backtrack or a flashback which tells the event that happened earlier or a flashforward which tells the event that will happen later on”. (Rusdi,2016) Shklovsky in his famous work, *'Theory of Prose'* (1925) has elaborately discussed about the art of narrative and its various techniques. In this book, he encompasses a large variety of narratives from ancient folktales to the fictions of contemporary period, from high culture to popular arts, commenting on films, paintings and poetry. He has devoted a whole chapter under the title *'The Connection Between Devices of Plot Construction and General Devices of Style'* to discuss the structure of plot in detailed. As a result David Gorman says, “Victor Shklovsky is recognized as an ancestor of modern narratology”. (Gorman, 65) It is critically acclaimed that Shklovsky's main contribution to narrative is to make distinction between 'Fabula' (story) and 'Syuzhet' (plot). But according to Tomashevsky's adaptation , for

Shklovsky “the story Line (fabula) is nothing more than material for plot (syuzhet) formation”. (Gorman, 67) For Shklovsky “Literary work is pure form. It is neither thing or material, but a relationship of materials”. (Shklovsky, 1991) In this regard it can be conclude that how an author arranges the material in the text is important to make the form difficult. When the author shuffle and reshuffle the sequence of events, instead of presenting the story in the chronological order (fabula), it is presented in the back and forth manner, the actual occurrence of events in the composition i.e. plot (syuzhet). So to make the form difficult, author does not need to make changes in fabula, i.e. everyday happening, S/he needs to break the chronological sequence of happenings only. So, the plot (syuzhet) is nothing but defamiliarized story (fabula). In this regard, Gorman cited Shklovsky’s observation from his essay “The Hamburg Score” (1928),

“The basic construction of plot is reduced to an arrangement of semantic elements.....or we take several semantic elements and arrange them in a stepped order. But the typical foundation of plot is fabula, an everyday life situation,..... we can create a mystery novel not by changing the fabula but merely by rearranging its constituent parts: by moving the end to the beginning, or a more complex rearrangements of the parts.” (Gorman, 66)

Saikat Majumdar, in *The Firebird* has adopted Shklovsky’s concept of complex narrative. The novel deals with more than one plot and arranges the events from both in parallel fashion, merging them in the complication and climax part. The fluctuations in the sequence of events swing the readers back and forth, make them spend more time to connect the links of the story to grip the situation. The very first chapter of the novel demonstrates Majumdar’s Knack of handling intrinsic plot. The opening line “Disaster came early in Ori’s life, at the age of five, the first time he saw his mother die”(Majumdar, 1) baffles the reader if they have missed something because how can

a person die first or second time. The description of the death scene witnessed by Ori is so vivid to comprehend the readers that it is an act on stage from a Play. The tension is resolved in further lines on the very next page, "He has just seen her suffer a life of misery and meet her death with calm, and here she was, in the greenroom thick with cigarette smoke and sharp with the glare of electric bulbs lining the mirror, smiling, alive." (Majumdar, 2) In the next paragraph, the story jumps five years ahead, as the protagonist declares, "He was now ten years old.....some memories were animals that would not be buried". (Majumdar, 3) giving the readers a little clarity that the earlier death scene was a five years back memory of the protagonist while the action of the novel in present is about a ten year old Ori's upcoming unsettling life journey. Readers on their part, taking a sigh of relief to be on track are once again thrown into the pit of memory which was a borrowed one when the protagonist was too young to remember anything. It was the memory of a play in which Ori played the role of a baby stolen in his sleep for slaughter before a thirsty goddess while his mother played the role of the cruel queen sacrificing the young child. Later, Ori was told this memory by his mothers crew. "He was just a baby then, they would tell him the stories later, a baby who hadn't startled at the clash of steel." (p.3) The three different timelines in a single chapter and that is the very first one where the readers are totally unaware about the future course of action, involves readers' much time to connect the tiny dots to link the happenings in the chronological order. Such complex narrative increases the difficulty of the reader to follow the action and obviously the perception of the reader is prolonged which is the object of defamiliarization. This shows the challenge posed by the author that the readers should be attentive enough not to miss any clue, to feel the sensation of art.

To heighten the effect of defamiliarization, Majumdar has woven plot inside plot in the very first chapter by introducing the story of Ahin Mulik. In the opening chapter, we see Ahin Mulik

coincidentally meet Ori at the theatre where he goes to see his mother. Ahin offers him to act in plays which is immediately thwarted away by Ori's mother Garima who knows the darkness of Ahin Mulik and the theatre world very well. Ahin Mulik, a psychopath, is the owner of the playhouse 'Pantheon' built by his dead brother Mani Mulik. He has written a play titled as "*Dusk*", a story of two prostitute sisters Leela and Meera. "*Dusk*" for Ahin is not just a play. Dusk is his life. He lives the character of Mrinmoy, an innocent husband of Meera who searches Meera in every woman. In Ori, he sees the character of Meera's son. While in Ori's cousin Shruti, he finds his Meera. The play is symbolic of age old typical mentality in which women are seen as a symbol of sexuality and immorality for which they should be punished. Whenever he sees a woman wants to take her to his bed. Ahin, a maniac, haunted by the character of Mrinmoy which occupies his physical world murders Shruti considering her Meera, who goes to find her aunt Garima in the Pantheon, ultimately fulfilling his dream of staging his play "*Dusk*" not on the stage but in real life. Majumdar, obviously leaves the readers totally stunned with this unexpected turn of events. The author has taken great care to weave the labyrinth of Ahin's plot which is presented in a fragmented manner by disrupting the order of happenings. As we say that the plot is a sequence of events in a composition guided by the "principal of cause and effect". In the novel, Majumdar to increase the difficulty of the reader and to prolong their perception, defamiliarizes the action by presenting effects before the cause. In the fifth chapter of the novel, Majumdar shows Ahin Mulik forcing a factory worker Koyna who is ready to sleep with him for money. In that act, Ahin asks Koyna to repeat the dialogues written by him for the character of Meera's sister Leela. "Repeat after me, he spoke sternly and slowly, 'My pickle will tickle their taste buds just as my body fires up their loins.' Her face furrowed into an ugly frown. 'what nonsense you speak!'" (Majumdar, 47) Here, the confusion is double sided, not only by Leela's side but by the readers also leaving

them totally baffled, what is happening. Because until the chapter nine, the novelist doesn't mention the name '*Dusk*', "For Dusk, the play in three acts, waiting to rise out of the dark pit at the heart of the most stunning playhouse in Calcutta". (Majumdar, 81) It is in the chapter Eleven only when the author elaborates about the play *Dusk* in detail and the readers start to pick the points from their earlier reading of the novel to arrange it chronologically in their mind. Sometimes, they even need to turn the pages back to grip the situation. Such is the technique of Majumdar to handle the complex plot with intrinsic nuance where the effects are encountered before the cause.

In *The Firebird* the story is told through third-person omniscient narrator who is aware of everything, has access to each and every situation. Such narrator has no limitation of time and space, able to jump from past to present and present to past and even sometimes hints at the future with the help of stream-of-consciousness. Such narrative widens the perspective of the readers by making them savor the taste of each and every characters' feelings. The feeling of identifying ourselves with each and every character, even the odd ones like a psycho Ahin Mulick, a criminal politician like Tatai and Trinankur, characters of all age-group and from all the sections of society bring an inexplicable feeling of familiarity which is quite novel and unexpected to the reader. Nothing is hidden from the readers. Even the suspense and mystery of knowing the actions that are hidden from the characters is quite thrilling that removes the automatization by taking the readers on the swing of emotional up and down.

The story is presented through a ten year old child's point of view which is deliberate by the author as it greatly facilitates him to defamiliarize the familiar things. For example, Tolstoy's technique of defamiliarizing the text by not directly naming it which is cited by Shklovsky in his essay '*Art as Technique*' has been widely used by Majumdar in *The Firebird*.

“Turning into a narrow lane, he saw the women. They stood next to each other in a line along the houses, facing the street in a wriggling, snake-like row. A scattered chain of shiny dresses, fiery-red make-up on dark skin and flowers wreathed around buns and waves of hair. They laughed and nudged each other; some of them stretched out their arms to beckon passers-by.”(Majumdar, 5)

The above lines describe the scene at a Red-light area where the women luring the customers out but Majumdar doesn't mention the terms directly. Instead, the simple and familiar thing is presented in an unfamiliar way making it strange because of a child's point of view who knows nothing about prostitution or Red-light area.

The story is about a child's consciousness with his surrounding and his mother's theatre world which is quite disturbing not only for the child but for the readers. Instead of spending a secure and affectionate childhood in the sunny and bright familial atmosphere, here we find a child is wandering in the dark alleys of old theatres contradictory to the sunny and brightness of childhood, watching the rehearsal of his mother's intimate scene with other men, going out with college students accompanying Shruti, with party goondas, absorbing the adulthood ahead of his age, merging with beggars girls, lured by the psycho like Ahin Mulik to act in play, shifting from the comfort of an age old home to a dilapidated rented unknown place which is itself very strange on a child's account. The readers' perception is further intensified by the duality of the narrative where the real and the reel world are involved. The question arises, 'Is a ten year child able to distinguish real from the reel?' What is fake or acted, a 'reel' world for the reader is real for the child whose innocence is greatly affected transforming him into a perpetrator who destroys his mother's career and causes her demise. Readers perception is renewed by this unexpected situation where they are hung between right and wrong, reel and real. Again the readers are given dual perception of feeling

where readers savor the kinesthetic imagery as the readers of *The Firebird* and relish the visual imagery as the audience of the plays like '*The Firebird*', '*The Enchanted Garden*', '*The Wishcar*', '*Bar-Badhu*', '*Midsummer Night's Dream*' which are introduced by the novelist in the action of the novel. Readers fluctuate between the role of readers and audience enjoying the text with refreshed mood removing their monotony as just a reader.

Figurative Language

Saikat Majumdar is known for his evocative and lyrical language. In *The Firebird*, he has demonstrated his knack of playing with the words to produce the outstanding and outrageous narrative. His narrative is full of figurative language that brings an abundant aesthetic pleasure to readers. Every page is replete with innumerable figures of speech that diverts the attention of the reader to how it is said than what is said which is a considerable notion in defamiliarization. Formalism resorts on making form difficult. For that narrative is structured in such a way, to direct the readers to focus on the language. Majumdar has made the use of Foregrounding technique that involves the use of figurative devices like simile, metaphor, repetition, parallelism in abundance. Foregrounding has evolved from the concept of defamiliarization and is described as "the range of stylistic variations that occur in literature, whether at the phonetic level, grammatical level or semantic level". (Miall & Kuiken, 1994) In *The Firebird* we come across an excessive variation of language on semantic and syntactic level. Every page of the novel is replete with innumerable figures of speeches. The most prominent of them are simile and metaphor.

Simile is a direct comparison while metaphor is an indirect comparison. In *The Firebird*, we have a wide variety of these two which not only make familiar things strange and unfamiliar but also enhances the aesthetic joy of the readers. Sometimes they are so subtle whereas sometimes they are so sharp and poignant to bleed the hearts of the readers. For example, "To Mummum, people

were like breed dog”. (Majumdar, 38) “The men and women of the beauty parlor, watching the redness spread like cancer on his skin, the”. (p.40) “The notes spilled over like a bunch of crumpled, dried flowers.” (p.46) “Bury his head in her neck along which green veins stood out like fault lines on an ancient rock.” (p.54). “Nausea shot through his blood like an electric current.” (p.55) “She was like a troubled child locked in a frenzy of jagged violence against the world.”(p.141)

Metaphors like “A marble statue in widow’s white.” (p.16) “The heart of the basement was a massive iron pillar” (p.45) “Her lips were a small, tender, blistered animal”. (p.46) “The stage was a tiny halo of light”. (p.94) “On the dull white cloth of the ironing board, the flat bellied steel frog let out a steamy fart.” (p.113) show Majumdar’s knack for creating the most far-fetch comparisons to express the simple and everyday things and actions in a novel and strange way that stun the readers and challenge their imagination and change their perception by removing the tedious automatization and bringing freshness to the reader.

There are many examples of personification used by Majumdar that totally contributed to make the narrative intense to fetch the attention of the readers towards the text. For example, “The red and white letters screamed out at every passerby.”(p.42) “Torn posters floated in the breeze and chase him as he ran.”(p.42) “Outside the day yawned and stretched through the fog in the winter air”. (p.87) “Love would kick out death” (p.92) “But her outstretched arms spoke the language of trust”. (p.46)

Paradoxical sentences like “It was a new home that quickly started to decay”(p.139), “But today he felt comforted by the darkness” (p.60), “Revolted and fearful, he couldn’t take his eyes off this girl”,(p.89), “Ahin had given birth to it, and yet it was not fully born.”(p.98), “soothing and shocking” (p.194), “a murmuring silence” (p.192), by fetching contradictory ideas lay bare the

undercurrent of tension in the novel. While the expressions like , “The cluck, cluck, cluck of the lizard in the room”,(p.55) “liquid laughter spilling over their lips”,(p.18), “lub-dub of his heart”(p.25), “clippety-cloppety-clop” (p.187) show the use of Onomatopoeia by the author that offer rhythm and music to enrich the poetic quality of the narrative. The literary devices like Metonymy and Synecdoche are also used by the author to bring variation on semantic level. The metonymy is replacing a word or phrase with another term associated with it while synecdoche is replacing a part of a sentence with the whole or vice versa. The examples like, “This is where the para (people in the colony) gathers in the evening” (p.55), “Why did she breathe out (tell) the details of her new home” (p.101), “On Monday morning, sixty sets of ironed white shirts and shorts (students) sat quietly behind their desk” (p.115), “suddenly, Miss Miranda wasn’t the school (Teacher) anymore” show the artistic nuance of the author that activates readers imagination. It also helps the author to make his characters realistic and life like.

Another literary device used by Majumdar is Parallelism. Parallelism is a prominent figure of speech which involves repetition of words or phrases or elements of sentence in similar grammatical structures. It is used to create harmonious effect in the narrative. It brings psychological depth to the text by deviating reader’s attention from the literal description to the hidden meaning behind it. It is also used to increase the intensity of the situational tension. Shklovsky talked about psychological parallelism in his essay on plot construction. According to him, “the purpose of parallelism is to transfer the usual perception of an object into the sphere of new perception – that is, to make a unique semantic modification.” (Shklovsky, 1917) Majumdar has fully exploited this figurative device to exhibit the psychological status of his characters by semantic use of words. The sentences like, “I like to copy things; Ori said, I copied it from my mind”(Majumdar, 64), “ it was kindness he could not spurn. Kindness that caressed him slowly”

(p.62), have philosophical and dual meaning, a child who is trying to copy the world, what will he copy from a dysfunctional family, manipulative, criminal neighborhood only destruction and violence. In the philosophical expressions like “The vultures were live, not stuffed birds, live ones” (p.67) author has succeeded to force the reader to feel a woman’s struggle to survive the society full of vultures by defamiliarizing it for patriarchal order which is waiting for her demise and ready to lung at her. The negative parallelism in the sentences like “Not when she was playing her part, never even if he was in the front row of the audience, never when she played her part”, (p.57) heighten the intensity of the feeling where a child is continuously longing for its mother’s love but left alone to cope up with the conflicts of his life while the hidden meaning that a child is deliberately ignored by its mother to obstruct his path in the same profession to protect his innocence hit the readers’ imagination to think twice about the narrative in which what the author is trying to insinuate by investing such contradictory ideas in a single expression. In this way author defamiliarizes familiar narrative by retiring readers from their habitual automatization to take things in granted without sparing a glance to it. The parallelism in *The Firebird* is peripheral and open ended for multiple interpretations increasing the difficulty of the text for the reader to contemplate which interpretation will be more appropriate.

In the matter of language and diction, Shklovsky in “*Art as Technique*” promotes the idea of using poetic language for literary creation. For him, poetical and practical language function differently. Prose is a form of practical/ordinary speech which is easy, accurate and economic, connotes the idea directly while poetic speech is “attenuated, torturous speech that denotes the ideas. It is a formed speech. A work is created artistically so that its perception is impeded and the greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of the perception”. (Lodge, 27) Shklovsky in his essay has cited the works of Leo Jakubinsky and Pushkin for their different ways to defamiliarize

language. Jakubinsky resorted on the idea of “phonetic roughening” by repetition of identical sound. In *The Firebird*, we find many alliterations written by Majumdar to bring phonetic variation into the text. The expressions like, “slowly swallowing the shiny metal pillar” (Majumdar, 49), “Not since the day she started glossing her lips just like that slut” (p.178), “He was half-hidden behind people” (p.194) impart the poetic rhythm to the text that enhances the aesthetic pleasure. Puskin defamiliarized poetic speech by his prosaic structure. For that he used the popular language which was criticized as vulgar by his contemporaries. Majumdar has showed his knack of using raw and colloquial language in *The Firebird*. His use of terms like “para” (neighbourhood), ‘Bouma’ (daughter-in-law) “Boudi” (sister-in-law), “Pujo-Carnival” ‘baijis’ (mistresses), ‘didi’ (big sister), ‘Jesu’ (Jesus Christ), ‘Mummum’ (Grandma), ‘Pishi’ (aunt), ‘durwan’ (gatekeeper), ‘nasha’ (addiction) ‘Jamadar goli’ (sweeper’s alley), ‘Babu’ (sir) show the colloquialism while the terms like ‘truckers’ for truck drivers, ‘cabbies’ for cab drivers, bleeding Marwaris for capitalists, ‘Soo-sooing’ for peeing exhibit the phonetic roughening which make the readers conscious about the use of language, shifting the attention totally from what is said to how it is said. In *The Firebird* The text is eye-catching, the style is strange to transform the familiar world of a middle-class Bengali family into an unfamiliar and unbelievable world of theatre in North Calcutta. One more eye-catching thing we find in *The Firebird* is the references of real places in today's West Bengal like Beaden Street, Sonagachi, Hathinabagh, Panipat, Hoogali, Chuchura, Central Avenue, Sealdah Station by the author that place the readers into extreme familiar world. But again, particularly for the Bengali readers who live in these places and forget to feel any novelty out of their habitualization to see things on daily bases, the novel offers a totally different scenario from a teenage boy’s perspective. The same para, school, theatres, streets, red-light areas, temples, college, restaurants who have lost their appeal to the reader become life-like

for them. The details they don't notice at all are minutely noticed by them after reading the novel renewing their boredom into freshness.

Conclusion

The Firebird is Majumdar's second novel which is widely praised by the critics and litterateur for his intense writing that grips the readers' pulse in the beginning and throw them into an overwhelming journey of a familiar world's unfamiliar facets which left the readers saddened and bruised. As the novel never fails to move us with its story, its text takes the readers to the next level of literary experience. The author never leaves a single point to defamiliarize it to increase the difficulty and prolong the perception of the reader by deviating them from the automatization of routine life. As Shklovsky discussed in his essay "*Art as Technique*", we can say that Majumdar employs a variety of artistic devices to disrupt the common semantic, phonetic and syntactic structure of the novel. The fragmented story, the complex plot, the figurative language, the third-person narrative, the point-of-view, parallelism, flashback and foreshadowing, poetic rhythm, reflexive and philosophical lines everything contribute to make a simple story transform into an unfamiliar, strange one where many questions are left unanswered. With the above discussion we successfully conclude that Reading *The Firebird* is absolutely an aesthetic pleasure, an unforgettable one where the readers are retired from their habitualization of seeing same thing repeatedly, activating their imagination to relish the novelist's artistic nuance and intrinsic writing style.

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