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Fluid Bodies, Liminal Selves: Rabindra Nritya as an Aesthetic of Becoming in Tagore's Dance Dramas

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Abstract:

Rejecting regulated postural syntax of Classical Dance forms, Rabindra Nritya emphasises on the free-flowing body's kinaesthetic continuity. Closely analysing Tagore's dance dramas *Chitrangada, Chandalika, and Shyama*, this paper argues that Tagore frames the body as a repository of lived experiences metamorphosed into lyrical gestures. Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* argues that "Our body is not an object; it is a grouping of lived-through meanings which moves towards its equilibrium." (Ponty 177) Tagore's protagonists embody a body which is the primary medium through which life expresses itself. Their identity is evolving, not fixed as is argued by Deleuze & Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* that "Becoming is to enter a zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or intensity." (Deleuze & Guattari 272) This paper engages discussions on fluid bodies and the transformative power of dance, reaffirming Tagore's enduring relevance within global embodied performance studies.

Keywords: dance, body fluidity, identity, phenomenology, Becoming.

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Rabindranath Tagore's contribution to modern performing arts occupies a distinctive position within the history of modern dance and theatre, resisting any form of easy assimilation into either classical or Western paradigms. Although Rabindra nritya has been widely discussed in terms of its lyrical beauty, syncretic influences, and cultural significance, its deeper philosophical articulation of the body as a lived, experiential site remains comparatively under-theorised. Existing scholarship has largely focused on Tagore's aesthetic nationalism, his synthesis of music, poetry, and movement, or the pedagogical legacy of Santiniketan as a wholesome topic of discussion. However, scholars have paid less attention to how Rabindra nritya reconceptualises the manifestation of the body itself, particularly through movement that gives advantage to fluidity, transition, and process over codified syntax of posture and representational gesture. In contrast to classical models based on structured and tabulated mudras, fixed stances, and hierarchically situated vocabularies, Tagore's dance language preserves an intentional openness that resists closure and structural rigidity. This openness is not a lack of discipline but a deliberate aesthetic choice grounded in Tagore's philosophical commitment to freedom (*mukti*), naturalness (*sahaja*), and relational harmony. The body in Rabindra Nritya does not situate meaning as an essential form of external codification of sign; instead, meaning unfolds through the dancer's lived experience with the flow of rhythm, space, and emotion.

Through a close analysis of Tagore's major dance dramas namely *Chitrangada*, *Chandalika*, and *Shyama* examines how a female protagonist navigates social, ethical, and emotional thresholds, thereby producing resistance to normative structures. These Tagorean marvels are particularly significant because they situate the female body at the centre of negotiation between self and society, placing it within hegemony-based dichotomous binaries. In *Chitrangada*, gender identity emerges not as a stable essence fixed at birth, however as, a fluid interplay between martial bravery and lyrical softness, destabilizing binary constructions of

masculinity and femininity and, in turn, unsettling heteronormativity. *Chandalika* draws caste as a concretised reality, where social exclusion is visible in the very posture, gesture, and finally, the metamorphosis occurs through a predominantly corporeal awakening rather than moral regeneration. *Shyama*, meanwhile, explores the dazzling intensity of female desire and social as well as moral transgression through a sensuous yet fractured corporeality that resists ethical and moral curtailment. Across these works, the dancer-actor's physical movement within the stage becomes the primary site through which identity is chronically questioned, negotiated, and reconfigured into a new shape.

When we approach *Chitrangada* as a performance rather than merely a literary text, it offers one of the most compelling simulations of bodily fluidity within the genre of Rabindra Nritya. In contemporary performances, the fluid choreography foregrounds movements as continuously evolving process rather than a sequence of codified postures. This prioritisation of flow over fixity enables *Chitrangada* to redefine gender as an embodied negotiated condition through gentle transition, rhythm, and spatial presence. The protagonist's selfhood grows not through narrative resolution alone but through the lived experience of movement unfolding in temporality. The dancer's posture remains gently firm, with weight distributed meticulously through the lower body, while soft yet expansive arm movements redesign the space with controlled momentum. These movements do not imitate rigid masculinity as a representational code; rather, they articulate what Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his seminal work *Phenomenology of Perception* describes as the body's sedimentation of life's experiences. As he argues, "the permanence of one's own body, if only classical psychology had analysed it, might have led it to the body no longer conceived as an object of the world, but as our means of communication with it, to the world no longer conceived as a collection of determinate objects, but as the horizon latent in all our experience and itself ever-present and anterior to every determining thought" (Merleau-Ponty 106).

Chitrangada's brave warrior-like demeanor emerges not as simple symbolic gesture of her performative masculinity but as a lived corporeal reality. Here, strength is felt and enacted rather than signified. The audience encounters power here not through gesture-specific iconography or posture alone, but through what Merleau-Ponty calls "a grouping of lived-through meanings which moves towards its equilibrium" (Merleau-Ponty 177) where bodily orientation, rhythm, and intention converge in action. As the performance gradually proceeds, the audience perceives Chitrangada's desire for Arjuna. With that, a subtle yet perceptible metamorphosis in movement quality simultaneously unfolds. Crucially, this shift avoids any form of abrupt disruption or theatrical spectacle; instead, the choreography facilitates gradual interweaving of movement modes. Grounded steps soften into gliding transitions, arm gestures lengthen into continuous arcs, and the torso becomes increasingly mobile, responsive, and receptive. Merleau-Ponty argues in this matter "Sometimes a new cluster of meanings is formed; our former movements are integrated into a fresh motor entity, the first visual data into a fresh sensory entity, our natural powers suddenly come together in a richer meaning, which hitherto has been merely foreshadowed in our perceptual or practical field, and which has made itself felt in our experience by no more than a certain lack, and which by its coming suddenly reshuffles the elements of our equilibrium and fulfils our blind expectation" (Merleau-Ponty 177) This reflects the idea that every movement transitioning to the next one is symbolic of some emotional connection with the audience's reception techniques.

As argued by Victor Turner in *Liminality and Communitas*, "the attributes of liminality or of *liminal personae* ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols

in the many societies that ritualise social and cultural transitions." (Turner 359) While Chitrangada embodies the idea of liminality in gender, Rabindranath Tagore's *Chandalika* stages a radical interpretation of liminality by representing caste discrimination which encircles around the exploitation of body itself. The drama centres on Prakriti, a young woman born into the marginalised "untouchable" caste category, whose bodily presence is regulated by traditional and social norms that indoctrinate caste onto corporeal posture and bodily movement. In the dance drama, integrating lyrical song, gesture, and spatial flow or the dancing body does not represent caste as an abstract social category; it effectively enacts caste as a lived experience of the body. Rather than a passing reference, caste becomes a palpable reality in how Prakriti moves, how others avoid her touch, and how her body negotiates distance and intimacy. In this way, *Chandalika* uses the body to transform Tagore's narrative into a lived performance of social exclusion and somatic transformation.

In performance excerpts of *Chandalika* (as seen in a Youtube performance titled CHANDALIKA. VISVA-BHARATI, SANGIT BHAVANA), Prakriti's choreography begins with her body held low and inward. Her gait and gestures are essentially filtered as if negotiating physical thresholds rather than expressing autonomy. In these moments, the staging does more than illustrate caste norms - it substantiates them with solid evidence of real-time experiences. The body, then, becomes a strong resemblance of a documented site where social boundaries reinstate themselves before being articulated. This idea deeply aligns with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological assertion about the body being a group of lived experiences that generates itself as a means of communication. In *Chandalika*, caste is that idea which is communicated through the bodily movements - intentional avoidance, stepping back, or hesitant reach articulates the social script as an active somatic presence. A consistent feature in all is how non-touch functions kinesthetically as a structural principle of the choreography. Subsequently, Prakriti is situated at the edge of bodily meetings near but far away from other

dancers, music, light but always in embodied avoidance. This spatial choreography of near-and-far is an effective symbolic representation of the dichotomy of systemic exclusion, where the audience perceives caste not as a simple metaphor but an experience which is at once tactile and spatial. The movements reinstate Prakriti's liminal space embodiment, reasserting her being inherently otherised within a social circle. When the other girls of the society ostracize Prakriti owing to her caste, her body responds, almost by crippling down and moving away from the light.

The epiphanic moment initiated by Ananda's asking of water from Prakriti can also be productively interpreted by using meaning as essentially generated not through representation but through shifts in bodily capacity and relational intensity. In his essay *the Ethics*, Spinoza argues, "The human body can be affected in many ways in which its power of acting is increased or diminished, and also in others which render its power of acting neither greater nor less". (Spinoza 154) Drawing on Spinoza's notion of 'affect' as the body's ability to affect and be affected, Prakriti's transformation in performance appears less as an ideological awakening and more as a reconfiguration of corporeal potential. Prior to the encounter, her body appears affectively smaller in demeanour which was highly restricted in movement, spatially cautious, and kinetically withdrawn from her surrounding thereby signalling what Sara Ahmed in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2024) describes as how "emotions shape what bodies do in the present, or how they are moved by the objects they approach" (Ahmed 2) The act of receiving water is thus not merely symbolic; it introduces a new perspective that alters Prakriti's thought orientation toward the world. In Rabindra nritya performance, this change in orientation is enforced through expanded limb movements, a steadier gaze that reasserts dominance, and a rejuvenated sense of weight and balance. Prakriti does not become a new persona and then start moving in a different manner; rather, her movement itself becomes the emotional conditioning through which bodily subjectivity is realised. The choreography

upholds this metamorphosis as a necessary modulation which becomes an increasing possibility of bodily freedom rather than a sudden narrative rupture. This idea also seamlessly aligns with Tagore's *sahaja* philosophy, where ethical realisation does not strongly impose itself from outside but emerges through relational encounter. In this reading, caste oppression functions as a contradictory bodily potential, while Ananda's benevolent gesture momentarily suspends this paradox, allowing Prakriti's body to experience an alternative rhythm of being. The dance, with both its tenderness and affective dominant staging, thus articulates an ethical grounding not majorly in moral instruction but in embodied relationality, where justice is not only felt as an expansion of movement but also in all its spatiality.

Unlike *Chitrangada*, where desire enables extreme self-assertion, or *Chandalika*, where desire acts as a catalyst of social awakening, *Shyama* effectively dramatises the body to represent desire as an overwhelming force that propels the moving body beyond simplistic moral equilibrium. *Shyama* stages the body not as a site of simply asserting normative aspiration or social exclusion, but as a juxtaposed point of intense tension between various emotional outbursts like desire, transgression, remorse, and ethical aftermath. In the Visva-Bharti/Sangit-Bhavana staging of *Shyama* (as seen in the YouTube recording by Doordarshan Santiniketan), the choreography pushes forward this tension as an interplay between bodily drive and moral restraint, where fluid corporeal movements simultaneously reveal both vulnerability and force within the same framework. From the starting sequence of the *Shyama* performance, the protagonist's movement vocabulary is shaped by rapidly dissolving continuous motion rather than segmented poses. The dancer's torso and arms gracefully fly through the stage in coordinated waves, and transitions between these steps are fluid and undisturbed, thereby creating a visibly affective network that carries the emotional weight of the drama. In *Shyama*, this desire is not articulated through any form of static gesture but through fluidity and intense flow, through how limbs extend, spiral, and recoil in relation to the emotion, governed by and

operated through breath and music. The body recognises and understands the need to provide a concrete shape for desire before it names it, and this idea initiates the embodiment of bodily meaning rather than a representation of narrative alone. As Erika Fischer-Lichte argues in her work *The Trans formative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, performance creates meaning through the "autopoietic feedback loop between performer and spectator" (Fischer-Lichte 41), in which bodily movement produces affective and ethical significance in real time. The feedback loop thus "identifies transformation as a fundamental category of an aesthetics of the performative" (Fischer-Lichte 50) In *Shyama*, the moral and ethical tension that Shyama possesses in her mind is not simply narrated as a plot or a storyline but emerges performatively through the massive shifts in rhythm, spatial orientation, and temporality. It is at that juncture that the dancer's body becomes the site of negotiation where desire, hesitation, and remorse are all enacted together in harmonious chaos as lived realities and experienced processes rather than represented concepts or ideals.

Far from being highly codified and increasingly decorative, this musical movement integrates and shapes the performer's spatial fluctuation and quality of intense gesticulation and motion. A defining feature of the performance is how Shyama negotiates space in ways that reflect both approach and withdrawal. In the YouTube performance, the dancer is often seen moving in semi-circular pathways, entering open space with extended grand bodily gestures and then retracting into smaller movement arcs steadily but with grace. These shifts are not random choreographic shifts; they document the protagonist's inner turmoil and oscillation between surrender and restraint. The continuos round and smooth spatial movement helps in reinforcing the fluid embodiment of desire as a force that circulates rather than straightens the body. This stance aligns with Deleuze & Guattari's notion that becoming is not a progression from points A to B but an experience of intensity and indiscernibility. Here, Shyama's identity is also evolving, not fixed as is argued by Deleuze & Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* that "Becoming

is to enter a zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or intensity." (Deleuze & Guattari 272) The body in motion does not tell a story of simple arrival; it manifests an arc of ongoing negotiation between the self and the outside, where transgression is expressed through the lived movements themselves. *Shyama*'s performance showcases fluidity not simply as aesthetic grace but as an embodied ethics of intensity. The protagonist's body remains mobile, continuously negotiating between impulses toward approach and withdrawal, desire and restraint, expansion and contraction.

Tagore's choreographic practice across *Chitrangada*, *Chandalika*, and *Shyama* can also be productively analysed through using Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction, particularly his challenge to any forms of normativity through structural fixity and hierarchical binaries. Rather than operating within a stable system of codified mudras or fixed gestures, Rabindra nritya continually defers meaning through its graceful set of movements. This conceptual facet aligns with Derrida's notion of *différance*, where meaning simultaneously emerges through delay and difference rather than simply arising of presence. Similarly, these choreographic sequences resist any form of motioned closure, as gestures dissolve into transitions, and the still body functions not as a resolution but as a pause or suspension, enacting Derrida's idea of *undecidability* of meaning, which came to be termed as *aporia*. Each movement bears the trace of what precedes before it, allowing the body to remain informed by prior emotional states rather than being completely resolved. In this sense, the choreography does not illustrate any proper fixed narrative meaning but necessarily supplements it, exceeding the textual framework and destabilising meaningful interpretations of surety of meaning. By refusing normalised postural endpoints and privileging continuity over culmination through gesture-specific mudras, Tagore's choreography deconstructs normative binaries such as masculine/feminine, classical/modern, and movement/stillness. The dancing body, therefore, becomes a site where meaning is continuously opposed, postponed, positioning Rabindra

Nritya as a performative practice that embodies deconstruction not as theoretical abstraction but as a lived, kinetic experience of the body. This again aligns with how Turner's conception of liminality, but Shyama stands a toe apart from Chitrangada and Chandalika in representing a liminal body negotiating between desire and transgression at every point of the performance.

The performance then becomes specifically fluid in nature because of subjective interpretation in the audience's receptive acts. When approached outside a strictly materialist framework, Rabindra nritya generates a multiplicity of meanings, through the spectators or the interested audience's diverse embodied memories, experiences of their own, and aesthetic competencies. Importantly, as Susan Bennett argues in her work *Theatre audience: a theory of production and reception*, performance meaning emerges not solely from the stage but from the "interaction of the audience with the actors (real audience is stage interaction)" (Bennett 71). In Tagore's dance dramas, the spectators are also considered to be active moderators and they do not passively consume choreography; they participate as well. They experience it kinesthetically, by sensing rhythm, suspension, and flow within their own bodies, governed by their own experiences. Meaning thus arises through participation rather than decoding, transforming choreography into a shared affective event rather than a closed aesthetic object. The choreography's smooth transitions and even smoother metamorphosis of emotional subjectivity, suspended gestures, and lack of definitive postural resolution create what Bennett identifies as interpretive openness, compelling spectators to negotiate meaning through affective and kinesthetic engagement rather than narrative comprehension alone. Importantly, Bennett emphasises that reception is not purely intellectual but deeply embodied; audiences respond through sensory and emotional attachment to rhythm, pace, and spatial dynamics. Tagore's choreographic language exploits this embodied reception, allowing ethical tension, desire, and transformation to be *felt* rather than decoded. Meaning thus emerges in the space

between the moving body and the witnessing body, affirming Bennett's claim that performance is an event of reception as much as of production.

Placing this argument within a postcolonial framework, one witnesses that Tagore's narrative practices challenge the dominant ideologies, but in a more skilful manner. It gradually shifts the tone from overtly nationalist themes and ideologies to a more cosmopolitan stance. His values had taken the form of an aesthetic decolonialisation. They sought cultural revival more than just patriotic fervour within a colonial context. Tagore's expression of modernity was neither an imitation of the Western model, nor was it entirely a return to Indian traditional values. Rather, it is a dynamic modernity that emerges through a continuous dialogue between the past and the present to redefine a future. It articulates freedom through relative movements and openness in posture. Rabindra nritya in these dance dramas become a crucial site for a postcolonial aesthetic to be practiced and nurtured. The fluid choreography functions as a mode of epistemological resistance rather than cultural display. According to critic Uttara Asha Coorlawala's argument in *"Ruth St. Denis and India's Dance Renaissance",* Indian Dance was increasingly read as a visible sign of spiritual essence rather than as a living, adaptive bodily practice. She states, "In a series of expanding repercussions and dialogues between India and the "West," each exchange modifies and influences the following one. Audiences abroad consistently expect to see an ancient (read "beyond criticism"), timeless (read "unchanging"), mysterious (read "incomprehensible"), spiritual, beautiful, ecstatic, complex art form." (Coorlawala 147) Her argument surfaces as a witness of the colonial period's demand of rigid codification and authenticity shaped by Western conceptualisation and expectations. Even today, the West's idea of Indian classical dance is shaped by the strict codes of the revered dance forms that dominates the world with its rhythmic modulation of body movement. Contrary to this system of codification, Tagore's choreographic style consists free movement that is embodied through the body's swift and fluid movements. He privileges lived experience

as a fuel to that bodily swiftness. He does not iconize his characters. Consequently, in *Chitrangada*, Tagore is depriving Chitrangada of the capacity to become a fixed symbolic figure (warrior woman or a princess-like woman). Instead, meaning emerges through her lived bodily struggle between imposed forms. Chitrangada's climactic declaration: *"I am Chitrangada, the King's daughter. I am not a goddess to be worshipped, neither am I an object of the commoner's pity"* can be read as the dismantling of fixed essence of any human being. Chitrangada rejects both exaltation and victimhood, the two dominant modes through which female bodies are iconised. Meaning is not presented as a moral emblem, since she is not the "ideal woman" but as an embodied truth, situated in lived experience. The refusal of symbolic extremes enacts what Derrida would call undecidability. Chitrangada exists between categories, not within them.

Colonial modernity in India reinforced caste hierarchies by translating them into rigid sociological and anthropological categories, rendering the "untouchable" body as an object of knowledge, surveillance, and exclusion. As Ashis Nandy argues in his famous work *The Intimate Enemy* (1983), "The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds" (Nandy 11) He means to say that colonialism did not simply have alien figures impose new power structures but intensified the already existing social divisions by re-inscribing them within modern epistemologies in the colonised subject's mind more clearly by the passing days. *Chandalika* responds to history not just by offering a critique of caste, but the real response is in dramatising the discrimination and representation of how caste is manifested through the body as contraction, hesitation, and internalised inferiority. Ananda operates as a postcolonial intervention precisely because he disrupts the colonial binary of upper and lower caste logic by disrupting the narratives of untouchability. The request does not argue against caste hierarchy; it undoes it performatively. Ananda's act reorients the way in which Prakriti's body progresses toward relational equality, initiating what Frantz Fanon

described as a moment of corporeal reawakening, where the colonised body begins to experience itself differently (Fanon 25). Importantly, Tagore does not monumentalise this moment as freedom or liberation; instead, he allows its effects to unfold gradually and ambiguously through movement. Prakriti's body expands, but not triumphantly; the choreography sustains vulnerability and instability, resisting the nationalist tendency to convert emancipation into heroic spectacle. In *Chandalika*, movement becomes a postcolonial ethics-in-action. The body adjusts with the newfound knowledge about equality not through any socio-political discourse but by altered orientation in newer ways of standing, reaching, and occupying space. This emphasis on new learning resonates with Tagore's broader postcolonial vision articulated in his works like *The Religion of Man* proposes that being liberated is understood as a sort of relational harmony rather than a form of political freedom (*Religion* 56). The dancing body thus becomes a rhythmic and symphonic event, where ethical meaning usually arises through coordinated movement rather than authoritative declaration.

In *Shyama*, the protagonist Shyama is not just constructed as a cautionary emblem of transgressive instincts of sinful desire or redeemed womanhood. Instead, the desire for transgressing one's morality unfolds, bodily felt, before it is morally intelligible. When one notices the linguistic shift in Shyama's expression of love, she does not use a morally ethical registrar for imparting her feelings. Her vocabulary consists of images that the dancing body embodies through motion. Shyama's search for Bojrosen and her declaration of affection embodies transgressive reality. Tagore has shaped his female protagonist to embody a spirit of resistance against dominant narratives. They are all breaking identity barriers, positioning themselves within the postmodern framework. Ethical consequence is registered through the body, reinforcing Merleau-Ponty's notion that the body is a repository of experiences and lived realities. Shyama's remorse is not simple repentance; it is represented through weight, fatigue,

and contraction, all of which are conceptualised through the visual appeal of freely flowing bodily movements of Rabindra Nritya in performance.

The subtle yet impactful presence of the Manipuri dance form in the choreographies of *Chitrangada*, *Chandalika*, and *Shyama* is evident in its kinetic philosophy. Tagore does not manipulate Manipuri as a classical style; rather, he absorbs its patterns of circularity, continuity,and softness into what we understand as Rabindra Nritya today, allowing movement to remain entirely free, fluid and relational. As critic Kapila Vatsyayan in *'Indian Classical Dance'* argues, "seemingly free and unbound governed only in a limited manner by the poetic line and the melody, a long winding metrical system, it [Manipuri Dance] is in fact rigorously structured and its easy flow and spontaneity is its outer form which makes for a smooth communication but is not to be mistaken for simplicity." (Vatsyayan 149) Indian Folk dance traditions operate as a chain, representing the continuation of energy rather than following rigidly codified vocabularies. In all the three dramas, the presence of Manipuri-derived softness enables the body to resist iconisation of any sort - gender, caste, or moral judgment - by successfully sustaining motion as process rather than a singular posture. This abstraction of movement philosophy, rather than preservation of form, positions Tagore's choreographic practice as a postcolonial refusal of both colonial discourse and radical nationalist classicism. In *Chitrangada*, the Manipuri-influenced softness operates through the bodily tension within the narrative of martial strength. The scenes involving Chitrangada's self-assertion of identity do not rely on any form of forceful stamping or any heavily angular postures; instead, strength is conveyed through sustained balance and controlled flow. The smooth oscillation between bodily firmness and fluidity is sustained through continuous gestural movements, suggesting a free-flowing body that adapts rather than resolves. This is particularly evident in moments of transformation in the character, where changes in identity are marked by subtle alterations in Tagore's positioning of rhythm, spacing, and choreographic stances in the orientation. In

Chandalika, Manipuri-inflected softness becomes a means of registering social containment and partial release. Early sections of the play are marked by choreographies which feature lowered gaze, inward-facing gestures, and restricted spatial reach, with the major movements remaining close to the body's centre. As the dance drama progresses, expansion occurs gradually through widened arm pathways and increased spatial mobility, yet the softness of movement remains intact. Even moments of emotional intensity avoid explosive gestures; instead, repetition and sustained motion convey inner turbulence. The absence of sharp climactic movement underscores the fragility of Prakriti's awakening, keeping the body in a state of ongoing negotiation rather than resolution. *Shyama* presents the most visible use of continuous movement under emotional pressure. Here, the flow of motion accelerates and accumulates, producing a sense of excess rather than clarity. Circular patterns tighten, gestures repeat with increasing urgency, and stillness appears only as collapse rather than repose. The softness of Manipuri movement does not disappear; instead, it becomes strained, allowing desire and guilt to register as physical weight rather than narrative explanation. The body seems unable to arrive at equilibrium, reinforcing the drama's refusal of moral closure.

A famous Bharatanatyam Dancer and a Professor in English at The Bhawanipur Education Society College, University of Calcutta, as well as an esteemed member of the Tagore family, Miss Souraja Tagore, had frankly disclosed the joys of this dance form in an interview with *The Statesmen*. She says, "Dancers in Rabindra Nritya must be able to adapt to a variety of styles and movements that are not restricted to a specific dance curriculum. Rabindra Nritya requires a very sensitive and evolved dancer. Through movements and expressions, the dancer must assimilate and emote Tagore's literature. A dancer who does not understand Tagore literature will suffer from a dangerous lack of the magic of Rabindra Nritya, which lies in the fact that it keeps improving and growing with each dancer's growth and experience. The joy and satisfaction of Rabindra Nritya can be found endlessly as the dancer matures. Rabindra

Nritya remains new over generations, and its scope is limitless." This research paper aims to explore this idea in abundance. The concerned texts and their performances have simultaneously presented a continuity of motion and softness in bodily structures. The free-flowing body is subjected to many pleasant as well as unpleasant changes. The circular movements and formations along with sustained physicality is evidently a testimony to the phenomenological approach of the body, which is considered supreme in storing and articulating the lived realities. The corporeal framework remains in constant fluctuation across the three works. Within that process, it becomes a resistant anti-colonial discourse within the colonial framework in performance and theatrical positions. The titular characters' intensive physical awakening throughout the plot helps in structuring them as a challenge to nationalist aesthetics by seeking legitimisation.

When analysed together, they stand in unison to bear witness to Tagore's postcolonial discourse within the colonial stage. It is also a witness to Rabindra Nritya's lasting endurance through time. Tagore's legacy contains the purest forms of tradition and it is conveyed through the rhythms of modernity. In placing his canon of work within the apparent postcolonial context, we get the opportunity to analyse the fluidity of identity that is found in surplus in his characters. The characters that happen to be the focus of the research are all females within a liminal space trying to break free from the shackles of a unidirectional flow of life, they are emblematic of the force that dominated the colonial space – a force so strong that it takes up an entire canon of literature to resist against hegemonic control. They are epitomes of a nation in transitional phase, quietly revolutionising the trend of fixated identity. Tagore successfully revolutionises the autonomy of Indian Theatre as well as change the dynamics of codified gestures of movement.

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