



## Confined to the Kitchen and Excluded from the Discourse in Life and After: Exploring the Dead in the Kitchen through Select Bengali Short Stories

Mukulika Batabyal

### Abstract:

The construction of the woman in most discourses remains similar across cultures: irrespective of her individual identity, she is invariably associated with her archetypal role of the caregiver. In the figure of this archetype one of her primary functions restricts her to the space of the kitchen where she is expected to provide edible food for her family. But when we consider the complete possibility of this archetype, a woman's identity has a clear division: that of the "good mother" and the "evil mother". While the "good mother" nurtures and nourishes, the "evil mother" turns her ordained space into a site of malevolence and weaponizes it to meet her own ends. In narrowing down this archetype to a more South Asian context (particularly the Bengali context) what we discover is that, not only does the base of the archetype remain the same, but rather, this culinary/cultural identity is further exploited to ensure fixity.

Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" addresses the issue of the double marginalisation of the gendered subaltern stating "the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow." All kitchen politics conspire to keep her within its confinements not even liberating her in death. In death she reappears in the figure of a শাঁকচুনি (the ghost of a married woman), or a ভাইনি (witch) who continues to provide for her family or lures her victims with food as represented in various short stories. In this essay I would like to explore the kitchen politics associated with this gendered identity of the woman through select Bengali short stories, and the fixity attached to this kitchen identity even in death disabling any form of liberation from that role. The main aim of this paper will be to bring out the multi-layered nature of the kitchen confinement and how these stories have ensured to keep intact the dominant narrative providing fixity to gendered identities.

**Keywords:** Food Studies, Gothic Studies, Gender Studies, Bengali fiction, Psychoanalysis.



The construction of the woman in most discourses remains similar across cultures: irrespective of her individual identity, she is invariably associated with her archetypal role of the caregiver whose primary duty is to nourish and nurture, always already confined to the space of the kitchen. However, *within* the structure of the archetype, is also contained the capacity for evil which manifests itself through the figure of the ‘evil’ mother<sup>1</sup> who turns the bountiful kitchen into a site for malice and weaponizes it to meet her own ends. Just like the ‘good’ mother who is representative of the Goddess in our collective unconscious<sup>2</sup>, the ‘evil’ mother appears across religions and mythologies, even pervading through folk traditions, fixing this personality type in our collective psyche. She usually appears as a supernatural presence in this role, who enchants or seduces her victims. This seduction is observed to be achieved mainly through food items whether in the Biblical figure of the serpent<sup>3</sup>, or as a witch in folk narratives as seen in ‘Hansel and Gretel’, where the witch uses food to lure the children<sup>4</sup>, or in ‘Little Snow-White’ where the ‘evil mother’ poisons Snow White with an apple<sup>5</sup>. This archetype, having been embedded in the collective consciousness, finds itself manifested through the other female figures that later take up the role of the caregiver. For the purpose of this paper, I shall take the case of a particular ethnic community—the Bengali context—and explore not only how the dichotomous functioning of the archetype—that affixes benevolence and malevolence to a woman’s identity (albeit through figures that don’t stand in directly for the mother, but whose role is central to sustenance)<sup>6</sup>—repeats itself across cultures, but also how this culinary/cultural identity is exploited further to ensure fixity.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her essay, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, has articulated the plight of the gendered subaltern<sup>7</sup> who faces a twofold marginalisation and is positioned in such a way that her voice remains unheard: ‘the subaltern as female [remains] even more deeply in shadow’<sup>8</sup>. If a woman is at all inserted within a narrative, she is usually kept in the periphery. While the subaltern has been discussed with respect to the postcolonial subject, the gendered subject remains oppressed even within this superset. Though her presence cannot be absolutely denied because of her necessary role in the domestic space, her primary existence is mainly acknowledged specifically in association with the kitchen. This understanding, when applied to the Bengali literary imagination, can be observed that it has not been very different. In many narratives, she finds a voice either as an old woman (usually a widow) contributing to the family from her place in the kitchen or as a supernatural presence. What is interesting to note is that even in her non-human form she has been imagined within the



confines of her kitchen (still cooking or turning that ordained space into a space of hostility) attaining no liberation from her shackles even in death. To understand this assigned fixity of her identity to the kitchen, we must acknowledge the gender politics that dominate any given discourse, and investigate, more pertinently, why a discourse is structured as such, by retracing it all the way back to its psychoanalytic ‘origin’.

In acknowledgement of the archetype, Jungian analytical psychology defines it as a concept that ‘indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere’<sup>9</sup>, meaning that it is prototypal in nature and is ‘no longer contents of the unconscious, but have already been changed into conscious formulae taught according to tradition....’<sup>10</sup>. The archetype, therefore, does not stem directly from personal experience but rather represents figures that constitute our understanding of the world. In the case of the archetypal mother she resembles, in extension, the primal mother figure who has suffered castration at the hands of the punishing all-father of the primal horde. In giving her a place in the central discourse she poses a threat to the ego formation and ‘I’ subjectivity that emerges from imagining oneself as a whole in the mirror stage because of the lack she represents<sup>11</sup>. This archetypal image that seeps into the identity of the woman provokes the initial urge for marginalisation. Her presence, therefore, compels one to physically remove her from the existing discourse by confining her to the space of the kitchen. This marginalisation and confinement, however, is not merely metaphorical. A traditional Bengali home, if one was to examine its architecture, is constructed in a way that the storage, dining, and cooking areas are usually located at least some distance from the inner sphere. According to the *Silpa Sastras*, the kitchen ‘was designated to the southeast corner, the dwelling place of the Lord of Fire’ as Joanne Lea Taylor mentions in her thesis<sup>12</sup>. On taking a closer look at the blueprint of a provincial urban nineteenth-century middle-class Bengali house, one will notice the kitchen as being separate even if not detached from the *অন্দরমহল* (inner sphere) as seen in the Chakravarty residence<sup>13</sup>. The woman’s place, therefore, was strategically designed to physically keep her in the periphery from where she would need to locomote in order to enter the main discourse or even make her voice heard.

The question that arises then is whether she ever acquires an identity separate from that of her association with the kitchen. In theory, she does after her death but the Bengali literary imagination directly counters it. In many horror short stories, the dead woman or the women who have transgressed societal norms appear as a *পিশাচিনি* (blood-thirsty spirit), a *শাঁকচুনি* (the ghost of a married woman), or a *ডাইনি* (witch) respectively. She has been portrayed, in

many cases, as the enchantress or seductress or simply a woman who evokes sympathy with her aim now being that of revenge. However, in this role too her primary site of existence is co-relational to her role in the kitchen. In Manoj Basu's short story 'জামাই' ('Son-in-law') that narrates the story of Binod visiting his in-law's village on a fateful night during a malaria outbreak, he receives hospitality from his now dead wife, Chanchala. She had succumbed to the disease, but even as a supernatural entity, she offers him a meal. In meeting Chanchala, Binod does not even detect anything mysterious about her behaviour but immediately places a demand for food, '...সারাদিন ভাত জোটেনি। ভীষণ ক্ষিদে পেয়েছে...তড়াতাড়ি চাট্টি ভাত ফুটিয়ে দিতে পারো তো দেখা' ('I haven't had any rice the whole day, I am starving... quickly see if you can boil some rice for me. '; my trans)<sup>14</sup>. It is only when he physically enters the domain of the kitchen does he notice something unfamiliar about her. She is seen to be cooking in an earthen stove except instead of lighting it with wood she uses her feet to ignite the fire and instead of a ladle she is seen to be using her fingers<sup>15</sup>. Only after observing the peculiarity of the situation does Binod sense its impossibility and in turn is forced to acknowledge her as a non-human. Even after her death, she is shown as serving her husband and providing nourishment for him from the confines of her kitchen.

Avik Sarkar's contemporary short story, 'ভোগ' ('Divine Offering'), also reiterates this trope but through a more horrifying depiction. 'ভোগ' ('Divine Offering') tells the story of a man, Ateen, who has a fetish for collecting antiques. In one of his antique hunts, he collects an ancient idol of a Goddess that is later discovered to be cursed. This Goddess requires being satiated with offerings and in failing to appease her one would incur her wrath. As the story progresses Ateen houses a homeless lady, Damri, and employs her to be his cook unbeknownst to him that she is a *pishachini* (blood-thirsty spirit) who has come to do the cursed Goddess' bidding. What is noteworthy here is Ateen's promptness at employing an absolute stranger and thrusting her to the confines of the kitchen. He even arranges to house her in the attic keeping her in the borders of the main action<sup>16</sup>. Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay provides a similar illustration of a non-human woman in his story 'মায়্যা' ('Maya'), who appears not directly in the kitchen but only when she is seen to be collecting gourd from the garden<sup>17</sup>.

As a supernatural presence, whose manifestation mainly resembles that of the 'evil' woman archetype, it does not seem very plausible to confine such a woman within the boundaries of the kitchen without any resistance on her part. Her supernatural liberties do enable her to intrude into the discourse. While in her human form, the need for her physical

confinement to the kitchen space mainly arises from the urge to distance one's self from the castration fear, in death she begins to resemble the 'uncanny' that requires being abjected and finally obliterated. Freud defines the 'uncanny' as 'that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar'<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, the 'uncanny' represents something that was once familiar but now frightens with its unfamiliarity. The initial impulse of restricting them to the kitchen that is observed in the case of both, Binod and Ateen, disables them from understanding the suspicious nature of the situation because this impulse falls in the domain of what is familiar to them. But the moment Chanchala and Damri cross the boundaries of their respective kitchens, with Chanchala stretching her arms out to an absurd length to pluck lemons from the tree or in chasing her husband fleeing husband<sup>19</sup>, and in Ateen's momentary glance at Damri's supernatural countenance, they begin to resemble certain unfamiliarity, something that may not have been observed in a human woman's behaviour.

The 'uncanny' also resembles that which 'ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light'<sup>20</sup>. The systematic placement of these woman characters in the kitchen attests to the attempt at concealing them from the discourse. Like Binod's demand to Chanchala for food upon meeting her that compels her to return to the kitchen, one of Ateen's first questions while enquiring upon Damri also consists in him asking, 'তুমি রান্নার কাজ পারো?' ('Can you do a cooking job?'; my trans)<sup>21</sup>. Damri even takes it upon herself to cook and serve the cursed idol. A similar instance also finds expression in Satyajit Ray's 'সেপ্টোপাসের ক্ষিদে' ('The Hunger of Septopus')<sup>22</sup>. While Septopus is a carnivorous plant, she resembles the 'evil' mother archetype in her tentacles and in her capacity of creating a hollow, which she uses to devour her prey, as Jung mentions, 'Hollow objects such as ovens and cooking vessels are associated with the mother archetype, and, of course, the uterus, and anything of a like shape'<sup>23</sup>. Kantibabu, an enthusiastic botanist, keeps Septopus in a locked room with a skylight<sup>24</sup>. What becomes a challenge however is in holding these women, in their demarcated spaces, preventing them from coming to 'light'. While in life a woman is perceived as the fallen woman for crossing the margins of the kitchen and peering into the world as depicted in Bibhutibhushan Bandhopadhyay's 'ডইনি' ('Witch'), where Kamala, a simple woman, is jeered at and called a witch by her neighbour for daring to cross the boundaries of her home and enquiring about her neighbour's child, in her phantom state of existence she trespasses those borders and physically moves into focus<sup>25</sup>. This movement of the phantom from the kitchen into the main action is always written as a moment of climatic

revelation because of the incapacity to fathom the rupture her presence creates in the central discourse.

Outside the domain of the kitchen, her presence is ‘unheimlich’<sup>26</sup>. When Binod attempts to escape after witnessing the mysterious incident in the kitchen, he notices that he is being followed not by one but four apparitions of his wife with their faces covered with their sarees. When she reveals her face, Binod is flabbergasted, ‘সামনের বউটা ঘুরে দাঁড়ায় বিনোদের দিকে। এতক্ষনে মুখের ঘোমটা তুলল। তারই স্ত্রী—রান্না করছিল সে বসে বসে’ (‘The married woman turns around and stands in front of Binod. She finally lifts the veil. It is his wife—she had been sitting and cooking’; my trans)<sup>27</sup>. Similarly, when Ateen confronts Damri about the dirt in his clothes, her momentary presence in the central discourse, outside her kitchen space, reveals her supernatural self, ‘মুখ বীভৎস কালো হয়ে গেল। চোখ দুটো লাল আর বড় বড়। মাথার চুল শাপের মত উড়ছে...’ (‘Her face turned horribly black. Her two eyes were red and big. Her serpent-like hair flew...’; my trans)<sup>28</sup>. In Bandhopadhyay’s ‘মায়ী’ (‘Maya’) too a similar strangeness is observed every time the protagonist senses the mysterious woman’s presence outside the act of collecting gourd. While she remains invisible, each time she enters his terrain she leaves a strong, intoxicating fragrance<sup>29</sup>. This inability to contain her presence within the walls of the kitchen and the inability to comprehend her strangeness outside is what necessitates the process of abjecting her and finally eliminating her from the discourse.

Julia Kristeva uses abjection in tandem with our ego formation drawing on the Lacanian theory. To abject is to expel anything that is ‘opposed to I’<sup>30</sup>. The first abjection appears in separating oneself from the mother as an attempt to achieve the ‘I’ subjectivity. What is abjected is excluded to allow space for one’s own subjectivity to emerge. However, even though it is excluded, it cannot be banished and in not being banished, any confrontation with it continues to threaten the ‘I’ as Kristeva states, ‘from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master’<sup>31</sup>. In view of this definition, we find certain justification to the requirement to exclude women from the centre of the discourse to the periphery. The consequences of her coming within the vicinity of the people who have excluded her/envision her in her state of exclusion constantly find a voice in the above-mentioned stories. She is not only shown to disrupt the peace prevailing over the action but her presence explicitly threatens one’s sense of the self. The presence of the mysterious woman in ‘মায়ী’ (‘Maya’) and Damri’s sudden sporadic disappearances from the kitchen culminates in the characters learning that their appearances outside their kitchen spaces literally initiates the process of the loss of one’s senses and subsequently the sense of the self.

The shopkeeper in ‘Maya’ warns the protagonist about the presence of the woman stating, ‘তোমার আগে যারা ওখানে থাকত, তারা সবাই একটা বউকে দেখত ওখানে প্রায়। এমন হত শেষে, ও বাড়ি ছেড়ে তারা নড়তে চাইত না। তারপর রোগা হয়ে দিনদিন শুকিয়ে শেষে মারা যেত।... ভুতে লোককে পাগল করে দেয়। তাদের কাউজ্ঞান থাকেনা...’ (‘All those who lived there before you, everyone saw a lady there often. It so happened that at the end none of them wanted to leave the house. Then they slowly withered away and eventually died... The ghost turns the people mad. They lose their senses...’; my trans)<sup>32</sup>. Similarly, in ‘ভোগ’ (‘Divine Offering’), the priest warns Bhubesh babu of the consequences of Damri’s presence. In shock he exclaims, ‘আগে বুদ্ধি নাশ করে, তাঁর বোধ, চিন্তা-শক্তি হরণ করতে থাকেন। তার বেঁচে থাকার ইচ্ছে শোষণ করতে থাকেন...তার জীবনশক্তি ক্ষয় হয়’ (‘At first, she destroys his intelligence, his senses, and his rationality. She sucks out his will to live...Slowly his strength to live dissipates’; my trans)<sup>33</sup>. While, here the loss of the self is expressed more visibly, it can be metaphorically read as the abjected mother’s attempt to devour the child and bring him back to her realm, the realm of the Imaginary<sup>34</sup>.

The process of abjecting the supernatural, however, then can be understood as slightly more complicated for two reasons: a) Unlike the ‘good’ mother who remains in the periphery, nourishing and nurturing that which has excluded her, the ‘evil mother’ puts up a show of resistance and seeks certain autonomy and even threatens to reclaim her position in the discourse. When Damri crosses the boundary and enters Ateen’s terrain, she is not there to nurture him but to perform quite the contrary. Physically her aim is to deprive him of hygiene, cleanliness and food, and moreover, to remove the people who can provide him with the same. She compels Ateen to wear ‘নোংরা, অপরিচ্ছন্ন’ (‘dirty, unclean’) clothes and forces him to live in a dirty place. She provides food that repels him causing him to lose his ‘ক্ষিদে, তৃষ্ণা’ (‘hunger, thirst’). Then she begins to kill his family members one by one<sup>35</sup>. Her ultimate attempt to deprive Ateen of his intelligence, his senses, and his rationality is indicative of her desire to dissociate him with every trait that he has acquired upon entering the symbolic order<sup>36</sup>. And ultimately her attempt to kill him—to suck out, devour, or feed on life itself, treating the very essence of life as food, can be read as the woman’s final stance at restoring her order and enforcing her stand. In constantly being casted out from the discourse, she returns with a vendetta to take back what is hers, life form itself, and to put it back where it belongs, which Freud calls the ‘heim [home]...of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning . . .’, the mother’s womb<sup>37</sup> (15). An even more graphic and literal depiction is found in ‘The Hunger of Septopus’. The carnivorous plant, Septopus, wishes to feed on the person who taunts her and has kept her confined in the room<sup>38</sup>. And b) the supernatural ‘evil’ woman already stands for something

that has been abjected as Kristeva in explaining the expulsion defines the corpse as already the abject, ‘...the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, "I" is expelled’<sup>39</sup>. The degree of self-awareness present in these characters of their abject position is revealed through the food intake of Damri, the cursed idol of the Goddess, and Septopus. The priest explicitly mentions that the only offering the Goddess accepts is that which has been rejected or what is ‘উচ্ছিষ্ট’ (‘leftovers’). While Damri is never exposed to be feeding on a carcass, the cadavers that Ateen stumbles upon on the terrace near the attic hint at the most macabre revelation. He finds ‘...পশু ও পাখির হাড়, কাকের ভাঙা বাসা, বড় বড় পালক, কাকের কাটা মাথা...’ (‘Bones of animals and birds, broken nests, long feathers, a decapitated head of a crow’)<sup>40</sup>. The area in which Septopus is confined is not visually very different. She is surrounded by feathers of birds upon which she has fed. Kantibabu also informs Parimol and Abhi about feeding her the carcass of dead cats and dogs<sup>41</sup>.

The question that arises then is what can be done to that which has already been abjected but continues to fervently disrupt the discourse and perversely reclaim what they have been denied? She cannot be ignored or welcomed because her presence is a reminder of the ultimate expulsion. Allowing her to remain in the discourse would be to grant permission for a complete annihilation of the self. This conflict, therefore, leads to an ultimate confrontation between the opposing sides. In the climax of the story, Ateen finds Damri cooking the dismembered limbs of Pushpa di to offer to the Goddess. This immediately instills in him the fear of punishment and castration and the need to obliterate the abjected. The dismembered limb, resembling the phallus, which had been repressed comes back to the fore threatening the disorientation of the self because of its direct link to castration<sup>42</sup>. This acts as the ultimate reason for destroying Damri and casting out the cursed idol in the river<sup>43</sup>. Septopus also meets a similar fate for attacking her victim and consuming some flesh from his limbs. It is due to this act that Kantibabu decides to get rid of her<sup>44</sup>. And the one who does not manage to eliminate the abject from the discourse loses his own sense of self as we observe in the case of the protagonist of ‘মায়া’ (‘Maya’). He continues to live in the house two years after the first occurrences of the uncanny and in fact, begins to enjoy their company. He states, ‘...দিনরাত ওদের নৃত্য দেখি, ওদের মধ্যেই বাস করি—এক পা যাই না বাড়ি ছেড়ে’ (‘...day and night I watch them dancing, I live with them— I do not step one foot away from this house.’; my trans)<sup>45</sup>. He begins to acknowledge the ‘apparitions’ as a natural phenomenon losing his subjectivity in the fissure that exists in between the domains of what is familiar and what is not.





In attempting to understand the discourse of food studies in a nation like India where the kitchen is essential to the structure of any domestic set-up, it is crucial to keep in mind the politics that dominate it. The strategic positioning of the woman whose existence is primarily linked with the kitchen is in the nucleus of this politics. While the domestic space is considered almost non-functional without her presence, she is only allowed limited access. This limited access is further problematized by the threat of obliterating her completely if she disrupts the central discourse. Even if we trace its justifications psychoanalytically, the patriarchal hegemonic structure that dominates even the domestic sphere brings to light the structural oppression and deprivation that has been conferred upon women, by constantly and conveniently perceiving her as the other, through systematised politics. If one is to fight gender politics, especially kitchen politics, it is imperative to analyse, acknowledge, and address the underlying problems and mechanisms to provide any form of successful resistance to this structure and achieve emancipation from it.

---

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>. Here I use mother not in the literal sense but in the position the woman represents and will repeat this for the remaining of the paper.

<sup>2</sup>. Jung, *Volume Nine: The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R.F.C Hull (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>. Jung, *Volume Nine*, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup>. Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, "Hansel and Gretel." in *Grimms' Fairy Tales* (Project Gutenberg, June 28, 2021), [https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2591/pg2591-images.html#link2H\\_4\\_0020](https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2591/pg2591-images.html#link2H_4_0020).

<sup>5</sup>. Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, "Little Snow White" in *Grimms' Fairy Stories* (1922; Project Gutenberg, December 23, 2020), <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11027/pg11027-images.html#littlesnowwhite>.

<sup>6</sup>. Jungian archetypes, which are essentially looked at as imbedded models for human behaviour, establish the ground for the traits human beings are likely to exhibit or are imagined to exhibit through the course of their lives. One such archetype is that of the 'mother' within which coexists the capacity for both, the 'good mother', and the 'evil mother'. While the stories that have been selected as a part of this paper do not directly adhere to the image of the mother, this analytical model provides us with the scope of understanding how these behavioural traits are imagined to be possessed by figures who provide sustenance, just as the mother, (i.e. the wife and the maid). The aim of this paper has been to critically explore this idea and look at how and why the imagination for the creation of female characters remains fixed (within the bounds of the archetypes) across relations and cultures.

<sup>7</sup>. As the stories selected for this paper hail from the Global South, the idea of Spivak's 'subaltern' has been used to understand the discourse. While the subaltern subject already faces an erasure from dominant discourses in terms of using a voice, the gendered subaltern faces a further marginalization within the subset of the already oppressed. The female subject, in all these stories, are kept in the periphery and their inclusion in the



main discourse causes an aberration which has been further discussed and analysed in the paper.

<sup>8</sup>. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 287.

<sup>9</sup>. Jung, *Volume Nine*, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup>. Jung, *Volume Nine*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>. Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience.” in *Ecrits*. trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), p. 78.

<sup>12</sup>. Taylor, *The Great Houses of Kolkata: 1750-2006*. (University of New South Wales, 2008), p. 157, <https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/19476>.

<sup>13</sup>. Sengupta, “Living in the Periphery: Provinciality and Domestic Space in Colonial Bengal.” *The Journal of Architecture*, 18, no. 6, 2013, pp. 905-43, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602365.2013.853683](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602365.2013.853683).

<sup>14</sup>. Basu, “Jamai.” in *Dui Banglar Eksho Bhooter Golpo*, ed, Sunil Gangopadhyay and Ujjal Kumar Das. (Kolkata: Ananddam, 1994), p. 54.

<sup>15</sup>. Basu, “Jamai,” p. 54.

<sup>16</sup>. Avik Sarkar, “Bhog.” in *Ebong Inquisition*, read by Deep and Mir (Kolkata: Mirchi Bangla, 2019), Youtube, 1hr., 59 min.

<sup>17</sup>. Bibhutibhushan Bandhopadhyay, “Maya.” in *Bibhutibhushan Golpo Smogroho: Ditiyo Khondo*, narrated by Mir. (Bangla Golpo, 2018), Youtube, 54 min.

<sup>18</sup>. Freud, “The Uncanny.” Trans. Alix Strachey, (1919), 1, [web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf).

<sup>19</sup>. Basu, “Jamai,” p. 54.

<sup>20</sup>. Freud, , “The Uncanny,” p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>. Sarkar.

<sup>22</sup>. Satyajit Ray, “Septopus er Khide.” in *Sandesh Patrika*, narrated by Mir (Kolkata: Mirchi Bangla, 2018). Youtube, 44 min.

<sup>23</sup>. Jung, *Volume Nine*, p. 81.

<sup>24</sup>. Ray.

<sup>25</sup>. Bandhopadhyay, “Daini.” in *Bibhutibhushan Golpo Somogroho: Prothom Khondo*, (Kolkata: Mitra & Ghosh Publishers), pp. 221-24. <https://archive.org/details/galposamagro-01-bibhutibhushan/page/n1/mode/2up>.

<sup>26</sup>. Freud, 3-4. ‘Unheimlich, uneasy, eerie’ or ‘Unheimlich’ is the name for everything that ought to have remained . . . hidden and secret and has become visible...’.

<sup>27</sup>. Basu, “Jamai,” p. 55.

<sup>28</sup>. Sarkar.

<sup>29</sup>. Bandhopadhyay.



---

<sup>30</sup>. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup>. Bandhopadhyay.

<sup>33</sup>. Sarkar.

<sup>34</sup>. The realm where the child exists prior to the mirror stage; a pre-linguistic state, according to Lacan.

<sup>35</sup>. Sarkar.

<sup>36</sup>. The order one enters into after they enter the language system, after the formation of the ego in the mirror stage, according to Lacan.

<sup>37</sup>. Freud, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup>. Ray.

<sup>39</sup>. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>40</sup>. Sarkar.

<sup>41</sup>. Ray.

<sup>42</sup>. Freud, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup>. Sarkar.

<sup>44</sup>. Ray.

<sup>45</sup>. Bandhopadhyay.



## References:

- Bandhopadhyay, Bibhutibhushan. "Daini." In *Bibhutibhushan Golpo Somogroho: Prothom Khondo*, 221-24. Kolkata: Mitra & Ghosh Publishers.  
<https://archive.org/details/galposamagro-01-bibhutibhushan/page/n1/mode/2up>.
- "Maya." In *Bibhutibhushan Golpo Smogroho: Ditiyo Khondo*. Narrated by Mir. Bangla Golpo, 2018. Youtube, 54 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-iHJXLbKyg&t=5s>.
- Basu, Manoj. "Jamai." In *Dui Banglar Eksho Bhooter Golpo*, 52-6. Edited by Sunil Gangopadhyay and Ujjal Kumar Das. Kolkata: Ananddam, 1994.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." Translated by Alix Strachey. 1919. Accessed April 9 2023. [web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf).
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. "Hansel and Gretel." In *Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Project Gutenberg, June 28, 2021. [https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2591/pg2591-images.html#link2H\\_4\\_0020](https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2591/pg2591-images.html#link2H_4_0020).
- "Little Snow-White." In *Grimm's Fairy Stories*. 1922; Project Gutenberg, December 23, 2020. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11027/pg11027-images.html#littlesnowwhite>.
- Jung, Carl G. *Volume Nine: The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious*. Translated by R.F.C Hull. London: Routledge, 1981.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." In *Ecrits*. 74-81. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Ray, Satyajit. "Septopus er Khide." In *Sandesh Patrika*. Narrated by Deep. Kolkata: Mirchi Bangla, 2018. Youtube, 44 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsi3ppWL1ac&t=2s>.
- Sarkar, Avik. "Bhog." In *Ebong Inquisition*. Read by Deep and Mir. Kolkata: Mirchi Bangla, 2019. Youtube, 1hr., 59 min.



---

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78\\_yUerbD9k&t=7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78_yUerbD9k&t=7s).

Sengupta, Tania. "Living in the Periphery: Provinciality and Domestic Space in Colonial Bengal." *The Journal of Architecture*, 18, no. 6 (November 2013): 905-43. [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602365.2013.853683](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602365.2013.853683).

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-313. London: Macmillan, 1988.

Taylor, Joanne Lea. *The Great Houses of Kolkata: 1750-2006*. 2008. University of New South Wales. Accessed April 9 2023. <https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/19476>.