Chapter 4

**Translation From Text To Screen**

Translation has its own dynamics and the entire process is accompanied with a host of considerations. In “Intertextuality and Translation: Borges, Browne, and Quevedo” Christopher Johnson quotes Walter Benjamin who views translation as the ‘afterlife’ of the original. According to Benjamin “a translation issues from the original... as its afterlife.” And thus, a work of translation marks the original’s “stage of continued life” (Johnson 2002: 179). Indeed, translations do extend the life for the original work, making it available for readers in a different language or form. Had there been no translations, many good works would have been beyond the reach of readers who are alien to the source language of the original composition. But while translating, the translator must retain the aesthetic appeal of the original in order to make the translation an ‘after-life’ of the original. Gopa Majumdar’s English translation of Satyajit Ray’s thrillers featuring the super sleuth Feluda have also ensured a ‘continued life’ for the famous detective beyond the fringe of Bengal. After reading any one of Ray’s thirty five thrillers, no reader can evade the attraction of the stories featuring the ‘three musketeers’ (Majumdar 2005:375)- Feluda, Topshe and Lalmohan Babu. But while translating the translator has to consider a number of crucial points regarding the genre that one is dealing with. A detective fiction story incorporates a dense network of action, thrill and suspense and one must not compromise with the mystery element while translating. Moreover, if the reader has read the original work before the translated ones, then his or her reading will generate a host of other observations as well. But before dealing with the intricacies of the translated versions, it is important to analyse and interpret the stories in order to perceive the structure of a detective fiction narrative. Following the previous chapter,
this one too will cover a detailed discussion of the stories comprising the second volume of Gopa Majumdar’s *The Complete Adventures of Feluda* (2005).

Detective fiction stories operate with a complex narrative structure involving a concealed past and a baffling state of affairs in the present. In order to unravel the complications of the present, the detective has to unveil the past. Being driven by an irrational desire of fulfilment, the criminal distorts the harmony of the rational world. Gathering information from the past and the present, the detective dispels all confusion and restores harmony in the present. However, the real interest is not the solution, as the cognition of the ways that leads to the final solution is more captivating. Taking an intermittent course and making his or her way through multiple digressions the detective arrives at truth but withholds all revelations until the climax is reached. The author designedly makes the detective conceal vital information to delay the solution and escalate the suspense. In order to create the desired degree of narrative suspense the author incorporates many narrative schemes or strategies which can be understood under the light of the theoretical apparatus of Gerard Genette and Kenneth Burke.

A typical story of detective fiction has a comprehensive structure with a concrete story line aided by a temperamental narrative discourse. The disjointed mode of narration, the detective’s withholding of information, his final resolution as the omniscient narrator are the various narrative strategies incorporated by the author to device the desired scheme of suspense in such narratives. While a detective tries to analyse the crime or make deductions, he actually tries to take an insight into the psyche of the criminal. But with multiple suspects the detective has to logically substantiate his thought process and make rational investigation to narrow down to the best possible motive and circumstance that has propelled the crime. In order to find the culprit (among a number of other suspects) the detective must understand the culprit’s motive and his mental course of action. Infact, the detective’s process of the criminal
revelation is almost similar to the process of psycho-analysis. The psychological implications of the detective’s investigation comes forward when the detective tries to replace the criminal with his own self and think of the crime scene as the criminal himself. During his investigation the detective receives misinformation about the present and gathers information about the past. With his rational understanding and sense of logic he examines all ends to apprehend the criminal’s motivation behind the crime. Each detective fiction story is actually a narrative of conflict between the ‘motivational discourse’ (Knapp 1999:588) of the detective and the criminal. And in this entire scheme of things the reader too has his own analysis to make. Though not as scientific, but the reader too makes an analytical reading to understand the dynamic structure of a detective story.

The first volume shows Feluda’s growth as a private detective. From a reader of fictional stories of detection Feluda evolves as an alternative agent; a realistic sleuth who is more competent than the police force and whose biggest strength is a brilliant combo of “powerful brain, steady nerves and strong muscles.”(Majumdar 2004:537). Soon his skills brought him fame from other corners of Bengal and even beyond. On reading the stories collected in the second volume, the reader interacts with a well known professional detective whose merit has now earned him respect from all corners including the state appointed policemen, who had previously (as seen in the stories of 1st volume) targeted their jibes at him. Feluda even ventures out of the country to carry out investigation on foreign lands. Whenever he makes his final revelation to disentangle the mystery; the men in uniform appear as passive listeners along with other characters. Infact, his feat as depicted in the stories convincingly fits him with the honorary title ‘ABCD’, i.e, ‘Asia’s Best Crime Detector’ (Majumdar 2005:187) as conferred upon him by Lalmohan Ganguli. This volume contains the last nineteen stories that were authored by Ray from 1979 to 1995 and were published randomly in Sandesh, Desh and also in Anandamela.
Whenever Feluda is confronted with a scene of crime he tries to bring order by reordering the conflicts that led to the crime. In most cases the conflicting motives behind a crime are those of greed and security. Though his skills of observation are exemplary, but in the initial stages of each case he (like any other detective) feels confused at what he observes apparently and is therefore ambiguous in drawing any concrete conclusion. As the narrative progresses, things begin to make sense and clues or observations begin to attain symbolic or thematic significance. At times the complexity of the case also requires him to carry out a psychological investigation of the criminal’s mental course of action and in this regard he has to understand the motive behind the crime. In this volume there are a number of stories where Feluda solves the mystery by decoding the criminal’s motivational impetus behind the crime.


In “Napoleon’s Letter” Feluda’s meeting with a young admirer brings him to the Halder house-hold where a murder almost coincides with his time of arrival. The reason behind Pavitracaran’s murder became evident when his most prized possession- Napoleon’s letter was found missing. But Feluda was intrigued by a rather trivial matter- the missing of Aniruddha’s pet bird, and this feeling further accentuated after he noticed a stain of blood on the bird’s cage. Feluda investigated to establish the missing links between the missing bird, the stolen antique- letter of Napoleon and the murder of its owner to expose the two culprits who joined hands to fulfill their respective motives. However, “The Disappearance of Amber Sen” is a different story where the initial crisis caused by the kidnap of Mr. Amber Sen turns out to be a staged drama aimed to test the intelligence of Feluda. Not only did Feluda succeed in assessing the drama, but he also exposed Samaresh Mallik, Amber Sen’s cousin who tried
to take advantage of the fake crime and lay his hands upon the ransom demanded as part of
the staged kidnap.

In “The Acharya Murder Case” renowned jatra actor Indranarayan Acharya’s murder
raised suspicion against Ashwini Bhaur, who happened to visit the victim hours before he
was murdered. Initially it appeared that Indranarayan was the victim of professional rivalry
and the murderer’s main motive was to steal his brilliant compositions. But Feluda’s
investigation helped to unmask those culprits, whose hidden motives lead to adverse actions
in the story. “Murder in the Mountains” is another complicated case of multiple crimes and
culprits. After Birupaksha Majumdar’s murder, a paper recovered at the crime scene with
‘vish’ inscribed on it, indicated that his death was caused by poison, however, he was found
to be stabbed to death with a dagger. Initially the most obvious motive appeared to be the
robbery of a precious statue of Krishna and Lokenath- the servant who had served the family
for many years was held responsible for the crime. Most people bought this idea because
Lokenath was missing since the crime took place. However, Feluda retraced facts from the
past and analyzed them in the light of the present to discover multiple angles of the mystery
which ended up in the revelation of three different crimes and their culprits.

On the other hand, “Peril in Paradise” and “Dr Munshi’s Diary” are two crime tales
which strike a number of other chords in the reader’s mind. Both the stories deal with the
revenge motif and are complex murder mysteries wherein the victims’ past bore an ugly
impact on their present. In the former, retired judge Siddheshwar Mallik met with a gruesome
end as he was first stabbed and then his head was smashed to death. Initial investigation
suggested that Prayag Mishir killed his master to steal a precious ring. But Feluda had his
suspicions on all and finally he exposed Mr. Sapru alias Mr. Sarkar. Sapru was driven by a
quest for revenge since his late father Manohar Sapru was given death sentence by
Mr. Mallik, although he was innocent in reality. In addition to this Feluda also exposed the
role of Vijay Mallik in his father’s murder. In an attempt to understand the motive behind the crime Feluda revealed how one wrong decision of the judicial system can force someone to become a criminal out of revenge. “Dr Munshi’s Diary” is another complicated murder mystery where the needle of suspicion kept vacillating until Feluda succeeded in understanding the motive of the criminal. Dr. Munshi was a psychiatrist and in his career he had once counseled three people after they had committed serious crimes but had managed to escape the grip of law. Dr. Munshi was in a habit of writing diary and when he decided to publish his personal account; a series of threats followed from two patients who feared that their crime might get exposed. After Dr. Munshi’s murder, all suspicion automatically fell upon those two patients but Feluda exposed the deceased’s wife and his brother-in-law as the real culprits.

The entire discussion about detective fiction narratives can be resolved as a narrative of motives and action. When the detective tries to analyze the criminal’s action or crime he is actually trying to understand why and how the criminal executed the crime. This phenomenon can be better understood under the light of Kenneth Burke’s concept of motivational discourse. Burke speaks about a five tier structure called the ‘pentad of key terms’ in the introduction of his book, Grammar of Motives (1969). To understand human action, Burke tries to find ‘some kind of answers to these five questions’ (Burke 1969:xv) regarding the act, scene, agent, agency and purpose. These five key terms help to understand the discourse of human action. Stan J. Knapp in his study of Burkeian pentadic scheme says that “Burke delineates a pentad of key elements around which motivational discourse is formed.” (Knapp 1999: 588). A detective fiction story is a narrative of conflicts and the major conflict arise from two opposing forces; that of the detective and the criminal. In a detective story, however, the ‘pentadic’ scheme operates at two different levels, on one hand the criminal tries to conceal his involvement and avert revelation, while the sole motive behind
detective’s investigation is to find the miscreant. Each protagonist acts according to his principle motive and the discourse thus involved forms their respective motivational discourse. Unless the detective succeeds in comprehending the criminal’s motivational discourse he or she cannot read the criminal’s story of crime and resolve the mystery to restore normalcy in an apparently chaotic cosmos.

But with multiple suspects the detective’s task of narrowing down the list of probable miscreants to the real criminal often gets tricky. In each case, the five components and their corresponding ratios help to find the actual culprit. In the stories discussed above Feluda tries to comprehend the strongest motive that have actuated the crime. In “Napoleon’s Letter” a number of incidents before and after the murder of Pavitracharan babu, provided a food for thought to Feluda. Before the murder, Feluda was intrigued by the missing of the pet bird and the discovery of blood stains in the bird’s cage increased it further. The gap between the crime and its discovery was very thin and the moment it was discovered everyone started looking for Sadhan Dastidar, Mr. Halder’s last visitor. But inspite of the prompt reaction he slipped out of hands and disappeared mysteriously. This was followed by the discovery of the murder weapon and it almost became evident that Sadhan Dastidar murdered Mr.Halder to take revenge of the humiliation that he had faced years before; after being thrown out from his job by Mr. Dastidar. While investigating, Feluda’s attention was drawn towards the ‘agent-scene’ ratio of the act of crime. Finally he revealed that when Dastidar left the study at 10.30 am and moved downstairs, he did not go out of the house. Infact, he came upstairs after taking the disguise of Hrishikesh Datta, Mr. Halder’s present secretary. Feluda explained that Dastidar was living in the house in disguise to execute his pre-planned act to kill his employer at an appropriate time. Above all his role in disguise also offered him a suitable alibi. The mystery comes to an end with two more revelations. To avoid any suspicion Dastidar tried to mess with the bird fearing that the talking bird might create a problem for
him. Feluda also revealed the involvement of Achintya Halder, the deceased’s son who aided Sadhan Dastidar alias Hrishikesh Datta to get hold of the precious curio- Napoleon’s letter.

A detailed analysis of the two stories “The Disappearance of Ambar Sen” and “The Acharya Murder Case” also focus on Feluda’s deciphering of the criminal’s motivational discourse. In the former story, the whole fiasco over the disappearance of Mr. Sen was actually a set-up, organized by the Sens to assess Feluda’s intelligence. But to their surprise Feluda succeeded in understanding the dynamics of the show. In the absence of any specific intention Feluda’s attention was drawn towards a new pair of glasses used by Mr. Sen and his negligence in changing the calendar dates. These observations raised relevant questions in his mind and he was convinced to believe that it was a staged show. The detective often acts as the alter-ego of the criminal and when the intention remains unknown the detective resolves the mystery according to his logic of convenience. In the absence of any concrete detail the detective often depends on his capability to find the most probable motive which is more valid according to the logic of the detective. In this case Feluda tried to find a valid intention behind the use of the new glasses by relying on his sense of logic. In his final explanation Feluda remarked, “To be on the safe side, I thought, you might even have got yourself some sort of a disguise which would explain the new glasses.” (Majumdar 2005:265). Being an expert in putting up disguises himself Feluda’s mental course of action suggested that Mr. Sen might have had used the same resource to make his plan work. However, in a final twist Feluda revealed the intention with which Samaresh Mallik tried to get away with the alleged amount of ransom.

In a story of double crime and multiple suspects, Feluda had to display the best of his skills to solve “The Acharya Murder Case”. Here the motive behind the murder of Indranarayan was interlinked with his profession. Initially it appeared to be a case of rivalry but the theft of his composed works made the motive clear. Following these developments
Feluda’s investigation included two stints: one at the race course which revealed Mr. Mallik’s hobby and the other on the night of the theft of Indranarayan’s works. Considering that Mr. Acharya was killed an hour later after Mr. Bhaur had left, Feluda focused on the agent-scene ratio to conclude that Mr. Mallik’s need for money made him kill Mr. Acharya in order to get hold of his newly composed plays and songs. Though previously it appeared that the thief and murderer were two different people but finally it was clarified that, having committed both acts at separate times Mr. Mallik tried to sell the papers to Mr. Bhaur. Having solved the murder mystery Feluda also threw light upon another crime- the theft of Mr. Indranarayan’s antique guitar by his brother.

A detailed analysis shows that the three stories: “Murder in the Mountains”, “Peril in Paradise” and “Dr Munshi’s Diary”, has one common thread that can be summed up in Feluda’s words: “The desire for revenge can be kept alive for many years.” (Majumdar 2005: 489). All three stories are intricate murder mysteries where the victim’s affairs or activities in the past have jeopardized his present. Besides revenge, the desire to possess also played a key role in the criminal’s action. In the initial stages of “Murder in the Mountains”; Birupaksha Majumdar’s murder, his servant Lokenath’s disappearance, the missing statue of Lord Krishna, the piece of paper with ‘vish’ (poison) written on it, suggest that Mr. Majumdar’s servant Lokenath poisoned him for stealing the precious statue. However, Mr. Majumdar was also stabbed to death. This reality raised a valid question in the detective’s mind as Feluda wondered why the culprit would stab the victim after having already poisoned him. Feluda questioned the victim’s son, his secretary and some members of the film crew who were shooting in the house on the day of the murder and laid his hands on a number of vital informations including some facts from the victim’s past and an old photograph. In analyzing the act of murder, Feluda focused on the ‘purpose’ of the crime and examined the context and the manner of the crime. The discovery of Lokenath’s corpse added an interesting twist to the
In “Peril in Paradise” Prayag Mishir was suspected for murdering his master Mr. Siddheshwar Mallik, a retired judge. However, in his typical style Feluda kept other people within his radius of suspicion and looked for a strong motive that resulted in the gruesome death of the victim during his vacation in Kashmir. Feluda’s rational mind was pinning on an idea of revenge since Mr. Mallik could have had many enemies because as a judge he had delivered many death sentences. In his hunt for the most logical motive, Feluda discovered that both his servant and Mr. Sarkar had a strong motive for taking revenge against Mr. Mallik. Hanuman Raut alias Prayag Mishir’s son was convicted by Mr. Mallik in a case in which he was framed. So he decided to take revenge by killing Mr. Mallik and even tried to settle scores by harming his son Vijay Mallik. On the other hand, Mr. Sarkar was the son of Manohar Sapru, who was given a death sentence by Mr. Mallik, inspite of being innocent in
reality and this explains his motive for stabbing the former judge to death. However, the real
twist was disentangled when Feluda disclosed that the deceased’s head was crushed by his
own son Vijay Mallik; after he had stolen his father’s diamond ring. In a similar way, the
revenge motif is also operational in “Dr Munshi’s Diary”; although in this story the crime
actually resulted out of the human vice of greed. With too many suspects - two of his former
patients whose names were mentioned in his diary’s manuscript, his current secretary
S.Chakroborty and patient Mr. R Mallik; the mystery appeared almost like a web. In the
climax, Feluda disentangled the web to disclose that Mr. Mallik wanted to seek revenge for
his father’s death as he was killed in an accident by Dr. Munshi but was never convicted for
the crime. However, before the revenge-seeker could succeed; Dr. Munshi was struck by his
family members. His will was a reason of contention and it was his wife and brother-in-law
who had planned to execute his murder.

In the stories discussed above Feluda encountered with some complex human
emotions like revenge, greed et.al. In each story Feluda looked for the most logical motive
that could have propelled the act of crime. While investigating, Feluda follows his usual
technique and analyses all relevant angles related to the mystery. In each case he had his
suspicions on almost every character (who were related to the context of crime either directly
or indirectly) and tried to know their past in relation to their present. This approach helped
him to avoid confusion of observation and perception. In order to reconstruct the crime
Feluda always emphasized on the context in which the crime took place. Infact, his
investigation followed an in-depth analytical –rational assessment of the four basic aspects:
act-scene-agency and purpose of crime. In his hunt for the criminal he even studied the
varying equations of those facets that might have led to the crime. In his book, Burke
propagated his theory to help study human action and the motives behind them. Burke also
suggests that often the flow of events give more prominence to one aspect of the pentad while
sidelining the others. He believed that thought and ideas are never at a distance from language, which is used to generate meaning. In a detective fiction narrative, the detective too tries to draw information and generate meaning out of an anarchy that spurs from the disturbing thoughts and actions of the culprit. At the end of each mystery one can assess how Feluda’s faculties of rational thinking and logical understanding aid him to narrow down from the multiple suspects and their respective motives to the most probable one in order to unmask the actual culprit.

However, the two stories “Peril in Paradise” and “Dr Munshi’s Diary” draws attention to some other important issues. Detective stories have a close association with the complex issues of law and order, morality-ethics, good-evil, crime-sin and justice-injustice. Detective stories primarily focus on the private investigator, who always turns out to be more efficient and therefore more competent in solving the mysteries. Although such stories always present the private investigator as an efficient-alternative agent but the aspects of law and judiciary is closely interlinked with such narratives. The role of the legal system and the judicial system, as depicted in the above mentioned stories, compels the reader to think about its close impact on the lives of the people in the stories. In “Peril in Paradise”, retired judge Siddheshwar Mallik no longer affirms with the convention of giving away death sentences to criminals. Having delivered numerous death sentences himself, he is doubtful about his decisions and is skeptical about his role as a judge assigned to deliver justice. Infact, because of these views he has even tried to communicate with the spirits of those he had delivered death sentences; only to ensure if his judgments were fair or not. In a conversation with Feluda he even conveys that in order to punish a criminal, longer and harder imprisonments can be given instead of death sentences. Feluda, however, thinks differently and replied that if someone is a killer “…he has no right to live.” (Majumdar 2005:466). In this regard, views may differ but law always intends to check crime and reform people. But when the guilty escapes the
clutches of law (owing to his authority and influence) and the innocent gets punished, then the role of law and judiciary would be put to question. Moreover such stories also place the reader in an ambiguous situation. As a reader, one usually tends to side with the criminal, since he or she has justified his action from the sympathetic point of view. But from the ethical point of view, such situations certainly pose a problem for the reader to decide whom he should associate with; the detective or the criminal.

Siddheshwar Mallik’s wrong judgment caused the death of an innocent man; on the other hand Dr. Munshi killed a person (Mr. R Mallik’s father) but managed to flee from the clutches of law. In such cases, the friends and members of the deceased’s family are sure to nurture ill-will against those, whom they held responsible for their tragedy. In “Peril in Paradise” Manohar Sapru’s son and Hanuman Raaut burn with the fire of revenge and attempt to do harm to Mr. Mallik and his family. Infact, the former even succeeds in his attempts. In “Dr Munshi’s Diary” R.Mallik had similar intentions and if Dr, Munshi was not killed by his wife and brother-in-law; then he would have surely taken extreme measures to meet his goal. In both stories the revenge motif plays a crucial role. Being wrongfully convicted, innocent people get punished for crimes committed by others and this make us question the accountability of the judicial system in making criminals out of common men. In both stories, the author has depicted how crimes result out of the injudicious role of the judicial system and how innocent people and their families suffer because of this. If Mr. Sarkar was not a victim of injustice at the hands of law, he might not have turned into a criminal. Some other characters too had criminal intentions although they could not concretize their thoughts. Their crimes as well as criminal motives result out of their disbelief in the judicial system. Law has been unfair to them by either victimizing the innocent or letting the miscreant free. When law and judicial system failed them, they entrusted
themselves with the task of claiming justice against the injustice done by the justice-dispensing bodies.

The mysteries also highlight how the detective discovers the most logical motive behind the crime. Interestingly an understanding of the motive of crime requires the detective to study the psychological intentions behind the crime. The motive behind any human action has its genesis in the human mind or psyche. While speaking about plot and character in Poetics (2000), Aristotle explained that in a play it is the thought which fuels the action and it is through action that a dramatic personage becomes a character and a character in action is the plot itself. Thus a character is a character in action; one who contemplates his thought into action. When a detective studies a criminal’s motive he has to study his thought that has resulted in adverse action. This entails for a psychological study of the criminal’s thought process. Infact, the criminal’s execution of an act of crime in the mortal-physical world is actually an enactment of what has been already planned out in his or her thoughts. Thoughts always precede action and thus before executing the crime, the criminal carries it out in his mental frame. So any act of murder or theft in the physical world is an actualization of an incomplete set of events which the criminal has already chalked out in fragments in the psychic frame of his mind. Thus, in his attempts to reconstruct the crime the detective has to rewind the criminal’s mental course of action. This also means that in order to find the criminal by following his plan of action the detective has to think like the criminal. Therefore the detective’s attempt to think like the criminal is the aftermath of the criminal’s physical enactment of a crime which is again an after-effect of the culprit’s mental course of action.

“A good detective has to be a good student of psychology.” (Majumdar 2005:602) and Feluda often takes a psychological insight into the criminal to solve the mystery. During the course of investigation, Feluda finds some important information or clues that facilitate him to reframe the story of crime. However, his final detailed narration draws our attention to the
fact that inspite of being absent at the moment of crime he maintains the flow of events almost in the same sequence in which the criminal had carried out the act. In order to achieve this precision, Feluda always relies on his rational mind to associate the gathered information and to think like the criminal in order to relate, how he would have carried out the act of crime in that particular context of time and place. This according to Heta Pyrhonen is “…an I-am-you approach, which entails the imaginative and effective adoption of other’s perspective and situation.” (Pyrhonen 1999:31). While investigating, Feluda often takes this approach and tries to replace the criminal by his own self in order to decode his opponent’s thought process. A detective fiction story is actually a conflict of equal and opposite forces. The detective and the criminal are brilliant in their own spheres but in this battle of intellect the detective always outwits the criminal maintaining the universal order of harmony.

In his adventures Feluda’s most intelligent adversary is the cunning mastermind Maganlal Meghraj. In “The Criminals of Katmandu” (1980) and “The Mystery of the Pink Pearl” (1989) he is once again pitted against his ace rival Meghraj. In the first story, Meghraj heads a trade of fake drugs and operates from Nepal. Feluda travelled to Katmandu to investigate a murder mystery and over there he learned about Meghraj’s role in the whole business after the latter called him for an unexpected visit and openly challenged him. In a thrilling climax, Feluda got Meghraj arrested and exposed the role of his accomplice; with whose help he got Mr. Som and his friend Himadri Chakroborty murdered. In “The Mystery of the Pink Pearl”, Meghraj wants to get his hands on a rare-precious pink pearl. The pearl is currently in the possession of Mr. Jiachand Boral and considering the dangers that Meghraj may initiate, Feluda insisted the former to leave the pearl at his place. However, Meghraj was a master of his skills and he got his men steal the pearl from Feluda’s house. This resulted in another visit to Benares; where Maganlal received a dose of his own medicine. Feluda got some hired men to steal the pearl from Maganlal’s house. However, in a final twist it turned
out that the stolen pearl was not genuine, as Lalmohan Ganguli has safely replaced the original with a fake one to ensure its security.

In both stories, the very presence of Maganlal Meghraj guaranties his involvement in the concerning scenarios of crime. And given his opponent’s power and cunning intelligence, Feluda had to ensure that he does not get way with his villainous plans and unjustified desires. In “The Criminals of Kathmandu”, Meghraj was finally arrested and to ensure that he does not get away with an easy escape, Feluda records his tale of crime as narrated by Meghraj himself. He even exposed Dr. Divankar who had killed Himadri by injecting him with a wrong drug and Mr. Batra, who was none other than Jagdeesh, Maganlal’s close aid. Feluda explained how he first became doubtful about Mr. Batra and his alleged look-alike. In a rather trivial incident Feluda faced difficulty in writing with a pen that was given to him by Batra. Although initially he did not pay much attention to it, but as things unfolded and it came to be known that Mr. Som’s murderer was left-handed, Feluda tried to associate all relevant angles to discover the truth. In this case a close study of Feluda’s thought process will suggest that he tried to take a psychological insight into the criminal’s act. A left handed person with an intention of hiding his identity would escape writing and ask the other person to write. But “If a left-handed person uses a fountain pen, he holds it at a certain angle and the nib gets worn.” (Majumdar 2005:146). And when a right handed person uses that same pen he would naturally face difficulty to write with that pen. Following this experience Feluda took a psychological insight into the culprit’s mind to resolve the confusion of Batra and his look alike as fabricated by Meghraj.

Another story in which Feluda’s investigation paves way for a psychoanalytic interpretation is the mystery of “Robertson’s Ruby” (1992) in which Peter Robertson and his friend Tom Maxwell were visiting India to return an ancestral ruby as a goodwill gesture. When the stone went missing it appeared that one of the many seekers of the stone must have
had their hands in it. However, the stone was later recovered by Inspector Chaubey, but the mystery was yet to be over as Feluda went on to unveil Chaubey’s role in the whole fiasco. Once again Feluda puts him at the other end to try and think like the miscreant. Although it appeared that Jagannath Chaterjee took the stone away, Feluda was not convinced with this outcome. During his stay in Bolpur, Feluda came to know that during the British rule a punkha\(^2\)-puller was kicked to death by his master Reginald Maxwell, Tom Maxwell’s great-great-grandfather. Later Feluda gathered more details about this incident and this paved the way to truth. His final confrontation with Inspector Chaubey revealed that the punkha-puller was his great grandfather and he pulled off this whole act to ‘settle old scores’ (Majumdar 2005:735) against Tom Maxwell. It was he, who hit Tom to take the stone. In this regard Feluda’s knowledge about Chaubey’s family history did help him to look for a justified motive. But apart from that, Feluda thought of the entire incident by placing him in Chaubey’s place so that he can synchronize his thought process with that of the miscreant’s thought process. Considering Chaubey’s past and the course of events when Tom was attacked; Feluda correctly assumed Chaubey’s role and this is evident when he says, “I thought the whole thing over and realized that had I been in your shoes, I’d have done exactly the same.” (Majumdar 2005:735).

In “The Mystery of the Pink Pearl” Feluda foiled his opponent’s plan by applying the philosophy of ‘Tit for tat’ (Majumdar 2005:592). Maganlal’s hired men stormed into Feluda’s house to steal the pearl after making him unconscious with chloroform. In a similar fashion Feluda also did the same; when he along with some hired men broke into Maganlal’s house in Benaras to steal the pearl. However, a psychological interpretation of the act would suggest that while planning and executing this reckless act, Feluda gave vent to his dormant urges in response to the pleasure principle of the id. In “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” Freud speaks about his concept of the ‘pleasure principle’ (Freud 2003:45) Freudian psychoanalysis
suggests that under suitable time and condition, ego tries to gratify the conflicting urges that are stored up in the id. Freud explained that human beings apply a coping strategy to control the anxieties latent in human psyche. His theory of defense mechanism helps to understand these strategies. One such strategy is the process of ‘sublimation’ (Gay 1992:36) through which the ego tries to substitute the anxieties or the dormant urges with acceptable behaviour. Under the light of Freud’s propositions it can be suggested that here Feluda also reveals his wild streak but considering the purpose behind it; the act gets legitimized. In two other stories “The Magical Mystery” (1995-96) and “The Gold Coins of Jehangir” (1983) Feluda acted in a similar manner.

In “The Gold Coins of Jehangir” Mr. Chowdhury called upon Feluda to throw light upon the theft of an antique gold coin that took place exactly a year ago. After Feluda’s arrival, a number of intriguing incidents occurred and this was followed by the discovery of the disappearance of some more curios from the house. With an interesting twist Feluda finally exposed Mr. Chowdhury’s cousin Jayanta and his friend Dr. Sarkar as the architects of the mischief. After stealing one coin, the duo planned a second theft. But their plan was foiled by Feluda as he removed the remaining coins and other curios from the chest. Feluda’s detection of alta in place of blood helped him see through the false sickness of Jaynata Babu. Taking advantage of that chaos, Feluda took the key from his pocket and opened the chest to remove the curios as a precautionary measure. In the climax he narrated how things underwent last year and how the culprits had once again tried to steal the remaining items a year later. In the final moment of confrontation with Jayanta babu, Feluda’s rational deduction and logical mind forced him into a confession. In another story “The Magical Mystery” Feluda broke into the house of Someshwar Burman to steal an exquisite statue to ensure its safety after there had been attempts to steal it. The first attempt failed while the second one resulted in the murder of a servant of the house. Since the murder took place in a
house that was inhabited by too many people, Feluda had multiple suspects. In a hunt for the most formidable motive, Feluda discovered that Surya Kumar Sen’s magic shows were running at loss and he was in desperate need of money. But Feluda made the most eye browsing revelation when he declared that Surya Kumar is the estranged son of Someshwar Burman. Feluda added that Surya Kumar chose to keep his real identity in darkness in order to execute his plan of theft. But since the object of theft was already removed by Feluda he could not steal anything but had to murder the old servant Avinash who happened to have seen the burglar.

While investigating Feluda focuses on all angles and takes every provision available to dig up the truth. At times he lies straight at face, sometimes he takes disguise to deceive people and if situation demands he even takes extreme measures leaving everyone startled. In order to unveil the truth the investigator has to take such steps and observing this aspect of Feluda’s character, Lalmohan babu is left amused as he says, “Who knew you were such an ace burglar?” (Majumdar 2005:757). Apart from his faculties of intellect, observation, rational deduction and physical strength, Feluda also relies on his instincts to discover the truth and overpower the culprit in the final moments of truth. In the final catastrophe Feluda dominates narration as an omniscient figure and silences the culprit with a detailed account of the background and the context in which the crime has been actualized. His style of narration exhibits his dexterity with which he fills the gaps with occasional reliance on his guesswork to reconstruct the act of crime. As a detective-narrator, Feluda also enjoys an authority which helps him to bridge the gap between the available clues or information which he does not wish to share with his companions and the actual facts or details concerning the crime. The approximation with which Feluda maintains a detailed narration shows his confidence and lack of surety and with such incredible skills of intellect he often forces the culprit into a confession.
The reader’s reading of detective stories is shaped by the various narrative strategies incorporated by the author. The detective’s plan of action may vary from one mystery to another and in order to understand the detective’s hunt for the motive, his psychological study of the criminal’s moves, his reluctance in revealing facts and final omniscient narration; a reader must get involved in an active interaction with the text. The genre offers ample scope for the readers to participate in the resolution of the mystery along with the detective. Following Louis Rosenblatt’s postulation of ‘lived through experience of reading’ (Davis 1992:74) it can be stated that, while reading detective fiction the reader and the text get involved in an interactive live-circuit and on utilizing his or her own faculties of thought, perception and intellect the reader would be able to sense the intricacies of the mystery and solve it. Wolfgang Iser further adds that this interaction between the text and the reader is dynamic owing to the presence of the textual blocks or ‘gaps’ (Iser 1972:285) provided by the author to hinder the reader’s passive and non-involving reading. Iser explains this while elucidating the dynamics of the process of reading in his aptly titled essay “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach” (1972). However, apart from the ‘textual gaps’, which according to Iser are present in almost every story; a typical detective story can be conceived as a story of gaps as it is based on the principle of ‘logos of absence’. The logos or the centre of such stories is built around an ‘absence’; an absence of clarity which engulfs the life of the characters with anarchy. While reading Feluda stories, the reader’s understanding of the mystery also gets hindered due to the presence of various textual blocks at regular intervals. These blocks or gaps digresses the reader towards unspecified directions until the climax is reached. Although all stories incorporate such blocks but some stories can be specifically analyzed as tales of ‘absence’; where the detective has to turn the apparent absence of the culprit into a visible presence. Reading “The House of the Death” (1979),

“The House of Death” is a tale of multiple misdeeds. First the murder of a Nepali driver, then the theft of a manuscript from Mr. Sen’s house and finally the murder of Mr. Bose; three different crimes with one common link and the least expected one turns out to be the mastermind. Being occupied about the blunt nature of the murder weapon and the footprints on the beach, Feluda undertakes a detailed investigation to expose the real identity of Mr. Sarkar. He was in disguise of a renowned photographer Bilas Majumdar and his partner in crime was Laxman Bhattacharya. Feluda uncovered both to reveal that the former was a smuggler who associated with Laxman Bhattacharya to steal valuable manuscripts from Mr. Sen’s house. While the latter was a crook who killed N. Bose, Mr. Sen’s secretary, after his crime got discovered.

In “The House of Death” the epicenter of the mystery is the murder of Nishith Bose, Mr. Sen’s secretary and the theft of precious manuscripts from the latter’s house. Laden with multiple gaps, the story leaves both the detective (within the text) and the reader (outside the text) baffled. First the footprints on the beach, then the murder of the driver, the murder weapon, Mr. Bhattacharya’s role, Mr. Sen’s gout and his medicines all posed a mental blockage for Feluda. Although initially he was suspicious about Mr. Sen and his secretary; Feluda ultimately succeeds in filling up the gaps to expose Mr. Sarkar alias Bilas Majumdar and Mr. Bhattacharya. His final narration presents him as an omniscient narrator, throwing light on various aspects to reconstruct the story of crime. By “checking and re-checking facts” Feluda finds answers to his own questions (which he had noted down in his notebook) to affirm that the real Bilas Majumdar was already dead. Sarkar had previously tried to kill Mr. Sen by throwing him down a hill in Nepal. In Puri he tried to cover up as Bilas Majumdar, killed the driver with whose aide he tried to kill Mr. Sen and then got associated
with Laxman Bhattacharjee to get hold of the manuscripts, while Laxman Bhattacharjee turned thief and murdered Mr. N.Bose by striking him with the wooden scroll of the manuscript.

While investigating, Feluda encountered numerous gaps that posed a block in his apprehension of the mystery. According to reader response theorist Wolfgang Iser; textual ‘gaps’ facilitate the reader’s dynamic interaction with the text. In a detective fiction story the gaps are the missing links which the detective needs to decipher in order to read the criminal’s story of crime. Mr. Sen’s violent reaction on seeing Bilas Majumdar prompted his secretary, Mr. Bose to comment, “I’ll tell you everything one day. I have a lot to tell.” (Majumdar 2005:31). Infact, Mr.Sen’s reaction went on to support Mr. Sarkar alias Bilas Majumdar’s allegations against him. The crook tried to blame Mr. Sen of trying to kill him, something that he himself had done. In this context, Mr. Bose’s referred comment creates a gap for the detective, as it made him ponder about the facts on which the speaker intends to throw light upon. With the murder of Mr. Bose this gap became more bewildering. In the final catastrophe, Feluda disentangles the web by narrating the real story of Mr. Sen’s accident and Mr. Sarkar’s role behind it. Finally the gap became discernible as it was clear what Mr. Bose intended to tell previously. Apart from this, the narrative is laden with many other gaps which the detective succeeds to overcome. Moreover, besides the investigator, the reader also tries to do the same in order to apprehend the criminal’s story of crime.

There are two other stories which offer an interesting study in this regard. “The Mystery of Nayan” is about a wonder boy Nayan, who had an incredible capability of answering any question whose answers are in digits. But this magical power attracted attention from some wrong ends as some people wanted to misuse his power for their personal needs and the most dangerous among them was Mr.Tiwari who wanted to use Nayan’s power for his advantage. Trouble followed Nayan when he, along with Mr. Tarafdar
and his friend Shankar went to Madras for a magic show. Once Feluda came to know about these developments he made up his mind to protect Nayan from any sort of trouble or exploitation. He followed Nayan all the way to Chennai after accepting the case of Mr. Hingorani who also happened to be the sponsor of Mr. Tarafdar’s shows. However, Feluda could not avert trouble as Nayan got kidnapped and this was followed by the murder of Mr. Hingorani and the theft of his money. The other story “Crime in Kedarnath” is about Feluda’s quest in identifying and locating Bhavani Upadhaya- an ayurvedic specialist turned hermit. Once rewarded with a precious pendant for having cured Raja Chandradeo Singh; he has now taken hermitage in the hills of Kedarnath. But that pendant has become a cause of worry for him. Pavendeo Singh, Mr. Singhania, Krishnakant Bhargav are all in search of Upadhaya for their respective interests. Feluda’s sole interest, however, was to ensure that Bhavani Upadhaya does not get into any trouble. Finally Feluda locates him and reveals that he is Durgamohan Ganguli, the long lost uncle of Lalmohan Ganguli.

In “The Mystery of Nayan”, it apparently seemed that Hingorani was murdered by Tiwari’s hired man after he refused to return the latter’s money. But Feluda was doubtful about two major issues. First Mr. Hingorani was instructed not to open the door to any stranger; secondly there was no sign of resistance or struggle against the killer. These two issues were almost like a gap in his course of investigation until he overcame them. Amidst an all-engulfing confusion Feluda suddenly saw some light as it is apparent when he uttered “Yes…yes… I see… I see.”; but darkness still pervaded as he wondered “But why? Why? Why?” (Majumdar 2005:690). This utterance of the detective creates a major gap and is finally filled when he accused Tarafdar with dual crimes. Tarafdar was accused of murdering Mr. Hingorani and kidnapping Nayan. So, it can be asserted that, when Feluda whispered to himself ‘yes…I see’ he was able to understand that it was Tarafdar who went into Mr. Hingorani’s room. Feluda explained that since Tarafdar was not a stranger Hingorani
spontaneously opened the door. He added that, Tarafdar used his power of hypnotism to hypnotize Hingorani before killing him and this explained why there were no signs of struggle between the victim and the murderer. But the case was half solved as Feluda was yet to discover the motive behind the murder and that’s what made him repeatedly ask ‘why’ Tarafdar did this. On one hand Feluda was occupied with all these blockades, and on the other his utterance left the readers baffled. These aspects also appeared like gaps for the reader as they were unable to comprehend any sense out of Feluda’s utterance. However, things get resolved once Feluda revealed that Tarafdar killed Hingorani for money after he came to know that Nayan had suddenly lost his magical power. Discovering Nayan’s truth, Tarafdar feared that his shows will run at a loss and Mr. Hingorani will not give him any payment. So he planned to lock Nayan and kill Hingorani to get hold of his money.

In the second story, the real identity of Bhavani Upadhaya had remained an enigmatic gap until Feluda tried to fill that up. In his course of investigation Feluda had to face a number of disjunctions and as he goes on to join them they pose an obstacle in the reader’s course of perception. Feluda’s reaction after observing Upadhaya’s handwriting, his queries about the region to which he belonged, his affirmation that Pavandeo would cause no harm; left Tapesh as well as the readers puzzled. These queries or doubts appeared like a fissure and each fissure got enlarged as Feluda refrained from revealing any details of his investigation. When Feluda finally met Upadhaya, he declared that he is a Bengali and validated his assumption saying that when he saw Upadhaya’s handwriting, he caught the likeness between the Hindi script and Bengali script. Besides he had also noticed the presence of Bengali books in the former’s Haridwar house. Thus, Feluda’s sharp observation confirmed that Upadhaya was a Bengali and the rest is revealed by the man himself. In this way Feluda’s sharp observation coupled with his faculty of rational deduction helped him solve the mysteries; no matter how intricate they are.
In “Tintoretto’s Jesus” (1982) Feluda resolves a mystery of double murders entangled with complex familial ties, false identities and forgery. Troubles begin to initiate when the pet dog of the Niyogi family is found killed. This was followed by the arrival of Rudrasekhar Niyogi and the murder of Bankim babu. But the shocker came when Feluda’s observation of two flies stuck in the painting of the famous art piece of Tintoretto’s Jesus revealed its duplicity. Feluda, Tapesh and Lalmohan babu travelled all the way to Hong Kong to retrieve the original painting but were taken aback to find that the one sold as original was also fake. The final culmination brings about a number of startling revelations. To begin with, Feluda’s curiosity about the killing of the pet dog revealed that the duplicate Rudrasekhar had killed the dog to avoid any suspicion that it might arouse about the culprit’s original identity. Feluda unmasked him as Nobo Kumar’s brother Nondo Niyogi, who had returned to the Niyogi house in lure of money. He replaced the original painting with a fake one and when Bankim Babu caught him red handed he killed him. However, the whereabouts of the original painting remained an enigma until Feluda affirmed that Robin Chowdhury, who was actually Rudrasekhar’s son Rajsekhar Niyogi, had safely replaced the original painting with a copy to ensure that it does not pass into the hands of the duplicate Rudrasekhar. Moreover, Robin’s feigned identity could not escape Feluda’s gaze as the latter noticed his close resemblance with his great-great-grandfather.

“The Case of the Apsara Theatre” (1987), “Shakuntala’s Necklace” (1988), “Feluda in London” (1989) also exhibit the brilliance of Feluda’s skills. In the first story his razor-sharp brain sees through the culprit’s well designed plan. In a cunning display of intelligence, Mahitosh Roy gave an impression that he was being threatened and was eventually abducted and killed. The drama continued as he reappeared as Sudhendu Chakroborty so that he can avoid suspicion and conveniently replace Nepal Lahiri as the lead actor after having killed him. In “Shakuntala’s Necklace”, Satyajit Ray builds up suspense by holding back significant
details. While Feluda was busy investigating the theft of a precious necklace he also had to deal with the murder mystery of Mr. Sukuis. At the site of the murder, Feluda found a letter that the deceased had been writing to him when he was killed. But Feluda chose to keep things under cover and intensified the mystery by declaring that the necklace was safe and the letter’s content would be disclosed only at the right time. In the final moment of revelation a hired killer disclosed Ratanlal’s hand behind the murder; moreover this accusation got confirmed by Mr. Sukuis’ letter. The letter also disclosed that Mr. Biswas had agreed to sell the precious necklace to Mr. Sukuis. In a final revelation, Feluda announced that the necklace was safely removed by Sheela, Mr. Biswas’s daughter and explained why she decided to safeguard the necklace after overhearing her parent’s decision to sell the family’s prized possession.

However, there are some mysteries which remain mysterious even after the truth is unveiled. Feluda sternly believed that “If a murder is committed, then the killer- the real killer, of course – should not be spared.” (Majumdar 2005:465). But in some cases the very ideas of ‘crime’ and ‘justice’ get blurred. After Nepal and Hong Kong, Feluda’s next foreign expedition took him to London. “Feluda in London” is a unique case in which Feluda is assigned to find someone on the basis of a childhood photograph provided by his client Ranjan Majumdar, who has lost some part of his memory after an accident. After collecting the fact that the boy in the photograph is an English lad- Peter Dexter, Feluda made his way to London along with Tapesh and Lalmohan Ganguli to find more about him. After their arrival in London the mystery starts intensifying with each passing day of their stay. In order to investigate, Feluda went to Cambridge and ended up discovering an unpleasant fact about Ranjan Majumdar’s life. Official records state that Peter Dexter’s death was a result of an accident, however, Feluda dug up the truth from the false records dismissing the testimonials of an eye witness-Mr. Hookins. Feluda’s analytical queries left Hookins with no way out but
to narrate the truth about the accident. Feluda came to know that following a fight with Rajan, Peter was hit by an oar wielded by the former and as a result Peter fell unconscious and drowned in the lake. At that time Hookin’s false testimony saved Rajan, although many years later Feluda could not save Mr. Majumdar. Back in India he was killed by Reginald Dexter, who avenged his elder brother Peter’s death. Hookins believed that Peter’s ill manners and racist comments towards Rajan were unjustified. So, even if Rajan was responsible for Peter’s death Hookin’s sympathetic attitude did not consider him as a killer and therefore he lied to save him. However, for Peter’s brother, who was also an eye witness, Rajan was a murderer. Although Reginald insisted that Rajan was guilty but his claims fell in deaf ears as he was also infamous for his racist attitude. The story ends with the news of Reginald’s suicide but pitches in a number of other questions for the reader: Is Rajan a ‘real- killer’? Was his act a well schemed plan or just an outburst of anger at the heat of the moment? Is the final catastrophe justified? Has Reginald delivered justice to his dead brother by killing Rajan Majumdar?

Cast in a somewhat similar fashion; “The Mysterious Tenant” (1980) is about Nihar Datta. He was a scientist but in a fabricated lab accident he lost his eye sight and therefore he had to leave his research incomplete. When he travelled back to India he brought all the relevant notes of his research. These papers along with some money were safely kept in his room until they got burgled one evening. This incident was soon followed by the murder of Mr. Dastur, one of the tenants of the house. While investigating Feluda encountered a number of questions and blockages but owing to his sharp observation and analytical mind he finally resolved the dual mysteries. But the story ends with a shocker as Nihar Datta turns out to be the murderer of Dastur.

With two different crimes Feluda was occupied with the thoughts that if “X is the research, Y is the money, and Z is murder.” (Majumdar 2005:85) whether these three issues
were linked together or not. Apart from this he was occupied by three questions that he noted down in his diary. Finally these six issues were found to be intricately entangled in one of his most complicated cases. The first question in his list was regarding the presence of too many scratches around the key hole of the safe from which the research papers and money were stolen. After Mr. Dastur’s murder the envelope containing the papers was found in his room but the fabricated envelope caught Feluda’s attention and when it was opened some blank pages were recovered from it. Following this discovery, came two startling revelations. In reality Dastur was Nihar Datta’s former lab assistant who apparently choreographed that fatal accident in which the latter lost his vision. But his disguise was caught as Mr. Datta recognized his voice and he thought that Dastur alias Suprakash Chowdhury has stolen his research papers. But Feluda observed that the envelope carrying the papers was fabricated and his logical queries forced Ranajit Banerjee- Mr. Datta’s present secretary to affirm his role in the theft. When his employer spoke to him about Dastur’s reality he even planned to pass off the suspicion of his act upon him. This clarifies Feluda’s first two enlisted question; too many scratches on the safe were made by Mr. Banerjee as he tried to open it a number of times. And after hearing Dastur’s voice. Mr. Datta called out ‘Who’s there?’ as he could recognize Suprakash Chowdhury’s voice. At last Feluda resolves the third query and discovers that the murder was executed by Mr. Nihar Datta. He decided to punish Suprakash for his misdeeds and it was this desire of revenge- which made him believe “…that if he’s still alive, it is because a job remains unfinished.” (Majumdar 2005: 71).

Interestingly the story ends with a different note as neither Ranajit nor Mr. Datta were convicted for their transgressive acts. Ranajit was asked to safely return the money and the files and his role in this nuisance was not revealed to Mr. Datta. While Nihar Datta’s involvement remained under cover as Feluda felt that “He is now close to death… and no one can touch him not even law.” (Majumdar 2005: 94). A detective operates in a human-mortal
paradigm where law and order requires detecting, proving and convicting criminality. But if
the motive of the crime is injustice or revenge and the criminal is let free then the conviction
of the criminal becomes difficult. Feluda’s stand in this case also puts his moral buildup into
question. Nihar Datta was a victim of malice and the lab incident not only caused him his eye
sight but also impaired him as a scientist. His research was left incomplete and his life took a
drastic change. The only jest that kept him alive was the thirst for revenge against the man
who was responsible for his adversity and misfortune. Feluda’s knowledge of the truth was
simultaneous with this realization. He was convinced that Nihar Datta’s act was beyond the
mortal paradigm of justice- injustice and even if he is let free he is close to death and would
be subject to the theological-religious paradigm where the concept of God-sin operates.

Critics are often of the view that detective fiction narratives are almost always
stereotyped. In such narratives any untoward action or development misbalances the
normalcy in the lives of the concerned people and the corresponding events usually raise few
basic questions like; who, why, how, when and where about the act of crime in an indefinite
order of significance. In such stories the plot is crafted to sustain a tension between these
questions and their answers. In a bid to find answers the detective thoroughly studies all
relevant angles from two perspectives. In order to arrive at the truth, the detective must
consider both the objective and subjective stance of the act of crime. A crime originates out
of the subjective drives of an individual (criminal) and the detective works as an agent
entrusted to harmonize the objective balance and pacify the anarchy which is caused by the
criminal’s act. Infact, all plays and stories primarily operate on the stereotyped notions of
sustaining the cosmic balance where in the ‘good’ always downplays the ‘bad’, the ‘right’
turns down ‘wrong’ and ‘truth’ wins over ‘untruth’. In a detective fiction narrative, the
detective too tries to expose the deceit, deception and dishonesty of the culprit to restore the
cosmic balance in an atmosphere ripped by chaos. In his quest for answers, the detective rests
on his own capabilities and utilizes his faculty of extraordinary intelligence to be able to observe the significance of an apparently insignificant thing, to think rationally and locate the most logical intention or motive, to analyze the opponent’s thought process and find the loose ends, to fill the gaps and deduce a solution.

Satyajit Ray has cast Pradosh C. Mitter as a twentieth century sleuth for whom each mystery is a challenge to his intelligence as he gets an opportunity to exercise his brain and outplay his opponent. In his attempts to study the crime, the context of the crime, to downplay the ambiguities and contradictions of the past and the present Feluda always relies upon his steady nerves and rational mind. By negating his thought process he tries to identify and associate with the criminal’s mental makeup and at times he even goes to the extent of producing unusual acts himself. In his typical style Feluda always keeps information to himself often annoying his close associates, more notably Lalmohan Ganguli; in order to script a nail biting climax. His depth of knowledge about any possible subject from ancient Indian art to regional history, from geographic details of a city to the railway timetable is exemplary. With all these attributes, Feluda’s portrayal as a private investigator gains more significance because in an age which is increasingly growing complicated, he evolves as an alternative agent who is far more competent in comparison to the inefficient police force. Unlike the stories of the first volume, here in most cases Feluda is shown to work either alongside the police or in collaboration with the police officers who are now sound about his capabilities and fame as a celebrated private investigator. Although Feluda is often seen to be cast in the Holmes mold, but his quintessential Bengali attributes, his physical and mental agility aligns him with the pioneers of the established tradition of Bengali Detective fiction.

Apart from studying the different theoretical perspectives of detective stories, Feluda stories also offer other avenues of research. The English translations of the Bengali originals and the inter-semiotic translations from the Bengali text to the silver screen offer an
interesting domain of translation studies. Cinematic adaptations as well as translations of classic literary works have often met with scarce criticism over the issue of aesthetic equivalence. The journey of a story from one linguistic medium to another or from a typographical medium to an audio-visual medium is ought to be tricky since each medium is endowed with its own set of conventions and it operates accordingly. So instead of critically evaluating the pros and cons of translations, this research aims to study the various multiple levels at which literary works gets translated as it is interesting to see what gets lost or gained during the process of translation. In the essay “REFLECTION OF AND ON THEORIES OF TRANSLATION” Julio Plaza and Kevin Marc Benson Mundy refer to Borges according to whom “Translation seems destined to illustrate the debate on aesthetics.” (Plaza, Mundy 1981:45). This debate gets more complicated when the translation is from one semiotic medium to another. Any particular language or medium works according to its basic conventions, so when a work undergoes translation it has to be adapted to the source medium or source language according to the conventions of the target medium or target language. In this regard the original work might undergo some necessary and indispensible changes which however should not impart any sort of compromise on aestheticism of the translated work. However, with two different code systems or two dissimilar art forms, it is interesting to see how the translator translates by negotiating between the complex system of elements that governs the respective language or medium.

Every language is unique and it develops according to its particular semantic tradition. So in order to translate a work from one semantic condition to another, the translator will be required to address the notions of the target language because as Plaza points out “...it is impossible to go beyond what is permitted by language at a given point.” (Plaza 1981:48). While discussing the various aspects of translation Plaza refers to M. Bense’s take on translation as he differentiates between documentary information, semantic
information and aesthetic information of a translated work. Documentary information is the most convenient aspect that a translator can retain from the source text to the target text. But the dynamics of translation gets tricky when the translator has to deal with semantic and aesthetic information. Every language has an inbuilt defence mechanism against translation. Any language reflects its culture and bears many culture specific terms. Such terms are often hard to translate from one language to another. When faced with such difficulty the translator either tries to decode the meaning of the original term and express it in terms of the language of the target text or retain the original word in the translated version and enlist the meaning of the concerned word in footnotes. Although in both cases the semantic information is easily conveyed but such attempts often fail to deliver the aesthetic information associated with the original term. With many such complex issues translation provides an interesting domain of study to see what gets changed or lost or gained while translating a work from one linguistic system to another.

Gopa Majumdar’s translations of Satyajit Ray’s stories featuring Feluda, Tapesh and Lalmohan Ganguli are brilliant narratives of suspense, thrill and action. Theorists often approach translation as a process of trans-creation and the translator as translator-creator. But Majumdar’s two volumes of The Complete Adventures of Feluda are no re-creation rather they are a reflection of Ray’s original Bengali composition featuring the super sleuth. The translated stories reflect Ray’s flair of writing which is a distinct feature of any original Feluda story. Although the researcher chose to read the English translations first, but as a Bengali reader, the researcher is pre-acquainted with the typical style of Ray’s writing (having already read some of the famous Feluda stories in Bengali before undertaking the research). So while reading the translated stories the researcher could sense the essence of Ray’s writing. The stories are laden with Ray’s trademark style of narration and storytelling, in fact, the translated versions read more like Ray’s stories. In this regard the translator must
be credited to have managed to retain the aesthetic appeal of the original Bengali works. But like any other work of translation, Majumdar’s versions too have some unavoidable changes.

Translation is always accompanied with some complexities and inescapable losses and gains. According to the essay, “Translation as an Act of Ventroloquism: The Author-Translator Hegemony in English translations of Kokborok Poetry” translation is “...a process through which a dialogue across cultures (that of the author and the translator) is initiated… from a source culture and language to a target culture and corresponding language. (Gupta 2009:109). The author explains that in this regard the translator must take care of the various cultural subtleties of the work that is being translated and of the language in which it has been originally composed. The researcher’s study of the English translations of Feluda stories facilitates a better comprehension of the above proposition. Feluda stories are essentially culture specific as Ray has laden his narratives with many culture specific nuances and terms. Here the source culture and the target culture and their corresponding languages are Bengali and English respectively. Moreover, the fact that the author and the translator belong to the same cultural background will suggest that the latter would deftly handle the cultural aspects and convincingly appropriate the cultural facets of the source culture into the target text. But interestingly Majumdar too is forced to make certain changes because Bengali with its own semantic conventions does not permit an all-inclusive translation and therefore the entire process will point out certain un-translatable spaces in the target text. This inbuilt defence mechanism of language (Bengali) will disrupt the ‘dialogue across’ the corresponding cultures. And in order to minimize this effect Majumdar tries to find appropriate English synonyms for the Bengali terms or express the semantic content of the term in English.

The researcher has detailed out certain sections from the translated English texts that highlights how the source language resists an all inclusive translation of many culture-specific terms. At the same time it is interesting to see how the translator has managed to
assimilate the meaning of many original Bengali words in terms of the target language. Ray’s original stories bear a number of aspects which reflects the socio-cultural ambience of Bengal. When the names of some famous Bengali delicacies undergo translation, Majumdar manages to provide plain explanations like ‘hilsa in mustard sauce’. But some culture specific words have maximum resistance against translation and are ought to be retained in their original form in the English translations. Her use of Bengali terms like babu, chandan tika, attar, paan wala shows how the cultural significance of the terms make them immune to translation. For instance ‘chandan tika’ is a pinch of sandalwood paste applied on the forehead on the occasion of any auspicious day like marriage or birthday and it reflects the Hindu-Bengali customs of the source culture. This shows the source culture’s resistance against the language and culture of the target text. Thus, the fact that complete translation is not possible does disrupt the interaction between the source culture and the target culture. But at the same time it gives more scope to the reader to interact and understand the source culture. Although the translator tries to provide the semantic content of the various culture specific terms but such endeavour cannot possibly connote the aestheticism of the cultural traits associated with the terms. Although being a Bengali, Gopa Majumdar had an advantage but when she was dealing with another language she failed to find a proper English word to replace the original Bengali term. Moreover, unlike most translations, Majumdar does not even provide an explanatory list of meaning for the readers from a different cultural background in the form of footnotes. This will actually give a scope to the reader not to make a simplistic reading and put some extra effort to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the terms as well as the source culture.

However, it has to be noted that a reader’s response might vary according to his or her cultural background. A reader, who belongs to the source culture but has read the English translations prior to the original ones, will encounter a level of advantage and familiarity
while reading. The cultural eddies of the source culture will facilitate better understanding for such a reader. The researcher as a Bengali reader has had read few original Feluda stories in the past and while carrying out the research, her reading of the English translations also lends a similar advantage and familiarity. But the researcher’s reading also highlights some other intricacies of translation. In some Feluda stories there has been a condensation of details that are present in the Bengali originals in the translated versions. Although, the translator is familiar with the source language yet at times Majumdar has compromised with the syntax of the original stories and narrowed down the wide depth of Ray’s detailing. For instance, in the Bengali story “Hatayapuri” the reader is entertained with an interesting limerick on Lalmohan Ganguli, however, this small piece of humour is not retained in the translated story “The House of Death”. Composed in Bengali, these five lines of melody, dedicated to Jatayu posed a linguistic resistance against translation. Although the translated story does mention about Feluda’s habit of writing limericks yet Majumdar fails to provide an English translation of Ray’s short poem. In some cases though, Majumdar has tried to compensate for the loss as she does in the same story. In the original story Ray has provided two lines of a poem by Lalmohan babu’s favorite poet, but in the English translation Majumdar has increased more lines to make it five lines of free verse. There are more such instances; however, some losses could not be replaced. The English translations lack the characteristic presence of Ray’s illustrative sketches which form an integral part of the narrative in the original stories. While reading the Bengali originals Ray’s illustrations aid in building perceptions about the characters and the scenes that come before or are followed by them. But at the same time it can be said that these illustrations impose a visual limit and therefore for a first time reader, reading the English translations gives scope of exercising one’s faculties of imaginative visualisation and perception.
Moreover, it would be interesting to study how the responses vary when the reader is from a different cultural background, more particularly a non-Indian. The genre of detective fiction is predominantly perceived as a western phenomenon and India’s position in the realm of the genre holds little space when compared to the West. An English reader’s account of the translated versions will not only facilitate a better comprehension of the Indian school of detective fiction but also of Feluda who is portrayed as a quintessential Bengali detective.

The English translations have made the stories available to a wider section of readers. This has not only helped to accord greater relevance to Ray’s work; whose global fame rests mainly on his directorial ventures, but has also helped to eradicate negligence towards the Indian tradition of detective fiction. The entire proposition was also supposed to assist the progress of cultural interaction, although this will require the reader to put an extra effort. For instance, if the reader comes across two terms like ‘machchli baba’ and ‘baba’ it is necessary to understand that both terms have different connotations. The first one is a compound word where ‘baba’ means a religious guru, while the second one is the Bengali word for father. Both words are culture specific and if misunderstood they will lead to misperception.

These highlights of the process of translation show that it is anything but an easy task. Despite the various convolutions, Majumdar has managed to do justice to the original classics, although she could not avoid some changes. However, she did it convincingly and even incorporated some interesting changes. But studying changes will be more interesting if the focus of the study is shifted to the cinematic adaptation of the stories. Two of Ray’s popular stories Joy Baba Felunath (The Mystery of the Elephant God) and Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress) were adapted into the silver screen by Ray. Julio Plaza explains inter-semiotic translation as:

…a space where conflict takes place (productively) among the various codes and elements of the system of art – from the production to the reception of a
work of art, understood not as an absolute category but as a cluster of relations between the elements of that system: object-representation-interpretant-author-reader. (Plaza 1981:45)

Literature and cinema both narrate some story to their target audiences but their concerning systems of art are widely dissimilar. With two different sign systems it is interesting to explore the various nuances as filmmakers re-write the typographical text of the original story into the screenplay of a movie. Cinematic adaptations of literary works always run the risk of comparison. But it must be noted that the journey of a story from its typographical medium to an audio-visual medium is tricky, since both mediums exist as independent modes of art and operate according to their own set of qualities and limitations. In a work of literature a writer incorporates linguistic aspects and invests language with meaning to convey his thoughts. Whereas, cinematic language incorporates audio-visual means to suit the purpose of the director. The art of narration in conventional literature is linear. When we read a text it tends to be a comparatively linear activity, mainly based on writing (écriture) and reading (decoding). But narration in movies is a far more complex affair since cinema is a part of the visual-culture and cinematography as a discipline is an important aspect of movie making. In movies narration involves dialogues, background score, body language (kinesics), facial expression, lighting, colour (in flashbacks often sepia tone is used), tone (voice-over), costume, mood, focus, camera placement, movement et.al. The role of camera angles, cutting, close-ups, continuity and the final arrangement of all the pictorial elements into a harmonious string of images enhances the narrative significance of the plot. So, as an original fiction gets adapted or interpreted into the large screen, the story gets transmuted at various multiple levels and provides a thought-provoking paradigm to study what gets changed or lost or gained in adapting literary texts from a typographical space into an audio –visual space.
According to Translation Studies theorist Andre Lefevere, “Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text.” (Lefervere 1992:xi) So, it can be stated that when a filmmaker transforms the literary narrative of a written text into the narrative of a movie adaptation he too indulges in an act of re-writing the original text (fiction) into another text (motion picture). And while the director decodes the narrative of the typographical text and codifies it in to an audio-visual narrative, it undergoes some necessary changes; necessary since both literature and cinema as independent domains of art exists only in respect to the conventions of the medium that embodies them. So, cinematic adaptations can be seen as an autonomous work of art whose credentials depend on the director’s interpretation of the original work, its execution on the screen and finally its acceptance by the audience. It may be argued that movie adaptations in comparison to the original text confine the viewer’s imagination by providing them with a series of concrete images. According to reader-response theorist Louise Rosenblatt, the act of reading a book initiates a transaction between the reader and the text and engages the reader in an active and participative process of reading. So, when a reader interacts with the text he gets an opportunity to decode the meaning of the text using his own faculty of intellect and imagination. Thus every reading becomes an act of re-writing with the reader’s expertise of capabilities and limitations and in this way the reader becomes the virtual writer. For a reader, the written text provides complete freedom in employing his own imaginary faculties to comprehend and visualize the various characters, objects et.al. Similarly, a filmmaker who is first a reader also enjoys the freedom of decoding the meaning of the book by employing his own faculty of intellect and imagination. So it can be said that while writing the screenplay, which forms the inter-mediary space between the linguistic medium of the typographical text and the audio-visual medium of the movie, the director also re-writes the story with his own faculties.
But considering the response of a reader-turned-viewer these factors might turn complicated. Satyajit Ray, in the introduction to his book, *Our Films Their Films* says that the director is answerable “…to the faceless millions who form the public pulse which must now beat with his film for the film not to fall by the wayside and die.” (Ray 2000:2). Any filmmaker tries to make the best possible use of his resources to make his interpretation work for the audience. But when the reader becomes the viewer, and watches another reader-turned-director’s interpretation on the screen, he may or may not come to terms with what is being shown on the big screen. Moreover, if the subject is the reader first, his reaction on watching the movie is sure to vary for two basic reasons- firstly the film as a text will not allow much space for visualization as everything will be implied, secondly the reader-turned-viewer will be watching a reader-turned director’s interpretation on the screen and as such the former’s perception of a particular scene while reading the story might not match with the director’s presentation of the same in the movie. Although, perception always varies from one person to another but the impact of the reader’s pre-conceived ideas about a literary work shall cast an impending influence upon his reception of the cinematic adaptation of the same work.

The researcher encountered similar intricacies while dealing with the transmutation of the original stories from the textual code system to an audio-visual system of codes. It has to be noted here that the researcher’s study focuses on the cinematic adaptations of the original Bengali stories by Ray instead of the English translation of the referred stories by Majumdar. Satyajit Ray is a noted filmmaker- one of the pioneering masters of world cinema. Celebrated for his art of filmmaking, Ray is one the few directors who have successfully adapted literary classics into celluloid. His very first film, *Pather Panchali*, based on Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay’s epic novel, is a classic of world cinema. The film was a trend setter in itself as it broke all the conventions of Indian film industry which emphasized more on
speech-melodrama, song and dance. In this film, Ray digressed at many places from the original novel. In one of the scenes where Durga’s father returns to the village to learn about his daughter’s tragic death, Ray improvised from the original text to present it in his signature style, incorporating the right blend of images, music, sound and silence. But on many occasions, Ray too had to face the attack of the critics and the following quoted excerpt from Ray’s interview with the Cineaste magazine shows how he justifies such actions. He said;

I choose a story or novel for certain elements in it which appeal to me. In the process of writing the screenplay, the theme may be modified, but most of the original elements will be retained. Often the screenplay evolves as a criticism of the original. After reading a story many times, you may feel that a certain character would not behave the way the author has described, so some changes are made. Once I have read a story and gotten to know it, I will leave the story behind and start from scratch. At the end, if I find that certain changes are convincing, I’ll keep them and forget the original. (www.satyajitrayment.org)

Apart from working on the classics by other writers, Ray has also adapted some of his literary works in the big screen. And it is quite interesting to see how he approaches, adapts and appropriates his own works in the light of his above statement. Among the thirty five Feluda stories Ray has made two of them into movies. His directorial ventures Sonar Kella and Joy Baba Felunath are the celluloid translations of his books by the same title. Both movies are brilliant detective thrillers in which Ray has incorporated many well-thought changes. Sonar Kella was the first movie to be made and released in 1974 and it was followed by Joy Baba Felunath in 1979. In both movies, Ray as a director has incorporated a number of changes while interpreting them into the silver screen.
But before dealing with the first Feluda movie, the research focuses on Ray’s second movie to apprehend the complications of translation. The main story line of *Joy Baba Felunath* is about a precious Ganesha idol and Machchli Baba- an impostor. While holidaying in the city of Varanasi, Umanath Ghoshal approached Feluda to solve the mystery of a precious idol which was stolen from his father’s room. While investigating, Feluda’s initial suspicion fell on Maganlal Meghraj, a local crook known for all kind of illegal works. In a game of hide and seek two other characters play an important role, one is Umanath babu’s son Ruku, and the other is his secretary Vikas Singh. Feluda’s investigation unfolds in the climax when he reveals that the idol was first safely placed inside the mouth of the lion, the bahon of Goddess Durga by Ruku and later it was stolen by Vikas babu. Maganlal Meghraj on the other hand was found associated with the racket of the fake sadhu. The story is an excellent piece of work in the realm of detective fiction as Feluda solved the twin-mystery employing his superior intellect, brilliant observation and analytical skills. As a writer, Ray created a brilliant detective fiction narrative by incorporating the right blend of crime, detection, mystery and puzzle. He keeps the reader involved by providing him access to various hints and clues, but at the same time the tight-gripped plot keeps the reader guessing until the final moment of denouement arrives.

Satyajit Ray’s view about film making, as quoted in the previous page, is clearly discernable in his movie *Joy Baba Felunath*. In adapting this thrilling detective story into a movie script, Ray had to strike a balance between what to show and what not to show in a stipulated time frame and that too without compromising the essence or intensity of the mystery of the original source. The film varies a lot from the narrative of the book as Ray moulds the original story line through various additions and subtractions to suit his purpose. Apart from the various minor changes incorporated by Ray, there are some major ones that have even changed the original storyline of the mystery in the film. While studying the
original text (story) and the target text (movie) the researcher has encountered a couple of alterations. The writer-director has been skillful in crafting them into the movie in order to lend it a different status of an autonomous piece of work itself. Following is a list, which according to the researcher’s perception includes Ray’s most important incorporations in an accentuating order of relevance.

a) To start with, Ray has set the layout of the mystery right from the very first scene which depicts Shashi babu, the idol maker of the Ghoshal family talking to young Ruku about the relevance of the various bahons of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. This added scene is highly significant as it later turns out that the bahon of Goddess Durga, ie, the lion was an important prop in the mystery. The mouth of the lion was used as the hideout for the idol and for the viewers it was an important clue that Feluda had analytically decoded from Ruku’s meaningless chatter as he referred to it as the ‘king of Africa’.

b) Next is the improvised role of Ambika babu, Ruku’s grandfather. Contrary to the original fiction the film depicts him working in alliance with his grandson to ensure the safety of the idol. The old man sensed that apart from Maganlal Meghraj someone else also wanted to get hold of the idol. So he decided to hide the idol inside the mouth of the lion of Goddess Durga. When Feluda was hired to solve the case, Ambika babu hoped that Feluda’s investigation would help to unmask the other person whom Ambika babu had noticed to enter his room to steal the idol at the dead of night.

c) However the most interesting change was incorporated in the final scene when Feluda declares that the Ganesha idol, the epicentre of the mystery was actually a fake one. Sensing the danger of a probable theft of the precious idol, Ambika babu had already kept the original one in the bank locker and replaced it with a fake one
at his home. This particular twist is in complete contrast to the original fiction and the drama it provides is the real highpoint of the movie.

Apart from these major ones Ray has also introduced some minor changes to enhance the dramatic essence of the thriller. For instance in the original story only Feluda takes the disguise of Machchli Baba in the climax, but in the movie he is joined by Tapesh and Lalmohan babu and the trio appear as sadhus in one of the most memorable scenes from the movie.

However, for the researcher reading “Joy Baba Felunath” as a reader and then watching the movie as a viewer has led to varied responses. Reading a book always offers a wide range of visualizations as the text allows free wings to employ one’s imagination in interpreting the story. The plot, the characters, the locale, the mysteries with its twists, the puzzle along with its clues is open for the researcher to perceive and visualize. The book as a text is the writer’s mode of expression, but the meaning of the text is not just confined within itself, rather the book becomes communicative only when the reader comprehends its meaning through an active interaction with the text. “Joy Baba Felunath” is one of the most interesting mysteries composed by Ray. In a classic detective fiction story Ray structures the narrative as an intricate puzzle. The enigmatic puzzle is not easy to comprehend and the reader must avoid a plain-passive reading and apply his or her own reasoning faculties to understand the intricacies of the mystery. In this way the reader becomes a virtual detective— one who tries to solve the mystery by deducing the hints and clues provided by the author in the narrative.

While reading the original text the researcher gets to interpret the multilayered content of the narrative making use of her intellect and imagination. This gives liberty to rewrite the story and decode the text at the reader’s mental-visual level. Reading facilitates an interaction with each word and in turn each sequence of the narrative runs a simultaneous
chain of images in the reader’s mind. The researcher’s imagination is further aided by the author’s lucid and graphic descriptions. Ray’s description of the city of Varanasi, with its narrow lanes, bustling crowd and busy ghats aided by relevant detailing allows complete freedom in drawing the picture of the city with one’s own colours. Moreover, Ray’s illustrations at regular intervals considerably aid the reader’s perception. His simple sketches not only triggers the reader’s visualization of the characters but they also shape an understanding of the various sequences. For instance, Ray’s description of the knife throwing game at Maganlal Meghray’s house is followed by a sketch illustrating the post-event frame of the incident. (see fig.1) This sketch describes the impact of the dangerous stunt following which Lalmohan babu collapsed and fell down in front of Meghray while others kept gazing with their eyes wide open. With extraordinary lucidity of writing and emotive sketches Ray’s stories paves way for the reader to almost visualize the situations in person. And above all, the elegance of his writing style also provides an opportunity to decode the clues and solve the mystery. In the original fiction, Ray provides the reader with five major clues that occupies the researcher cum reader with thoughts of solving the puzzle with proper analytical deduction. So for the researcher cum reader, reading is a more alluring exercise as it makes her competent in exploring her creativity and imagination.

But when the reader turns into a viewer, the former becomes a mere spectator subscribing to what is being provided by the director. In the movie everything is implied as the viewer gets to see every character, every action from the perspective of the director and it is hard to imagine anything beyond what is being shown. But the viewer’s response will be highly significant when analyzed in view of the fact that the original story is already read by the viewer. Reading gives free wings to indulge in an active interaction with the text, but when the same reader watches the adaptation he or she might not associate with the director’s take on the original fiction. Watching the cinematic transmutation of the Bengali story “Joy Baba
Felunath” has been a fulfilling experience for the researcher who is also a reader turned viewer. Having known the original story line the researcher must have been surprised by Ray’s added fabrications in the movie. For instance, on watching the very first scene the researcher could associate with the thematic significance of the scene. The scene depicting a conversation between the idol-maker and young Ruku is set as a prelude to the mystery in which the prop, i.e, the lion-bahon of Goddess Durga is an integral part of the mystery. Following this there are other additional twists like the scene in which an unidentified man is shown entering Ambika babu’s room at the dead of night; trying to open the chest in which the idol was usually kept. The drama is further heightened when Feluda, Tapesh and Lalmohan babu appear in the disguise of sadhus to deliver a finishing blow to Maganlal Meghraj. However, the final catastrophe reveals the mystery-within-the mystery. Ray shows that the grandfather-grandson duo worked together to ensure the safety of the idol by replacing it with a fake one and this was a big surprise to the researcher as it was in complete deviance from the original story.

Moreover, cinema as a narrative medium does not provide much scope for imagination as the director partially spoon feeds the viewer. It is like being trapped into an audio-visual socket that triggers a certain amount of passivity. The film as a text is explicitly structured where the visual space is dominated by recurrent stereotyped images. For instance, if one considers the knife throwing incident in the movie, the scene is a visual treat for the spectator. Throughout the scene the stance of the characters especially that of Lalmohan babu who was standing still with a huge caricatured board at the backdrop draws special attention. While watching, the viewer can sense the shock or trauma that Lalmohan babu undergoes; standing helplessly as Arjun was throwing knives towards him, right at the aim, missing his body just by inches. Ray’s craftsmanship not only makes the scene thrilling but it has also captured a permanent frame in the viewer’s mind. Years after watching the movie such frames are
retained and any reference to it (movie) will spontaneously replay bits and parts of the scene in the viewer’s mind. But when the same sequence is read, the reader’s faculties of imagination are free to interpret the whole sequence in his or her own terms. In this regard it must be added that the researcher’s perception is boosted by Ray’s sketch that shows a post-event frame of the sequence. So watching the movie restricts or narrows down the researcher cum viewer’s perception thereby curbing her power of imagination.

However, Ray’s first directorial whodunit is based on the Bengali story “Sonar Kella”. It is a story about a little boy Mukul who could supposedly remember things from his previous birth and made random remarks about a golden fortress, camel, peacock et.al. His life takes an adventurous course when he sets off for Rajasthan—the land of forts and deserts along with Professor Hemanga Hajra. Tempted by the lure of hidden treasure Mukul is followed by two nasty criminals but Feluda foiled their greed by exposing the disguise of Bhavananda, who in a bid to kill the real professor, attacked him and took his place to play act as the real professor. This story when made in to movie retains almost all the original elements except a few minor changes. However, for a reader-turned viewer the movie offers nothing surprising. For instance, in the movie the fact that in Rajasthan Mukul is actually accompanied by Bhavananda in the disguise of Professor Hajra is known to the viewer right from the point when the real Hajra was thrown off the mountain. But in the original story, these facts were revealed only at the end. As a result when the injured Professor dressed like a local Rajasthani man loiters around Mukul, the viewers know about his identity. But in the original story, the role of a local Rajasthani man with blood marks on his clothes appears mysteriously intriguing to the readers. So while reading the readers are gripped with an intensifying suspense which is pacified towards the last few pages of the narrative, once the fake Professor in between a huge pile of rubble was busy looking for treasure. The story ends
when Feluda in his characteristic style clarifies all doubts about the mystery as an omniscient narrator.

However, one interesting aspect about the movie is the scene where the fake Professor is shown to hypnotize young Mukul to know about the actual fortress that he is referring to as the golden fortress. Moreover as the first Feluda movie, Ray’s casting of actor Soumitra Chatterjee, Santosh Dutta and Siddartha Chatterjee in the roles of Feluda, Lalmohan babu and Topshe has not only epitomized the image of the characters but has also imprinted these actors as the eternal Feluda, Lalmohan babu and Topshe. As a result, for the viewer it becomes difficult to imagine anyone else in the role of Feluda. This impact is so enthralling that the book-cover of the 1992 edition of “Sonar Kella” published by Ananda Publishers depicts Soumitra Chatterjee as Feluda. Infact, this speaks about the prioritization of film images on book covers and a reverse sequencing of influence in time. However, for the researcher the movie fails to retain its mystery because in contrary to the original story, in the movie the viewer is not kept in darkness and everything is shown. Moreover there is no additional twist that will lend an extra edge to the movie.

The study of literary classics and their translated versions can be extended to another level when the attention is shifted to book covers of the original stories. When a reader holds a book he starts deciphering the text right from the cover of the book. The title of the book, the graphics on the front cover, the colour schemes of the used text and images, the type of fonts, its typeface everything draws the reader’s attention while he tries to decode the text even before going through a single page. One of the key elements of Ray’s writing has been his sketches which also contributed to form the book covers. His experience as an advertising artist at Keymer &Co. paid off when Ray designed the posters of his films and later of his books. The lucid sketches depicts Ray’s eye for detail. When Feluda became popular his illustrations caught the imagination of the readers as they began to perceive the characters or
the scenes through Ray’s sketches. Infact, his simple straight-lines evoke the reader’s expectation through the cover design and the reader immediately tries to make an idea of what he or she is going to encounter on turning the pages of the book. Infact, prior to the cinematic adaptation of the books, every reader must have had his own interpretation regarding the looks of the lead protagonists. But once the first Feluda movie was out in 1974, the readers might have had a mixed feeling on seeing Soumitra Chaterjee as the super sleuth. While for some, the actor might have fit into their imagination while for some others he did not. However those who have first read the translations, there were no book covers as the stories appeared mostly in collections and hence they missed out the thrill of deciphering Ray’s illustrative lines as in Sharodiyo Desh Pratrika- an annual Durga puja edition of Desh magazine.

Similarly film posters also help to trigger the perception of the viewers. Infact, the study of the translations of original stories in the form of their movie adaptations becomes more interesting when the researcher makes an analysis of the film posters. Since the gap between the film’s release and the publication of the original fiction is not more hence it can be assumed that at the time of the film’s release most Bengali viewers must have read the stories before watching the movies. And as the movies were made in Bengali it is but obvious that a majority of viewers were Bengalis. Considering these two aspects, designing the posters of the film must have been a challenge for Ray, as he had to ensure that the posters, as a crucial aspect of film promotion in those days, must sustain the interest of the reader-turned viewers and at the same time it must attract his other viewers from non-reader section. Of the two film posters, the poster of Sonar Kella is more thought provoking. (see fig.2) With a black backdrop the poster is skillfully designed and features a white scorpion along with the film’s title in golden yellow. Ray’s use of colour draws attention; he presents the movie-title in golden as the Bengali term ‘sonar’ in the title means golden and a white scorpion against a
black backdrop lends it more significance. The use of scorpion is highly thoughtful as scorpion is significant at two levels. Firstly, scorpions are integral part of the geographic terrain of a desert and the film takes the viewers to an exciting trip of exotic Rajasthan; secondly as the film starts the viewer realize that the culprits inflict their first lethal attack against Feluda using a scorpion. So it can be said that Ray’s posters serve to feed the inquisitive mind of those viewers who have not read the original fiction and thus trigger perception. Infact, even for the reader cum viewer the posters help to initiate their curiosity of interacting with a familiar story through an unfamiliar medium.

Satyajit Ray’s movies are celebrated as works of art and his take on his two literary creations also exhibit his workmanship. Infact, by deviating from the original source most notably in Joy Baba Felunath Ray has actually ended up re-writing a new story altogether. But the aesthetic appeal of the movies depends not on one but on a number of crucial factors since the genre of detective fiction has its own conventions. A detective fiction narrative operates according to some narrative strategies, many of which often appear to be stereotyped. These strategies are integral aspects of the narrative discourse as they help to generate mystery and thrill in such stories. In his essay “Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage”, Umberto Eco writes about cult movies and their various aspects emphasizing more on their stereotyped frames. According to Eco such frames make a film cult and the directors use them because “When you do not know how to deal with a story, you put in it stereotyped situations because you know that, they at least have already worked elsewhere.” (Eco 1985:6). In his essay, Eco speaks about ‘intertextual frames’ which refers to stereotyped situations that are recurrent and are ‘coming from previous textual tradition’ (Eco 1985:6). While speaking about movies he tried to emphasize how such stereotyped situations operate in cult movies. However, it is interesting to notice that even though the conventional notions of detective stories incorporate stereotyped narrative schemes, Ray has managed to
avoid stereotyped frames in his movies to lend uniqueness to each scene. For instance, almost all whodunits show the final climax in which all characters are present when the detective-narrator explains how everything happened. In *Sonar Kella*, Ray deviates from this style as he keeps all angles open to the viewer right from the initial stages of the movie. However, in *Joy Baba Felunath*, Ray has improvised an interesting twist which necessitates the final culminating scene in which Feluda reveals the reality of the fake Ganesha idol to other characters in the movie. Infact, after watching the movies, one can hardly find any scene or sequence that gives a feeling of repetition. In this regard, Ray must be credited for his skills as he has successfully appropriated the stereotyped conventions of detective fiction to make films that are thrilling detective movies without any recurrent frames. In view of the research conducted, it can be asserted that Satyajit Ray has deftly handled the conventions of the genre in both mediums. Finally it must be remembered that the whole issue over the credibility of such adaptations is highly debatable and relative. So, if an adaptation does justice to its own medium and is accepted and appreciated by viewers by a simple cause of the end justifying the means, the issue resolves itself amicably. But if the film in its own medium is a failure and does not satisfy the audience then the entire mechanism itself is put to scrutiny. So apart from studying the various theoretical aspects of Ray’s stories, the researcher has extensively dealt with the translated versions of the original stories both in linguistic as well as cinematic domain to showcase an enthralling area of research that the stories offer.
Notes

1. A folk theatre form of Bengal.

2. A string drawn manual fan, suspended from the ceiling, especially during the British Raj to be fanned by pulling by the punkha puller, who was a native Indian.

3. A red colour or vermillion colour paint used to anoint the feet of Indian, especially Bengali- Hindu unmarried and married woman.

4. A nonhuman entity, usually an animal or bird, who is mythologically or by popular belief associated with a popular deity in Hindu religion as a mode of transportation; such as the lion of Goddess Durga, an owl of Goddess Laxmi.
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