

International Conference
on
On Differences, Togetherness & Politics:
Reading Nazrul vis-à-vis South Asian Thinkers

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Nazrul Centre for Social and Cultural Studies, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol

Date : September 16-18, 2020
Venue : Damien Hall, Southfield College (formerly Loreto College), Darjeeling

Chief Patron : *Professor Sadhan Chakraborti*, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Kazi Nazrul University
Patron : *Dr. Anuradha Rai*, Principal, Southfield College, Darjeeling
Chief Advisor : *Dr. Swati Guha*, Director, Nazrul Centre for Social and Cultural Studies
Convened by : *Dr. Srikanta Roy Chowdhury*, Department of History, Southfield College, Darjeeling

Concept Note

Nazrul, being the National Poet of Bangladesh, cannot be studied in isolation from the issues related to nation, nationalism and formations of identities based on differences and similarities. Nationalism based on ethno-racial, geopolitical or religious terms has already been proved to be a not only non-inclusive but also often violent, intolerant, and discriminatory. Trying to link liberalism with the issues of identity formation, thinkers like Neil Mac Cormick, Will Kymlicka, Chaim Gans, Charles Taylor, and David Miller, while making one's choice and individuality central to one's attempt to form group identities have argued for framing of national identity based on cultural and social contexts rather than on a common ancestry. Despite the differences between 'I', 'me', 'you', 'other', etc., an individual, once conscious of being a 'singular-plural', is in a pursuit of becoming a 'we' out of togetherness, based on the subjective choice. This choice of the individual, on the one hand, is grounded on the consciousness of the perils of a 'solitarist' identity, and on the other hand, is guided by the possibilities of intimacies provided by the multiple cultures of the civilizational domain where one is located. Integrity teaches us about responsibility and objectivity in one's way of engaging with others, while the prerogative of intimacy, according to Kasulis, is to orient the self with responsiveness and intersubjectivity in one's engagement with people who are the intimate-others. The South Asian culture, thus, needs to be revisited with intimacy every time we as South Asians, attempt to reorient ourselves with ever changing notions of identities. The politics of intimacy aspires towards a social bi/multi-orientationality that will allow an individual to adapt oneself to different cultural contexts in a shared civilizational domain. Nazrul Islam, with his interfaith and dialogue with various intellectual traditions and communitarian praxes, is one of the best suited models for the South Asians in addressing various issues related to differences, togetherness, choice, identity formations, nationalism and cultural syncretism.

The present seminar aims at revisiting Kazi Nazrul Islam to understand the following issues in a better way:

- What, according to Nazrul and his works, has been the essence of the civilizational domain that we call South Asia?
- Accepting the markers of what makes one a Bengalee or a Bangladeshi, shouldn't one need to move beyond them towards a broader cultural orientation of inclusiveness in order not to contradict with the spirit of Nazrul's multi-cultural nationalism?
- What are the various social bi/multi-orientationality that one can learn from Nazrul in course of one's politics of intimate belonging towards togetherness?
- How has Nazrul agreed to or differed from the other South Asian thinkers of intimate consciousness through cross cultural recognitions and responsiveness?
- How and why is there an urgent need for the contemporary South Asians to revisit Nazrul in orientating the self about engaging with the people of differences?

Papers are invited for presentation, related to any of the following sub-themes:

- ❖ Differences and Exchanges: Nazrul and His Works
- ❖ Togetherness in a multination: Lessons from Nazrul
- ❖ Politics of Belonging with Others: Insights from Nazrul
- ❖ Nationalities, Identities and Beyond: Nazrul in a Comparative Lens with South Asian Thinkers
- ❖ Relevance of Nazrul in Contemporary South Asia

Call for Papers

A limited number of presenters will be invited to participate in the international conference. The participants interested in presenting paper are requested to mail an abstract of the proposed paper (within 500 words), along with five keywords and a brief bio-note (within 250 words) to Srikanta Roy Chowdhury (**e-mail**: nazrulodtp2020@gmail.com; **WhatsApp**: +91 9832481951).

Last date for submitting abstracts: **May 24, 2020** till 12:00 midnight.

Date of confirming the acceptance to the selected participants: **May 30, 2020**.

The participants invited for the conference should mail the first draft of their complete paper in English, unpublished and with proper citations (as per the style sheet to be provided along with the letter of acceptance) by **August 30, 2020**.

The organizers can reimburse the travelling expenses (if required) and will be happy to provide hospitality from September 15 afternoon to September 19 forenoon, 2020. Terms and conditions will be intimated along with the letter of acceptance.