



“Tokyo Cancelled” A Postmodern Reading of Rana Dasgupta: A Review

Rabi Kumar Roy¹, Prof. Karunesh Jha²

¹Research Scholar Dept. of English, A.P.S University, Rewa, M.P., India

²Professor and Head of English Dept., Pt. S.N. Shukla University, Shahdol, M.P., India

Corresponding author-rabikumar.raju@gmail.com

Received: 05 Nov 2023; Received in revised form: 11 Dec 2023; Accepted: 19 Dec 2023; Available online: 30 Dec 2023

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Abstract— *Tokyo Cancelled*, the debut text of the award-winning author Rana Dasgupta, who also won a Commonwealth Writer's Prize for his brilliant second novel *Solo* (2009), seeks to connect the contemporary techno-cultural world and the eerie world of myth, fantasy, magic, and imagination. Dasgupta chooses new ways of representing the world with his postmodernist experimentation *Tokyo Cancelled* as he continues to do in *Solo* as well. In a contemporary anonymous international airport, Dasgupta makes thirteen stranded passengers tell thirteen stories which in turn transport the reader to the realms of magic and fantasy. While rejecting the conventional mode of narration, and going away from the traditional concepts, Dasgupta creates a pastiche of postmodern events, occurrences, events, and characters. The author celebrates the elements of irony, paranoia, fragmentation, parody, dark humour, magic realism, and techno-culture which hold the very essence of a postmodern society and its inhabitants. This paper, thus, from a postmodern perspective, attempts to analyze the contemporizing of the fantastic elements existent in the text *Tokyo Cancelled*.



Keywords— *Tokyo Cancelled*, Post Modern, Novel, Thirteen passengers, thirteen stories

I. INTRODUCTION

Rana Dasgupta is an Indian-British author, journalist, and screenwriter born in 1970 in London, England. He grew up in England and studied at Oxford, the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud in Aix-en-Provence, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He lived in London, Kuala Lumpur, and New York before moving to New Delhi India 2001. After graduation, he worked as a journalist in Eastern Europe and India, covering various topics, including politics, economics, and social issues. His first book, *Tokyo Cancelled* (2005), uses the framing device of thirteen stranded travellers sharing stories to while away time as they wait for their delayed flight. These stories show an amazing range, varying in location from Asia and Africa to South and North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Some of these stories speak of princes and kings and magical transformations, while others are more obviously contemporary in their settings with protagonists ranging

from investment bankers and marketing consultants to workers in sweatshops. Far from creating an escapist fantasy world, Dasgupta uses conventions from folktales and fairy tales in this story cycle to represent the textures of experience in our globalized contemporary world. In addition to offering a critique of late capitalism through a focus on the increasing alienation that seems to characterize contemporary experience, *Tokyo Cancelled* also explores, *Tokyo Cancelled* also explores the possibility that the act of storytelling itself might be a way of resisting alienation.

Walter Benjamin's essay on Nikolai Leskov entitled "The Storyteller" is one of the influences on Dasgupta's work (Dasgupta, "Writing" 12-13). Benjamin points out that the storyteller "has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant" (Benjamin 83). At a basic level, storytelling implies a sharing of experience. Benjamin makes the argument that in the modern world "the communicability of experience is

decreasing" (Benjamin 86). In contrast to the storyteller who through the rendering of his story makes it a part of the experience of the listener, Benjamin posits the figure of the novelist, the modern solitary individual who has isolated himself and has no counsel to offer the reader. There is a sense of palpable nostalgia that pervades Benjamin's account of the decay of storytelling. The storyteller is an artisan, a craftsman whose task is "to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way" (Benjamin 108). The decline of the storyteller is linked to the rise of the alienated modern individual who seems removed and distant from "the raw material of experience."

Dasgupta sees *Tokyo Cancelled* as an experiment in "how storytelling might respond to this inconsequence of experience," which is also one of the central concerns of Benjamin's essay (Writing TC 16). Man is spoken of as being separated from his work (he plays no part in deciding what to do or how to do it) a break between the individual and his life activity. Man is said to be separated from his own products (he has no control over what he makes or what becomes of it afterwards) a break between the individual and the material world. He is also said to be separated from his fellow men (competition and class hostility have rendered most forms of co-operation impossible)-a break between man and man. (133-134). The genres of fantasy literature and magic realism are often entwined and interwoven. The prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Award winner Rana Dasgupta's debut novel *Tokyo Cancelled* (2005) produces a fantasy world in a global setting. In 2010, Dasgupta published his first work of fiction, "Tokyo Cancelled," a collection of interconnected stories set in the titular city. When writing "Tokyo Cancelled," Dasgupta was in his late thirties and had lived and worked in several different countries, including India, England, and Bulgaria. This wealth of experience is reflected in the book, which draws on various cultural and historical references to explore the themes of travel, identity, and cultural displacement. "Tokyo Cancelled" is a captivating and thought-provoking collection of stories exploring the many facets of life in one of the world's most vibrant and dynamic cities. The book provides a powerful portrait of the experiences of travelers, both real and imagined, who find themselves in Tokyo, a city that is both familiar and strange, and that offers both refuge and challenge. In "Tokyo Cancelled," Dasgupta uses the city of Tokyo as a backdrop to explore the broader themes of travel, identity, and cultural displacement. He draws on the experiences of his travels, as well as on the experiences of other travelers from around the world, to create a rich and layered portrait of the city and its people. The stories in the

book are connected by a series of recurring motifs and themes, including travelers' experiences, the cultural and social differences between countries, and how people negotiate their identities in a rapidly changing world.

This text creates a mysterious fantasy world with thirteen magical stories told by 13 travelers stuck in an unnamed airport. According to M.H. Abrams, authors of magical realism, "weave sharply etched realism in an ever-changing pattern, presenting ordinary events and descriptive details alongside fantastical and dreamlike elements, and a national debut novel by a storyteller who weaves together a story of timeless appeal. Style that energetically harmonizes with the modern world. Thirteen passengers are stuck at the airport. Their destination Tokyo is covered in snow and all flights are canceled. To pass the night, they gather at the quiet baggage carousels and tell each other story. Robert De Niro and; the child born in the wash is controlled by the transubstantiation of matter and turns against his enemies; a wingless bird guides a Ukrainian businessman back to his lost lover; a person who shapes other people and memories must face his past; a Chinese youth with wonderful luck cuts his hair and cleans his ears; the entrepreneur risks losing everything in his puppet madness; a mute Turkish girl stays alone in a German cartographer's house. Stories about life on the road, told by people who travel. Stories from the great cities of New York, Istanbul, Delhi, Lagos, Paris and Buenos Aires—which grow into a novel of hopes, dreams and disappointments that unites people everywhere. Dasgupta's writing is extremely idiosyncratic and fresh, so striking that it seems to come from both the future and the past, but combining a timeless mystery with a lively present, his cautionary tales manage to recall both Ballard and Borges, portraying the ordinary extraordinary. People (some lost, some confused, some happy) in a world still indescribable, inexplicable, wonderful. Tokyo Canceled one of the main subjects; is the idea of cultural alienation and the challenges travelers face when they find themselves in a strange place. Dasgupta explores how travelers experience this experience, from homesickness and alienation to the thrill of discovery and new cultural experiences. He also explores how travelers are shaped by their experiences in a foreign place and how they are changed by the people and places they encounter. Tokyo cancelled upon its publication; it was widely praised and recognized as an important work of modern fiction. The book was a Commonwealth Writers and finalist; it was chosen like the book of the year by the prize and several important newspapers and literary magazines. After publication of the Tokyo canceled, Rana Dasgupta continued to write and publish, exploring a wide range of topics and subjects. He has written fiction, non-fiction and films and has received widespread acclaim for his work,

including several major literary awards. Considered one of the most critical voices in contemporary literature, his work inspires and engages readers worldwide. *Tokyo cancelled* is a work of fiction that can be described as a collection of connected short stories. The book is set in Tokyo and explores the experiences of travelers stuck in the city due to a canceled flight. When he examines the characters and their experiences, Dasgupta illuminates the many different ways that people and travel experiences can shape their personal histories, cultural backgrounds, and psychological states. Literature review Dasgupta first book *Tokyo Cancelled* (2005) is a collection of interconnected stories that take readers on a journey through the lives of people living in the great metropolis of Tokyo. The stories are united by a focus on alienation, isolation and the search for connection in a rapidly changing world. Through his rich and complex portraits of Tokyo and the inhabitants of the city, Dasgupta explores how people respond to contemporary challenges and opportunities, and how they struggle to find purpose and fulfillment in a world that is often hostile and confusing. *Rana Dasgupta Tokyo Cancelled* is a unique and imaginative piece of fiction that explores the lives of a diverse group of travelers in an airport blizzard. Through the interconnected stories of the series, the author offers a vivid and deeply human account of the many different characters affected by this sudden interruption of life. The result is a moving and thought-provoking meditation on the nature of travel, the meaning of home and the bonds between strangers. *Tokyo Cancelled* one of the most important forces; in this way, the author conveys the sense of community that arises in passengers spending time together at the airport. Through conversations, interactions, and shared experiences, the characters begin to form bonds and connections that are both meaningful and lasting. This sense of community is further enhanced by the way the author weaves together the individual stories of the travelers, connecting them and highlighting the many different perspectives and experiences presented between them. Another great strength of the book is its imaginative and playful approach to the travelogue genre. The author uses different narrative techniques and narrative devices to explore travelers and their many different experiences and conveys the sense of wonder and possibility evoked by the journey. For example, he uses elements of magical realism, dream sequences, and allegory to create a rich and imaginative world that is both familiar and strange, inviting the reader to explore the many facets of travelers' experiences.

In addition to the imaginative and playful approach; *Tokyo Canceled* is known for his compassionate and empathetic commitment to his characters. Throughout the book, the author is deeply concerned with the inner lives of the

Travelers and the many different ways in which they are affected by the events around them. He is particularly interested in the ways in which characters are challenged by their unexpected displacement and the ways in which they respond to that challenge. The result is a portrait of a group of people that is both nuanced and complex and invites the reader to identify with the many different experiences presented in the book. Finally, the book is noted for its insightful commentary on the nature of travel and the meaning of home. Through the experiences of travelers, the author explores the many different motives and reasons for traveling and the many different emotions that can accompany being away. He also considers how people can feel connected to different places and cultures, and the importance of finding a sense of belonging in a world that can often seem uncertain and chaotic. Research methods the research methodology for the study of Rana Dasgupta's novels has a multifaceted approach that combines close reading, literary analysis and cultural research. This method aims to explore the complex themes and motifs in Dasgupta's novels and the cultural, historical and political contexts in which they were created. In this essay, I outline the critical elements of this research methodology and explain how they can be applied to the study of Rana Dasgupta's novels. The first part of this research methodology is close reading, which involves a detailed analysis of the text itself. A close reading pays attention to the language, style, and structure of the novel, as well as the pervasive themes, motifs, and symbols. Close reading is an integral part of the research methodology for studying Rana Dasgupta's novels, as his works are highly literary and densely layered and require careful and attentive interpretation. By analyzing a text, researchers can identify patterns and themes that may not be immediately apparent and gain a deeper understanding of an author's intentions and methods. Another component of that research methodology is literary analysis, which examines novels from the broader literary traditions and genres in which they are situated. Rana Dasgupta's works are complex and multi-layered, using various literary traditions and styles, from postmodern to magical. Realism By placing these works in a wider literary context, scholars gain a deeper understanding of how Dasgupta deals with and transforms these traditions and how his work contributes to contemporary literary discourse. The third part of this research methodology is the use of digital tools and resources to analyze novels in new and innovative ways. For example, digital tools such as text mining and visualization software can be used to identify text patterns and themes. And to explore the relationships between the different elements of the novel. Similarly, digital archives and databases can be used to access and analyze primary sources

related to novels, such as author interviews, reviews, and critical responses. In conclusion, the research methodology for the study of Rana Das Gupta's novels is multifaceted; combining close reading, literary analysis, cultural studies, interdisciplinary studies and the use of digital tools and resources, using these methods together, researchers can gain a deeper understanding. Of the complex themes and issues of Dasgupta's work, as well as the wider cultural, historical and political context in which they are situated. Themes of Tokyo novels Cancel Motifs in Rana Dasgupta's novel Tokyo Cancelled; They are based on the author's fascination with the subject of travel and how people experience and understand new and unfamiliar places. The main themes of Rana Dasgupta and novel stem from the author's interest in exploring many aspects of life and heritage. Through his writing, Dasgupta seeks to delve into the complexity of the human experience and illuminate the many different ways in which people find meaning and purpose in their lives. He is primarily interested in examining the intersections between individual lives and the larger historical and cultural contexts in which they occur, and seeks to emphasize how these intersections shape and influence the experiences of individuals. Throughout the book, Dasgupta explores the many different ways that people and travel experiences can shape their personal histories, cultural backgrounds, and psychological states, and aims to shed light on the many different aspects of the human experience. Which can affect how we perceive the world around us? Another important drive for the novel is the author's interest in exploring how people connect and form relationships with others, especially in new and unfamiliar environments, and a commitment to exploring the relationship between the individual and the wider cultural and historical context. To exist throughout the book, Dasgupta seeks to shed light on how people and travel experiences are shaped by the wider cultural and historical contexts in which they find themselves, and considers how that context affects their views and understanding of the world around them. . Finally, the main themes of Rana Dasgupta's novel Tokyo Cancelled rooted in the creator and a belief in the power of storytelling to illuminate the complexity of the human experience and help us understand the world around us. Through imagination and thought-provoking writing, Dasgupta invites readers to explore the many different aspects of the human experience of travel and to consider how people's experiences and perspectives are shaped by the broader cultural and historical context in which they live to exist.

II. PERCEPTION OF RANA DASGUPTA IN THE TOKYO CANCELLED

Rana Dasgupta's "Tokyo Cancelled" was widely praised upon its publication and continues to be regarded as a tour-de-force of writing. The novel is known for its imaginative storytelling and ability to illuminate the complexities of modern life and the human experience. The novel's unique combination of lyrical prose, imaginative storytelling, and thought-provoking themes have earned it a reputation as one of the most important and original works of contemporary literature. Critics have described the book as a powerful study of how people experience and understand the world around them. They praised its ability to give readers a fresh and insightful perspective on modern life. Critics described the book as a unique blend of fiction, non-fiction and reporting, and praised Dasgupta's ability to bring a fresh and insightful perspective to a wide range of subjects. The novel is described as a meditation on the city of Tokyo and its place in the world. It has been praised for its ability to illuminate many aspects of the human experience, including love, loss, and the search for meaning and purpose. In addition to the critical success of "Tokyo Cancelled" was also a commercial success and was widely read and discussed in literary circles around the world. The book was translated into several languages and was widely criticized and discussed in the media. Overall, Rana Dasgupta's perception when he wrote "Tokyo Cancelled" was a talented and insightful writer who made important contributions to modern literature. With his innovative and thought-provoking writing, he gained recognition as one of the most important and original voices in contemporary literature. His works continue to be widely read and celebrated.

III. CONCLUSION

Tokyo cancelled is a thought-provoking and imaginative novel that explores travelers and lives in a unique and exciting way. Whether you are a seasoned traveler or someone who has never left your hometown, this book will captivate and inspire you with its detailed descriptions, empathetic interactions with characters, and insightful commentary on the nature of travel and the meaning of home.

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