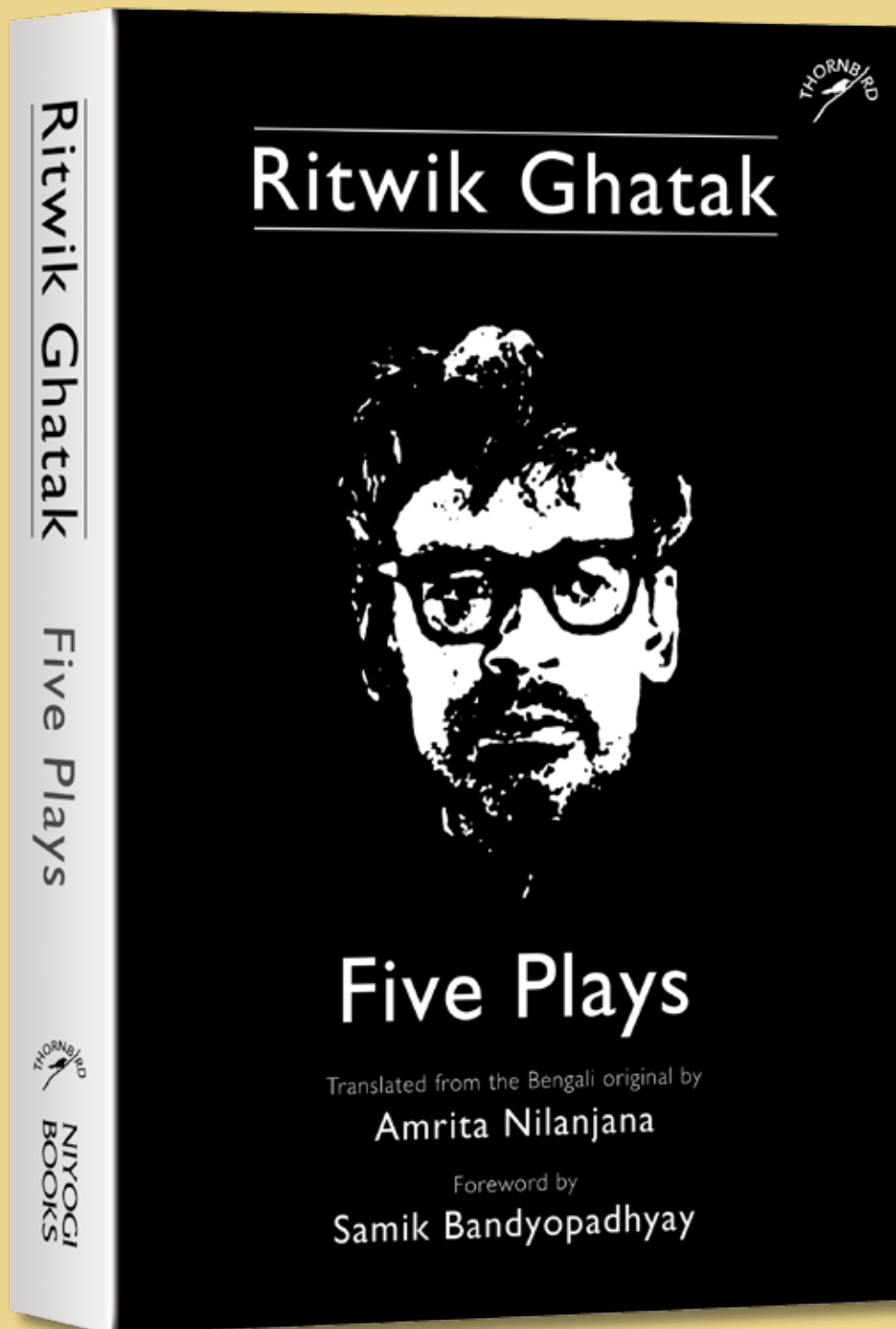


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# Ritwik Ghatak

## Five Plays

Translated by  
Amrita Nilanjana

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Ritwik Ghatak perhaps remains the most celebrated auteur of Partition narratives—not only did he complete eight masterly feature films before his premature death, his brilliance and eccentricities also were reflected as a film-theorist, critic, author and a theatre writer-practitioner. In this collection of plays, his writings specifically act as a cultural sign bearing the remnants of one catastrophic history—the Partition of Bengal. Ritwik details the visual and aural realization of a fragmented Bengal in such a socio-political and cultural milieu of Indian history where we can trace both dystopian and utopian features. Plays like *Dalil* (translated as *Charter*), *Sanko* (translated as *Communications*) and a few more are narratives that focus on the post-Independence socio-historical observations of the Indian subcontinent with a sustained critique of the impact of Partition and the functioning of political malpractices in the lives of the refugees from East Bengal. Drawing from various sources, as disparate as folk music, Indian classical music, and folk theatre as well as Indian classical dramaturgy, the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and mythology—Ritwik has portrayed the tragic predicament of the innumerable, hapless immigrants, amalgamating the cultural richness with the social reality of that time.



Born and raised in Kolkata, **Amrita Nilanjana** obtained a Master's degree and an MPhil in English Literature from Calcutta University. After migrating to Delhi, she taught

English Literature as a visiting faculty at the post graduate level in Delhi University. She is also a theatre critic and a short story writer. An avid reader and a restless traveller, Amrita Nilanjana is particularly fascinated by artisan communities living in remote areas, and has launched a silent campaign to return to these artisans their pride and their rightful place in society.

*'Dalil (translated as Charter in the present collection) that Ghatak wrote and directed for the stage focused more on the Partition and the divides and enduring fissures and agonies that it left behind in its wake...The same theme seems to be carried into a later phase in historical time, with the communal cleavage and the violence it generates continuing in both the fragments of the 'partitioned' territory, in Sanko (translated in the present collection as Communications).*

—Samik Bandopadhyay

