

# Discordant Devotion of Transsexuality: A Transgender, Sri Chaitanya, and Gaudiya Vaishnavas in Kaushik Ganguly's *Nagarkirtan* (2017)

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## **Abstract**

Kaushik Ganguly's film *Nagarkirtan* (2017) depicts a homosexual relationship between Parimal, alias Pari (played by Riddhi Sen), a 'hijra'/transgender who desires to become a complete woman through a sex-reassigning transsexual surgery, and Madhu (Ritwick Chakraborty), a flautist in a Kolkata based *kirtaniya* group (chanters of devotional songs). In the film, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the spiritual founder of Gaudiya tradition in Bengal, remains as a constant symbolic entity, and the scenes of *nagar-kirtan*, Gaudiya tradition of chanting devotional song in praise of Radha-Krishna, and members of Nabadwip-based (Sri Chaitanya's birthplace) Gaudiya community have created the narrative's mnemonic crux. This paper seeks explore how Pari's transsexuality and homoerotic passion for Madhu parallel Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Radha-like graceful femininity and utmost devotion for Sri Krishna, and to critically unravel the ambivalence of Bengal's Gaudiya community who worship the transsexuality of Sri Chaitanya as the divine "*milita tanu*" (combined bodies) of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna, imitate his 'feminine' passion for the (masculine) god, and yet are homophobic/transphobic.

**Keywords :** Transgender, transsexuality, androgynity, hijra, Sri Chaitanya, Gaudiya, *kirtan*.