

Philosophical Philogyny in Rabindranath Tagore's Select Short Stories

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Abstract

Indian English Literature, which has a fertile space for an everlasting oeuvre, never fails to produce skilful, potential, and peppy artists. When it comes to the contribution of literature, Rabindranath Tagore plays an important role. Being a versatile performer, Tagore rejuvenates the antique sociological aspects through his artistic hands. As a whizz kid, his works expel the voices of Indian women whose circumstances lead to losing their charm, which automatically results in sociological trauma. Through his intermingling innovations, Tagore combines the artistic essence in his works by mixing his ideas on philogyny with a philosophy to provide his readers with a good supplement. His short story corpus remains transparent enough to project the suffocations of Indian women whose innocence is mistaken for ignorance. Some of his heart-melting stories, *Kabuliwallah*, *Subha*, and *The Postmaster*, explicitly show Tagore's art of bringing out the fathoming of women's minds in front of the readers. The very purpose of this research paper is to throw light upon the cognizance of Rabindranath Tagore, who is fond of keeping philosophy and philogyny as his dual eye sights.

Keywords: Celebration of womanhood, philosophy, vulnerability, fathoming of women's minds, philogyny.

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore is the greatest Hippocrene who carves his own indispensable inscription in Indian English literature. Apart from succeeding as a versatile personality, Tagore has always been an altruist, which cannot be neglected. Being a bohemian, he exposes his desperation towards the unconventional society just by throwing heart-wrenching words. Like a bird with two feathers, his works, especially short stories, serve dual purposes. The sole aim of his writing mode is to swim deep to discover the fathoming of women's minds. On the other side, Tagore is quite aware of preaching philosophical values to be appreciated.

Apart from his writings, his admiration and obeisance towards female society get splashed in other artistic forms. Few among his paintings, 'Bharat Mata,' 'Dancing Women,' 'Woman with Flower,' and 'Woman's Face' act as colorful proofs to justify his attribution towards the feminine world.

Regarding literary aspects, Tagore acts as a voice artist by sensing the

mentality of women. In the following stories, *Kabuliwallah*, *Subha*, and *The Post-Master*, the readers could easily empathize with the agonies of the female characters. A good supporter can consider one's needs by exposing the troubling factors. Tagore is a respectable supporter who extends his hands to uplift women from the submerging society through his pen.

Main text

An admiring philogynist empathizes with women's mind flow and expels them to transfer their trauma into tranquillity. Tagore is one such figure whose machination moves towards concerning female characteristic features. Just by portraying the domestic events, the writer succeeds in proving the bitter fact that a single incident changes a women's entire life. Despite retaining female charm combined with calmness, these Indian women fail to prove their noble values to society. While they meet with such disaster, Tagore wins by bringing them out through his pen.

When *Kabuliwallah* is often seen from the perspective of the piteous pedlar, the charm and innocence of the little Mini are often ignored. With the intention of celebrating womanhood right from the roots, Tagore creates a miniature angel and names her 'Mini'. Through her childish chattering, this little figure engraves the aspects of womanhood. As an active kid, Mini attains her fulfilment by letting herself find curious little things.

Father! Ramdayal, the doorkeeper, calls a crow a crow! He doesn't know anything, does he?... What do you think father? Bhola says there is an elephant in the clouds, blowing water out of his trunk, which is why it rains?... Father! What relation is mother to you?

Keeping innocence as the base form, Tagore carves the childish features which spray visual colors in the eyes of the readers. Even without knowing anything about a strange pedlar, Mini runs with utmost joy and screams, "A *Kabuliwallah!* a *Kabuliwallah!*" which proves her overwhelming innocence.

The esoteric friendship between a little girl and a tall, bearded Kabul always remains unique to be celebrated. Tagore, an expert in making such a beautiful, unexplainable bond, never fails to show the impacts caused by the flow of time. Mini is no more a kid and the overflow of time has transferred her into a bride. The unconventional society will never allow such a bond to get kick-started again. Unknowingly, Mini is forced to lose not only her giggling charm yet is the instruction to wind up the friendship through the evil hands of society. This is how a female is dumped into the pit of reputation under sociological regulations.

On the other side, there is again a celebration of female childhood in the same story whose passive presence brings a plethora of pathos to the readers.

Through the attributions of Mini, Kabuliwallah visualizes her little daughter Parbati who is far away in her hometown, Kabul. The little Parbati wins readers' hearts by leaving her impression of an ink-smearred little hand.

Through the framing sense of these parallel little girls (Mini and Parbati), the writer explores the universal values of life. Irrespective of social status, wealth, religion, race, and caste, all the sixth-sensed are humans who are meant to exchange love in every form. Such a heart-melting morality is stated through Mini's father.

According to Tagore, sketching the aspects of life can be quickly done by underlining an incident from domestic life. His art of nurturing philosophy and philogyny through two innocent little kids gapes readers with a swooning sense that remains hard to define.

Being the holder of voice for millions of voiceless women, Tagore's gem voice for Subhashini in his story *Subha* in particular, echoes the bosoms of readers in multiple ways. When her mother considers Subha as a personal shame, the writer decorates her little femininity through his praise-worthy words. None could comprehend the depth of a dumb girl's heart better than this legendary spirit.

Apart from her mother, there are moments when Subha considers herself a curse to her family. This silly girl is entirely unaware that though the world loathes her, there is still a passive

observer who listens to all her speeches through his third vision, and the listener is none but the creator of this gorgeous, pampering Subha.

No doubt, Tagore is the most fabulous gem meant to decorate Subha's crown. In the process of crowning the princess (Subha), he goes to the extent of disqualifying the sense of human speech. Though humans possess speaking abilities, they often need to improve in expressing their thoughts. According to Tagore, the tranquillity of this dumb girl provides pleasure instead of opening ears to the futility of people's blabbering. To the entire world, Subha is often misunderstood as a voiceless puzzle. Yet to the writer, she is a prestigious nymph who rules the underground watery world.

If Subha had been a water nymph, she might have risen slowly from the river, bringing the gem of a snake's crown to the landing place. Then Pratap, leaving his little fishing, might dive into the lower world and see there, on a golden bed in a palace of silver, whom else but dumb Su, Banikantha's child? Yes, our Su, the only daughter of the king of that shining city of jewels!

As a Philomath of womanhood, Tagore rhapsodizes the depth of a dumb girl's heart which is as deep as the sea and as clear as the heaven. His art of comparing

Subha with nature is highly energetic. Her grandeur is compared with the late-night moon, which remains lonely as Subha, and the latter's solicitude gets sophistication through the tide of the sea. By injecting the voice of nature, Tagore medicates her inability and rejuvenates her soul through his solace.

But here, nature fulfilled her want of speech and spoke of her. The murmur of the brook, the voice of the village folk, the boatman's songs, the birds' crying, and the rustle of trees mingled and were one with the trembling of her heart.

Sreeja Konar's research article "Dialogue between Silent Woman and Silent Nature: An Eco feminist Reading of Tagore's *Subha*" parallelizes the intimacy between the voice of nature and Subha. This dumb girl's connection with nature is beautifully expelled through the ideals of Ecofeminism.

Expressions on Subha's face are endlessly compared with different elements of nature, like a dim-setting moon or ever-sparkling thunder. The character has her own diversified strong and demure elements like human expressions and emotions to demonstrate herself as a living being. Subha's wordless and

companionless existence relates her with the clear endless sky and the shadowy, silent noon tide with all the vigor of its calmness.

Like a swine that never realizes the value of a pearl, the purity of a little soul remains disregarded by the barbarous society. Intending to mock such an unfit marriage, Tagore compares the groom with God, to whom a beast (Subha) is decorated to involve a sacrifice. His screech secretes sounds of rage, which shields his support towards women.

Apart from protesting against women's vulnerability, the writer hits a philosophical arrow through the bow of Subha. Beyond every voiceless girl, there always remains a plethora of emotions that ought to be recognized wholeheartedly. The inability to communicate does not mean that a soul should be secluded. Instead of opening ears to hear, Tagore states that it is better to open hearts (just like Subha's cows Sarbbashi and Panguli) through which the piteous souls like Subha could unwrap all the unspoken entities. No matter how the soulless society regards Subha. A peppy philogynist always accompanies her loneliness and comprehends her emotions.

Tagore's interpretation of the psychological conventions of women is never inscrutable. His androgynous analysis of humankind purifies the possibilities by bringing out emotions through which he artistically portrays the

soothing paths of life. Through his short story *The Post Master*, the writer differentiates the necessities of life just by sensing an alarm to annihilate the autocracy in which the entire humankind is wrapped.

As a psychological hermaphrodite, the narrator dives deep into the varied personalities of the unnamed postmaster and the orphan, Ratan. Though both the characters shiver from longingness, Tagore underlines the underlying variation in their search mode. When the postmaster longs for his family, the orphaned girl urges a need of finding a paternal relationship. The search for the postmaster winds up as soon as he resigns from his monotonous job, and here the investigation of the silly girl starts, whose emotions flow all along with the river banks, which can no longer intermingle with the sea.

A little village of Ulapur is enough for the ducky narrator to unwrap the actual affirmations of life. The characterization of Ratan is vividly portrayed whose suffocating life can get smoothened through one who could replace her vanished father. The memories of her ancient father hit her hard, and Tagore again succeeds in giving spirit to her emotions through words.

Ratan, perhaps he would begin, do you remember anything of your mother? That was a fertile subject. Ratan partly reflected and somewhat didn't. Her

father had been fonder of her than her mother; him she recollected more vividly. He used to come home in the evening after work, and one or two evenings stood out more clearly than others, like pictures in her memory. Ratan would sit on the floor near the postmaster's feet as memories crowded in upon her.

Subconsciously Ratan starts visualizing the postmaster as a savior who has arrived to free her from the clutches of loneliness. Such traces of her belief can be sensed when she transfers the position of the postmaster from 'Master' to 'Dada.' Her repetitive interrogation, "Were you calling me, Dada?" expels multiple emotions through which she finds her ultimate opportunities for solace.

At times, to the vision of the postmaster, Ratan replaces the womanhood of the former's family, especially during his sickness. Ratan succeeds by resembling his mother and sister through her soft touch and gentle concern. The tragic hint that the narrator sketches is that she obviously fails to offer herself as a daughter.

You need not be anxious about me going away, Ratan; I shall tell my successor to look after you. These words were kindly meant, no doubt,

but inscrutable are the ways of a woman's heart! 'Difficulty is a woman's heart' can never be applied to Tagore. His curious ways of undergoing a woman's psychology are appealing and heart-melting. The overflowing agony of an orphaned girl at times of getting departed from temporary affection can never escape from the pen of Tagore.

Her affection for the postmaster can neither get replaced nor reciprocated. Fortunately, Ratan's longingness sails in her flood of tears to reach the boat of the postmaster. Her grief-stricken face melts his heart to return, yet he does not, and the negotiating narrator takes this state of dilemma to dictate his doctrine of philosophy.

'Parting,' which has been a mandatory schedule in the timetable of humanity, will never get parted from the parts and parcels of life. It is intrinsic to note that such separation shall never get linked again. Tagore lets the great parting 'death' as his philosophical reflection where no one returns.

The period that ruthlessly spins between birth and demise remains too short to experience life's moralities. Yet this artist's acknowledgment widely exposes the autocracy of humankind. The entire month's salary of the postmaster remains too cheap to bargain the shivering heart of the poor, little girl. When the postmaster tries to replace Ratan's affection with money, the notion of life gets its ultimate destination through kindness.

The last part of the story, *The Post Master*, is brilliantly built and serves dual purposes. The weeping of a lonely girl's heart evokes life's futility, which gets garnished with philosophy.

Alas for our foolish human nature!... False hope is clung to with all one's might and main till a day comes when it has sucked the heart dry, and it forcibly breaks through its bonds and departs. After that comes the misery of awakening and the longing to get back into the maze of the same mistakes.

Being an embodiment of emotions, a human can never abscond from the anticipating circumstances that eventually squeeze out the unexpressed pathos. Such events act as mentors of life where Tagore positions himself as a witty learner.

Conclusion

The intertwining laws of the universe and their impacts on the lives of humans always remain as mentors of morality. In contrast, Tagore's picking up philosophy to tangle it with philogyny is witty evidence to be stunned.

As an admirer of women, Tagore elucidates the enthusiastic essentials needed for a female child by creating 'Mini' in his story *The Kabuliwallah*. His art of characterization preaches the utmost philosophy of life by making readers realize that 'kindness' is the unique key to opening the doors of hearts

irrespective of narrowing social boundaries. Through his appealing aspects, the writer extends his ideas on philogyny by screening the unexposed emotions of a dumb girl in his story *Subha*. Being an evident philosopher, Tagore explains the expectations of a suffering soul, which are to be felt by the vast world, and such compassion can compromise and smoothen the paths of life. In his appealing short story, *The Post Master*, Ratan falls as a seed amidst the paternal land, blooms beautifully as a flower, and proves the philosophy of mortality; her expectations start withering as soon as the postmaster departs. Tagore, a soother of souls, transfers the withered flower as manure to ensure the tree of philosophy, which dictates the bitter nature behind 'departure.'

All these machinations in the select short stories help analyze the cognizance of the ducky writer whose philosophical ideas ignite the spirit of knowledge by intermingling the enlarged aspects of life. Keeping 'philosophy' as his path, Tagore triumphantly reaches his destiny as a 'peppy philogynist.' Besides being an adoring writer, Tagore wins the

dukedom of oeuvre by holding dual dimensions, decorating his crown as a 'philosophical philogynist.'

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