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## Short stories of Tagore: Prism of Human intricacy in Relation

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Rabindranath, one of the most adorable savants of twentieth century is a soaring refinement of Indian literature having a world status of highest recognition. His versatile genius did not leave much space in different genre of writings and his marvellous works have their bright imprints in all these fields but his contribution in crafting short story outshines other form for their superb techniques, precise composition and unique style of narrative, its varieties and wonderful execution. He has pioneered in writing this latest form of literature in this sub continent with modern context.

Writing short story obviously a western phenomena and it began in second part of 18<sup>th</sup> century when European society was seeing an unprecedented transition in its own structure. The industrial revolution in England and its rapid spread in Western Europe brought a dramatic change in the shape of the society. At least two new classes the bourgeois and working class arrived and got their prominence in political and social importance. The economy got a change and new mode of life and life style rolled over in the continent. A new middle class arrived who were by nature fond of knowledge and reading was their favourite leisure. As a result printing industry boomed in Germany, France, Italy, Spain and other major countries of mainland Europe competing with British Isles. There came a flood in publishing journal, magazines, newspapers and their special editions and supplementary .This literary publication could not give much space to the writers to write novels of full- fledged fictions. On the other hand the new middle class and lovers of literature among the working class could not provide much time to read big novels or fiction as life became a stage of hustle bustle. This situation prompted to bring the genesis of short story. The French writer were the path- finder and soon it was followed in other European languages. In India the British rule brought western idea and new educated Indians were eager to see mass education as they noticed the positive changes that the nation of colonial ruler and the other imperial powers of Europe had achieved through mass education. So in Indian language an impetus of publication came that resulted crafting short stories for the hungry readers who were earnest in gathering knowledge mitigating their literary urge. Tagore as a son of an aristocrat and noble family of Calcutta had the fortune to see a conducive atmosphere of culture and literature in the threshold of their mansion and at the earliest age of his life was carried away with passion of creating literature without realizing it in his own way. The healthy environment that he received as a young played very important role to wrest his hand to weave short stories along with other genres of literature.

Tagore was a modern romantic in sense as he started his literary career and looked at things with a passionate view to extract the beauty and sophistication of life. He valued women highly all through his life and it is evidently reflected page after page in his prolific literary endeavour.

## **Creative background and artistic view of the author:**

In one of his conversation with Dilipkumar Roy (a renowned Indian classical music exponent and composer) Tagore admitted

“You must remember that I had at that time (days of adolescence) already taken my first dip into literature of romance and melodrama. So I had figured often enough in imaginary encounters, as a knight-errant or dare devil” (Roy 171)

With the advance of life he soon became matured and perceived the stark reality of life. Probably it stirred him internally to expose the cruelty, covet and basic instinct of human desire; he chose short story to express this sharp and critical view to dissect the society as he felt writing is not only a pleasure but a business of social anatomy. In his famous excerpt Tagore mentioned “*small life small words humble grief and unattended pain and an unending even after ending.*” is the characteristic narrative of modern short story and in this regard he outdid so many masters of this field with his aesthetic outburst in his short stories.

In Tagore philosophical perception, one axiom very rigidly stood

“Many questions will remain unresolved and their answers can remain incomplete. The domain of unfinished accounts would change over time, but not go away and in this he saw not a defeat but a humble- and also beautiful- recognition of our limited understanding of a vast world” (Cahkravarty XIX)

And his experience as a zamindar (land lord) of Silaidaha (at present in Bangladesh) he came very close to the life of the marginal people and observed their helplessness, sorrow and penury that forced them to be victim of the situation, their defeat and struggle all came in his short story and raises some basic questions before us which we don't have any answer at all.

In his ‘Punishment’ short story we see how innocent Chandora a young bride of a peasant family who was full of life even in the midst of poverty and economic uncertainty and having unquestionable love for her husband Sudam betrayed by the latter went to Gallows by the false accusation of killing her elder sister -in-law the wife of Sudam's brother in the court When Sudam requested her to take the responsibility of killing his Bhavi though it was committed by her own husband in an accidental heated moment. Sudam did not do it willingly and he was not a shrewd at all. But he was convinced by a sly law year to arrange so to save his brother from hanging. He assured that Chandora would suffer a minor punishment for it that ultimately did not happened. Seeing the gravest situation for his wife Sudam rushed to the prison to persuade his wife to confess the truth before the Magistrate who could save her from such dire consequence, but being mortified with such loveless act from husband Chandora denied to face her and denied the prison guard to meet her husband. So Tagore shows Not Chandora but Sudam got the punishment of life for being trapped with falsehood innocently.

As it is mentioned earlier that Tagore always maintained high esteem for the women in our society and even in his short story when he would bring any female character he would sketch her with dignity and integrity that would remain absent in their male counterpart. He clearly expressed her grace and charm and sweetness—that is her *hladini* qualities again are necessary to our very existence, and this not a mere poetising but an incontestable experiences of our everyday life. Thus we see even in bleak situation of life the female characters stand with genuineness and sanctity. In His ‘Refuge’ we see how a Hindu widow who was very strict to keep the sacredness of her family temple and does not relent at the mischief of her nephew do wrong with the temple at the end allow a pig to save its life hiding in the flowery herbs of the temple fleeing from the quarters of the latrine cleaners who were about to lynch it for its flesh. This way the author shows the victory of humanity over mere religious belief and exhibits the motherly softness of the women before a helpless animal.

Tagore took the sharpness of western pattern of composing short story but as he was a sheer humanist who never allowed death’s victory in our life would introduce a soft tone in his deliverance that makes his story very humane. Now the world seriously began to appreciate this attitude which is a strong vehicle against bone shivering cruelty and inhuman atrocities that we are undergoing in recent time across the globe.

He knew how to give master stroke to startle the readers with unpredictable crisis or climax and how sharply he could transfer the course of narration in a different direction that would penetrate in a shivering way in our heart but as he was never a pessimistic, even in the tragic end (mostly they are except the satire ones) there we could see a ray of hope, a possibility of a new start of life which is rare in the literature of the world. Tagore emphasized on close human relation and he always aspires a freedom from the mundane attitude of life. His protagonists in their very flesh and blood gesture achieve an eternal sagacity to cross the tepidity and stagnates in which life hurls them with its merciless social condition.

### **Composition and texture:**

except few ones Tagore short stories are astonishingly precise one in their size and bold in their execution to tell us an anecdote where psychological crisis of the characters is more concentrated than their physical or other problems. So an educated reader at the very beginning of the narration savours an aesthetic pleasure and sense of uncertainty simultaneously in which direction the story will lead him to the end. His master craft of making and highly personal colloquial keeps the full attention of the reading and one can’t miss even a small paragraph to extract the beauty of the outstanding writing. One can finish a story in one breath due to their economic expounding. Though the tale start with a plain domain suddenly jumps or leaps or sometimes plunge into utter crisis –what a tremendous shock we receive. His is a style of his own completely unparallel and any conscious reader can easily distinguish his narrative from the rest without much difficulty. We can taste the pungency and like a regular wine consumer we embrace its kick and for it we have appreciate his peerless exposition and style that bears his signature in every line. Some where his words come down so easily like cascade , in places it as heavily tall a high mountain and in very next moment it flies like a soaring bird and take us to the world where the narration promise to carry up.

The Short story author Rabindranath is a different person from his other avatars as a creator. Here we see a strong language, often grave and serious to tell the impending fate of the tale and the readers turn very conscious about the coming situation in which the author will throw him overwhelmingly .This uniqueness

is the solo Tagorian style that has prompted many Indian film director to use his story to make marvellous film of international accolades.

Tagore was undoubtedly an unsurpassing satire maker. Let us examine his jeering laughter with pungent language to describe irrational outlook of the people. In his 'We Crown Thee king' he writes

“Purnendu Sekhar the father of Nabendu, was a man well known amongst the English officials of the Government. In the voyage of life he had arrived at the desert shore of Rai Bahadurship by diligently plying his oars and salaams.” (Tagore - We Crown Thee king)

How magnificent he is to show the greedy Indians who did not hesitate to betray with own country for their own sake and how shameless were they to attain the blessing of the foreign rulers for their personal ambition. On the other hand he takes on the dead habits rituals in which our countrymen and society submerged in name of tradition and did not hesitate to use his pen in vocal to drive away this decadent practice from social life.

“No one in the kingdom of cards had any occasion to think: no one had any need to come to any decision: no one was ever required to debate any new subject. The citizens all moved along in a listless groove without speech.”(Tagore - The kingdom of cards)

In this allegorical story he expose the onerous platitude that prevailed in+ the society and when some come from the outer world like the prince of the story and violently shake the society it gets back its greenness from obscure paleness and a new liveliness comes that free the people from unbearable monotony.

### **Social message along with humanity:**

Tagore was a precious son of Indian renaissance and human emancipation was highly important to him. He took his writings a vehicle to reach this goal. As usual his short stories also bear the witness of his great attitude. Like his exquisite songs his short stories have irresistible attraction to the honest readers of literature and they become enriched aesthetically and morally. None of his tale ends with negativity though parting and tragic ending is inseparable part of his writings. We closely watch how the intimated ones feel for each other and aspire only a happy conjugation or reunion in against the force and condition that thwart their earnest attempt to remain together. Tagore like the tragedians of ancient Greece firmly believe the internal fate of our life that ultimately triumph. So his tale do not bring mere ray of hope instead they prepare us to admit the intricacy of our life. Like some of his peers he did not intend to console us with unreasonable optimism and promise of ancient pastoral happiness. That's why his short stories turn so vibrant and contemporary and play as a trove for progressive film making even today. In their innermost formation we feel a triumph of human existence and its eternal validity. Tagore did not believe that human existence is a mere chance of the cosmic rule he felt our life at the end sings the carol of the omnipotent who wishes a harmony for all. Due to our incomprehensive attitude to realize this grandness we suffer as a common or as a mighty one (falsely).

## **Some of his famous short stories:**

**The Cabuliwallah (The Fruitseller from Cabul):** In this marvelous story he shows the universality of fatherhood that does not obey any social barrier. Rahamat the stout Afghan came to Calcutta with dry foods brought the tar imprints of the palm of his little daughter Amina and when he met the little girl of the narrator his innate fatherhood swelled and he became a regular companion of mine the constant prattler. He would share with her resin, almond, pista and nuts finding his faraway daughter in her. No one understood it even the narrator as the fruitseller concealed this pain from everyone. In a fury he accidentally killed a man who had owed some money from him and later denied to pay it back. After a long time he arrived at the threshold of Mini. The unfortunate man did not realize that time had elapsed and the little Mini was now a matured one and coincidentally it was her marriage ceremony. Rahamat was treated an unguested fellow by Mini's mother who apprehended something ominous for her daughter as in such auspicious occasion a person like him who is a returner from jail.

Mini on the other hand could not recognize her old companion as the memory of those pleasing company went to oblivion and as a young Indian girl she was laden with bashfulness. The father came forward and offered some money to Rahamat so that he could safely return home with it curtailing the expense of the marriage. Rahamat held his hands tightly and burst into tears telling him that his Amina had also grown up like Mini and would she recognize her father? This way Tagore tell us a transnational story full of compassion and empathy.

**Hungry Stone:** This eerie making story tells us the passion of medieval love and cruelty of the high hand Nizam who became jealous to see his Persian court singers whom he aspired for his carnal desire fell in love with one of her percussionists. Being blind in anger to see the platonic love between to performer of his court he buried them living and their un-satisfied soul still roamed the ruined palace of Nizam after long years of their killing that frightened the local people though the innocent couple had not slightest desire to harm anyone. The author wants to tell that under the veil of dazzling story of the kings and rulers so many pathetic tales are hidden before the public domain.

**Lost Home (Nastanir):** The story depicts the complicacy of human mind and as it bi-effect ingenuity of human soul. Charu the young charming wife of the middle aged editor did not get much attraction to her husband though she did not hesitate to do her duty towards him. The young cousin of the editor who would live in the same house was a young poet and accustomed with the new idea of life. He could accomplish good poems that stirred Charu to attain his company. Charu's husband Bhupati was busy in his work and as a renowned fellow of the society could not spend much time for home and his wife. The young heart of Charu desperately wanted a easy going companion who could be treated as a playmate who would spend time for her. It forced her to slowly forget her husband whom she failed to grow a true relation of husband and wife. On the other hand Amal having a free hand could afford time for his sister in law and ultimately Charu found that in her heart Amal had got a permanent place which she could not ignore. Bhupati did not notice this intricate situation and when he came back to his young wife keeping away his usual busy attitude he found that no love was left for her from Charu. He understood Home does not grow with four wall and love is very important in our life and our ignorance can bring catastrophe in our life. Realising it he left home telling a lie that he was going to attend a seminar in a distant town.

Tagore adopted western progressiveness but he was deeply rooted in Indian high philosophy that has brought a welcoming composure in his body of writing and his short stories are excellent one for their own beauty and appeal to his readers. He reached the core of human heart and fished out the aesthetic corals and pearls of human nature. The perspective of his short story still amaze us. His short story does not bring the grandeur of Rose but fills our nostril with the mild fragrance of jasmine and these as beautiful as daisies.

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