CHAPTER II

TAGORE

"A FEMINIST-IN-SYMPATHY" OF THE

INDIAN THEATRE

The Indian theatre described in the previous chapter was the legacy of a young Bengali boy who grew up in a family devoted to culture, poetry and drama. This boy was Rabindranath Tagore later to become the most outstanding name in Bengali literature and one of the greatest luminaries on the Indian literary firmament. The only Indian poet to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, he gained for modern India a place on the world’s literary scene. Within the country his prestige was enormous and his stature colossal. In his foreword to Sukumar Sen’s History of Bengali Literature, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote,

"For most of us from outside Bengal, the name of Rabindranath Tagore is almost synonymous with the high achievement of Bengali literature. People of my generation grew up under the influence of his tremendous personality and were consciously or unconsciously moulded by it. Here was a man like an ancient Rishi of India, deeply versed in our old wisdom and at the same time, dealing with present problems and looking at the future. He wrote in Bengali, but the scope of his mind could not be confined to any part of India. It was essentially Indian and, at the same time, embraced all
humanity. He was national and international, and meeting him, or reading what he wrote, one had the feeling, which comes but rarely, of approaching a high mountain peak of human experience and wisdom".¹

It is certainly challenging and rewarding to examine the way such a great Indian writer perceived the nature and role of women in society and how he projected this perception into his works, especially his plays since the theatre is our chosen area of study.

Tagore had an early initiation into the theatre, for his family was celebrated for its enormous interest in drama and staged plays regularly. Calcutta of the nineteenth century as we have seen was the centre of a theatrical renaissance, and the Tagore family made a great contribution towards this. They were great and powerful patrons of the private play-houses that had started mushrooming all over the region. Elite Bengali families had play-houses in their courtyards and one such play house was established in Jorasanko, the ancestral home of the Tagores. Jyotindranath Tagore, an elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore was considered to be the most accomplished man of his day. He could play the violin and the piano, compose music, paint and write and present remarkable performance on the amateur and private stage. It was this brother who encouraged and directed young Tagore’s literary and artistic talents and drew him to the theatre as well. Tagore certainly imbibed the theatrical air, watching his brother’s plays as well as other contemporary dramas presented in Jorasanko theatre. With such a unique advantage it was only natural that Tagore
began writing plays at a very young age. His first play was written when he was eighteen. At the age of nineteen he composed his first musical drama, *Valmiki-Pratibha*. This inordinate interest in the theatre turned Tagore indifferent to formal education and lured him back to Calcutta from England where he had been sent for higher education. On his return he completed and staged his musical dramas *Valmiki-Pratibha* and *Kal-Mrigaya* successfully. And in 1884 with the publishing of *Prakritir-Parishod*, a tragedy later known as *Sanyasi*, Tagore's career as a playwright was launched. It turned out to be a brilliant and prolific career during which he produced more than sixty plays. These were plays that earned for Bengali drama the prime position in modern Indian theatre.

Tagore's greatness as a playwright does not rest on the number and variety of his plays alone. He is undeniably great because of the themes around which his plays are built up. His plays are decidedly plays of ideas rather than of action. And these ideas when properly analysed reveal Tagore to be a revolutionary in the theatre. This aspect of his plays link him with such masters of Western drama as Ibsen and Shaw who used the stage to question social values and norms and to expose social evils. This mystic poet, playwright, novelist, educationist and idealist was a sharp critic of society and a rebel in the true sense of the word. He was of the avant-garde and we cannot help marvelling at the breadth of his vision and the daring of his social criticism. And since this vision and this social criticism embraced also the question of woman and her place in society, we must pause to take stock of Tagore's time and its ethos, its *zeitgeist* as it
were. This is necessary to determine how far credit for his extraordinary forward looking views is to be divided between the temper of the time, the liberality of his upbringing and the natural largeness of his own soul.

Tagore lived and wrote at a time when great social and political changes were taking place in the world. Calcutta, always aesthetically and intellectually a trail-blazer among Indian cities gave the lead to a cultural renaissance and social reform. Organisations like the Brahmo Samaj came into being and Bengal saw the emergence of great leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. Society with age-old customs and hoary traditions came under severe scrutiny. The most glaring evil that marked Indian society centred on its treatment of women. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Bengal’s own illustrious sons, many steps were taken to promote the well-being of women. Education of women was encouraged. The dowry system and the oppression of widows were condemned. The inhuman practice of Sati was made illegal. Tagore endorsed the general enthusiasm for removing the disabilities of women, but he went further. The above-mentioned reforms regarding women did not spring from a recognition of gender justice or of women's right to be equally empowered members of society as men. Rather they were only the removal of glaring harassment and oppression. Tagore, however believed in the innate strength of women, their spiritual and emotional resources which can be of immense potential in creating a healthy and happy community. His attitude to them was not one of patronising courtesy, but one of respectful recognition of their creative, and regenerative power. Tagore saw men and women alike as persons, individuals of worth. It is this manifold
splendour of women as half of humanity that he wanted to celebrate. In this respect he was far ahead of other social reformers of Bengal and he anticipated, as we shall see, many of the cherished tenets of modern feminism. He stood not for the mere uplift of women, but for recognition of their total humanity, their worth, their uncompromising right to be partners of men in all human enterprises.

When we examine this aspect of Rabindranath Tagore, we find that the factors contributing to this remarkable outlook are many. First of all there was the unorthodox atmosphere that he imbibed at home, especially from the liberal views of his father. It was an atmosphere that encouraged questioning of tradition, and a scrutiny of religious teachings long held sacred by the family. Tagore learned very early to ask questions and weigh the worth of "given" values. A revolutionary by nature, he never accepted any doctrine or teachings passively and unquestioningly. In one of the autobiographical chapters from his collection, "Lectures and Addresses" Tagore throws light on this individuality and independence of his judgement:

I was born in a family who were pioneers in the revival in our country of a great religion based upon the utterance of the Indian sages in the Upanishad. But owing to my idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for me to accept any religious teaching on the only ground that people in my surroundings believed it to be true. I could not persuade myself to imagine that I had a religion simply because everybody whom I might trust believed in its value.²
This independence of mind made him free from any kind of prejudices and narrow-mindedness. His was really an open and receptive mind and he had a sensitive, poetic temperament that made him receptive to any manifestation of truth and beauty and justice. But he felt that Brahmanical Hinduism had declined into a blood-thirsty religion demanding sacrificial blood and nurtured on empty rituals. Tagore yearned for spirituality of a different type. He wanted a religion that would respect the worth of the individual and the essential equality of human beings. In the Gita he found the voice of a great love that is the basis of all religion. In the movement of Vaishnavism Tagore found nourishment for this feeling of love that is fundamental to religious awe and ecstasy. In his lecture entitled "Personality" Tagore states:

All spiritual teachers have proclaimed the infinite worth of the individual. It is the rampant materialism of the present age which ruthlessly sacrifices individuals to the blood-thirsty idols of organizations. When religion was materialistic, when men worshipped their Gods, for fear of their malevolence, or for greed of wealth and power, then the ceremonies of worship were cruel and sacrifices were claimed without number. With the growth of man's spiritual life, our worship has become the worship of love.\(^3\)

This conviction, we will see later, was the basis for Tagore's play Sacrifice or Visarjan as it is titled in Bengal. This idealistic doctrine shaped his attitude towards human beings. His humanism can also be traced to the teachings of the Upanishads at the centre of which lies the affirmation that
the infinite can be attained through the finite. But more than all this, what deeply entrenched Tagore's faith in the worth of human beings irrespective of caste and gender was Buddhism. The teachings of Gautama Buddha were based on the equality of human beings. Buddhism does not recognize the caste hierarchy that is at the root of Hindu society. The idealistic and sensitive nature of Tagore responded eagerly to the message of the Buddha and he was drawn to Buddhist legends as a source of inspiration for his works. Several of his plays are centred round such legends. In Tagore's whole-hearted involvement in the Brahma Samaj we see an attempt at translating into reality the truth of Buddhist teachings. The inhumanity underlying the caste system revolted Tagore's sensibility. His philosophy of humanism, of the essential human worth was antithetical to Brahmanical Hinduism's way of declaring a large section of humanity as "untouchables". "A religion that insults is a false religion"; he has made his Chandalika declare unequivocally.

Tagore saw the denigration of women as part of the oppression that supported and nurtured Indian religio-social structure. To him it became possible to see caste and gender as two concurrent and related evils that had to be swept aside if Indian culture was to be cured and made healthy. In many of his works, fiction as well as plays, the focal point is a human being who is doubly victimized - a low-caste woman.

Tagore was aware of the paradox at the heart of Indian civilization - namely a recognition, even worship of the feminine principle at the centre of creation, and at the same time, the devaluation of women in all practical sphere. He has admitted that "In our country, woman is accepted as the
symbol of strength in every man". However, his criticism of civilization and established modern society was that the feminine principle has been ignored. In his essay called Woman he says:

At the present stage of history, civilization is almost exclusively masculine, a civilization of power, in which woman has been thrust aside to the shade. Therefore it has lost its balance and it is moving by hopping from war to war. Its motive forces are the forces of destruction, and its ceremonials are carried through by an appalling number of human sacrifices. This one-sided civilization is crashing along a series of catastrophes at a tremendous speed because of its one-sidedness. And at last the time has arrived when woman must step in and impart her life rhythm to his reckless movement of power.6

This reverence for the feminine principle was fundamental to Tagore's holistic view of the human person. Again and again we find his characters seeking for wholeness, for a realisation of total humanity, which is impossible in a system that is distorted by caste or by patriarchy. William Cenkner in his essay "The Feminine in the works of Rabindranath Tagore" writes:

An organic and holistic conception of human development provides the context in which Tagore articulates the feminine principle. Throughout Tagore's creative work, the feminine images a principle of vitality and integration which seeks wholeness but, in fact, achieves it in an incomplete manner.7
Just as Bernard Shaw's strong women protagonists of drama are anticipated in the powerful women of his fiction, Tagore's women characters in both fiction and drama are consistently drawn with striking qualities. It is useful to turn once again to W. Cenker and his observations of women in Tagore's fiction. They are "neither primarily romantic figures, mothers, divine mother, nor even objects of desire..." This statement is valid of the women in the plays as well. Tagore did not present either in fiction or on the stage stereotypes of women as goddess or sex object. The dichotomy so familiar in literature between the devi and the Vampire, the Madonna and the femmefatale did not present itself in Tagore's works. His women protagonists whether queens, courtesans, untouchables or downtrodden are intensely real and endowed with tremendous inner resources and spiritual vitality. This will be made abundantly clear by an analysis of the selected plays.

The plays chosen for a close reading in the following pages are Chandalika, Natir Puja, Malini, Sacrifice (Visarjan), The King and Queen and Chitra. All these plays are heroine dominated. Three of them, in fact, are named after the heroines, a rare phenomenon in drama where male protagonists invariably lend their names as titles. Webster's plays and Ibsen's Hedda Gabbler are some of the exceptions rather than the general rule. In addition to naming the plays after women protagonists and weaving the plot around them, Tagore did something unheard of in Indian theatre till then. He introduced women on the stage. This together with the prominence of their roles made the female presence on the stage powerful indeed. The male hegemony in the field of drama was shaken by this daring
intervention of Tagore. The momentous significances of this step has been admitted by theatre critics. Ananda Lal's comment about Tagore's *Natir Puja* and *Chandalika* two of the plays that will be discussed in detail is pertinent in this context:

The first edition of the play (*Natir Puja*) was also historically important in that it contained no male characters a revolutionary idea in the Indian Theatre of its time, where women could not even perform without their morals coming into question.\(^9\)

Again the same critic goes on:

*Natir Puja* (1925) gave the women full scope by eschewing male roles all together, while *Chandalika* (1933) brought in a man only in the final scene. Meanwhile, by casting women along side men, Tagore, had persistently chipped away at the social convention that decent, respectable women did not participate in theatrical activities.\(^10\)

In this respect Tagore was a pioneer, a trail-blazer, and we could say, echoing Virginia Woolf's tribute to Aphra Behn that all actresses on the stage as well as in the cinema should drop flowers on the tomb of Rabindra Nath Tagore. Women's right to enter the stage and follow a career of acting has been won for them, and this was a major landmark in Indian women's journey towards some degree of emancipation and autonomy.
Three of the plays chosen for our scrutiny have as their sources Buddhist legends, or traditions centred on the Buddha. These are *Chandalika*, *Natir Puja* and *Malini*. Though the imprint of Buddha and his teachings lies powerfully on all the three, the women protagonists of these plays are very different from one another and the message conveyed by each is distinct and separate. What is striking about each play is the way Tagore transforms the original story, so that his play and the original source are in spirit utterly different, even while the characters and the situation remain the same. This is because Tagore has thrown overboard the patriarchal assumptions that lie heavily on the original versions. The women of the sources, marginalized, despised and labelled, become in Tagore’s hands remarkable individuals of great intrinsic worth and capable of rising to great spiritual heights.

The inspiration for *Natir Puja* came from a Buddhist legend related in Rajendralal Mitra’s *The Sanskrit- Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, published by the Asiatic society of Bengal in 1882. The legend may be recalled briefly thus: Raja Bimbisara, a contemporary of Buddha and the founder of the ancient empire of Magadha came under the divine presence of Lord Buddha. He built a big stupa over the Lord’s nail and hair and performed religious rites there regularly. Learning that his son Ajathasatru was ambitious to be king, Bimbisara renounced his throne and embraced the life of an ascetic. Ajathasatru, however, hated Buddhism. Goaded on by his villainous cousin he embarked on a policy of persecuting its followers. A veritable reign of terror was let loose and worship at the stupa was
forbidden on pain of death. However, Srimati, a female slave defied this royal decree. Knowing fully well what the consequences would be, she washed the steps of the stupa and lighted a row of lamps around it. Ajatasatru, ordered her execution.

On this meagre plot Tagore's imagination bestows flesh and blood. Characters are developed, conflict made to grow and develop into a climax, the proper setting is created for the enactment of the tragedy and the dialogue is forceful yet poetic. Tagore's protagonist, Srimati, is not a slave girl, but a court dancer. She is courageous and dignified. Right from the beginning when she boldly defies the king's decree, right to her martyrdom, Srimati, captures our imagination and compels our admiration. On "Vasanta Poornima" day, which is the birthday of Lord Buddha, Srimati is chosen by the 'Sangha' to offer worship at the shrine. Ratnavalli, the royal Princess is incensed that the honour of that choice goes to a mere courtesan, overlooking the royal ladies. She wants to humiliate and punish Srimati and so she gets Srimati to dance at the stupa contravening the king's orders. Srimati, who has already been told by Upali, a disciple of Buddha that she has been chosen for a special mission accepts what she knows to be the role of a martyr. Remembering Upali's admonition to her, to "offer the best she has" she dances with fervour, putting all her soul into the dance. The dance turns into one of deep religious ecstasy and the dancer and the dance become the offering. In the height of devotion Srimati begins to recite the final verses of the formal Buddhist worship even as her head is struck off by one of the royal guards.
If Princess Ratnavalli in Tagore’s play felt indignant that a courtesan was chosen for a great religious honour, Tagore’s suggestion that a "low" woman was a martyr must have shocked the sensibilities of the Indian Establishment. In spite of the fact that courtesans, in ancient India, were highly accomplished and enjoyed great popularity and considerable power, they were still looked upon as sex objects. There was a stigma attached to their calling and certainly the ladies of the palace and other "well-born" women held them in contempt. That Tagore should choose such a character to be the martyr whose blood would enrich the land spiritually was a blow in the teeth of Hindu orthodoxy. Indeed the effect of Srimati’s martyrdom was to open the flood gates of the kingdom to a wave of Buddhism. The spirit of one woman triumphs over the forces of envy and of royal tyranny. The single-minded and pure devotion of the courtesan elevates her, and raises the spiritual level of the kingdom. The play encodes the message that religious ecstasy or a martyr’s death is not the monopoly of the elite classes or of the male gender. Tagore could not have expressed his great respect for women’s spirituality better than by depicting this worship of Srimati, a worship in which the totality of her being is offered to the Buddha. It is interesting to note that Tagore clothes his message in a highly effective art form, the dance. In the original source Srimati’s gesture of worship is to light the lamps. But Tagore’s Srimati offers herself through the dance. In many cultures of the East and of the West the dance is understood to be the medium of transition from the temporal and physical to the spiritual and eternal. W.B. Yeats who had great admiration for Tagore and shared with him a deeply mystical strain has used the dance in this way in poems like
"Byzantium". The dance, like the purifying fire, cleanses away the dross and leaves the spirit clean and free. That Tagore meant this dance to be the crescendo of his play, its very core and significance is clear from the title Natir-Puja, meaning dance-worship.

It is important to realize that the role of the martyr is not thrust upon a reluctant person. True there is the message from the Buddha that she is chosen. But it does not deprive Srimati of the freedom to decline the role and the responsibility. Tagore definitely projects Srimati as exercising her volition. In full knowledge of the danger of defying the king’s orders, she does precisely that. Her death is the result of her choice, the natural outcome of her deliberately accepted course of action. For, if an unwilling human being is killed in the name of religion, that death does not deserve the name of martyrdom. The essence of martyrdom is the volition, at least willingness of the martyr. It is through this willingness or deliberate submission that the martyr triumphs and the land is renewed through his or her blood. So Srimati stands triumphant, spiritually victorious, like Joan of Arc and many other women who have in different places and times given their lives for their convictions. Like Antigone, heroine of Sophocles’s play of that name Srimati exemplifies the majesty of the human spirit which refuses to be cowed down by the tyranny of authority and power.

A very popular Buddhist legend is the basis for Tagore’s Chandalika. Ananda, a disciple of Buddha during his wanderings as a Bhikshu happened to pass a well from which an untouchable girl, a Chandalika was drawing water. Ananda asked her for some water. The untouchable girl fell in love
with the Buddhist monk. In order to get him she made her mother work a spell on the holy man. The powerful spell made Ananda forget his vow of chastity and tormented by lust he went back to the chandal girl. However, in his anguish Ananda prayed to the Buddha who saved him from humiliation and sin. Buddha’s grace redeems his discipline and Ananda is once again secure on his spiritual path. This legend was in circulation, illustrating the power of the Buddha to help and redeem his faithful followers. To convey the extent of the Buddha’s grace and spiritual power, the danger in which Ananda stood had to be projected very well. This danger was the lust of a low-born woman, a seductress the symbol of depravity. The legend posits what myths of many cultures underscore - namely the assumption that woman is the seducer, the cause of man’s fall. Eve and Helen appear in many a myth in different names. The equation of woman’s body with sin and depravity is protean in shape, and has given rise to the dichotomy of spirit versus flesh.

But Tagore does not subscribe to this view of man woman relationship. From the beginning of this beautiful one - act play Tagore stresses the fact that Prakriti’s love for Ananda is not lust, but a far nobler feeling. Her love for him was inspired by his respect for her humanity. He was the first to treat her like a human being, to give her a sense of her worth. Tagore makes us see in retrospect through the words of Prakriti to her mother this extraordinary encounter between the Buddhist monk and the chandal girl. To her confession of her caste Ananda had replied, "If the black clouds of Sravana are dubbed Chandal, what of it? It doesn't change their nature, or destroy the virtue of their water. Don’t humiliate yourself...
Self humiliation is a sin, worse than self-murder". Centuries of humiliation and ill-treatment have branded on the psyche of the "untouchables", even the Dalits of today, the sense of their own inferiority. Prakriti had interiorized a sense of such abject worthlessness that she even thought of herself as "a flower sprung from a poison plant". Her wonder was that Ananda taught her that she too could serve. The simple words he uttered "Give me water" had given her a glimpse into such a tremendous truth that she was completely transformed. "I may truly call it my new birth!" She tells her mother. And to this suggestion of a new birth Tagore brings in the idea of water, essential symbol of regeneration. Prakriti, the low-caste girl can thrill to the significance of this new birth; "Only once did he cup his hands, to take the water from mine. Such little water, yet the water grew to a fathomless, boundless sea. In it flowed all the seven seas in one, and my caste was drowned, and my birth washed clean". So amazing is the effect of this new birth that Prakriti's mother is struck by the transformation of her daughter. "Why, even the way you speak is changed".

Prakriti's yearning for Ananda, then, is a natural response of her newly awakened soul, to the one who redeemed her. It is not lust, and Tagore deploys his poetic symbolism to make this very clear. "I want to take this life of mine and lay it like a basket of flowers at his feet. It will not defile them." This last statement of hers is truly significant, for here is the girl affirming her realisation that she is not inferior, or untouchable. For Ananda had given her self respect, taught her to value herself. She is, in
other words, his equal. It is remarkable that Tagore gives to this Chandal girl sentiments which Charlotte Bronte was to put into the mouth of her heroine Jane Eyre who proudly asserts to Rochester "Before God you and I are equal". It is an affirmation that we are to hear more than once from Tagore's female protagonists. His play Chitra, as we shall see, is centred on this idea of equality and partnership between man and woman.

Tagore's Chandalika is different from her counterpart in the Buddhist legend in yet another way. The legend tells of a lustful girl waiting for the monk to be brought to her by the spell of her mother. And it is the divine power of Buddha that intervenes and saves his disciples from the evil awaiting him. Tagore shifts the credit of Ananda's salvation from Buddha to Prakriti, the Chandal girl. This is a tremendous break away from the original story and speaks eloquently of Tagore's deep sense of respect for women and the down-trodden, low caste people. He leaves no doubt at all in our minds that it is Prakriti by her volition who saves Ananda. Her drastic intervention at the high point of the spell is revealing. She understands fully that her mother's life is at risk and yet save she must the man who has saved her soul from degradation. "Mother, stop!" she cries, "Undo the spell now - at once - undo it". For Ananda whose form as she described to her mother earlier was 'radiant as with the light of dawn' is now burdened with guilt and shame. And this would not have mattered to her, if she was the evil seductress. But Prakriti's love being akin to spiritual worship will not debase the object of her love. "What a sight to see. Where is the light and radiance, the shining purity, the heavenly glow? How
worn, how faded, has he come to my door". It does not take her long to decide what to do. Quickly she resolves that Ananda should not proceed any further. She does not even consult her mother now. She chooses to stop the spell. "Away with all this away with it!"; she cries as Tagore tells us in the stage direction "she kicks the paraphernalia of magic to pieces". And she chants "Victory, Victory, Victory to him".

Tagore's Prakriti, then escapes stereotyping on both counts. She is not the sinful seductress that woman is supposed to be, and she is not the embodiment of depravity that a low-born person was perceived to be. She emerges as a powerful, dignified individual who refuses to accept the traditional role prescribed to her gender and caste in a patriarchal society. Her total refusal to accept the boundaries set by casteism makes her an extraordinary phenomenon in Indian literature. Her mother accepts and bows before such boundaries. She tells Prakriti "you are unclean, beware of tainting the outside world with your unclean presence. See that you keep to your own place, narrow as it is. To stray anywhere beyond its limits is to trespass". But Tagore who always pleaded for the removal of boundaries has given to his heroine infinite courage, so that she can exclaim "Let everyone marvel at my daring!" Tagore's respect for this character is evident from his naming her Prakriti, Nature with its infinite bounty and beauty and splendour. By showing her as spiritually reborn, Tagore explodes the notion that a spiritual re-birth is the monopoly of the male gender or of the elite class, the caste Hindu.
Tagore's presentation of this "untouchable" girl owes much to his knowledge of and association with the tribal folks of Bengal. Mulk Raj Anand in his inaugural address titled "Rabindranath Tagore in Retrospect", delivered at the seminar commemorating the 125th birth anniversary of the poet pointed out that Tagore "enjoyed the company of Bauls and Santhalis no less than that of the more privileged. Tagore owed a debt for his free thoughts and unconventional religious beliefs to these itinerant singers who followed no formalities and were untouchables wandering about from village to village, singing and dancing and taking delight in the ever-changing play of life."  

Mulk Raj Anand takes care to point out that Tagore's interest in these underprivileged sections of India was not mere lip-service. He translated the sympathy and compassion into action. "Like the feudal Prince Gauthama of the sixth century before Christ, he was aware of the pain of life. He had always been a searcher after truth. And he had sympathy for the poor folk, innocent picture of oppression of the Sarkar, of the rich landlords, and of the priests. So like Leo Tolstoy on his estate in Yasnaya Polyana, Rabindranath also liberalized the management of his lands and took deep interest in peasants' welfare."  

It is this aspect of his life and personality that makes Tagore a source of inspiration to all those who fight against the bonds of orthodox faiths and thwarting and debilitating traditions.
In *Chandalika* Tagore made his female protagonist declare, "A religion that insults is a false religion". The play *Sacrifice* is a far greater attack on false religions that exploit the gullible and oppress the poor and marginalized. No greater attack on institutionalized priestly religions has appeared on the Indian stage and no greater exposure of religious hypocrisy can be found anywhere in Indian literature. Tagore who had drunk deep at the spiritual springs of Buddhism found many things in Hinduism distasteful. The tenets of equality and universal love preached by Buddha had shaken the casteism and heinous cults of human sacrifice and many an edifice of superstition had crumbled under the impact of this new religion of love and *ahimsa*. The deeply humanistic teachings of Buddhism were a force behind the several measures taken to lift up the underprivileged and oppressed sects like women and the untouchables. So the need for cleansing organized religion of oppressive and evil practices was a theme that Tagore often reiterated in his speeches and incorporated in his writings. In a conversation with Mulk Raj Anand Tagore said,

Religions which are meant to liberate our souls have become prison houses. Maths and Mosques which once proclaimed love, have become centres of strife and hatred. The upper castes say to everyone below them, Touch me not... truths which were meant to raise men above animals had become perverse dogmas causing blindness of reason deadness of moral sensibility.27
Sacrifice is a severe criticism of 'perverse dogmas' that not only cause blindness of reason, but acute suffering to the poor and powerless. It is a great testimony to Tagore's deep sympathy for the down-trodden and reverence for women that a beggar maid Aparna is the medium for the playwright's critique of organized and exploitative religion. Sacrifice is the English translation of Tagore's original Bengali verse play, Visarjan (1890).

At the turn of the century, Indian society, especially Bengali society, was seething with a socio-political revolutionary fervour. The spread of English education together with other forms of reform mentioned earlier created a questioning attitude. This questioning attitude was directed also at the religious tradition of worshipping Kali or Shakti. In Bengal's religious milieu Kali worship was very popular. But, by the turn of the century it had begun to decline and lose its original fervour and had turned into a sort of materialistic and dehumanizing cult. Tagore exposes the excesses of this cult. The play's plot is full of conflicts. These conflicts, are complex, between brothers, between the king and the Queen, between the temporal and the spiritual authorities. The predominance of these conflicts and the tragic denouement that they lead to show that this brand of religious practice is divisive and that it causes misery to its followers.

The play's impact on Indian conservative society was predictable. It was successfully staged at Shantiniketan, but Tagore was the target of ferocious verbal attacks from hard-core religious fanatics, because of his unsparing and open criticism of the prevailing inhuman practices of the Kali cult. But to a less prejudiced audience the play's sterling qualities were
apparent. When the Indian Art and Dramatic Society staged the play in 1920 at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, it gathered positive critical reactions. The Daily Telegraph described it as "all true, human, and moving containing dignity and...a wealth of imagery."  

For us the play is of immense interest and significance for the remarkable study it offers of a victimized woman and an autonomous and liberating girl. The victim really is Queen Gunavathi, an orthodox, superstitious housewife whose joys and expectations of life are all prescribed by traditional society. Having interiorized the creed fed to Indian women, that barrenness is a curse, Gunavathy longs for a child. She prays to Goddess Kali and seeks blessings from Ragupati the high priest of Kali. Ragupati is a ruthless politician in the garb of a Brahmin. He takes advantage of his privileged caste and gains power and material benefits. He exploits all gullible devotees and easily manipulates the weakness of the Queen. The Queen in her neurotic obsession for a child is only too happy to fulfil every wish of the priest. As his influence on her grows she turns more and more into a self-centred and irrational woman. Eventually Ragupati even turns her against her humane and good husband, King Govinda. The crisis in the play develops when a pet lamb of the beggar-maid Aparna is taken from her and slaughtered to please Kali. Aparna’s lamb is not the solitary offering, but it is one more number to make up the required three hundred kids, required to gain an answer for Queen Gunavathy’s prayers. While the Queen and many others are blind, Aparna can see the cruelty that marks this religion preached by Ragupati. Her appeal and her bold
reasoning opens the eyes of King Govinda. The scales fall from the King's eyes and he realizes the futility and horror of shedding blood to appease Kali. He passes a law forbidding the shedding of blood in the name of religion. The result is chaos within the kingdom, for the people are accustomed to blind obedience to the wishes of Raghupati, their mediator before Kali. Raghupati is incensed and threatens the king with all sort of dire consequences of offending Mother Kali. When the king refuses to be influenced, the priest works on the credulousness of the Queen and the king's brother Nakshatra, both of whom turn against the King. Raghupati's frustration soon turns into hatred of the king and he thirsts for the king's blood. He tries to instigate the brother to kill the King and he stoops to the extent of deceiving the royal worshippers of Kali by ventriloquising the goddess's utterances. One of the commands that apparently come from the mouth of the goddess is that royal blood should be shed for her appeasement. As the play moves to its tragic conclusion, royal blood is indeed shed. But it is not of the King. It is the blood of Jaisingh, a Kshatriya by birth, the adopted son of Raghupati, and the lover of Aparna. He kills himself as the offering to Kali. This most unexpected blow prostrates Raghupati. His cheap tricks are exposed, he is humiliated and now his treasured son is dead, because of his claim that Kali demands royal blood. Raghupati touches the nadir of humiliation and defeat and it would have been the end for him but for Aparna. For this simple unsophisticated beggar-maid rises to lofty heights. Her heart broken for grief over Jaisingh's death, she still has love for the villainous priest who has caused the tragedy. Sensing his defeat and shame and sorrow she comes to him and
says simply "Father". Raghupathi is electrified by that one word. "'Father' did you say?" he asks incredulously. Then he adds, "Do you rebuke me with that name?" "Father" Aparna repeats, and leads him away, to another life, we are permitted to believe. Aparna's forgiveness brings healing to the soul that most needs it, in this play. Tagore could not have paid a greater tribute to women than by depicting this splendour of a poor girl's soul, as it drowns its own misery and pain in a wave of compassion and love for someone who deserves to be considered her enemy, the destroyer of all her hopes. Raghupati cannot but respond to such pure goodness. He throws away the idol of Kali, and experiences the love of the Goddess in the love of Aparna.

Tagore's portrayal of Aparna is revolutionary. A woman impoverished and with no access to power she has a grandeur of soul which Queens and Princesses lack. She has courage and honesty. She is simple and pure-hearted and this is the source of her fearlessness which makes her reason with King Govinda about her slaughtered lamb: "Mother has taken? It is a lie. Not Mother, but demon..." 

Then turning to the idol of Kali she articulates the doubts and questioning in her heart. "Mother art thou there to rob a poor girl of her love? Then where is the throne before which to condemn thee? Tell me King?" No wonder it spurs the King to action to take steps to denounce the inhuman practice of blood sacrifice. He learns from the simple girl the great truth that true religion is based on communion with God, through qualities like love, service to humanity, honesty and righteousness. To him the voice
of Aparna becomes the voice of the Goddess. "Mother came to me in a girl's disguise and told me that blood she cannot suffer".32 In the portrayal of Aparna one can see the strength and consistency of Tagore's humanism. He brings this poor, orphan girl from the margins of society and places her on the centre of the stage as a real beacon of light, an apostle of love, an agent of regeneration. She serves as Tagore's mouthpiece for the intrinsic values of human beings. Such convictions were not for airing in the theatre only, but ran deep. Tagore translated these into actions. A hint given by a biographer of Tagore's is relevant here. The critic D. Tuck writes:

In 1883 Tagore married Mrinalini Devi, who was the uneducated daughter of one of the employees of the family estates in eastern Bengali(sic). Tagore’s deep love for her and his attachment for his children is reflected in the sympathy for Aparna's plight.33

Tagore demonstrated more than once his faith that a woman can be the salt of the earth. Another play of his, Malini repeats this theme in a different setting. This full length play written in 1895 is located at a point in time when a set of new ethics challenged out-modeled old ethics, beauty and revelation clashed with fear and fanaticism, blind orthodoxy clashed with a spirit of humanism. In such an atmosphere, Malini, a princess, a devotee of Buddha stands alone as an enriching spiritual force against a spiritually dead patriarchal society and converts her hostile subjects into her followers.
The Brahmin subjects of the King, Malini's father, resent the Princess's newly-acquired faith in the Buddha. Their murderous hatred however fades in the brilliance of Malini's purity and love. The creative force of her compassion and love wins over her angry critics, transforming them into devotees. Only one of her enemies remain un-converted till the end. Kenemanker murders Supriya, another hater of Malini, later converted to her religion of love. Malini pleads with her father to let that man escape. Malini's contribution to society, to her father's kingdom is immense. She is at the beginning of the play the focus of controversy, for she defies the whole nation and chooses the Buddhist faith in an anti-Buddhist reign. She is autonomous, and sticks to her decision, and her knowledge of what is best for her. She renounces the comforts of the palace. Beneath her gentleness there is a will that is strong as iron. But it is a will that is guided by love. Hence she is able to act as a uniting force between conflicting groups and religious interests. Malini has a vision. It is to unite the world into a single human family. Tagore the poet and mystic, it is clear, foresaw what many men and women have now begun to see, that the problems of the world can be solved only if women are placed at the top, in control of politics. As Virginia Woolf has argued in Three Guineas, men have shown over and over again their predisposition to war. It is women who can now save the world from the hatred and devastation of war. Women create and nurture life, and bring about an ambience of love and harmony. This is the message of Tagore's Malini.
Another remarkable woman who enters the public sphere is Queen Sumitra of Tagore’s play *The King and Queen*. This English translation of the Bengali play *Raja 'O' Rani* written in 1889 is a powerful political drama, replete with conflicts between love and duty, palace intrigues and political struggle. The play was favourably reviewed when it was staged by the Indian Art and Dramatic Society at the *Comedy Theatre* in London in 1919. What the reviewers had singled out for praise was the characterisation of the protagonists, King Bikram and Queen Sumitra.

Bikram is weak, self-centred, infatuated and indifferent to his responsibilities and duties towards the state. The kingdom is governed by relatives of the Queen. They are corrupt and totally devoid of interest in the realm. Sumitra is disgusted with Bikram’s irresponsibility and his unrestrained sensuality. Moved by reports of the people’s suffering under the bad regime, Sumitra has to make an important choice. It is the choice of a course of action that could have grave consequences. She chooses what she considers the right action. She leaves Bikram and with the help of her brother Kumarasen tries to restore order and peace to the realm. With a battered ego Bikram turns vindictive. All his desire for the Queen now turns into a lust for revenge. He whips up a rebellion and wages a successful war against Kumarasen and Sumitra. Kumarasen, too proud to surrender to the King’s forces, arranges his severed head to be presented to the King, the victor. The Queen who brings it falls dead at the feet of her tyrant husband. Tagore does not end the play on that note. Sumitra’s death transforms and redeems Bikram. His pride, his ego and selfishness are vanquished and a new, disciplined, responsible ruler emerges. There is hope
for him and his subjects, all because a noble woman has given her life for these. Once again the community is renewed through the death of a martyr. And the martyr is a woman.

The redemption of the voluptuous King is due also to the chastening influence of another female character in the play - Ila, a princess. Her father, knowing Bikram's nature, still considers it an advantage to enter into an alliance with him and offers to give Princess Ila in marriage to Bikram. Ila, however, rejects Bikram's advances and openly confesses her love for Kumarasen, the penniless fugitive. Her profound sincerity and the depth of her love for the King's enemy, has a tremendous effect on Bikram. For the first time he realizes what a priceless possession a noble woman's love is. Now he realizes what a treasure he has lost in losing his Queen.

In Princess Ila and Queen Sumitra Tagore has given us two faces of Eve'. Ila is gentle, loving and soft-spoken. But her resolve is like steel. Nothing can induce her to respond to Bikram's amorous advances. Sumitra is strong-willed practical and straight-forward. She cannot stand by and see her slothful pleasure-loving husband jeopardize the well-being of his people. She refuses to be circumscribed within the "Lakshman Rekha' that Indian culture prescribes for women. She refuses to be a mere sex-object. She rejects the gender role thrust upon her by society. Not willing to remain a chattel of her husband Sumitra is prepared to walk out of her home in response to a higher call than domesticity. It is not lack of love that makes her do so. It is love of a far higher nature than the love for a husband and family. Ananda Lal, a critic has pointed out that through Bikram and Sumitra Tagore offers contrasted studies of love:
The wild kind of love which forgets everything except the loved one, succeeds in rousing, against itself all the laws of the universe. Instead of this kind of passion, which negatests the world Tagore advocates a humanitarian love such as Sumitra's: “The love that is self-controlled and friendly to general society, which does not ignore anyone, around itself, — the love which, while placing the loved one in its centre diffuses its sweet graciousness within the circle of the entire universe, — has a permanence unassailable by god or man.34

Many critics have drawn attention to the similarity between Sumitra and Nora of Ibsen's Doll's House. The parallel lies in the fact that both of them break away from the conventional patriarchal norms and go out in response to their inner promptings. Both of them can be described by a term that came into vogue in the end of the nineteenth century, "The New Woman". Nora leaves her husband to find out her real identity Queen Sumitra walks out on Bikram for a different purpose. She wants to give her best to her subjects. In doing this she is stepping into a realm traditionally occupied by men. She is crossing the boundaries set by patriarchy. But Tagore as we have seen, wanted boundaries removed and he projects Sumitra's action as laudable and her sacrifice as spiritually beneficial to those she leaves behind. Once again through the martyrdom of a noble and high-minded woman, the slumbering identity of a king is restored and a nation is saved from ruin.
The Tagore play that is most overtly feminist is Chitra. It is the first play of Tagore's published in English. While the Bengali version Chitrangada was published in 1892 the English translation appeared in 1913 coinciding with the first wave of feminism that was sweeping over the West. Tagore's source is the Indian epic, The Mahabharat. But once again the play is a far cry from the original story. Since it appeared soon after the announcement of Tagore's Nobel Prize, the play received considerable critical attention. It was staged in Shantiniketan and in many other places in India and abroad. The reviewers stressed the point that the play had "a direct and powerful bearing on the question of the emancipation of women". The American Review of Reviews commented that the play "Answers with gravely beautiful symbolism and puzzling questions of feminism - is woman really equal of men? Can she share the great duties of his life and retain both-her womanliness and his love?" These questions no doubt would outrage feminists today but at that point in time they were considered highly revolutionary and the fact that Tagore's play could provoke them is a tribute to its dynamic social relevance. The New York Times paid a rather equivocal tribute to Tagore. Its review under the leading "Tagore's Ideal Woman" contained the remark, "We did not look for an oriental, even though a seer, to write a book that might serve as evangel to the most advanced among the modern occidental women?" In the opinion of the critic of Current Opinion the heroine of the play by this "Strange Hindu Poet" "distinctly partakes of the type of the New woman. Her troubles are those that will beset the next generation when suffrage
has borne its fruits". Abraham Sinberg, a reviewer for another newspaper, *The Colonnade* was moved to ask in disbelief, "Has the feminist movement overcome India, we have no word of such a state of affairs".

Indeed he was right. The feminist movement had not overcome India. Had it done so Tagore would not have earned the credit for being so far ahead of his time. But the absence of such critical notice of the play in India is deeply significant. Indian orthodoxy's response to the challenge of the play was to ignore its threatening social aspect and to focus on its poetry, its symbolism. But in what way is *Chitra* an overwhelmingly feminist play?

Before we begin to address this question it is necessary to recall the original story in the *Mahabharata*. In the epic the focus of interest is Lord Shiva's boon to Prabhanjana, an ancestor of the Manipur Princess Chitra, that he and his successors would be blessed with one child each to perpetuate their race. In the course of his sojourn in fulfilment of his vow of celibacy the Pandava hero, Arjuna comes to Manipur. There he happens to meet Chitrangada, the beautiful daughter of Chitravahana and falls in love with her and asks for her hand in marriage. Chitravahana agrees to give his daughter to Arjuna on one condition. The child born of that marriage should be given to Manipur to continue the royal line. Arjuna agrees. Three years of wedded bliss follow, and Arjuna takes leave of Chitra and their little son and continues on his wandering. This story presents nothing more than the typical patriarchal theme of woman as an object of exchange, an object of passion and a means of procuring heirs to perpetuate the race. Tagore had no use for such a theme, but he saw in its potential for transformation into
a plot loaded with social relevance and his own unorthodox ideas about marriage and man woman relationship.

The most important point of deviation that Tagore introduces is in the character and personality of the heroine, Chitra. Instead of a passive, beautiful princess who passes from the possession of her father to that of her husband, Tagore’s Chitra is autonomous and in control of her life and destiny. She lacks beauty, but is abundantly endowed with courage, and all qualities that are considered "masculine". She is a warrior, and protector of her people. She has more strength than grace in her arms and she is fond of hunting. She is an Amazon and does not even remotely resemble her original of the epic. Utterly unfeminine, in all these respects, she is woman enough to fall in love with Arjuna. She knows that she has to take the initiative if she is to win his love. Already there is a reversal of roles in her life. Instead of the protected, she is the protector of her people. So now instead of the one wooed, she has to do the wooing".

"I know no feminine wiles for winning hearts. My hands are strong to bend the bow, but I have never learnt Cupid’s archery, the play of eyes". She approaches him directly with a proposal of marriage. Arjuna shocked by this audacity of the young woman rejects her. Chitra seeks the help of the god of love, Madana who grants her exquisite beauty for a day. Vasantha, god of youthfulness bestows on her the bloom of youth. Though her request was "Give me one brief day of perfect beauty and I will answer for the days that follow", the gods grant that "Not for the short span of a
day, but for one whole year the charm of spring blossoms shall nestle round thy limbs". Arjuna is now enchanted by the beauty of this young woman whom he cannot recognize at all. Their passionate love and wedded bliss last a year during which Chitra drops several hints about the transience of beauty. "Alas, that this frail disguise, the body should make one blind to the light of the deathless spirit," she wails. In spite of her happiness she is disgusted by the deception. She finds it a hateful task to deck her body - now become her rival: "Every day to send her (the body) to my beloved and see her caressed by him." A strong resolve takes shape within her, "I will reveal my true self to him, a nobler thing than this disguise. If he rejects it, if he spurns me and breaks my heart, I will bear even that in silence". But she does not do that yet. The mad festival', as Vasanta calls it, continues.

However Arjuna grows restless. "Give me something to clasp, something that can last longer than pleasure, that can endure even through suffering," he muses. Having heard from the villagers of the greatness of Princess Chitra, her valour and devotion to her people, Arjuna has a great yearning to meet her. Chitra warns her, "Ah, but she is not beautiful." But Arjuna has a different sense of values now, and replies, "They say that in valour she is a man, and a woman in tenderness," when the allotted year is over and the spell broken Chitra reveals herself to her hero. The words she speaks to him resound with her restored confidence in herself. They are an affirmation of what she believes to be the basis for an enriching bond and partnership between man and woman.
I am Chitra. No goddess to be worshipped, nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. If you deign to keep me by your side in the path of danger and daring, if you allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self.49

The love that now unites them is not based on the illusion of beauty, but a perfect understanding and mutual respect. The above speech of Chitra, unprecedented in Bengali literature, or in any Indian writing for that matter reveals Tagore as far ahead of his time in his understanding of gender issues. He has a totally new and, in India, unheard of understanding of what a woman can be, and what self-realisation can mean to her. W.Cenkner's comment is relevant here.

Tagore achieves continuity between the women of the past and those of the future by introducing the experience of profound friendship between women and men, a relationship hardly explored in Bengali literature. Woman as mother, wife, mistress and goddesses are stereotypes, but women as friend is a novel perception established in early Bengali literature of this century.50

Tagore has given us a variety of women. We could say of him what Ruskin said of Shakespeare,- that "he has no heroes only heroines." Of all
Tagore's heroines, Chitra is the one most clearly drawn on what one could definitely call feminist lines. The heroines that we have discussed are all in some way or other a far cry from the stereotypes of Indian womanhood. Several women characters of Tagore remind us of the truth of Simone de Beauvoir's comment. Trying to find a reason for the universal devaluation of women, she theorized that women are steeped in "immanence" or their physicality, great-achivements in the physical or spiritual realm. Tagore's women, we find are not sunk in "immanence". Many of them reach spiritual heights.

All of them are in their own ways autonomous. Autonomy is a concept that has assumed great significance in feminist theory, and on the feminist agenda today this has even gained precedence over equality. This is because after the first militant clamour for equality Western feminists are willing to concede that men and women are different and that what women should fight for is autonomy. Gerda Lerner in her book The Female Experience defines female autonomy as a process of "moving out from a world in which one is born to marginality, to a past without a meaning, and a future determined by others, into a world in which one acts and chooses, aware of a meaningful past and free to shape one's future". Tagore's women have autonomy in this sense, and it is a fact that has to be doubly underscored that this mystic poet of India has recognized the basic need that women have for autonomy and self realization. Tagore does not envisage this freedom of women as something anti social, or antithetical to
the healthy development of society. Tagore's women strive not only for self-realization, but also in that process, for setting free men who are in some bond or other. Feminism, in fact, is much maligned in India because of its association with "bra-burning women's libbers" of the West, who are supposed to be androphobic. But a feminist agenda properly understood is meant to emancipate not only women, but men as well, and thus to bring about a new social order where oppression and injustice of all sorts will cease to be. In this context Tagore, deserves devoted study. One point that cannot be overlooked when we talk about Tagore's projection of the female experience is his recognition of female sexuality. He is sensitive to every aspect of human personality and its claim for fulfilment. He recognizes that women's desire has as much right to be acknowledged as male desire and many of his women characters express their longing for a love that is not devoid of the physical dimension. Chitra, Prakriti, Queen Lokeshwari and Princess Ila are all unafraid to speak of their desire for the man they love and to seek gratification. Mystic though Tagore is, he is not far removed from the lived experience of men and women. Tagore constantly asserts that he based his plays on reality, on the lives of real people. His women, therefore are not abstracted from impossible virtues and mere idealization.

It is perhaps hasty to call him a feminist, but when we read Tagore with gender on the agenda we can see quite clearly that he is a feminist in sympathy. He is a champion of all the oppressed classes and his message
to us is something that he once articulated in a conversation with Mulk Raj Anand.

"The young must discard the bad social and mental habits of the past. We must not follow dasturs blindly. Many of our leaders stick to inherited beliefs without questioning, because their parents told them to do so in childhood years...."  

This call to break off inherited shackles should be resounding now. But what has happened in India is a calculated 'misreading' of Tagore whereby the revolutionary in him is made to go unnoticed and the symbolist is projected all the time. The stark simplicity of his plays has not been stressed enough. Instead over-emphasis is placed on the symbolism giving rise, to the impression that Tagore is difficult. Critics complain of "little realism and over much symbolism" in his works. One of the critics Surjit Mukherjee finds Tagore's dramas to be "constantly in danger of letting its symbol proliferate and obscure the human significance". Correcting this misreading Ananda Lal points out,'

Ironically, few critics later heeded the caution not to over-emphasize the symbolic elements in Tagore's plays, so he rapidly became typecast as a symbolic dramatist and ultimately neglected because of it.
There are a few discerning critics like Amar Mukerjee who rightly evaluates Tagore's contribution to Indian theatre thus: "Tagore carried the dramatic tradition of Bengal so much forward that people could not equally advance in time".\(^{55}\) Regarding Tagore's similarity to Ibsen in outlook and contribution to drama, Ananda Lal writes,

Both began as products of the nineteenth century but ended up having revolutionised their respective literary traditions; both wielded tremendous influence on writers outside their mother-tongue. Ibsen on other European languages, Tagore on other Indian languages; both tried their hand at a variety of dramatic genres and styles during their careers; and both remained virtually unchallenged as literary monarchs in the course of lengthy reigns of over half a century each, even if much of their work was widely misunderstood.\(^{56}\)

A feminist reading of the entire works of Tagore is long overdue. Already his true contribution to social criticism and social restructuring is obscured by too much of veneration and too little understanding. Mulk Raj Anand talks of the need to understand his humanism, "by divesting his beliefs of the legend of a vague and woolly idealism which some of his utterances encouraged and which was woven around him by those who expect every Indian to be an unearthly wise man from the east." \(^{57}\)
Tagore was not a philosopher who delighted in the abstract, unconnected with the reality of human experience. In his "Conversation with Einstein" he has stated that the truth of the universe is human truth meaning thereby that he is interested in concrete human beings and not in abstract man. "Truth is realized through man ... We individuals approach it through our own mistakes and blunders, through our accumulated experience, through our illumined consciousness". The world has blundered long enough away from the truth of gender relations and gender justice. Now with a feminist reading of the works of Rabindranath Tagore, our consciousness can truly be illumined and we can move a little closer to the making of a society free from casteism and sexism.
END NOTES

1 Sukumar Sen, History of Bengali Literature "Forword" by Jawahalal Nehru (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 1960) 1.

2 Rabindranath Tagore "My Life" Lectures and Adresses, ed. Anthony x Soares (New Delhi : Macmillan, 1995) 11


5 _______ The Diary of Westward Voyage trans Indu Dutt (London Asia, 1962) 6.

6 _______ "Woman" Personality, 172.


8 Ibid 107.


10 Ibid 30.


13 Ibid 2.

14 Ibid 3.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid 7.

18 Ibid 17.
19 Ibid 2.
21 Ibid 18.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
26 Ibid 6.
27 Ibid
28 "Prince of Wales Theatre" Daily Telegraph 5th May 1920, 11.
29 Rabindranath Tagore Sacrifice (Madras Macmillian 1994) 83.
31 Ibid 564.
32 Ibid 565.
34 Anand Lal, 54.
35 "Drama" Atheneaum 17 January 1914, 99.
36 "Plays and Books about the Drama" American Review of Reviews 49 (April 1914) : 503.
38 "Rabindranath Tagore as a playwright issues a message to women". Current Opinion 56 (May 1914) : 358.
39 Abraham Sinberg E. "Rabindranath Tagore" Colonnade 8 (September 1914) 85-89.

40 Rabindranath Tagore, Chitra A play in one act. (Madras Macmillian 1974) 5.

41 Ibid 9.

42 Ibid 10.

43 Ibid 19.

44 Ibid 27.


46 Ibid 44.


48 Ibid 55.

49 Ibid 66.

50 Cenkner 1981, 109


52 Mulk Raj Anand - 5.


54 Anandlal, 1987, 63.

55 Amar Mukherjee "The Dramas of Rabindranath Tagore" Modern Review 85 (June 1949) 483.


57 Mulk Raj Anand - 5.