Chapter-5

Reflections on Tagore’s Ideology and Life-Philosophy in the Short-Stories

It (Tagore’s philosophy) is a sigh of the soul rather than a reasoned account of metaphysics; an atmosphere rather than a system of philosophy. But we feel that the atmosphere is charged with a particular vision of reality. Though poetry is not philosophy, it is possible for us to derive from Rabindranath's works his philosophical views.¹

The present chapter examines Tagore’s views for human life that are fabricated in his short stories. If we return to his literary realm, we observe that he displays a social concern in them with a purpose to improve the existing situations of his times. His works are artistic creativity infused with the thoughts of the past spiritual and the philosophical aspects. He is basically recognized as a poet and not for his being a philosopher. We do not get any systematic exposition of his philosophy of life in any of his writings. But in spite of being a poet, he conveys his emotions in his prose. He appears like a philosopher with his logic, reason and straight forwardness that he expresses in his literary writings. His ideas provide a new and positive vision of the world.

The word ‘Philosophy’ in Sanskrit means- *Darshana* or *Vision* i.e. a view of finding a new perspective, a kind of seeing, and a fresh and useful outlook to use in relation of human beings to their environment and to each-other. The ‘ideology’ is defined as the ideas or thoughts that are fixed for behaving in certain matters. Tagore’s thoughts are not philosophical but are spread in poetic and prose works. Primarily, he is a
poet but what he felt as being a visionary as truths, he has expressed them through images and similes. In order to trace the philosophical ideas behind the literary expressions, there always remains a risk of error. But Tagore writes in his *Stray Birds*-

“If you shut your doors to all errors, truth will be shut out”.

So, some efforts in this direction have been made with a hope that they will lead to some near about conclusions though not to the ultimate truths. If Tagore’s life and literary works are given attention, the readers find that he was much impressed by the philosophy of *Vedanta* and *Upanishads*. From his childhood, he was inclined to the Indian culture and traditions. He was influenced by the effect of the Vaishnav thinkers and Bhakti Preachers. Dadu, Ravidas, Nanak and Kabir’s thoughts touched to his heart. He was also influenced with the preachings of the religious book, *The Gita* in which he found a combination of abstract, impersonal, Brahman with concrete and personal, god with physical form.

In *Sadhana* (a book of sermons, or mystic hymns, or perhaps meditations), he speaks from his inner inspiration and creates an atmosphere which is charged with a particular vision of reality.

In his writings, we have an interaction of his soul with the people, environment and his reflection of attitude for life. He shows his deep and vital faith in his idealism and seems to maintain two ideologies related to his philosophy of life. As a Vedantin-a philosopher who draws his teachings from the Upanishads and on the other side, as a theist who was influenced with Christianity. His personality is completely revealed in his poems, which are the unconscious expression of his soul, the outpourings of his devotional heart and the manifestation of his poetic consciousness. But his prose writings
also contain the suggestions of his intellectual belief. So, by the study of his literary works, his philosophical ideas can be drawn. He writes-

> To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preaching, as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others, and awaiting for their confirmation my own special testimony, which must have its value because of its individuality.²

In interpreting the philosophy and message of Rabindranath Tagore, anyone interprets the ideal of Indian philosophy, art and religion, of which his literary works are the outcome and expression. He, the epitome of Indian spiritual heritage and a pioneer in the Indian literary scenario assumes the roles of interpreter and mediator between the civilizations of the East and the West and combines the Indian and Western traditions to bring a synthesis between the East and the West. Many of his literary works use myths, symbols, legends and allegory to express his views on love, joy, devotion karma, sacrifice, death and religion. Lord Buddha's teachings had a very special place in his writings. His use of the Buddhist philosophy with allusions and suggestions is interspersed in the thematic pattern of his literary writings.

As the focus of the research work is his short stories in which the teachings of Hindu philosophy and religion are handled. The embedded philosophy and ideas enhance the literary beauty and significance of the short stories. His lofty idealism for mankind and marvelous presentation of events provide him a worldwide fame. He believes in the
power of the spiritual forces that has a particular value at the present moment of materialism.

_Upnishad, Vedas_ and the _Bhagavad Gita_ had its impact on his thoughts throughout his life as his father, during the wonderings at the Himalayas, taught the boy Rabindranath to chant the holy verses of the Upnishads. He also saw his father reciting the holy hymns from the Upnishads to attain communion with the eternal. His life philosophy was coloured and soaked in the thoughts of Hindu scriptures. His main expository writings- _Sadhana, Personality, Creative Unity, The Religion of Man, Towards Universal Man_, and _Reminiscences_ etc. are intermixed with the infinite references to the _Vedas_ and the _Upnishads_. His ideas on art, God, reality, beauty, truth, personality etc. are found throughout the collection of his literary works. The stories are also not untouched with these interspersed ideas. He also agreed to the ideas of the Bauls (the Bengali singer) and Sufis of Bengal.

_Upnishad_ means by sitting near to guru and listen to the mystic principles. It is a “secret wisdom” that includes the philosophical discussions of concepts such as– _Salvation_ (Moksha/Mukti), _Ultimate reality_ (Brahman), the _Individual soul_ (atman), religion, duty and essence (Dharma) etc. Upnishads are 108 in numbers. Most consider Upnishads to form a part of the Vedas; others see it as separate, as they were reactions to the interpretations of the Vedas. The Upnishads are the foundation of Vedanta means- “the end of the Veda”-goal, conclusion or highest aim. He always believed in Upnishadic concept that everything is related to a single ultimate reality. The main contentions of the Upnishads are:

In the _Vrihadaranyaka-_
‘Let the universal soul give us the intellect to have access to his nature.’

According to it, there is the existence of a supreme power which pervades the entire universe. By Upnishidic seers, this power is called as the impersonal power, Brahman, which is imminent in the universe and sustains and regulates it. Each of human beings is a manifestation of this Universal Soul. There is a sense of oneness as an expression of the same soul. This inspires them to an inner readiness to help others and to sacrifice the personal interests for others. Tagore’s stories are also built on the structure of different human beings’ behaviours extending in different situations.

In his short stories, he attacks on superstition and suggests moving on the path of truth. He regards that knowledge (jnana) has the power to free from intellectual, economic and social limitations by bringing humans into truth. In the Gita, knowledge means self-knowledge, Tagore adds other aspects of knowledge that are useful in finding out the infinite behind finite facts. He believed that scientific knowledge helps to liberate the mind from superstitions.

At the same time, Tagore believes in self-generated inspiration than rational analysis, His short stories, “Living or Dead” and “The Parrot’s Training” are not only narratives but they try to search the inner realities of things.

Action (karma) in Indian thought, karma (action) is usually understood as the shackles. Tagore repeats arguments from the Gita:

The Gita says action we must have, for only in action do we manifest our nature. But this manifestation is not perfect so long as our action is not free. In fact, our nature is obscured by the work
done by the compulsion of want or fear. Our true freedom is not
the freedom from action but freedom in action
, which can only be attained in the work of love.4

Actions will shackle the self if they are implemented for selfish reason.
Bhagavad Gita puts it:

The deeds that are done solely for the sake of self fetter our soul;
the disinterested action, performed for the sake of the giving up of
self, is the true sacrifice.5

Through true sacrifice, action becomes pure joy and makes the way to unite with
Brahma. Tagore did not confine the concept creative work to the fine arts but also made a
part in the formation of personality and of the society. The Bhagavadgita says: “The
whole world rests on sacrifice. It is the law of the universe." He is sacrificing himself that
nature and humanity may live. The theme of the story, “My Lord, The Baby,” is also
based on this high human value-sacrifice. In the story- the protagonist, Raicharan,
sacrifices his son by assigning to him to his master and his wife as a result of losing their
son incidentally through him. He shows his loyalty for them and his action (Karma) gives
fulfillment to his life’s end.

Tagore illustrates the image of an oil lamp. If a lamp hoards its oil, it cannot fulfill
its purpose. It gives up its oil and sacrifices it and finds its meaning by establishing a
relation to the world and fulfilling its duty. Tagore sees humans as creators: “The
ultimate truth of our personality is that we are no mere biologists or geometricians; we
are the dreamers of dreams, we are the music-makers." This dreaming or music-making is
not a function of the lotus-eaters; it is the creative impulse which makes songs not only with words and tunes, lines and colours but with stones and metals, with ideas and men. Within art, the artist’s task is, according to Tagore, to translate “his joy into forms” and to find finite expressions of the infinite, the artist is experiencing. Though, Tagore’s writings are poetic rather than philosophical works, in the centre of his ideas stands -the human being and his or her potential which can be achieved through a unity of the individual with the larger community, with nature and with the world. ‘Spirituality’ and ‘humanism’ are the most characteristic features of his thinking. According to Tagore, spirituality means to live the life to the fullest. It can be attained through ‘self-realization’ not by believing in superstitions and supporting to dogmas. The stories reflect his humanistic views. To Tagore, civilization should be evaluated with the value it attaches to man and not in the worldly progress it has produced. Tagore’s concern was the cognitive quest to understand the ultimate reality. He writes-

Reality in all its manifestations reveals itself in the emotional and imaginative background of our mind. We know it not because we can think of it, but because we directly feel it.\textsuperscript{6}

According to him, if we want to achieve a sense of something infinite or absolute, this will not be through rational arguments but as through vision and feeling. He regards that the understanding of reality cannot be separated from human emotion and perspective. As he writes in his essay, The Religion of Man-

We can never go beyond man in all that we know and feel-I felt that I have found my religion at last, in which the infinite became defined in humanity-
reality, is the definition of the infinite which relates truth to the person.\textsuperscript{7}

In the story, “The Renunciation”, when the male protagonist marries a kayastha girl and after it, when his father says him to leave her for being of a different caste, he denies the difference of casteism and shows his humanly attitude by thinking her as a part of his life.

*Spiritual humanism* also takes its place in Tagore’s writings. It recognizes the high worth of the aspirations of the human beings and requires men of the contemplation of the ideals that are sacred to humanity. The way to escape from the sway of fate lies in giving up the ties that bind the man to the external world. As in the story, “The River Stairs”, the sanyasi leaves the place when he finds that Kusum is in love with him. He maintains the purity of his being an ascetic by doing so.

Humans find their fulfillment and perfect freedom when they overcome their narrow self and maintain individuality as has been illustrated in the story, “The Wife’s Letter” in which Mrinal cared for Bindu, her sister-in-law’s younger sister. But when she feels suffocated in the repeated life-processes of the family, she leaves her home to find her individuality. Tagore believed that Unity between self and world does not entail in negating the individual human being and loss of the self. It has been shown in the story, “The Woman Unknown”, in which Kalyani after the break in marriage bond for demand of dowry, does not get disheartened and tries to reach to her potential.

Man can take interest in the absolute only when it is humanized.\textsuperscript{8}

Love for Tagore, is the supreme path, because love is emblematic for connectedness and unity. It achieves a harmony between the opposites. Tagore therefore calls *love* as *integrated essence*. Love is a unique state of being, because the loving and
the loved are connected yet separate; it realizes both unity and difference. Tagore uses the word 'love' relating it to God, all human beings and nature. Tagore maintains that love needs to be personal. It should therefore be initially directed towards what is near to us and then be extended until it encompasses the whole world.

This joy, whose other name is love, must by its very nature have duality for its realization. The lover seeks his own other self in his beloved. It is the joy that creates this separation in order to realize through obstacles of union.9

The same thought occurs in the short story, “Cabuliwalla” in which Cabuliwala loves Mini as her daughter and Mini’s father also has the same feelings of Cabuliwala as a father and helps him economically to reach to his daughter in his native land. Mini’s father and Cabuliwala after having different persons, as a father, they have the same emotional feelings. The same theme continues in the *Isha Upanishad* in which it has been said that we cannot enjoy anything without sharing with others. In it, the amity or loving kindness towards other people has been emphasized and cruelty, indifference and violence and anything that is against in establishing a cordial and harmonious relationship with others is rejected. The protagonists of Tagore’s stories realize the value of compassion and self-sacrifice.

Tagore’s philosophy of life takes its shape from the creative literary output of the poet from his many collections of poetry- *Gitanjali, The Crescent Moon, Fruit Gathering, The Cycle of Spring*, including *Sadhana*. In *Sadhana*, the poet-philosopher has accumulated his philosophical knowledge and wisdom. He viewed that the West always believed to master the nature as they thought it made of inanimate things and
beasts. In today’s world situation, this attitude of man has led to diverse problems between not only man and nature but also between man and man. In Indian context, right from the ancient times, India believed in nature as the sanctuary to the rishis, a place where the soul of man can find solace with the soul of the world.

When a man is confined within the walls of human self, he loses the inner perspective. Radhakrishnan aptly points out,

… Rabindranath advocates life in nature and in the open as the best means of spiritual progress, for in nature the religious eye will see the infinite lying stretched in silent smiling repose. According to him the best way to derive inspiration is to lose oneself in the contemplation of nature----

Man can comprehend the mysteries of reality by establishing perfect harmony between man and man, and man and nature. Man must thus cross the barriers to become more than man and experience the freedom of consciousness and to unite with God:

To be truly united in knowledge, love, and service with all beings, and to realize one’s self in the all-pervading God is the essence of goodness…Life is immense.

Tagore emphasizes on the point that a man should search for unity with the outward materials by an internal adjustment. In this search, we become able to find out that One who possesses the all; that indeed is our last and highest privilege to know oneself is to understand the world around. Tagore gives the example of a family where parents love their children. It is a general fact that anyone whom we love, we find our
own soul in that person. Generally it happens that whom we love, we become one with his/her soul. We do not differentiate with that person. Our emotional attachment makes us realize that we have the same supreme soul in us as well as the other whom we love.

First of all, man must know how to segregate his soul from his self. The self is the body that causes him pain and suffering and produces greed, pride, fear and death. Man becomes great when he becomes able to realize that the physical self or body is nothing in itself rather that it is a part of the supreme consciousness. When a man's soul frees from the petty activities of the physical world and when he remains unaffected by the distractions of life, he gets a unity with the soul, and his consciousness becomes one with the infinite. Suffering and pain and evil in world are only impermanent though we imagine it to be standstill and therefore exaggerate its presence. Rabindranath's search for the Divine life leads him to express the Devotee’s intense experience of pain, passion and joy. He writes-

I will meet one day the Life within me, the joy that hides in my life, though the days perplex my path with their idle lust.\textsuperscript{12}

He adds that Upanishads too tell us that “all that is, is manifestation of His joy, His deathlessness. From the speck of dust at our feet to the stars in the heavens-all is a manifestation of truth and beauty, of joy and immortality”. There is evil in the world that is visible in various forms. The presence of evil is an appearance of imperfection in the world. The very goal of life is to move from imperfection to perfection, as Tagore establishes that: This life process is going on- we know it, we have felt it; and we have a faith which no individual contrary can shake, that the direction of humanity is from evil to good. For we feel that good is the positive element in man’s nature and in every age
and every clime what man values most as his ideal of goodness. Tagore distinguishes between goodness and pleasure and says that while pleasure is limited to one's own self, “goodness is concerned with the happiness of all humanity and for all time”. When a person reaches to the state of perfect goodness, he/she realizes his/her life in the infinite. He draws from Budha's teachings that when an individual merges in the universe, he becomes free from the bondage of pain. Tagore stressed that the self is responsible for the sufferings and the sin that man commits,

> It has led man to shame and crime and death; yet it is dearer to him than any paradise where the self lies, securely slumbering in perfect innocence in the womb of Mother Nature.13

In the state of ignorance, we believe that 'self' is an end of life. But it is the Dharma, which is the innermost nature, the essence or the clear truth of a human being that enables him/her to remain away from the selfishness. His short stories point to the vision of Dharma as in the story, “Mahamaya” the sati episode, in which he presents the hour of crisis but Mahamaya passes through the short hour of trial by obeying the wish of her family. The true nature or essence of our being is the godliness inherent within us. This is realized when we extinguish selfishness in us. In recalling the words of Buddha, Tagore says:

> The emancipation of our physical nature is in attaining health, of our social being in attaining goodness, and of our self in attaining love. This last is what Buddha describes as extinction- the extinction of selfishness. This is the function of love, and it does not lead to darkness but to illumination. This is the attainment of
bodhi, or the true awakening; it is the revealing in us of the infinite joy by the light of love.  

In order to attain a union with soul, the self is freed from self-will. When an individual negates one's self, he/she attains the power of love. A man should try to attain freedom from self through love, in this way; he will be able to enjoy the life. It is in action that we tend to manifest our nature. The poet gives the example of a mother, who “reveals herself in the service of her children, so our true freedom is not the freedom from action but freedom in action, which can only be attained in the work of love”.

Tagore differentiates between maya and truth in that maya which separates man from God, while love is truth or satyam. Man has to cast aside his selfish desires. Therefore, when the 'self' sees itself in isolation from the soul as the absolute, it lives in futility. But it becomes satyam when it recognizes its essence in the universal and the infinite: It is the end of our 'self' to seek that union. It must bend its head low in love and meekness and take its stand where great and small meet. It has to gain by its loss and rise in its surrender. We must know that it is only the revelation of the infinite which is endlessly new and eternally beautiful in us and gives the meaning to our self. In echoing the words of Tagore, Radhakrishnan also expresses a similar view when he says that in the annihilation of the self lies the fulfillment of love which leads man from the self-centered life to a god-centered one Tagore talks on the concept of the infinite love of "Brahman". Though by the laws of the world, we have to lead a disciplined and moral life, but the human soul sets on its passage from bondage in law to freedom in love. He rejects the idea of the denial of nature. Tagore negates the idea of escaping from the world responsibilities and to shun all the actions to cultivate the enjoyment of Brahma's
union for attaining the soul's joy. Along with the influences of Upanishads, Tagore’s themes are also infused with the vital principles of Buddhism. His characters strive hard to relieve the sufferings of humanity from the clutches of the material world. Through his characters, he crystallizes the meaning and essence of life.

In his book, *Heroines of Tagore: A Study in the Transition of Indian Society* (1968), Bimanbehari Majumdar mentions that he turns to Indian epics and even Buddhist legends to draw inspiration before portraying his women characters. Rabindranath's philosophy can be interpreted in the light of his fundamental principles. In the stories--“Living or Dead?”, “The Little Master’s Return" and "The Post Master", Tagore, through the characters-Kadamini, Raicharan and Ratan respectively shows that the truth of life lies not in understanding it by intellect but by the power of feelings.

He believed in the vision of reality it embodies the supreme value of beauty, truth and goodness in it. In his literary works, he mingles his spirit to the environment and reflects his attitude for life-situations and reveals his unconscious expression of his soul and the outpouring of his sensitive heart. He expresses his spiritual views in the story, “The Hidden Treasure”. This story keeps the theme of 'greed' and its disastrous consequence in life. The character, Shankar, becomes the mouth-piece of Tagore’s thoughts as in the following lines-

Shankar replied: “Today the last link of my fetters is broken! That stone which you intended should kill me did not indeed strike my body but it has shattered forever the folly of my infatuation. Today I have seen how monstrous the image of desire is. That calm and
incomprehensible smile of my saintly Guru has at last kindled the inextinguishable lamp of my soul.\textsuperscript{15}

In the story, “The Hidden Treasure” Tagore preaches through the character to be away from greed.

Mrityunjaya took up a thin plate of gold, bent it and broke it into small fragments. These he scattered about the room like lumps of dirt. On some of them he made marks with his teeth. Then he threw a plate of gold on floor and trampled on it. He asked himself, ‘How many men in the world are rich enough to be able to throw gold about as I am doing!’ Then he became oppressed with a fever for destruction. He was seized with a longing to crush all these heaps of gold into dust and sweep them away with a broom. In this way he could show his contempt for the covetous greed of all the kings and maharajahs in the world.\textsuperscript{16}

For remaining away from desires, he writes in the story.

The swami laughed slightly as I did it. At the beginning I did not understand that laugh. But now I do. Doubtless, he thought it easy enough to burn a piece of paper, but to burn to ashes our desires is not so simple!\textsuperscript{17}

Tagore believes in the existence of God. He was not an idol worshipper rather he believed in \textit{Jeeban Debia}, a governing presence which he felt all around himself. He mostly uses the words- \textit{The Universal Man, the Supreme Person, the Supreme Spirit, the}
Infinite Personality for God. His ideology of Jeeban Debta is reflected in the story, “The Wife’s Letter”, in which a character, Bindu, a helpless girl in her family as being without parents, had to live in with her elder sister’s house where she is not wanted. Later she is married to a mentally-weak person with whom she is unwilling to live there. So, she returns back to her sister. She forcibly has to go to her husband and she ultimately ends her life by committing suicide. Tagore shares the thoughts with the female protagonist, Mrinal who calls her in form of Jeeban debta. Mrinal thinks that she has not died rather she has become one with the Universal Soul.

Tagore’s thoughts are a combination of monotheism and theism. Some critics regard that his philosophy is influenced by Christianity also. But he feels indebted to Saints like Ramanuj, Kabir and Dadu etc. for the thoughts regarding to the ‘Supreme power’. He regards God as having personality. He regards that the supreme power is the base and ideal of human life and existence. He wants to bring God near to man.

P.T. Raju Writes-

Man can take in the Absolute only when it is humanized.\(^{18}\)

Like Baul Singers of Bengal who do not talk about Absolute but sing the songs in praise of God’s grace, Tagore also regards God as Jeeban Debta. In the essay, ‘Personality’, Tagore imagines the Absolute Personality as- “there is a point where in the mystery of existence contradictions meet, where movement is not all movement and stillness is not stillness, where the idea, and form, the within and without, are united, where infinite becomes finite without ‘losing its infinity’”.

The ‘self’ acquires a significant meaning when barriers are stopped and a coordination with outer and natural environment is maintained. He feels a significant unity
with nature. The feelings of separateness and detached dissolves and all the differences shatter and the spirit of harmony is achieved.

The story, “Subha” centres round the same thought. Sudha in the company of nature finds an existence of herself. In man’s society, she cannot get involved for being deaf and dumb but she communicates her feelings with nature. Nature listens to her and consoles to her. She forgets her weakness in communion with nature and finds her life in nature. In man’s society, she is as an alien but in nature’s company, she is an active member. She not only knows nature, but also lives it and attains thereby the greater and deeper freedom. She feels so comfortable in the company of nature that she even forgets her existence as a human being but when she had to make communion with society, she fails and bears ill-treatment. She forgets the difference of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in nature’s company which she feels in human’s society.

Rabindranath’s Upanishadian oikkya-chetana (principle of Unity) prompts him to forge connections among apparently different genres and forms. But, still, it is the poetic that seems to be dominating in virtually every case. In fact, it is characteristic of Rabindranath to weave the poetic into the discourses of fiction, non-fiction, plays, and even essays. If we think of his novel Shesher Kabita, or his short-story, ”The Supreme Night”, or play as Dakghar to cite just a few works at random and some essays in which Rabindranath Tagore exemplarily enacts a transaction between the prosaic and the poetic in such a way that the borderlines between the two begin to blur.

Any literary work that implies a philosophical vision and offers a manifestation of life provides the full perspective of reality. Tagore, in his stories, remained true to the realistic exposition of reality. The human mind inclines to accept the interpretation of
reality that appeals to it. Rabindranath Tagore centers the story, “The Hungry Stones” on this idea. The cotton dealer (second narrator) deliberately presents a fantastic but false form of reality. The theosophist readily accepts the cotton dealer's interpretation because it supports his philosophical views. The theosophist believes that he can attain knowledge of the divine and the supernatural through the use of the intuitive feelings. The beauty of Tagore’s stories lies in the appearance of the truth, problematic events and emotions, in the joys and sorrows dealt with the characters as they struggle in a stifling society with its unique cultural beliefs and traditions. And if we want to see God, we should transfer ourselves to another dimension of reality. We should make ineffective to the obstruction of individuality and relax the despotism of the senses; our ignorance will then be removed. We escape from the light of separation and see God as we transcend the darkness in which the whole universe is bathed. Tagore was a strong believer in the principle of ‘unity in diversity’. He believed that the unity of India lies in her exaltation and preservation of the principle of unity in diversity in which every language, every religion and every culture will have its due place.

He writes producing infatuation-

I saw in the glorious evening light that delicate wan face laid like a drooping flower against the soft white pillow, with the unrestrained curls playing over the forehead, and the bashfully lowered eyelids casting a pathetic shade over the whole countenance.¹⁹

Devotion of wife has been reflected in the story, “Vision” in which the wife loses her eye-sight by the experiment of husband (doctor), still the wife maintains devotion for her husband and thinks—
A wife is a burden enough to a man, in all conscience, and to add to it the burden of this blindness was to make his life unbearable. I vowed that I would suffer alone, and never wrap my husband round in the folds of my all pervading darkness.²⁰

In this story, “The Conclusion”, he focuses on the existential concerns of resistance and reconciliation in human relationships in which the female protagonist being as of a boyish temperament and carefree nature is married without her wish. First, she resists the married relationship but later on reconciles to it and finds it interesting to fulfill the responsibility after marriage.

The subsequent generation owes to Tagore as he has left an immense heritage in the form of literary works and educational experiment. As an educator, he had a definite social aim to build up a social structure to achieve the ideal of society through education. In Education, he advised the teachers to be like the children and not to think themselves superior. The education of the impulses should receive high place in the schools. Tagore’s naturalism made him a universal man. Like a true naturalist, Tagore wants that the child should be educated in natural surroundings. He believed that the education given in the natural surrounding helps them to develop the intimacy with the world. In this context, the story, “The Parrot’s Training” is allegorical in its theme. In it, a parrot is taught by putting papers into its mouth. The extreme efforts are made to make it scholar. But by putting so much paper into its mouth, it cannot bear this force and ultimately dies. The same case is happening in our so-called modern education system where small kids are forced to rote and learn. They are not getting a benefitting and enjoying education but feel imposed on them. As a result, they find the atmosphere dull and cheerless that affects
their grooming badly. Tagore has rightly said that we are busy in decorating the cage till now; the bird of this cage is still hungry. He advocated the child centered education and stressed to create a non-authoritarian learning system for the children. Tagore maintains more faith in an individual than in any institution. He figures nature as the best teacher to the pupil. The students should not be put pressure to learn anything. Nature will automatically be a guiding force to infuse the spirit of learning in students. It will shape their behaviour and character. Man bears the diverse qualities and potentialities given by God. The feelings of purity and spirituality help man to maintain a harmonious relationship with man, nature and God.

Tagore believed that a nation’s progress not only depends on the agriculture and craft but also on the development of technology and scientific advancement. This thought occurs in the story, "The Laboratory" that is based on a female’s responsibility who fights with everything to save the laboratory established by her husband. Tagore may have used a factory instead of a laboratory but it seems he wants to enhance the scientific advancement by using the scientific terms. Tagore's faith in the freedom of child in education is centered on child’s own experience and activities. He explained the freedom in three senses: freedom of heart, freedom of intellect and freedom of will. For Tagore, education has only meaning and object in freedom. This idea has been expressed in his famous poem, *The Freedom of Heaven*.

The genesis of the expression of freedom lies in his experience as a child. He records his own expressions in the stories of child-protagonists as in the story, "Once There Was a King", in which he recalls his own childhood days through a child – character and describes how he fears of a tutor and finds pretentions to escape from him.
“The Home Coming”, a very pathetic and psychology-centered story in which Phatik, a child, finds it difficult to live at maternal uncle’s house for ill-treatment from aunt’s side and longs to go to her mother’s home throughout the story but that doesn’t happen as he breathes his last when his mother reaches there to bring him back. The story, “Subha” also favours the carefree company of nature for special children like Subha (a dumb girl) who is not made to live in human’s society. When she is married, and her husband knows about her defect, her husband remarries neglecting her.

In Tagore writings, one cannot find logical or conceptual analysis but he offers an original vision of the world through his poetry and prose, and exercises his literary works on the themes of human nature and human relationships. He enjoys nature's beauty in calm and serene mood as well as the nature in fury. It reflects his philosophy of life that life, as a whole, is not only joyful but sorrows and suffering also occurs in the course of life. Just as gold purifies after being beaten in the fire, in the same way life also becomes meaningful by the hardships encountered in the passage of life.

In Buddhist ideology- Self is without own being rather it is a part of the outer world and is among others; Inter subjectivity or the ‘being in the world’ is a significant form of human being not self or ego hood or private existence. He had an intimate feeling with nature. When a person comes out of the bondage of ego, the world looks different. It has been presented in the story, "The Cabuliwala" in which Cabuliwala feels his love for Mini and loses the difference of her and his real daughter.

Tagore alludes to Buddha’s idea of Brahma-vihara, or the joy of living in Brahma. This idea entails the proposition that the one, who overcomes pride, hatred, deception, anger, cruelty, and antagonism towards fellow- beings and fellow creatures,
cultivates the quality of love for all creatures in the process of exercising universal
goodwill and attains perfection of consciousness. Taking central thought from Buddha’s
teachings, Tagore emphasizes that:

It is through the heightening of our consciousness into love, and
extending it all over the world, that we can attain Brahma-vihara,
communion with this infinite joy. 21

Tagore quotes the old texts:

From love the world is born, by love it is sustained, towards love
it moves, and into love it enters. 22

In Sanskrit, the creation from love is called lila, the spontaneous game of love,
and Tagore uses this word and idea in many of his writings. God wants to create love and
is prepared to sacrifice his joy and to limit his limitlessness because then he will be able
to realize himself and his personality, by giving himself:

This joy, whose other name is love, must by its very nature have
duality for its realization. 23

The lover seeks his own other ‘self’ in his beloved. It is the joy that creates this
separation in order to realise through obstacles the union”. He endorses the old Indian
ideal of joy as the soul of the art. As in the story, “The Supreme Night”, at first, the
narrator refuses to marry surabala but later on, repents for his decision. As after marriage
of Surabala with someone else, he coincidentally meets to her one night, he feels that night
as the supreme night. Though he yearns to marry with her but it is of no use now as she
belongs to someone else.
Tagore affirms that “Beauty is omnipresent; therefore everything is capable of giving us joy”. Conceptualizing love as the root of delight, Tagore believes that it is a creative spirit that permeates the universe and art. Love is such a power that enables the human beings to find freedom and to fulfill their potentials. He maintains

Whatever name our logic may give to the truth of humanity, the fact can never be ignored that we have our greatest delight when we realise ourselves in others, and this is the definition of love.\(^{24}\)

and this thought is found in the stories—“The Postmaster” and “Cabuliwala” where the characters-Ratan and Cabuliwala know no bounds to their love. In the story, “The Cabuliwalla”, Cabuliwalla’s love for the five years old girl, Mini is as fatherly love. And in his case also the finite love unites with the infinite as he has no distinction in her daughter and other's daughter and he feels extreme delight in the company of other person's daughter.

According to Tagore, if we want to achieve a sense of something infinite or absolute, this will not be through rational arguments but as through vision and feeling. He regards that the understanding of reality cannot be separated from human emotions and perspective. As he writes in his essay- *The Religion of Man*-

We can never go beyond man in all that we know and feel-I felt that I have found my religion at last, in which the infinite became defined in humanity----reality is the definition of the infinite which relates truth to the person.\(^{25}\)

Tagore believed that it is necessary for a man to acquire the knowledge of both the finite and infinite. The former helps him to attain the immortality and the latter
enables him to reach to immortality. It happens in the story, “Devotee”, in which the female protagonist resists her husband’s Guru’s ill-intentions and when she finds unable to convince her husband against Guru, she decides to leave her home and family life and unite with God through worship.

We find the character of the Ascetic to be a stern person to all of the worldly feelings in "The River Stairs", Kusum's husband leaves her and proves that for a true ascetic it is sorry for him not to maintain the physical alienation from the world and not to stay detached from the world mentally. Her husband after becoming an ascetic, a long ago, coincidentally happens to visit the place but when he finds Kusum in love with him, he decides to leave the place. But before his going, without a word, she bowed to him, and placed the dust of his feet on her fore head. Tagore narrates through the ‘ghat’ as an omniscient narrator:

The moon set: the night grew dark. I heard a splash in the water.

The wind raved in the darkness, as if it wanted to blow out all the stars of the sky”. Thus, by stepping into the Ganges as into a bridal chamber, she sacrificed her life.26

The touching narration brings the thought of her stepping as to the bridal chamber as if she, unable to find her earthly love, chooses to unite with the universal love. She finds her solace by uniting her finite existence with the infinite soul.

Tagore believes in two aspects of God: one monotheistic personal God, the other- Brahman which can be defined or felt as a human-being, consciousness, supreme reality, bliss etc.
There is a point where in the mystery of existence contradictions meet, where movement is not all movement and stillness is not stillness, where the idea and the form, the within and without, are united where infinite become finite without ‘losing its infinity’. This joy, whose other name is love, must by its very nature have duality for its realization.

The lover seeks his own other self in his beloved. To find fulfillment and to liberal ourselves truly is necessary to reach unity, advaitam, with the infinite through our individual self. We are to substantiate the famous words taltvam asi (Thou art that) self; by dedicating it instead of negating it as the female protagonist in the story, “The Devotee” dedicates her life in the service of God.

Tagore expresses his faith in a "human" God, and discards the concept of the world as an illusion. He praises action overmuch and promises fullness of life to a religious soul. These are essentially the features of the Christian religion. Although most poets have enjoyed a deep delight in nature, but in Rabindranath this bliss of nature has found a special meaning.

He maintains a positive view of the relation of nature to human soul. He does not use nature only in poetry but in prose also. Even many of his short stories begin with nature-description and also end with it. Nature beautifully becomes a mouth-piece of expression of inner feelings of characters. Paragraphs on nature are very well-knitted in the main theme of the narration and it appears as if nature plays an integral part in presenting the happenings. Tagore's pulse of spirit in nature seems to throb for him. He finds a spiritual vision in natural phenomena. The water not only cleanses his limbs but it
purifies his heart as it touches to his soul. The earth is not only a contact with his physical body but it a living presence for him. When a person feels the eternal spirit in natural objects, he discovers the fullest meaning of the world. He finds himself established with perfect truth and harmony. The eye of an artist is needed to perceive the spiritual beauty of the things of nature. Rabindranath has the eye which pierces into the secret of nature's bliss. Tagore regards nature as being full of life which helps to the spiritual progress because he believed that a religious person can perceive the infinite lying stretched in silent ease and smiling in nature. Nature and society are manifestations of the absolute. The same light resides in the world outside and the world within. Tagore discovered spirituality in Western civilization also. He found it in the West’s dynamism, experimentation and pursuit of truth.

Marking nature's spiritual dimension, Tagore portrays nature as the most sacred place for pilgrimage and leads to an expansion of our consciousness. For Tagore, the beauty of nature fills us with joy and makes a relationship of love. It is through this love that one finds the enlargement and meaning of one’s own being as has been reflected in the stories- "Subha" and “The Conclusion” in which Subha and Mrinmayi find a companionship in nature. They love nature more than human beings. The message is clear that the communion with nature saves the human beings from evils when violence and hatred prevail and the love relationship avoids struggle in human beings. Tagore's global thoughts insist on the human being's emotional involvement with the world. Tagore’s religion emphasized on a faith chosen by individual conscience rather than an authoritarian code of belief and ethics. It is derived from vision and not from knowledge. Tagore’s focus was on finding the harmony and beauty that he saw in nature, and in the
relationship of the individual with the universe. The spiritual man is one whose inner vision is bathed in the illumination of his consciousness and who realizes the peace, harmony and truth. His philosophy and ideology seek to attain the purpose of human life. He seems to believe that this life is an avenue to reach to Brahman—the supreme bliss. Our thoughts, actions and words should strive to reach to the ultimate goal, the infinite.

Tagore believed that education had important aim—personal fulfillment and self-improvement. It was important to borrow knowledge and experience from abroad, but not to use them as the foundation for Indian education. Even so, if there was one European quality which Indian university students must acquire, it was ‘the desire to know, to find out about the laws of nature and to use them to improve the conditions of human beings’.

Science and its applications in the form of technology have led to the power and prosperity of Western countries. But Tagore wanted science to be taught along with India’s own philosophical and spiritual knowledge at Indian universities. In his view, education was not intellectual progress alone. It should also develop a student’s aesthetic nature and creativity. The quest for knowledge and its achievements in an agreeable environment are integral parts of the process of education.

*Freedom* and *creativity* are linked in Tagore’s thoughts. The more people go beyond the limitations of their animal nature, the closer they come to humanism, freedom and unity, and are then able to develop their creativity. He wanted teachers to stimulate the students with constructive doubts, the love of mental adventure, the courage and a will to conquer the world by action and boldness in thoughts and actions. He was against any form of physical punishment to impose discipline. He wanted discipline to come from within, from implication of noble and high ambitions in life. Discipline would
follow naturally when minor actions will be discarded to pursue the grand creative
desires. He wanted the students to think of the whole of mankind. He wanted them to
become universal men and women like him and to overcome feelings of narrow
nationalism in order that the world could live and grow in peace and fellowship.

Tagore promoted education for women, especially women of the lower class who
were playing better roles in the home as caretakers. He has depicted this desire to educate
women in the stories- “The Postmaster”, *The Exercise Book* and “The Woman
Unknown”. Ratan has the ability to learn but is treated by the postmaster, the
representative of patriarchal society, not as an intellectual but as a domestic maid. In the
story, *The Exercise Book*, Uma is restricted to write. In “The Woman Unknown”,
Kalyani who rejects to marry at the marriage time in protest of dowry decides to remain
spinster and to devote her life in educating the girls in future.

He advocated the globalization and opposed the boycotts of foreign goods. As an
internationalist, his thinking was to welcome globalization with different cultures and
languages. To remove poverty and social evils like ‘casteism’ and ‘dowry system’ etc, he
believed in establishing a relationship of mutual understanding and to be compatible to
the values of universal unity. Tagore fully expressed his idea regarding the women-
education and her place in society.

The fictions that Tagore has written, especially the short stories reflect his
‘aesthetics’ discussed in his famous essay, *What is Art*, where he points out that “the
artist combines what is individual with what is universal”. He further notes that one vital
element of art is the element of realization of truth through love and sympathy. These
ideas are mirrored in his stories as he fuses individual experience and ideals associated
with universal truth. He believed that the worldly progress should be judged by how much it has evolved the love for humanity rather than increasing the power.

Tagore discusses the quality of love adding that the world is born out of love, that it is sustained in love, that it moves towards love, and finally enters into love. Love enables man to surpass all limitations and to continue his elation with the world. Love is a means to harmonize the opposite situations of life as of unity and diversity, personal and impersonal, gain and loss, bondage and liberation. It is the poet’s strong perception, hence, that:

   It is the high function of love to welcome all limitations and to transcend them. For nothing is more independent than love, and where else, again, shall we find so much of dependence? \(^{29}\)

   Love is not a product of compulsion but of joy. And this joy which is manifest in creation,

   is the realization of truth of oneness, the oneness of our soul with the world and of the world-soul with the supreme lover. \(^{30}\)

Tagore conceptualizes that action is important to attain God. Tagore stresses the idea that “activity is the play of joy”, for just as the Brahman finds joy in creation or action so does a man need to realize Brahma through his everyday action – a two way process. He is of the opinion that one must work to live, and simultaneously live to work; hence the life and activity are inseparably inter-connected. Tagore emphasizes that God’s tendency itself lies in knowledge and action.

Therefore, one must learn to find joy in work and give oneself entirely to work rather than allow it to overpower us. Tagore staunchly propounds the fact that a good
balance between the two attitudes towards life is much more fruitful for humanity. He believes in the integration of contemplation and work in the world. In the end of one of the lectures, Tagore gives a prayerful note as he says,

Let us once for all dislodge from our minds the feeble fancy that would make out thy joy to be a thing apart from action, thin, formless, and unsustained.\(^3\)

Tagore echoes a simple but universal truth, unless we take joy in our work or action, it ends up being burdensome. As already specified by Tagore, everything in the universe is created and sustained in love and joy.

In order to comprehend this principle in creation, man has divided the whole of creation as either beautiful or non beautiful. However man has understood the idea of beauty differently at every stage of his growth in history, when there was a time in ancient India the beauty cult belonged to a chosen few. Then came a time, when in the history of aesthetics, people believed that beauty existed in things, great and small. Tagore believed that when a person has the power to see the things leaving aside his self-interest, then he can have a true vision of beauty that is present everywhere. He links beauty with truth and opines that through the sense of truth a person can realize order in creation and the sense of beauty helps to feel the harmony in the universe. If we are able to feel the harmony in creation in our soul away from the physical self, then life also becomes an expression of beauty that tends to unite with Brahma. Tagore posits the view that in every object and movement of nature, there is music and harmony of creation as in the child's first utterance, the fall of rain and the shine of the stars in the sky.
Tagore believed that God is not a material possession. All these earthly objects manifest but one truth that they have their meaning not in themselves only but in their relation with the infinite. When a person leaves his worldly desires and surpasses from the lust of worldly possessions, at that moment, his soul moves on the path of the eternal. He puts forward the proposition that God cannot be attained but is experienced. If a man becomes able to seek joy and freedom away from the physical existence that he does not want to get but to be one with Brahman and nothing else. Tagore identifies it with the illustration of the river which joins the larger body of water, the ocean, but cannot become the ocean. Similarly man’s soul though yearns to become one with the Infinite, however cannot become the Brahman Himself. Brahman is Brahman, He is the infinite ideal of perfection but we are not what we truly are, we are ever to become true, ever to become Brahman. There is the eternal play of love in relation between this being and the becoming; and in the depth of this mystery is the source of all truth and beauty that sustains the endless march of creation. Brahman can be known only by the soul, “by her joy in him, by her love”. He gives an eloquent expression to his desire for social betterment. He presents his philosophy in his comprehensive work, *Sadhana* in which he includes the idea of reconciliation between service and renunciation, action and seclusion, self and soul, the finite and the infinite, and the individual and the world. Man as a member of society has to offer himself entirely to the service of other fellows.

The philosophy of Rabindranath is an absolute idealism of the concrete type… Rabindranath’s is a wholeness of vision, which cannot tolerate absolute divisions between body and mind, matter and life, individual and society, community and nation, empire and
Tagore has truly been a man of the world who fulfilled his worldly duties as a family member, on the one hand and on the other, he has been a man of the world who serviced to society at large, and rendered his work in joy and love, and propagated the idea of the oneness of Being, so as to be united with the eternal spirit.

Tagore, himself was a symbol of philosophy, who lived as a simple man and served the society with his superb literary works with a message that all are one and will be a part of paramataman (The God). His writings have the impression of the teachings of the Upanishad. The soul of ancient India gets reflected in them. His idealism developed in India's past heritage and philosophy is thoroughly soaked in Indian origin and development. In Dr. Coomaraswami's words,

The work of Rabindranath is essentially Indian in sentiment and form.33

Along with it, one finds in Rabindranath Tagore that he is the one of the regenerators of Hinduism. He has freely borrowed from Christianity and Western teaching, and has fabricated these alien elements into the woof of his own faith. But more over that he is such a great writer who surpasses all canonical, social, cultural barriers and complies to the ‘humanitarian values’ in his stories which are in its entirety is ‘a self-sufficient entity’.
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