Chapter-3
Tagore’s Short Stories: A Study of Psycho-Socio Realities of Characters

.........the artist finds out the unique, the individual, which yet is in the heart of the universal. When he looks on a tree, he looks on that tree as unique, not as the botanist who generalizes and classifies. It is the function of the artist to particularize that one tree. How does he do it? Not through the peculiarity which is the discord of the unique, but through the personality which is harmony. Therefore he has to find out the inner concordance of that one thing with its outer surroundings of all things.1

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, writes in his critical literary work, Poetics that ‘plot is the first principle, the primary thing, the fundamental thing, the soul of the tragedy’ and the character is only of secondary importance. With this, he meant that in the composition of a dramatic work, plot comes first. According to him, anyone can have a story with many incidents, moving with a breath-speed in which no character is revealed, but one cannot have characters without incidents. But in modern times, it has been recognized that in a story, one neither needs a multiplicity of events nor elaborate dialogues. It is through critical incidents and the brevity of the significant talk that brings out the human motives of the characters. The main stress in writing a literary work has shifted from the ‘incidents’ to study the ‘inner thoughts and motives’ of the characters. Even critics, rhetoricians, and philosophers are trying to explore the psychological dimensions of literature, ranging from an author’s motivation and intentions to the effect
of the text and performances on an audience. The application of psychological principles in the literature contributes to open up the entire realm of human mind and behavioural aspects.

This chapter investigates the characters’ internal forces (as ambition, free will, fate, jealously and greed etc.) and the external forces (societal conventions, established norms in society and determined codes of behaviour and manners of society) that play an important role in the making of the story. It explores the different dimensions of significant interdisciplinary area—psychoanalysis’ in Tagore’s short stories. It tries to document in it the analysis of psycho-socio factors that make the characters for handling a particular situation. In his short stories, the centre is the ‘human-being’, so the theme as a periphery revolves around the characters’ study of thought-processing and behavioural-actions.

In his short-stories, the delineation of the characters, circumscribed by social conventions, the conditions of culture and divided self-sensibility draws up an unsteady correlation between two different worlds—inner and outer. This conflict in characters and situations sharpens Tagore’s perception. He is gifted with a vision which tries to search the reality and with a hyper sensitivity, which makes him see the verisimilitude of things. He fuses the ideas and the narration in a text in such a way that they seem as inseparable. He makes a similitude between the sensory and the psychic, the physical and the metaphysical, the past and the present, and the here and the hereafter. His insight endows him with a vision which imparts him the power to confront the truths of human nature.
In the short stories, Tagore tries to probe into the mind of his characters. He portrays in them what he has felt about them. He presents their feeling, emotions, thoughts and ideas (inner world). He is interested in the inner conflicts of their life. He deals with the problems realistically in the background of a traditional, patriarchal system of society. His thoughts are based on acceptance of life, and not denial of life. He critically analyses the psychology of the characters, examines every ripple of mind, delves deep into the character’s subconscious mind and shows the outcome of the inner struggle with nature, custom and self. It is really surprising that Tagore, in spite of being primarily a poet, was deeply earth-bound and realistic in the threadbare analysis of the psychological conflict of characters.

The story, “Living or Dead?” describes a psychological case that is a result of social pressure. In the story, there is a reference to a repressed character a widow woman (Kadambini) who because of non-functioning of heart-beat for a short while is considered dead. Her re-awakening into life is considered as a ghost. She is ill- treated by her in-laws and she drowns herself in a well in the house to prove that she was alive as any other person and was not a spirit. The story ends on a very pathetic and oxymoron statement-

By dying, Kadambini had given proof that she was not dead.²

Through the story, Tagore is primarily concerned with criticism of social behaviour, which he condemns without didacticism but also without complacency. Women, in Tagore’s short stories are most often a living-dead, a known person whom society deprives of independence. At first, they are subjected to her father, then to her husband, and at last to her son. They are caught in a conflict between the individual
aspirations and social demands. They are torn between self-expression and social stigmas-psychological and material. In the story, the writer deals with a contrast between goodness and evil, innocence and experience, life and death. He blends in it the techniques of psycho-analysis and being unconscious-factors (forging a short span of death) to interpret her existence at social and personal levels. The author leads the audience to participate emotionally in the protagonist’s conflict with her own unconscious experience. He aims his audience to achieve a state of awareness, which implies both an intellectual perception of the wholeness of situations and more importantly emotional behaviour of the turmoiled life. The story also maintains the impact of Aristotle’s theory, *Catharsis* as by the catastrophic end of Kadambini, the audience is purged of the emotions of ‘pity’ and ‘fear’.

Tagore’s short stories divulge in many psychological emotions which are acknowledged through his characters. His main interest is ‘the inner man’, ‘the soul or ‘the psyche’ of the individual and he studies it in all its complexity and manifold varieties, and unravels the intricate tangles of human motives, moods, emotions, and thoughts. He structures the characters with few-deft touches. Not only the central figures, but also the minor characters also present the living and breathing realities. Tagore catches the characters in a cool moment of introspection or of guarded self-revelation and he lets the readers see in their minds the causes and the results of the previous actions. The short-story, “Cabuliwalla” (1892), is a narration of the life-story of Rehmun, the Kabuliwalla, who was a fruit seller in the streets of Calcutta, came from Kabul (Afganistan). He frequented the house of the narrator who lived with his wife and the five-year old talkative daughter, Mini. Mini and Kabuliwala, in a friendly way, spent the
time. They met every day. One morning, it happened that the two policemen were taking away to Kabuliwala for the reason that he had stabbed his neighbour for not returning his borrowed money. All this happened before his fixed time to return to his native land. Years passed when he was released from jail and after that, he came back to meet to Mini. This was the day of her marriage. The narrator (Mini's father) did not allow him to meet her on that auspicious day of her marriage as he was a criminal and he did not want that his presence would bring a bad luck for her. After denial of his request to see Mini once, he showed a filthy paper imprinted with the impression of his own little daughter which he had brought when he came to Calcutta from Kabul, Afganistan. While he was returning back, he saw a glimpse of Mini as a bride. He could not feel the old friendship.

Tagore narrates:

I remembered the day when the Cabuliwallah and my Mini had first met, and I felt sad. When she had gone, Rahmun heaved a deep sigh, and sat down on the floor. The idea had suddenly come to him that his daughter too must have grown in this long time, and that he would have to make friends with her anew. Assuredly he would not find her as he used to know her. And besides, what might not have happened to her in these eight years?3

At this juncture, the story reminds of Eliot’s, *Objective Correlative* theory, which defines as

a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion: such that when external facts,
which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.\(^4\)

As he sees Mini, he is reminded of his own daughter who would have grown up like Mini in Kabul. The marriage pipes sounded but Rahmun sat on seeing before him the great mountain of Afghanistan. The narrator gave a hundred rupee note to him so that he could go back to his country and visit his daughter, and let that happiness of his meeting bring good fortune to Mini. The narrator had to cut short some of the entertainment because of this charity. But the marriage feast was all more full of happiness to him than earlier because the thought that a long-lost father would meet again his only child in the distant land satisfied his inner self. The myth-making power of Tagore is evidently seen in this story. Here the character is seized by inward vision and presented with total understanding and love. K.R. Iyengar, comments on the story:

The child sees the Cabuliwallah with the eyes of trust and affection, and so the ‘beast’ becomes ‘Beauty’ and the stranger becomes the Friend. In due course, the child Mini–‘who is incapable of wasting a minute in silence’–becomes a bashful girl, and with a few deft touches Tagore suggests the miracle of the bud’s unfoldment as the full-blown flower.\(^5\)

Tagore uses the term-\textit{Nostalgia} for distancing the past by the protagonist (Kabuliwala). Through Mini, Tagore opens before the readers the innocent world of children. The story not only expresses the feelings of the main character (Kabuliwala) but of the narrator himself to understand his fatherly feelings. Tagore contrasts the innocence and playfulness of Mini with the seriousness of her father and the extreme loving-nature
of Kabuliwala who sees the reflection of his own daughter in Mini. Tagore also expresses child psychology when Mini baffles her father by asking him “Father, what relation is mother to you?” Mini could make her noble, educated and high-ranking father realize that the illiterate, Kabuliwala is also a father like him. Mini’s unfriendly behaviour to the Kabuliwala when he paid his final visit from the jail, might have grieved his heart and that made him think about the possible strange behaviour, he would get from his own daughter. It is this pathos that gives sweetness to this story. As a sentimental story, it is knitted with the strings of inner heart. This one of the best of Tagore’s stories that is most powerful in arousing the passionate emotions of a human being.

Tagore had a unique natural genius to read women’s minds and he analysed their strange structure through his stories. He tells the world that Indian women are highly sacrificing, pure, loving, kind and obedient. They are devoted to their husbands, love their children deeply, and give due reverence and consideration to their in-laws, but in some stories, like "The Elder Sister", he shows their struggling nature if they are not given a faithful response by their husband. In the short-stories, he probes deep into the lives of the Indian women. The short-story, “The Skeleton” depicts the ‘unfulfilled desires’ of a young widow woman. Her spirit is restless even after her death. The spirit says that her skeleton is hanging in a classroom, and the teacher teaches the basics of human anatomy with it to his students. At a night, the spirit narrates to a young student her sorrowful story. She tells him that her husband died just two months after their marriage when she was only sixteen. She returns to her parental home. There she got infatuated with Shekhar, her brother’s doctor friend. But Shekhar was engaged somewhere else. He was about to go for his marriage. On the fixed day, his marriage was
to be celebrated late at night. Before starting, the doctor and her brother were having a glass of wine together on the terrace as it was their daily habit. Meanwhile, she went down to the dispensary and got a little powder that she had dropped into the doctor’s glass. She went into her room and dressed herself in her bridal-garments of silk and gold, put on her jewellery and ornaments put the red mark of wife-hood on the parting in her hair. And then under the tree in the garden, she prepared her bed. She herself had eaten the poison. She dressed up like a bride and waited for her union with her eternal love. She thought that she would unite with her lover as a spirit. When she awoke, she found herself as a ‘skeleton’ and three urchins were practicing osteology from her skeleton. Soon, in the morning light, the soul disappeared but it left on the narrator’s mind the reflections of joys and grief of the young woman.

Tagore shows aptly that in those social surroundings, women were not allowed to express their desires. They would die with agony in their hearts. Their youthful desires remained unfulfilled. The society was responsible for the insensitive attitude towards women.

The story can be analysed with reference to Freud’s theory of unconscious and conscious mind-processes. In this process, the ‘unconscious’ is a "primary process" that consists of symbolic and condensed thoughts, and a "secondary process" that consists of logical and conscious thoughts. In the story, the protagonist-the young widow woman’s infatuation with the doctor was an ‘unconscious’ attempt but to mix the toxic substance in the drink was a ‘conscious’ attempt. According to Freud, the unacceptable sexual wishes were repressed into the System Unconscious, unconscious due to society's condemnation of premarital sexual activity, and this repression caused anxiety and depression.
The writer also uses the feminine symbols—‘Bridal robes of silk’, ‘gold’, ‘scent of Jasmine and Bela’, ‘Canari coloured sari’, ‘garland of white Jasmine blossoms’ and ‘crystal bangle’s—in the story to produce the effect of repressed feelings that want to break the societal-bounds structured for a widow. She is self-obsessed. She looks upon herself as a beautiful woman and has the feeling of *narcissism* (image of self-love). As she tells—

Well! Are you perhaps thinking that the sight of one’s own beauty would soon grow wearisome? Ah no! For I did not see myself with my own eyes. I was then one and also two. I used to see myself as though I were the doctor; I gazed, I was charmed, I fell madly in love. But, in spite of all the caresses I lavished on myself, a sigh would wander about my heart, moaning like the evening breeze.6

She passes through the state of ‘libido’ which is the energy drive associated with the sexual-desire. The *libido* in the individual is a more generalized drive to which Freud calls *Eros* (the Greek word for ‘love’), which roughly means ---the life-instinct. Tagore presents the sensual imagery and her suppressed sensual desires as she tells---

And I spreading a snow white sheet on the lawn would lie on it with my head on my arm. With studied carelessness the other arm would rest lightly on the soft sheet, and I would imagine to myself that someone had caught sight of the wonderful pose of my hand, that someone had clasped it in both of his and imprinted a kiss on its rosy palm, and was slowly walking away. What if I ended the story here? How would it do?7
Her response opens up a new vista of psychological analysis. Perhaps her widowhood and the social restraints that accompany this state serves as a catalyst in opening up hitherto tabooed frontiers of self-expression. In order to gratify her desires, she opts to break the social bondage by ending her life. Not able to achieve the state of material love, she chooses –Thanatos- (a Greek word for ‘death’) which means –the death instinct.

The story becomes an illustration of *Interpersonal theory* that was first introduced by Harry Stack Sullivan, and developed further by Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Clara Thompson, Erich Fromm. This theory accents the nuances of interpersonal interactions, particularly how individuals protect themselves from anxiety by establishing collusive interactions with others, and the relevance of actual experiences with other persons developmentally (e.g. family and peers) as well as in the present. This is contrasted with the primacy of intra-psychic forces as the woman shares her feelings with the young student. Those repressed feelings were not only specifically of the young woman but they are also represented the feelings of the young widow women in general.

The short-story, “The River stairs” is a very sensitive story. It is narrated by the stairs of a river, the Ganges. The whole incident happens there. Kusum, a girl of seven years used to come there to bring water. She was married. But after one year, she became widow. People said that her husband had worked in some far off place. She had met him only once or twice. A letter brought her the news of his death. Ten years slipped away. One morning, a tall, young, fair skinned sanyasi came to take shelter in Shiva Temple near Ganga. People began to worship him as a holy man. He would expound the Gita’s preachings. Some people sought him for counsel, some for spells and some for
medicines. After some months, a fair was held near the Ganges. Many of the pilgrims visited the sanyasi, among them were a party of women from the village where Kusum had been married. They recognized that he was Kusum’s husband. But this identity was not sure, so the matter spread no further. Kusum came daily to bow at his feet. She used to listen to his teachings on religion. She daily worshipped and served at the temple. But for sometimes, she gave up visiting the temple. The sanyasi sent for her. He asked her the reason of her neglecting the service of god. She replied that she saw a dream in which she was the sinner as she saw a person clasping her hand and whispering of love. When he inquired who he was, she replied without losing faith;

If you bid me, I must speak out. But, then, I cannot explain it clearly. You Master, must have guessed it all. I adored one as a god, I worshipped him, and the bliss of that devotion filled my heart to fullness. But one night I dreamt that the lord of my heart was sitting in a garden somewhere, clasping my right hand in his left, and whispering to me of love. The whole scene did not appear to me at all strange. The dream vanished, but its hold on me remained. Next day when I beheld him he appeared in another light than before. That dream picture continued to haunt my mind. I fled far from him in fear, and the picture clung to me. Thence forth my heart has known no peace, all has grown dark within me!8

She told that it was the sanyasi himself whom she adored as a god. After sensing her passion for him, the sanyasi thought it better to leave that place because according to
him, the sanyasis should remain away from worldly pleasures. So, the story is a depiction of two pure lives. They lead their life as is destined by fate. In the story, there are hints that the Sanyasi was her husband who had become a Sanyasi and lied that he was died. The Sanyasi proves to be a selfish, deceitful, dishonest and irresponsible person. Tagore reveals the heart of Kusum as pure and innocent. He delineates her as a spiritual woman. He interprets her inner self with a masterly intuitive art. She felt his presence as her husband’s. When he left the place, she did not want to live without him. Hence she sacrificed her life without him by dying in the river.

The idea behind this story is that the societal restrictions were so dominant that the sexual wishes were to be repressed into an unconscious state, and that the energy of these unconscious wishes turned into anxiety or physical symptoms. Kusum vacillates between two contradictory forces- withdrawal (social restrictions to a widow) and involvement (Personal desires), detachment (social restrictions) and attachment (repressed desires of life).

Freud had theorized that ‘dreams’ had symbolic significance, and generally were specific to the dreamer. He published this theory in his book, “The Interpretation of Dreams” (1900). In the story, when the Sanyasi makes a scrutiny of Kusum’s repression and crisis, the narrator uses the tool of dream-sequence and probes into her unconscious mind process. The character of Kusum becomes specific as she voices out her dream and feelings innocently. She becomes a representative of those girls who repress their inner wishes of sexual drive and want to get fulfillment in love but are not able to achieve it either because of patriarchy or any other reason.
Without a word more Kusum bowed to him, and placed the dust of his feet on her head. He left the place. 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.\(^9\)

Nature becomes expression of the emotions. In the end of the story, the river feels the splash and Kusum dies. Her action gives birth to a number of questions: Why does she commit suicide? What was her mental condition? Was she feeling guilty? The story presents the two different actions of male and female. The female surrenders her life by dying and loses her identity while the male after rejecting the pleasures maintains his identity as a sanyasi. This shows that the female is sentimental while male is logical but Tagore expects his character to carry only pure thoughts because only pure thoughts can lead to pure actions. In fact, the purity of the character of Kusum heightens her dignity. The story flows like the river Ganges but the climax as a twist stuns the reader. The story also communicates the feeling of *aesthetic purity* of emotion. The characters of Kusum and the Sanyasi represent themselves as steadfast in their convictions, and they continue to maintain the ideology they have willingly chosen. Tagore balancing the superb height of both the characters seems to suggest that the social equality was a dire necessity in the contemporary period. The sanyasi reaches to the process of *Sublimation* where by the repressed feelings are promoted into a grander disguised state.

The story, “The Conclusion”, describes the development of love after marriage. Mrinmayi, the heroine, is an unsophisticated girl who always behaved like a tom-boy. She gets married to Apurba. Even after marriage, she retains her strong adherence to her
pre-adolescent self. Her efforts to restore the past days put impediments in her life. Theorizing this state, Homi Bhabha, an Indian physicist, writes-

Remembering is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present.10

Once she runs away from her in-law’s house and reaches to her parental home. But there, she feels unhappy. She finds that her attitude is changing. She does not like to play with her old playmates. She feels depressed. Then she returns in her in-law’s house. Transformation takes place in her personality. Now, she behaves like a married woman, cares for her husband. The story explores the tension in the inner realm of the girl where she finds herself tussling with the changing situation. The social norms ultimately succeed and undermine her individual efforts. The social behaviour trespasses into her individual space and influences her behaviour.

As the title, is suggestive in itself, indicates the completion of the process with which the girl’s individuality gets transformation. Because of social interventions, she emerges as a submissive wife, the one whom the society appreciates, accepts and values. The story can be seen in terms of Self psychology which was proposed originally by Heinz Kohut, and has further been developed by Arnold Goldberg, Frank Lachmann, Paul and Anna Ornstein, Marian Tolpin, and other theorists. It emphasizes the development of a stable and integrated sense of ‘self’ through empathic contacts with other humans for mirroring, idealization, and twinship, and thereby strengthen the developing ‘self’. The process proceeds through "transmuting internalizations" in which a
character gradually internalizes with other characters. Mrinmayi transforms from a tomboyish nature into a loving woman through contact of other characters of her in-law’s house.

The story, “Subha” depicts the close affinity between man and Nature. Subha was the youngest of the three daughters of Banikantha. Her elder sisters were married. Subha (Subhashini) was a dumb girl. She was as a silent weight upon the heart of her parents. She lived in a small village with her parents. The little girl, when her work was done, she went saliently to the banks of the nearby river. She had the realization from her earliest childhood that God had sent her like a curse to her father’s house, so she kept away from ordinary people and began to live in the company of nature. The sounds of nature joined with the throbbing of her heart.

They became one vast wave of sound, which beat upon her restless soul. This murmur and movement of Nature were the dumb girl’s language.¹¹

The two cows in the house were her only companions whom she loved and cared much. Whenever she was hurt by anyone she would go to these friends for sharing her grief. She had a companion named Pratap, the youngest boy of the Gosains. By nature he was a lazy fellow. His main interest was to catch fish. Subha was growing up, the thought of her marriage filled her parents with anxiety. Her father decided that they should shift to Calcutta but it was heart-rending for her to leave the place, the streams, the cows, the nature and her friend, Pratap with whom she had grown up. Subha went out of her room and threw herself down on the grass beside the river. And putting her arms about the Earth- her strong, silent mother, she requested her not to let her leave her. Soon her
marriage was fixed but her defect was not disclosed to the bridegroom’s party. Her displeasure and tears were uninfluential in producing any effect on her parents and the proposer of the marriage. The marriage was performed on a fixed day, with the hope that that would bring good luck to her. The husband’s work lay in the west, and shortly after the marriage, he took her there. In less than ten days, everyone at that place knew that the girl was dumb. How her heart felt the pain, only God could hear. That marriage gave Subha with everlasting miseries and she was in extreme loss as she lost nature but could not gain man. The tragedy of her life could be felt only in a few short sentences and the reader is left to think over human suffering which cannot be explained or understood as what would have happened to Subha when people knew about her dumbness. She would have been as a fish out of water, as uprooted from her belongings. One can guess what happened to Subha when her dumbness was disclosed. In the words of Srinivasa lyengar-

She was soon abandoned by her husband for another, as casually as one exchanges one pencil for another; but has not the dumb girl – even she – feelings of her own?.

Subha was really a pathetic character who in the dumb agony of the human heart denied all possibility of self-expression because of her dumbness. She was not able to reveal her agony of the heart so was denied to give expression to her 'self'. The sweet and loving-natured Subha was denied the comfort and consolation of pouring out her sorrows into some sympathetic ears and receiving the sympathetic and encouraging words from others. Tagore expresses this pathetic situation with a poetic insight that is his specialty. The readers remain surprised at Tagore’s insight to penetrate into human minds. Even the
title of the story is ironical 'Subha', short form of Subhashini means one who speaks well. But Subha, of the story, is destined by fate to be a mute speaker.

“The Home-coming” (The Chhutti) is a story of Phatik, a young boy who lives in a village with his widowed mother and brother. He was the leader of the boys of his age group, naughty by nature, playing games with his friends, little quarrels with his younger brother for which he often got rebuked by his mother – in short it could be said that he lived a carefree childhood. Then on a day, his maternal uncle came in their house. Seeing the sorrowful condition in which, his sister and her children were living in, he offered to take along Phatik to his home in Calcutta, to enroll him in school and give him the education and upbringing that he deserved. Pathik, though was not interested in going there but had to go against his wishes. However, uncle's wife and two sons weren’t happy with the sudden intrusion of this boy into their life. But Phatik’s uncle was adamant. He wanted his nephew to live in their house and remain with his sons, hoping that with time, he would be accepted by his family.

Phatik is excited to go in new school, but is again and again troubled by his cousins and aunt. He was rebuked for every mischief whether committed by him or not. He requested his uncle to send him back. But his uncle was not ready for it. Phatik started to ignore his cousins’ and aunt’s complaints and rebukes and began to remain in his own world. When he asked his uncle about when he could visit his mother and brother, his uncle replied, when there is ‘chhutti’ (holiday) in the school, which is the Puja holidays, almost three months later. Whenever he felt disheartened, he began to write a letter in the name of his mother, where instead of complaining, he praised the members of his new family and also asked her to permit him to visit him, with the
promise that now he would not be so naughty as to fight with his younger brother. One
day, when he was much scolded by his aunt, he decided to leave the place and return to
his own home back. When his uncle did not find him, he rebuked his family members for
their misbehavior with the boy. A fisherman brought him back there in an unconscious
state. He told the Uncle that he was trying to go to his village through river ways. When
the aunt saw him in such a state, she exclaimed- “What a heap of trouble this boy has
given us. Hadn’t you better send him home?

Phatik heard her words, and sobbed out loud: “Uncle, I was just going home; but
they dragged me back again.”

He became ill. The Uncle called a doctor who after checking him declared that the
boy might not survive for a long time. Listening this, the uncle was very much heart-
stricken. He had taken the responsibility of Phatik but now he was failed in that.
Unconsciously, Phatik was calling to his mother. Tears were rolling from his eyes. His
uncle wiped his tears but the boy again began to mutter

Mother,” he cried, “don’t beat me like that! Mother! I am telling
the truth!"  

His uncle sent a message to his mother and told about it to Phatik. He began to cry
out as if fathoming the distance covered by mother to reach there:

By the mark!-three fathoms. By the mark-four fathoms. By the
mark--He had heard the sailor on the river-steamer calling out
the mark on the plumb-line. Now he was himself plumbing an
unfathomable sea."
and soon Phatik’s mother arrives. Phatik very slowly turned his head and, without seeing anybody, said: “Mother, the holidays have come."

Phatik bids farewell adieu and goes on a ‘chhutti’, a holiday—a very long holiday. He returns home only through death. The three scenes are well contrasted: play and home life in the village, school and relatives in Calcutta and the fatal illness as a climax. When dying, he remembers his home and sees his mother.

The inclusive voice of the story is that the tragic end would not have been intended by the writer if some simple and normal behaviour patterns were adopted. No person, whether young or old likes to live in a hostile environment, where the people surrounding are looking to bring the person down all the time. A little love, a little understanding to, a little co-operation would have been helpful to go on the path of strong relationships, develop a harmonious environment and to build an amicable and a secured future. But Phatik received none of these behaviour patterns and so the life of an innocent boy was lost as wavering in other’s hands. In the story, Tagore expresses the psychology of the child how he feels the home-sickness, alienation and dislocation.

In the story, “The Castaway” (1895), Sharat, a wealthy man, is married to a young wife, Kiran. She often lived with her family in the city. A young neglected boy (named Nilakanta) of a village theatrical troupe runs away from a travelling musical group and sorts to take up shelter with Sharat and Kiran. The boy was never behaved as a human being before he met Kiran. She is just delighted and treats the young teenage as though he were her child. Some years passed and Sharat begins to hate the boy and feels jealous.
of him to see the inclination of Kiran towards him. The situation becomes complex when Sharat’s younger brother, Satish, who is as old as Kiran, visits them in summer. He and Kiran become very close friends, their closeness is innocent but her husband gets angry with and jealous of his brother, but Nilkanta is also extremely jealous of Satish, for diverting Kiran's attentions from him. He feels neglected by Kiran and thinks Satish to be the cause of this change. Eventually Nilkanta puts a problem to all the family when he steals an ink pot of Satish. When inquired, the boy swears that he didn’t steal it. Kiran discovers that he did it, but she doesn’t tell the truth. Nilanta tells Kiran that he was not a thief what he had done only as revenge to Satish for turning aside her attention towards him. To his credit, Kiran also favours his innocent love and saves him to be accused of as a thief.

The characters-Subha (“Subha”), Mrinal (“The Conclusion”), Phatik (“The Home-Coming”) and Nilkanta (“The Castaway”) pass through the process of isolation and displacement. The character begins to experience a strong memory of the cuisine-to sail to and fro making no particular port- that one relished back at one's home.

The story, “Once There Was A King” is also based on child’s psychology. It has some autobiographical elements. It depicts the mentality of a nine years old boy. The story has ‘a story within the story’ in which nine years old Tagore wanted to escape from his study but listens a story of a Brahmin boy from his grandmother. In the internal story, he wants to know of the princess in the palace and what is Brahmin boy’s relationship with her. Tagore with his simple narrative skill made the readers to sit in the edge of the seat and ends the story with the death of the Brahmin boy to whom till the end is not known that the princess is his wife. Tagore as a child and the readers feel sorry at
Brahmin boy's fate. The title itself showed that the story is for the children. Through the story, the writer points out that the imagination of a child is pure and untainted. A child is an embodiment of innocence, ignorance and purity.

The title of the story, “The Wife’s Letter” (Streer Patra), stresses on the word 'wife' because the wife voices to her desire through the letter. The story delineates a radical approach of its protagonist as well as the writer himself. The path-breaking radicalism is voiced in the very opening: “... to this day I have never written you a letter. I have always been at hand—you have heard so many words from my lips, and I too have listened to you—but there has never been an interval in which a letter might have written.”

This boldness offers a prelude to the protagonist’s autobiographical mode of narration. Mrinal surpasses in her ability to endure the odd situations. The story covers Mrinal’s girlhood, her state of deprivation as a daughter and a wife. Mrinal questions the false behaviour everywhere that limited her existence. She expresses her wish to transcend them by crossing the imposed limitation by patriarchy for women. She wants to get freedom when she sees the situation of the two females in her house-her sister-in-law and her younger sister, Bindu as suppressed figures in the family. Mrinal's sister-in-law is an obedient wife. She is as an ideal Hindu wife. She is weak in showing her love for her younger sister who has no one in her family who could take care of her.

The ill-treatment with her in the family stirs Mrinal's heart. She tries her best to protest and take care of her. They become companions. Mrinal feels:

She developed so great a love for me that it made me afraid. I had never seen such an image of love in my household. I had
read of such love in books, but that was love between men and
women ... after so many years, this ugly girl became obsessed
with my beauty ... She loved to handle the weight of my hair
...The girl was infatuated with me.16

The story here touches the chord of Lesbian Feminism Ideology, which evolved in
the late 1970s and early 1980s. Martha Shelly, a Lesbian Feminist urges,

Lesbianism is really the heart of the women’s liberation
movement. For, in order to throw off the oppression of the male
caste, women must unite.17

Tagore establishes the fact that women themselves should create a space for their
survival.

He knew that the existing social system was against women’s
emancipation and therefore he relied heavily on women’s wish to
make them free from the bondages. Tagore has created a woman
character from a feminist perspective nearly nine decades before
the ideology was evolved. This reveals how Rabindranath Tagore
justly interpreted the female psyche.18

The positive image of the lesbian as a woman of strength and independence
continued as a central thesis of the Lesbian Feminist theory. As Elsa Gidlow, an elderly
Lesbian poet puts it:

It usually included erotic attraction to women, although we know
there have been many women of Lesbian personality who never
had any sexual relations with one another. What is strongly a part of the Lesbian personality is loyalty and love for other women.\textsuperscript{19}

Tagore presents the Lesbian Feminist ideological perspective. His text enables a woman to tell and write her story about the culture of the times and to unravel the story of gender relationships. Mrinal is a New Woman envisioned by Tagore who challenges the patriarchal oppression and liberates from the same. Mrinal and Bindu's love is interrupted by society as Bindu is forced to lead a conventional role of a wife. On feeling unattracted by her forced marriage, she returns to Mrinal but now she feels cut off from her love Mrinal. Depressed by her life, she commits suicide. Mrinal’s sarcasm directed towards the society lies in her cautionary comment:

But one should reflect why this play-acting takes its toll only of the saris of Bengali women, not of the dhotis of brave Bengali gentlemen.” In interpreting Bindu’s self-immolation, Mrinal, shares the sensitivity of the author, who manifested an equal admiration for his deceased character, identifying her with the ‘life’s deity’ (Jiban-Debata). In Tagore’s own words, this deity linked his life “to the vast, the immense through separation and deep pain.\textsuperscript{20}

Tagore shares his thoughts with Mrinal by writing that the end act of Bindu brings her to the union of “Jiban Debta”. Mrinal speaks of Bindu with a deeper admiration: “There she is infinite.” As for her own scripting the text, Mrinal opts for something more radical step. She resolves astutely:
But I will never again return to your house at number 27, Makhan Baral Lane. I have seen Bindu. I have learnt what it means to be a woman in this domestic world. I need no more of it.” She never seeks solace in the deathbed. Rather, she chooses a life that would be her own. Instead of searching security within the confines of four walls, she tends to justify her position in the vast cosmos. Her self-realization is complete with the declaration: How trivial is this daily commerce of my life, how trivial are its set rules, set habits, set phrases, set blows.21

Finally, it is this realization that effaces the obscurity of her identity. The shroud of Mejo- Bou disappears leaving Mrinal, radiant with the knowledge of self-discovery. Her decision to leave the home is like Mira bai's decision as she says: “I too shall live. At last I live.” However, the question remains-how far did she succeed in her attempt? The story concludes with her resolution to undertake a new journey. But will that journey secure complete freedom from social inhibitions? Will her individual assertion and resolution really prosper ignoring all impediments? Probably, the mystery remains unresolved forever.

The story, “The Woman Unknown” (Aprichita) can be seen in the perspective of Modern conflict theory that addresses emotional symptoms and character- traits as complex solutions to mental conflict. It dispenses with the concepts of a fixed id, ego and superego, and instead posits conscious and unconscious conflict among wishes.
(dependent, controlling, sexual, and aggressive), guilt and shame, emotions especially anxiety and depressive affect), and defensive operations that shut off from consciousness some aspect of the others.²²

Anupam, the fiancée of the protagonist, Kalyani, narrates the story. His widowed wealthy mother and his maternal uncle brought him up. He is a postgraduate, an obedient son and an eligible bachelor” because he lacks “the quality to disobey. . . and has been trained to follow the orders from the women’s quarters.²³

His engagement to the daughter of a doctor, Sambunath Babu of Kanpur, is fixed. The cash and quantum of gold ornaments to be given to the bridegroom’s family by way of dowry is also settled to the satisfaction of the bridegroom’s maternal uncle. When Sambunath Babu seeks Anupam’s opinion in the matter of verification of the gold ornaments, he realizes that Anupam is under the control of his uncle. The goldsmith certifies that the jewellery is all pure gold. However, after the dinner is over, Sambunath Babu announces,

I cannot give my daughter in marriage to a family that considers me capable of stealing her gold.²⁴

The marriage is broken off. By refusing to marry her daughter in a dowry-gluttonous family, the bride’s father asserts his self-dignity. Tagore, the humanist, reveals his concern for the bride’s father by this sheer conception. Everyone in the family of
Anupam is angry at the boldness of the girl’s father. They threaten him that it would be difficult for him to get his daughter married.

Tagore on one hand depicts the several nuances of gender bias regarding masculine and feminine attitudes of contemporary society and on the other hand, presents a progressive thinking father who takes a decision regarding his daughter’s marriage that could have effectively ruined her by losing the chance of her ever marrying. Anupam comes to know that the girl has turned down many proposals offered during the one year. He imagines that the reason for the rejection by Kalyani is that she languishes for him. He dreams that the girl’s father

... swallows his pride and comes to our doorstep.\textsuperscript{25}

With all humbleness, he will seek his acceptance for marrying his daughter. However, nothing happens as he has dreamt.

In the story, Freud’s theory of \textit{Id}, \textit{Ego} and \textit{Super Ego} works, where the hero, Anupam wants to marry Kalyani (\textit{Id}) (the organized part of the personality structure that assimilates the basic drives. \textit{Id} acts on the pleasure principle, focuses on selfish and instant self gratification. But when her maternal uncle at their marriage time weighs and testifies the gold of dowry, the marriage is broken by Kalyani’s father. After this in Anupam’s character-the \textit{Ego} works. (It acts according to the reality principle. It seeks to please the \textit{Id}’s drive in realistic ways that will benefit in long term rather bringing grief). He says---

“A girl’s father and such audacity! What was the world coming to! “We will see how he gets his daughter married now,” they threatened. (\textit{Ego})
His behaviour reflects the *Super Ego* that aims for perfection and is the organized part of the personality structure. He tries to act in a socially appropriate manner when he says---

I was twenty three then; now I am twenty seven. I have not given up hope yet, but I have given up my uncle. Since I am the only child, my mother has not been able to give me up. Do I have any hopes of marriage? None whatsoever. I live in the faith which an unknown melodious voice had instilled in me on a dark night: there is room here. There is room for me. There must be. Or else, where would I go? Thus years come and go, I stay on. I meet her; I listen to her voice; I try and be useful to her whenever I can, and my heart tells me that this is indeed where I belong. I have found a place for myself. O my unknown woman, I have not got to know you full well; I never will. But I am fortunate, I have found my space.\(^2^6\)

Despite his true love for her, he never gets shattered when he understands that Kalyani wouldn’t marry him. Instead, he too chooses to remain unmarried for the rest of his life. He takes this ultimate decision because he has found a special place for her in his heart. Therefore, he will not need a second place to live in. Thus, we can attribute his love for Kalyani as the spiritual achievement which is far superior to that of physical one.

Tagore’s short stories depict the working of the human mind compassionately and in a different light. His prose becomes simple and direct in his descriptions of the people
of Bengal of day-to-day life, the people of his own beloved land, whereas his aristocratic classes are dealt with in a language of directness. The stories are full of pathos and the readers feel that they have been transported to a different world; where they are forced to think with their full capacity to empathize with the characters. Tagore’s short stories depict “hope and aspirations, disappointments and frustrations, joys and sorrows of life”

He exposes the inner process of Indian psyche and shows its relation to the society. The characters are portrayed as struggling, on the one hand, with the realities of Indian life and strain with which they are burdened, on the other hand, with psychic conflicts of personal feelings. In their endeavour to come to terms with the reality of their situation and depending on the degree of their affectability and the pressure of the external circumstances, these characters react in three different ways-

1. They move too far away from the ordinary course of life i.e. they commit suicide (as in the story- ‘Living Or Dead?, ’The River-Stairs’ etc).

2. On being compelled to silently suffer the strain of life, they defy the social injunctions but only with an attitude of revenge (As in ‘The Castaway’) and necessitated by an inner compulsion to escape (“Home Coming”, “The Conclusion”-the characters’ attempt to escape from home).

3. They find a measure of fulfillment in their connection to the world. (“The Wife’s letter”, “The Woman Unknown” “The Conclusion”- as ‘New Woman’)

Tagore emotionally and intellectually well-equipped gives vivid presentation of psychological realities of Indian life. He discovers the depths of the inner self, plunges below the surface existence and explores those depths which make the characters as lucid
brilliant and explicable reflection of a different personality. He employs the revolutionary findings of modern psychology for creative purposes.

Raicharan is the central character in the story, “My Lord, The Baby” (1891). He was of twelve years when he came to work in the house of Anukul. Anukul got married and now he found that he had two masters instead of one; he was soon comforted however by a new arrival in the house. He loved to Anukul’s son and so he became good friend and entertainer to him. On a rainy day, when the afternoon was bright, the child compelled him to take him to the rice fields, on the bank of the river, Padma. He then insisted on that he should bring some flowers from the large Kadamba tree in the mud. When he went for it, the child was drawn by Nature to the river. When he returned with flowers, he found that the little master was not there. Only his go-cart was found. Heartbroken, he ran up and down the fields calling the child till evening. Not finding him and the child, Anukul’s wife sent for him and he was brought to the house. He told her what had happened there. They suspected that the child was either drowned or kidnapped by Gypsies. For this, he was removed from his master’s house. He returned to his village. In his old age, he was blessed with a son. He could not love the child at first because he in mind had a memory of his master’s dead son. The child started to speak exactly as his dead little master. He treated the child as the reborn child of his master. He gave him delicious food, costly dresses and good education. To meet his expenses, he served in a house. In this way, twelve years passed. Phailna, as the boy was named, lived like a rich man’s son. Raicharan was old and weak and so he gave up his work. He now took determination. He came to Anukul’s house one evening and told him and his wife that it was not Padma River that stole their baby, but he had done that. He told that the child
was with him and he would bring him the next day. Though Anukul was suspicious of this revelation of the secret but he believed on it as it was not easy to doubt his faithful servant. The next day he took the child there. Anukul and his wife welcomed the boy with affection. They could not however forgive their old servant and asked where he would go since he was old. None would take him as a servant. Much pathos is created at the end of the story- Phailna was angry at first, when he saw that he was the wealthy Anukul’s son and not Raicharan’s, because he thought that all this time he had been cheated of his birth right. But seeing Raicharan so unhappy, he generously said to Anukul:

“Father, forgive him. Even if you don’t let him live with us, let him have a small monthly pension.” After hearing this, Raicharan did not utter another word. He looked for the last time on the face of his son; he made obeisance to his lord master and mistress. Then he went out, and was mingled with the numberless people of the world.27

At the end of the month, some money was sent by Anukul in at Raicharan’s address, but the money came back as Raicharan could not be found there. Raicharan’s loyalty to his master was exceptional. This guilt, in his mind that he was responsible for his little master’s death, made him offer his own son to the master. The guilt made him think that the drowned child was reborn in his house. He reared the boy as his little master and surrendered him finally to his old master. There can be no better sacrifice than this. But the pathos lies in the fact that his own dear son, for whom he lived, dismissed
him. Heart-broken, he ended his life. The characters of Raicharan and his son are also a contrast between humanity and inhumanity.

The Object-relations theory although often attributed to Melanie Klein, were actually first mentioned by Sigmund Freud in his early concepts of drive theory.²⁸

can be applied in the story, “The Postmaster” that is a story about the relationship of a postmaster and an orphan girl, who cares of him heartily. This theory attempts to explain the rise and fall in human relationships through a study of how internal representations of the ‘self’ and ‘others’ are organized. It suggests object-relations problems (typically developmental delays throughout life) include disturbances in an individual's capacity to feel warmth, empathy, trust, sense of security, identity stability, consistent emotional closeness, and stability in relationships with significant others.

The story is an account of the city-bred young man having his first experience of village life. He is lonely. His duties are light and it is difficult for him to spend his spare time. He tries his hand at verse-making, transforming the surrounding weeds into beautiful flowers though he would have changed them with greater pleasure to city roads flanked with palatial houses. His only companion is a twelve years orphan girl who does household work for him. As a background we have the changing face of Nature with flow of seasons, especially the transition from summer to the monsoon rains. The postmaster’s illness and the care taken by the child who nurses him back to health is lightly sketched. The aftermath introduces the pathos of the story: the postmaster applies for a transfer and on his application being refused resigns his post and will go back to Calcutta.
“The postmaster said: ‘I am going away tomorrow, Ratan.’

‘Where are you going, Dada?’

‘I am going home.’

‘When will you come back?’

‘I am not coming back.’

Ratan asked no other question. The postmaster, of his own accord, went on to tell her that his application for a transfer had been rejected, so he had resigned his post, and was going home.29

When he breaks this news to the child she wants to accompany him, a request, this, which the postmaster cannot comply with.

Many new things to think of had entered her little brain, when the postmaster had finished his supper, the girl suddenly asked him: ‘Dada, will you take me to your home?’ He rejected and said, ‘you need not be anxious about my going away, Ratan; I shall tell my successor to look after you.’ These words were kindly meant, no doubt: but inscrutable are the ways of a woman’s heart! Ratan had borne many a scolding from her master without complaint, but these kind words she could not bear. She burst out weeping, and said: ‘No, no, you need not tell anybody anything at all about me; I don’t want to stay on here.’ The postmaster was dumbfounded. He had never seen Ratan like this before.30
He would like her to work for his successor but she will not: when he leaves she refuses his money-gift and wanders about the empty house with a vain hope of his return while he sits in his boat ruminating on the ‘hails’ and ‘farewells’ of the world. So the traveler, borne on the breast of the swift-flowing river, consoled himself with philosophical reflections on the numberless meetings and partings going on in the world-on death, the great parting, form which none returns.

But Ratan had no philosophy. She was wandering about the post office in a flood of tears. It may be that she had still a lurking hope in some corner of her heart that her Dada would return, and that is why she could not tear herself away. Alas for the foolish human heart!

There is the utmost economy of words through casual conversation, description of nature and simple analysis of thinking are ruled out. The postmaster goes back to his previous world but what about the adolescent child? The postmaster sees that relationship with the consciousness of society. The story suggests the voices of the inner soul of the girl and the social fear felt by various waves of mind of the Post Master. The story posits an organic relationship between nature and man that actively participates in the emotional life of the characters in the background.

Thus, Tagore peeped into the relationships of man and man, man and nature and man and woman; observed the reality with direct emotional experience and feeling and
presented it in front of the readers. Tagore is realistic in the depiction of nature. He looked into nature as an escape from worldly problems. Depicting the flow of the river he points out its indifference to the whole incident. “The Padma went on rushing and swirling and gurgling as before, as it knew nothing and had no time to attend to the world’s minor occurrences”

Tagore uses nature for the creation of a particular mood as has been reflected in the short story, “The Supreme Night”. Its theme is based on first love. The narrator is the character himself. When he was a small child, he used to play with Surabala. He wanted to be a law-officer, so he went to Calcutta where except carrying on his studies, he joined political and benevolent societies for the country.

Surabala’s father decided to unite them but he had taken a secret vow not to marry and to die for his country. After two or three months, he heard the news of Surabala's marriage to a pleader, Ram Lochan. After his father's death, he left his studies and joined a school in a village on the post of a master. Coincidentally, Surabala lived there. He chanced to visit her home. After that, he remembered the company of Surabala.

I returned to my house, but the pain clung to me. Whether I read, wrote, or did any other work, I could not shake that weight off my heart; a heavy load seemed to be always swinging from my heart strings.32

One day, it was half past one in the morning, a tidal wave was suddenly heard—the sea was rushing on them. He ran towards Surabala’s house. He knew that she was alone there. They stood on the embankment of a tank to save themselves. He wanted to
converse with her but could not utter a word. He wished death at that moment so that he
could be one with her. He felt that night was supreme for him and it beamed his whole
life.

The story is full of thoughts and less actions. It expresses the wistful yearning of a
youth who did mistake because of his error of judgement at right time but now he repents
for that but that is of no use for him. The story can be seen in the vein of Freud’s three
stages of thought-process-Id, Ego, and Super Ego. As the protagonist narrates---

The village was wont to praise her beauty; but in the eyes of a
young barbarian like me that beauty had no glory; ---I knew only
that Surabala had been born in her father’s house solely to bear
my yoke, and that therefore she was the particular object of my
neglect. 33 (Id)

And

In two or three months I learnt that Surabala had been married to
a pleader named Ram Lochan. I was then busy collecting
subscriptions for raising fallen India, and this news did not seem
worth my thought. 34 (Ego)

I returned to my house, but the pain clung to me. Whether I read,
wrote, or did any other work, I could not shake that weight off
my heart; a heavy load seemed to be always swinging from my
heart-strings. In the evening, calming myself a little, I began to
reflect: What ails me?’ From within came the question; ‘Where
is your Surabala now?’ I replied: ‘I gave her up of my free will. Surely I did not expect her to wait for me forever’. But something kept saying: Then you could have got her merely for the asking. Now you have not the right to look at her even once, do what you will. That Surabala of your boyhood may come very close to you: you may hear the jingle of her bracelets; you may breathe the air embalmed by the essence of her hair,—but there will always be a wall between you two.’I answered: ‘Be it so. What is Surabala to me?’ My heart rejoined: ‘To-day Surabala is nobody to you. But what might she not have been to you?’ Ah! That’s true. What might she not have been to me? Dearest to me of all things, closer to me than the world besides, the sharer of all my life’s joys and sorrows, she might have been. And now, she is so distant, so much of a stranger, that to look on her is forbidden, to talk with her is improper and to think of her is sin! 35 *(Super Ego)*

Tagore through the stories, "The Post Master" and "The Supreme Night", presents the conflict between *self-psychology* and *society-psychology*.

The Story, “The Hidden Treasure” attacks on the covetous greed of mankind. In it, Mrityunjaya, the main character, when he was a child, his grandfather, Harihar, invited a sanyasi passing nearby him and for several days treated him as an honoured guest. The sanyasi talked about his poverty. At this Harihar told that he would try his best to recover from that miserable condition. The sanyasi consoled him that he should be satisfied with
his present position. It is of no use to try to be wealthy. But Harihar persisted and declared that he was ready to undertake anything that would restore his family to their proper rank in society. Thereupon the sannyasi gave him a stained and wrapped piece of paper that looked like a horoscope. When it was unrolled Harihar saw that it had some signs in cipher written within circles, and below there was a lot of doggerel verse which he could not understand. To that, the sanyasi replied him to keep that by him and said that by grace of goddess Kali, some descendant of his will gain the wealth which that writing told the secret hiding place. Just at this movement, Harihar’s youngest brother, Shankar, arrived on the scene but Harihar snatched that paper away before it could be observed. All his life, he tried to find out the mystery of that paper but couldn’t.

When he died, he left that mysterious paper to his elder son, Shyampada who spent his whole time in studying the secret cipher. Mrityunjaya was Shyampada’s eldest child so he became the owner of that heirloom on his father’s death. He decided to find out that long haired sannyasi. After one year’s search he became able to search him. During conversation, he came to know that the sannyasi was his uncle Shankar who also had tried hard to find out the hidden treasure but after meeting a virtuous saint, he burnt the ashes of his desires. The whole day, Mritunjaya roamed about in the hope to find a path to treasure. After hard labour, he succeeded in finding the treasure in a dense jungle. He felt very happy-

Mritunjaya began to go round and round the hall touching the piles of gold again and again. Seizing some small pieces he threw them down on the floor, he lifted them into his lap, striking them one against another he made them ring, he even stroked his body
all over with the precious metal. At length, tired out, he spread a large flat plate of gold on the floor, lay down on it, and fell asleep.36

When he woke up, he wanted to take the gold out with him, but he couldn’t. He started to break and throw the gold. In this way he could show his contempt for the covetous greed of all the kings and maharajas in the world.

Tagore presents a horrifying climax-

As Mrituyanjaya watched the gold, fear gripped him. Those piles of glittering metal surrounded him on all sides with terrifying smile, hard silent, without tremor or change, until his body began to tremble his mind to quake. What connection had he with these heaps of gold? They could not share his feelings- they had no sympathy with him in sorrows. They had no need of the light, or the sky. They did not long for the cool breezes. They did not even want life. They had no desire for freedom. In this eternal darkness they remained hard and bright forever.37

He began to recall his domestic life and out world. The writer expressed the inner desires- “That life, that sky, and that light appeared to him now as more priceless that all the treasures of the universe. He felt that if only he could for one moment again lie in the dusty lap of mother earth in her green clad beauty, beneath the free open spaces of the sky, filling his lungs
with the fragrant breeze laden with the scents of mourn grass and
of blossoms, he could die feeling that his life was complete.\textsuperscript{38}

As these thoughts came to him, the sannyasi asked—“Mrityunjaya, what do you
want now?”-

He answered—“I want nothing further. I want only to go out from
this maze of darkness. I want to leave this delusive gold. I want
light and the sky, I want freedom!\textsuperscript{39}

He got tired of living with gold flakes. The life, the sky and the light appeared to
him now as more priceless than all treasures of the universe. He felt that if only he could
for one moment again lie in the dusty lap of mother earth in her green clad beauty,
beneath the free open spaces of the sky, filling his lungs with the fragrant breeze laden
with the scents grass and of blossoms, he could die feeling that his life was complete. He
came out of the depth and threw the secret down the wall.

\emph{Greed} and \emph{temptation} act as the destruction of man and cause the futility of life in
the end. It can be said that the character dooms not because of the working of some
outside agency but because of \emph{Hamartia} or \emph{miscalculation} on the part of the character.
His tragic flaw-greed (like Shakespeare’s Macbeth’s inordinate ambition) brings
downfall to his character. So, the story also runs in the same vein as Leo Tolstoy’s. \emph{How
Much Land Does a Man Need} as both are based on the theme of ‘human greed’ and
‘temptation’.

“The Trust property” (Waaris) is a story about an old man’s ego on his wealth and
human fault, for this reason, removing his son and grandson from the house and then

123
repentance and with series of events killing his grandson and becoming psychologically mad. In the story, Brindban Kundu is a rich but miser man who lives with his son, daughter-in-law and grandson. Of all, he loves his grandson, Gokul, very much. He plays with him. He has secretly hidden his wealth at a hidden place which no one knows. When his son asks him money for the better treatment to his ailing wife, the old man refuses. The son is rendered helpless as he watches his wife suffer and pass away for lack of a treatment which could have been easily afforded for. Fearing that the same can happen to his son, he leaves his father’s home taking his son, Gokul, along.

Finding himself alone, separated from his beloved grandson, Brindban yearns for the little boy’s giggles and misses him badly. As years pass by, he soon starts behaving like a lunatic while the local boys start making fun of him. One day, among the naughty local boys, he meets a new boy, named Nitai, who claims that he ran away from home as his father was trying to enroll him in a school where he was not interested to go. So, the old man offers to hide him in his house. Nitai happily agrees to it. The old man is happy to have the boy at his home and gets him all that he wants. The boy too is happy living a comfortable life with the friendly old man. Soon, news spreads that a young boy is living with the lunatic old man. And when Brindban hears that the boy’s father is in town looking for his son, he decides that it’s time to execute his plan. The old man holds Nitai’s hands and takes him into the hidden place where his wealth is kept. He performs a puja and makes the boy to promise him that he will take care of the treasure and will hand over all the property to his grandson whenever he arrives. This statement he forcefully makes him repeat again and again, multiple number of times, till the boy is tired, exhausted and on the verge of fainting.
The old man is planning to make the boy a ‘jakh’. It was believed that when a boy is made a ‘jakh’, his spirit will safeguard the treasure until the real ‘waris’ would arrive. At this stage, the old man leaves him alone and seals the darkened place.\textsuperscript{40}

But next morning, he gets a shock when he is awakened by his son, who tells him that he is looking for Nitai, who is actually his son, Gokul. He had changed his name as since he didn’t want to be known as the relatives of Brindban Kundu. Hearing this, the old man, shivers, left speechless, fear in his eyes for the ghastly deed he has done, points towards the place where he left the boy. Nitai’s father runs towards the pointed direction. But it gets too late.

The theme of the story, “Raja and Rani” is jealousy. If the wife favours to someone, the husband feels jealous and cannot bear it for long. In the story, a rich Raja becomes friends with Bipin Kisore, a musician, singer and great conversationalist. However, the queen is very cool to Bipin. However, the Raja intensifies the friendship and so puts on a musical sharing with Bipin. His wife attends and is deeply struck by Bipin’s talent. She tells her husband about her likeness for him. The kings jealousy flares up and he becomes so surprised at this that he dismisses Bipin from his home and company, and Bipin never has no idea of what happened to him.

Freud projects \textit{jealousy} as-“is derived in both men and women either from their own actual unfaithfulness in real life or from impulses with which they have succumb to repression.\textsuperscript{41}
And this happens in the relationship of Raja and Rani. Tagore’s some short stories maintain the Concept of Orality which means that after so many years of his parting from the world, the readers cannot forget some characters or stories. They have made permanent place in the memory the readers. “The Postmaster”, “Cabuliwala” “My Lord, The Baby” are such types of stories that cannot be forgotten after so many years. For instance, the characters of Kabuliwala, Giribala and Kusum in the stories of “Kabuliwala”, Giribala and “River Stairs” respectively have the capacity to create a lasting impression in the minds of the readers.

Through the sensitive portrayal of the psychic conflicts and the psychological contours of the characters, the writer seems to underline the importance of subverting the established values and substitute them with those values which are more amendable to human nature and which promote happiness. Before delving into the structure of the short story, it is essential to put the story within the psychological as well as sociological context.

Tagore lays stress on the incidents in the development of the character but the character has contacts with the external world at numerous points. It has contacts with the world of nature and the world of man. In each story, there is a particular human situation- a love-situation (in the stories, "Mashi" and "The River Stairs"), a crime situation (in “Kabuliwala” and "The Castaway"), home-sickness (in “The Home-Coming”) transformation (in "The Conclusion"), failure (in "Living or Dead", "The Skeleton" and "The Supreme Night"), success (in "The Woman Unknown") and in each case, he reveals the soul of the individual rendering the ‘soul-dissection’. The human soul is studied in most varied, the most poignant and unusual situations. He combines the situations of the
external world with the internal world and by doing so, he creates an influence on the minds of the readers.

The reader’s own psychology also affects his response to the literary work because he has to be able to understand the situation and the characters, put in it, to think about what happened next, or why that particular character thought that, what S/he did and what an individual would do in the same situation. The writer’s own psychology also reflects in the literary work because the produced work shows that the writer has a complete understanding about the ways, the people think. The author reveals the inner self of the characters without separating them from reality.

In a nutshell, Tagore in his stories remained true to the realistic exposition of reality. There is a contrast in the mind and an arena of the empirical self. His characters present the inner convulsions of psychic storms and realize the need to fuse with the outer world. The construction of the ‘Self’ finds its fulfillment by becoming one with the norms of society. Tagore seems to adopt a middle path by believing in the social structure with the coordination of individual’s attempts at self-expression. So, the chapter is an exploration of Tagore’s talent, richness of expression and thinking through the portrayal of the characters in short stories.

References

1Tagore’s ‘Personality’ 24.

2Omnibus I 976.
3Ibid. 1009.

4Objective correlative <https://www.britannica.com/art/objective-correlative>

5Male Protagonists of Rabindranath Tagore's Short Stories<www.profkvdominic.com>

6Omnibus III 104.

7Ibid. 104-105.

8Ibid. 180.

9Ibid. 181.

10Bhabha, Homi K. *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge. 63.

11Omnibus III 164.

12Towering Personalities of Womanhood <www.profkvdominic.com/?page_id=406>

13Omnibus I 894.

14Ibid. 895.

15Ibid. 895.


<https://books.google.co.in/books>

18Emancipated Women: The New Women of Tagore

(http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/44832/4/c4.pdf)


23. Emancipated Women: The New Women of Tagore <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>

24. Woman Unknown September 12, 2017 <https://shakespeareguirandart.com>

25. Emancipated Women: The New Women of Tagore <shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>

26. Emancipated Women: The New Women of Tagore <shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>

27. Omnibus I 905.


29. Omnibus III 173.

30. Ibid. 174.

31. Ibid. 175.
32 Ibid. 120.

33 Ibid. 116.

34 Ibid. 118.

35 Ibid. 120.

36 Omnibus II 317.

37 Ibid. 318-319.

38 Ibid. 320.

39 Ibid. 320.

40 Innocence lost Stories by Rabindranath Tagore <writersbrew.com/2015/10/innocence-lost-stories-by-rabindranath-tagore-6/>

4 Indian Women Novelists and Psychoanalysis<https://books.google.co.in/books?isbn=>