



FEMININE PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SHORT STORY “NASTANIRH” OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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The Abstract

Female characters have played an important role in the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore. The female characters of his short stories are more prominent than the male characters. Most of his stories are centred round the endless problems and contradictions faced by the females. “Nastanirh”, a short story by Rabindranath, has been regarded as one of the best short stories ever. The short story titled “Nastanirh” was published in 1308 Bangabda in the Baishakh-Agrahayan issue of a magazine named “Bharati”. (Majumdar, Samares, p 150). Feminist ideals have been perfectly reflected in the short story. The eternal fact of dominance over the inner minds of females has been vividly exposed. The complex male-female relationship is aptly portrayed in this short story by means of psycho-analytic descriptions. In this Research paper, we are going to present a discussion on the topic of “**Feminine psychology in the short story “Nastanirh” of Rabindranath Tagore.**”

Keywords: Feminine, Male, Psychology, Nastanirh, Rabindranath, Charu, Bhupati.

Introduction: The plot of the short-story is about the scenario of the degraded conjugal life of Charulata and Bhupati. Bhupati couldn't manage time to stay with his new wed young wife due to his hectic preparations of publishing a newspaper. So was the shadow of dissatisfaction over Charulata's mind. As mentioned in the short-story, “where the couple becomes glorified before each other to be evergreen in superb qualities for the maiden glimpses of romanticism, no one could know whence from that golden dawn of conjugal life turned to be the past. Without any taste of newness, both became accustomed to their old identities.” (Tagore, Rabindranath, Edit. Mukhopadhyay, Sudev; p 625). Thus, started the root of their tragic life. The heart of Charu was shadowed by loneliness in the absence of Bhupati. Without realising the agony of Charu, Bhupati brought home their relative Mandakini as a companion of Charu. Amidst the barren thoughts of Bhupati, Charu had to live a colourless life. A quote from Sisir kumar Das is worth mentioning - “Such a lady who's heart carries the fragrance of a dead love, how unbearable is life for her, how hard is a husband for her! The courage and control shown by Rabindranath in this story is an ideal for the modern writers and regarded as a pioneer among the rovers of complex, dense forest of the heart. This experiment is also done in “Chokher Bali” by Rabindranath. So hard is to create such a theme in the gamut of a short-story, which is possible with the inter-actions among the complex flow of events forming the structure of a novel. Rabindranath outperformed that hard challenge’ (Das, Sisir Kumar; p 96).

Aim and Importance of the Study

It has been observed during the study of the Short-stories of Rabindranath that the female characters have played an important role. The social stigmas of the erstwhile society, blind restrictions, injustice towards females, deprivation by the male dominated society, feminine psychology etc are perfectly portrayed. Rabindranath is a connoisseur of the contemporary Bengali society. Although a variety of topics are present in his short stories, still the women-centric short stories too are superb and attractive. Rabindranath proved to be genius by means of composing the first ever short story in Bengali literature. His short stories can be broadly categorised as social document of the 2nd half of 19th century and 1st half of 20th century. The study of the stories of Rabindranath is of immense importance due to its variety of themes.

Method

There has been Descriptive and Analytical method adopted in discussing the topics of the Research paper.

Source

Both Primary and Secondary data are considered in discussing the topic. Primary data consists of the vol. of “Rabindra Rasanabali” edited by Sudeb Mukhopadhyay and secondary data consists of various articles, magazines etc.

Area of Study

The short stories of Rabindranath have variety of themes. His short stories gave importance to the psychological aspects of the females apart from presenting the multiple problems faced by the females of the contemporary society. The variety of impressions of the female mind is seen in the short stories – as an eternal mother, as lovely wife, some characters vocal with protest, some are filled with love towards nature etc. In this Research Paper, we are going to discuss on “Feminine Psychology in the short story “Nastanirh” of Rabindranath Tagore.”



Discussion on the subject

A vast difference emerged between the husband and wife in their early days of conjugal life. Unknowingly, both of them became the voyager towards two opposite destinations, due to the variations within them regarding the philosophy towards life. In the one hand, Bhupati is busy in publishing a newspaper, and on the other hand, Charu is searching an oasis in the coloured dreams of life. In the passage of time, Charu too approached towards breaking the bondage of self-restraint to fulfil the subconscious desires. A lady seeks to live an absolutely happy conjugal life by moving through a vast world of joy being the life partner of a complete man by virtue of a marriage (Barua, Prahladkumar, p. 399). Charu found it to be impossible.

In this way, Charu once had intimacy with Amal, a cousin of Bhupati. The immense desire hidden in the corner of Charu's mind seems to find a stream to flow down. Charu was confined in the hallucination of a colourful life by the company of Amal. Charu even started to judge the life itself in a new light, without a thought on her future. The company of Amal nurtured the hidden talents to flourish. Having been the hobby of reading, Charu became a regular participant of literary sessions by Amal. Charu herself too started to culture her taste in literature. Amal encouraged Charu a lot for her literary creation. All the other things seemed to become irrelevant for Charu. Amal moved very near to her heart by means of some tiny things. Sometimes she bubbles over Amal with egoism. She became a voyager of heavenly pleasure by fulfilling the desires of the mind. Just like flora and fauna turn fresh with the season of Spring, the company of Amal too turned the whole being of Charu to flourish from a state of despair. Many changes happened to Charu's life beyond the knowledge of Bhupati.

Bhupati planned a design in his mind about his future after getting release from the Newspaper. He promised to perform the daily family affairs with study and care to Charu. Bhupati himself has admitted to be guilty for not being able to spare time for Charu. Following his sufferings of repentance, Bhupati has confessed his guilt as – “Tell me Charu, what is happening to you? Am I doing any injustice to you? You better know, how burdened is me with the mess of the paper. If I am causing to hurt you, it is not intentional” (Tagore, Rabindranath, Edit. Mukhopadhyay, Sudev, p. 641). This realisation by Bhupati seemed to be very late for Charu. Bhupati sought to have the warmth from Charu's heart. But he did not receive the expected response from Charu. Bhupati continued to suffer from repentance. “The art of how to gossip with wife was forgotten by merely writing in Newspaper for a period of 12 years” (Ibid. P. 652)

The memory of Amal entered silently into the secret corner of Charu's heart as love. Amal was too far while Charu realised this from her core of the heart. Charu was stunned by the foreign tour of Amal. The good gesture of feminine mind often comes in the form of love. It is not clear many a times. Charu too did not realise it during the presence of Amal. At his departure, even couldn't utter more than “Sure to send letters, Amal?”, despite going to speak a lot (Majumdar, Samaresh, p. 166). Perhaps there was no room for Bhupati in her heart. Charu waits eagerly every day in vain to get any information of Amal. Charu moves around like a wounded deer if there were a gap in getting whereabouts of Amal. Failing to console her mind in any way, Charu sent telegram to Amal at the cost of mortgaging her jewellery without informing Bhupati. This act of Charu created an unclear doubt hurting the heart of Bhupati. Betrayal and denial are very painful. Bhupati started suffering an unanswered problem. But Charu did not get the expected response from Amal too. No reaction from Amal is seen in the last part of the story. Charu is eager to keep the memory of Amal alive in the core of her heart. As if, the memory of Amal is the glory of her life. The thoughts of Charu are expressed in the short story as – “Amal, I have not forgotten you for a single day. Not for a day, not for a moment. You have developed all the best substances of my life, I will worship you everyday offering the best parts of my life” (Tagore, Rabindranath, Edit. Mukhopadhyay, Sudev, p. 654). Some prefers to assign the character named “Charu” as a “Morbid” instead of a “Tragedy”. At the end of the story, Charu is suffering from relentless sorrows, and Bhupati is like an electrocute tree. (Dey Sarkar, Digvijay, p. 73). The short story “Nastanirh” of Rabindranath has some resemblance with “The Lady with the Dog” of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, the Russian playwright and a pioneer of modern short story. One major subject, among the various contents of these two realist writers from the last decade of the Nineteenth Century is the relationship between male and female, reflecting various problems along the stages of human being. The short story “Nastanirh” of Rabindranath and “The Lady with the Dog” of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov are the best examples of it. There is a Topological similarity between the two stories. (Banerjee, Ranjana, ‘NisangaSangi’, Edit. Samant, Subal, p. 168)

As feminine psychology has been aptly reflected in the novel “Chokher Bali” of Rabindranath, similarly “Nastanirh” is also a perfect example of feminine psychology. Pramathanath Bishi has cited a fine comparison between “Chokher Bali” and “Nastanirh” – “As if, Nastanirh is a draft of Chokher Bali. Chokher Bali is complex with many branch and sub-branches, Nastanirh is smooth as per laws of modern short stories. Short story should not be compared to Novel. But, it is also true that no such complain has been found in the ending of Chokher Bali. Chokher Bali is Ideal, but Nastanirh is perfect” (Bishi, Pramathanath, P. 37)

Epilogue

At the end, it may be mentioned that the short story has got special recognition under the mastery touch of Rabindranath. It may be considered as one of the best short stories from the purview of the construction of a short story. From the intensity of the content, feelings of Rabindranath has moved towards the depth. Though the character of Charu has become directionless, yet there is



no trace of disgrace attributed to it. The story writer has taken utmost care in presenting the role. Expression is very restrained. Rabindranath has shown expertise in the field of Aangik too. The short story consists of artistic elements to touch the hearts of the readers. The high morale embedded in the story has lifted the story to be a distinctive one. Undoubtedly, the short story Nasthanirh is a unique outcome of the artistic creativity of Rabindranath.

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