

TAGORE – BORN ROMANTIC – IN THE EYES OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Dr. Tinni Dutta

ABSTRACT: *Romantics are as much made as born, It was echoed in Tagore's voice, 'I am a born romantic'. But they cannot be assessed solely in psychological terms and they need the right environment 'As for the right environment – it seems to have been an unfavorable one'. (Clarke, 1962). Indeed the earlier stressful life-events worked as a set, which sometimes released or directed the poet's creative energies. It is on record that events in Tagore's life have provided him and stimulated him with an urge for creation. Methodology was followed by content and dynamic analysis in the present phase, the life event stress occurring during the year immediately previous to the composition of the poem under study has been studied. The version of life-event scale entitled as 'An Anglo-American comparison of the scaling of life-events' was used in case of Western Poets whereas 'Bengali Version' adapted by Sarkar, S (1990) was used in case of eastern poets. Tagore has shown the free and unfettered expression of personality, 'selfless creativity' through his creation. The poet has explored the area of darkness which Jung has called 'shadow'. There is a constant struggle in human psyche between light and darkness, dynamically between superego and id. Enlightenment rose suddenly and spontaneously not from above but came up from darkness. As in Indian philosophy, Yajnavalka has said, when visible lights are extinguished, one find the 'light of self'.*

KEYWORDS: Literature, Psychology, Rabindranath Tagore, Content and Dynamic Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Romantics are as much made as born, It was echoed in Tagore's voice, 'I am a born romantic'. But they can not be assessed solely in psychological terms and they need the right environment 'As for the right environment – it seems to have been an unfavorable one'. (Clarke, 1962).

Indeed, the earlier stressful life-events worked as a set, which sometimes released or directed the poet's creative energies. It is on record that events in Tagore's life have provided him and stimulated him with an urge for creation.

The romantic poems compass the gamut of passion, emotion, mood and thought. The romantic poets are of 'earth and heaven', 'of the world, the flesh and the spirit, 'of both instant and eternity,' 'of the outer world of forms and the inner world of intuitions' (Sengupta, S.C. 1961).

The sense of oceanic wonder, the most sublimated expression of the self-transcending emotions are not root of their creation. The emotions expressed in such creations mostly reveal universal characteristics of human mind as if the creator feels and creates not as an individual but as representative of mankind. Wordsworth describes a poet as 'singing a song in which all human beings join with him'.

According to Freud (1917) 'the artist loses in his daydreams what is personal about him and makes it possible for others to save enjoyment, to derive consolation and alleviation from their own sources of pleasures in their unconscious'.

A feeling of eternity, oneness with the universe, rang out in the heart of romantic poets. In the world of Tagore 'this great world is a creation. An expression of the infinite – where its morning sings of joy to the newly awakened life and its evening stars sing to the traveler : this call has urged him to reveal the truth , to reveal the infinite himself.' (Tagore, 1917). This encompasses a 'peculiar feeling'. ' a sensation of eternity'. a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded as it were 'oceanic ', (Freud understands this oceanic feeling as being a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole. Freud, 1921). Infant in a state of primary narcissism finds no distinction between the subject and object around him. Gradually with the development of ego, the feeling of limitless unboundedness decays. The subject becomes aware that there is a world around him. But often to some individuals, ego's increasing separation is perceived as threatening, the development of the ego consists in a recovering state.

An effect of 'Nature' on Tagore's poetry was revealed through his sojourn at Shelidah. His letters show 'what an amount of solace he derive from these holidays snatched from a full of worries and anxieties at Santiniketan and Calcutta'. (Tagore, R, 1958).

It is quite apparent that gentle, brooding sadness that lurks the theme and mood of some distinguished romantic poems are indicative of romantic withdrawal . But their feeling of 'depression', their 'lazy hours of seclusion' are only temporary . After such phase of

'momentary regression' This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life. This has a concurrency with the psychoanalytical viewpoint. Freud's pioneer studies on relationship between 'psychoanalysis and literature' was modified by Hartmann (1931) and Kris (1952) . According to Kris the integrative function of the ego includes self regulated regression, despite the pull of regressive forces, the ego is capable of full control over 'resolving conflict' and 'discharging tension'. Poetry acknowledge relative autonomy of the artist in relation to the unconscious dynamics. The innovations of ego psychology show us that unconscious processes not only have an unfortunate press, infantile and irrational in nature but rational, conscious thought processes spring from it.

The special significance of true work of art resides in the fact that it escapes and soars beyond the personal limitations of the creator. The biography of the poet makes it abundantly clear that ' creative urge is often so imperious that it battens on their humanity and yokes everything to the service of work, even at the cost of health and ordinary human happiness '. (Jung , 1922).

The creative impulse lives and grows within the poet like a tree in the earth from which it draws it nourishment. The energy needed for this is naturally gradually diminish, leading to 'apathy', and to the regressive development of conscious functions. They revert to an infantile and archaic level and undergo a processes of conflicts and anxieties that are evident in their creation.

Tagor also swang between 'action and contemplation'. 'enjoyment and detachment'.

In view of such outreaching on the parts of both psychoanalysis and poetry it appears to the present author that the time is ripe for flourishing exchange in the domain of art & psyche so that new constructive ideas could be utilized for adaptations and applications.

Special features of Romanticism in Poetry.

I. Freedom of individual self expression-it refers to sincerity, spontaneity, originality in literature.

II. Predominance of individual imagination and aspiration-it refers to the increasingly independent nature of the declining system of aristocratic patronage, the poet found themselves as free spirits expressing their own imaginative truths.

III. Stress on sentiment and emotion. It refers to the emotional directness of the personal experiences of the romantics.

IV. Nostalgia for Childhood: It refers in favour of emotional intensity, often taken to extremes of nostalgia for childhood.

V. Love for nature: It refers to Nature-Worship, oneness with the nature, dissolving the 'Self into the Absolute'.

Reference of the Selected poems: All the selected poems are referred by the authentic experts and critics in literature.

Special Preferences: Special preferences are given to the selection of those poems in which the little of theme of the poem of different poems are identical or similar.

Rabindranath Tagore

(1861 – 1941)

1. Meghadut (Cloud Messenger)
2. Urvasi (The name of beautiful lady)
3. Dushamaya (Hard Times)
4. Swapna (Dream)
5. Ratri (Night)
6. Romantic
7. 'Anasuya (The name of a lady - love)

Procedure of the investigation:

In the present phase, the life event stress occurring during the year immediately previous to the composition of the poem under study has been studied. The version of life-event scale entitled as 'An Anglo-American comparison of the scaling of life-events' was used in case of Western Poets where as 'Bengali Version' adapted by Sarkar, S (1990) was used in case of eastern poets.

Rabindranath Tagore

The first-fold analysis of Tagore's poems indicates that quantitatively the precipitation one year life-event stress magnitude of the poet before the composition of the poems selected for this present investigation fall within the range of 50% - 64.3%. This is indicative of moderate life-event stress in poet's life before these poems were composed. But it was only based on the severity of the stressor itself, but without having an opportunity to consider the poet's subjective perception due to his very absence. Nature of events indicated that they were of three types; exit, involving a departure of a person from the social field, here, death of Rabindranath Tagore, uncontrolled events, where initiation of events were without his control, such as management of Tagore's Estates at Sheliadaha & Jorashanko, and desirable events where

initiation was not beyond his control such as changes in work hour, editorial charges of Sadhana, publication of a volume of books, move to another city and so on. Qualitative analysis further revealed the poet's earlier maternal deprivation played an important role in his poetic development. It is evident from Tagore's biographical analysis that living under the domination of servants culminated in 'separation anxiety along with a 'feeling of loneliness' within the poet. Such feelings of 'loneliness' along with 'wish to emancipate from bondage' were triggered by bereavements with which he was confronted in his later life. It was implied from theme and content of his poems selected for this present investigation, that seclusion in Santiniketan and Shealiadah have inspired Tagore to create. It was corroborated with the lines of his son. Rabindranath Tagore. He wrote 'during his (poet's) youth he was completely absorbed in his self and his own creative work and avoided society.(1958).

So, there are adequate evidence for confirming the first hypothesis that 'Romantic poems stem from poet's stressful life-events'.

Images used in Tagore's poetry are mostly visual in nature. The vast green plains, the sunny green shore, the spiring flower – these glorious manifestation on colourful images are indicative of his ability to establish emotional rapport. He was able to make a pleasant, gracious and charming response to social situations. Free floating clouds, the immutability of the mountain bindha, the depth images suggest his affectional anxiety which he wishes to cover with an intellectual cloak. However successful integration between forms and colour certainly indicate 'a serene balance of mind and emotion..... He unshaken by criticism, disappointment and adversity '(Church, R, 1961

The 'Mother' – Archetype' stemmed from the depths of Tagore's unconscious reflected his various poem. Night in poem 'Night' in poem 'Night represent mother-Archetype in varied ways, her tremendous power is evident in the night sky as if her words are 'whispering'. Her songs are crooning every day into his ears. The poet phantasized that within her shadow' these are some who have sat speechless for ages'. and moon and stars are gazed with her light and the poet found within her darkness, from the unknown burst forth 'the arrow of joy'. Here, the images as the 'mother archetype' have become embellished and more varied. This vibration of positives idea was further corroborated by phrases like 'gloom of the forest'. 'the sunny green shore' in the poem 'Dushamaya'.

Anima, the natural archetype was expressed in Tagore's poem most frequently in various colours, in diversified ways. In 'Meghadut' the poet has sketched as if his mind recalled of her beloved (anima). On a rainy day he has wandered far away from home and scanned through an empty path and eventually tried to unite with his beloved, where she awaited for him for a long time. In 'Swapna'. (Dream), also, the poet has expressed a desire for reunion with his beloved, (anima) but he experience the path as noncongenial and desolated. Eventually when he met with his beloved, he found his words were lost and forgotten. Again in the poem 'Anasuya' he wished to dream of his beloved who has sprung from nature and offered him a flower yet to bloom. In all these instances the poet wished to enjoy and fulfill his heterosexual desires, 'there by enticing a man into life, overcoming man's idleness and inertia. The animal acts to animate man by reflection and by projection into involvement with the life process' (Alex, W, 1955).

In 'Urvasi the poet's desire for union with his beloved was with his urge to unite with his mother. As Neumann (1955) mentioned (within Creative man) 'anima is not fully differentiated from archetypal mother'. Thus 'Urvasi'. The lady of Hindu mythology is

dissociated from all human relationship . 'She is not mother, not daughter, not bride' but the eternal WOMAN.

Apart from the mother archetype and anima (natural archetype) the universal symbol of bird was also revealed in Tagore's poem. Birds in depth psychology, represent thought and flight of thoughts (Cirlot, 1962). In the poem 'Dushamaya', & 'Anasuya' the bird came as the messenger of the emancipation and it led the poet toward the region of freedom and imagination with the higher spirit beyond the immanent realities.

Thus there are adequate evidences for confirming the second hypothesis that theme and content of the romantic poems are expressed in different forms of images, archetypes, myths and symbols.

Aesthetic phantasy in the form of childhood is a wish fulfillment in a disguised and rationalized way was vivid in Tagore's poem. The poet wished to retreat in his childhood where he expanded a large amount of emotion. But instead of playing he now phantasized. It was reflected in his poem like 'Urvasi'. 'Dushamaya' & 'Night'.

In 'Urvasi', two distinct trends flow by side. The poet wished to enjoy the flawless beauty of lovely women, but an 'undertone of sadness', 'long drawn sign of eternal separation' were also revealed. Here the poet desired to return to the primitive age. He searched the tender and warmth of primordial mother which was repressed in his deepest unconscious . The poet experienced occasional maternal deprivation in his early childhood and throughout his life he searched for his mother's presence within nature. Here (Urvasi) he felt it was hidden in the vast sea as it was strongly repressed within him.

In 'Dushamaya' Tagore's perception of the 'leaves of the forest' as a 'swelling ... dark black snake' was interesting. The 'gloom of the leaves of the forest' was a cozy resting place, with a denotative implication of hearty warmth reminiscent of the mother's embrace.

The poet's desires regress into childhood, his need for primary attachment with mother was portrayed in the poem 'Night'.

So, again there are adequate evidence for confirming the third hypothesis that 'Romantic poets retreat into childhood for wish fulfillment and for uniting with 'Omnipotent' mother'.

Another chief characteristic of Tagore's poem like 'Romantic' is that the poet has retreated into nature from the 'so called realities' and was absorbed in his own creation with his awakened spirit. The poet believed that a poetry creates itself in moments of self abandonment, as if when 'his conscious self goes to sleep , his creative lethargy abnegates his conscious self, the poem gushes out of forces seemingly beyond his control' (Singh A, 1984). It is a state of temporary regression. In such a state the libidinal cathexes have flown back onto his ego. But the poet has always been in charge of his withdrawals and freshly created cathexes. In this sense it is an 'Adaptive Regression' which is markedly reflected in the poem 'Dushamaya', 'Night', 'Dream', 'Romantic' & 'Anasuya', 'Adaptive regression' in the service of the Ego refers to the ability of the ego to initiate a partial, temporary, and controlled lowering of its own function..... in the furtherance of its interest. Whenever the poet perceived the environment as no congenial and threatening, whenever he felt loneliness, he suffered a phase of regression. In this type of regression the poet has retraced its steps, but came up again. He obeyed the 'invitations of reality' despite its ugliness, distress, and poverty (Romantic & Anasuya). And

also traditional 'Upanishadic Concept of 'Charaibeti', (Move forward) was expressed in Tagore's style (Dushamaya)

Thus, there are adequate evidences for confirming the fourth hypothesis that 'Romantic poets utilize the mechanism of 'Adaptive Regression',

Tagore transcended his unconscious aspiration, his delicate conflicts and his inherent anxieties through his creation.

It is evident from Tagore's biographical analysis that living under the domination of servants culminated in 'separation anxiety' along with a 'feeling of loneliness' within the poet. This deep pangs of separation from mother figure was retained in the poet's unconscious and reflected in his poems. Dushamaya & Night symbolically . Dynamically at the beginning the poet has felt profound 'separation anxiety', Probably such anxiety occurs in adults due to one's 'defensive regression'. According to Angel (1977) 'one wished to look at his wife as a protecting mother, from whom he fears to separate because he is afraid of consequences of looking at her as a sexual person', Thus it was found that the poet sometimes preferred solitude and detachment in the midst of his family & children.

Here in 'Dushamaya', thus fear has brooded and loneliness has pervaded his mind.

To Tagore, 'Love to the beloved' was not mere an emotional responses, nor it was a libidinal outflow. It is the joy that is at the root of all creation. 'It is the living thing in man, that which lives of itself and causes life' (Jung, C, 1917). It is the call of the soul which cannot be denied. Love urge in Meghadut, the poet was in a conflict between scared and profane (animal) love. According to the 'laws of complexive sensitiveness' where human beings love, they do not desire, and where they desire, they cannot love (Freud, 1912). And it resulted in the strange failure in the fulfillment of heterosexual desire. Finally the poet has sublimated his conflict through his extended narcissism, through his communion with infinite. In 'Dream' the poet's sexual phantasies which are strongly repressed is called into play. The poet had searched in his deepest stratum of unconscious, but he couldn't verbalize to convey his desire. And it is known 'in most inhibition repressed trend tend to return' (Otto Fenichel, 1945). Finally the poet felt a 'feeling of flowing together' with his beloved through formation of higher level identification, ego accentuation and achieved a desired reunion with his beloved. Symbolically it is represented through the image of passionate silence and city of Ujjain gradually dissolved in the darkness of night.

In the introduction of Manasi, the poet wrote, 'I sometimes detect within myself a battle-ground where two opposing forces are constantly in action, one beckoning me to peace and cessation of all strife, the other engaging me on to battle?' Dynamically the conflict the poet has felt, can be interpreted as conflict between passivity/activity. Again on the vicinity of death Tagore expressed similar conflict in his poem 'Romantic'. Here the poet has claimed himself as 'Romantic' yet he has still obeyed the invitation of reality.

Tagore has shown the free and unfettered expression of personality, 'selfless creativity' through his creation. The poet has explored the area of darkness which Jung has called 'shadow'. There is a constant struggle in human psyche between light and darkness, dynamically between superego and id. Enlightenment rose suddenly and spontaneously not from above, but came up from darkness. As in Indian philosophy, Yajnavalka has said, when visible lights are extinguished, one find the 'light of self'.

There are adequate evidences for confirming the fifth hypothesis that ‘Romantic poets sublimate their wishes, anxieties and conflicts through communion with nature by means of increased and powerful introjections and projection and also by multiples ego adaptive defensive resources’.

REFERENCES

- Abercrombie, L (1932). Poetry: Its Music & Meaning , London, Oxford University Press, Humphy, Milford.
- Alex (1977). Archetype : Anima International Encyclopedia of Psychiatry , Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Neurology. Volume -2 , Edited by Wolman.
- Bellaket al (1973) . Ego Functions in Schizophrenics, Neurotics and Normals . John Wiley and Sons. 1962.
- Dutta, T(2001). Romantic Poetry: A Psychoanalytically Oriented Study. Firma KLM Pvt Ltd
- Freud, S, (1907) Delusions and Dreams in Jenen’s “Gradiva”, Standard Edition.
.....(1912) Contribution to the Psychology of Love , S.E.XI.
.....(1916-17) Introductory Lectures of Psychoanalysis Vol. 15 & 16. Hograth Press London, 1957.
- Jung, C (1911). Symbols of Transformation, C.W. Princeton University Press Volume V, Published . in 1967.
.....(1921) . Psychological Types, C.W. Princeton University Press Volume Vi, Published. in 1971.
- Klopfer, Anisworth, Klofer & Holt (1956). Developments in the Rorschach Technique, Harcourt, Brace & World , Inc.
- Selye, Hans (1946) . Stress and Peronality, Handbook of Stress, Goldberge, r, L & Breznitz, S, (1942), New York, Freed Press.
- Spitz, E, (1985) . Art & Psyche, Yale University Press.
- Tagore, R (1958) .On the Edges of times Viswabharati.
- Dr. Tinni Dutta is presently working as a Lecturer in the Department of Psychology, Asutosh College,