

SRINIVASAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy)

PERAMBALUR - 621 212.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

II-M.A., ENGLISH - IV SEMESTER (EVEN)

**A COURSE MATERIAL ON:
Single Author study-Rabindranth Tagore
P16ENE4**

Prepared By:

**D. DURGA , M.A., M.L.I.S., M.Phil.,
Assistant Professor in English,**

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Syllabus

Objectives:

To initiate learners into the study of Tagore's works and his narrative techniques

To expose learners to the aspects of Indian civilization and culture with reference to Tagore

Unit – I (Poetry)

Gitanjali– Verses II, VIII, IX, XIX, XXXI, XXXV, XXXVI, XLI, XLV, L, LI, LXII, LXXVI, LXXXVI, XC

Unit – II (Prose)

From The Religion of Man

“Man's Universe” (Chapter – I)

“The Creative Spirit” (Chapter – II)

Unit – III (Drama)

Sacrifice

The King and the Queen

Unit – IV (Short Stories)

“Kabuliwala”

“Subha”

“My Lord, The Baby”

Unit – V (Fiction)

Gora

Books for Reference:

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UNIT I (POETRY)

Verses II

Poem

(Tuni Jokhon Gaito Bolo)

When you ask me to sing
My heart swells with pride
As I look intently at you
My eyes moisten with tears
All that is hard and bitter in me
Melts into heavenly music
All my prayers and thoughts
Take wings like merry birds.
You are content with my songs
I know they please you.
They admit me to your company
The One I can't reach through thought
Accepts me through my songs!
My songs make me forget myself
And let me call my Lord my friend.

Explanation

Through this stanza, Tagore expresses his gratitude and surrenders himself to Godliness, which is his inner self. He realises that his life's work and meaning is through his songs. But at the same time, he cannot write as and when he wants. He can only write when there is a calling from within. Only through that calling he can write. And every time he gets his command from his inner self, he is overwhelmed in joy.

In this stanza, he reveals that he is pained, lost and unhappy when he is not creating songs. But all his anguish and dissonance turns into beautiful work. He is not saying his bitter experience has disappeared rather it turned into Beautiful experience. This realization of sadness and happiness are uniting forces of inner self makes him speechless. He realizes that his true self is as big as Ocean and he simply adorns it.

In this stanza Tagore says

His soul rejoices in ecstasy through his songs
He can unite with his soul only through his songs
Without songs, he is nowhere close to himself.

When he sings, he is in total bliss. There is no ego, no arrogance. He forgets himself while singing. In that blissful moment, he realises that his soul is Godliness. As you see, his poems are concise, deep and Soulful.

Verses VIII

Poem

(Rajar Moto Beshe)

The child you dress up like a king
And deck in jewelry,
Weighed down by what he has on,
Loses all pleasure in play
Lest what he wears tears or smudges
Lest what he has on is soiled or stained
He stays away from all company.
The child you dress up like a king
And deck in jewelry
Feels completely fettered!
Why dress your child so, O Mother?
Why deck him in jewelry?
Open the door and let him play,
In sunshine or rain, freely!
The child you dress up like a king
And deck in jewelry,
Will never be part of the world's festivals
And will never listen in
To the music forever steaming
From the heart of the universe!

Explanation

THE CHILD WHO is decked with prince's robes and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all pleasure in his play; his dress hampers him at every step.

In fear that it may be frayed, or stained with dust he keeps himself from the world, and is afraid even to move.

Mother, it is no gain, thy bondage of finery, if it keep one shut off from the healthful dust of the earth, if it rob one of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life.

Verses IX

Poem

O O FOOL, TO TRY to carry thyself upon thy own shoulders! O beggar, to come to beg at thy own door! Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret.

Thy desire at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath. carry thyself upon thy own shoulders! O beggar, to come to beg at thy own door! Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret. Thy desire at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath.

Explanation

O FOOL, TO TRY to carry thyself upon thy own shoulders! O beggar, to come to beg at thy own door! Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret. Thy desire at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath. It is unholy-take not thy gifts through its unclean hands. Accept only what is offered by sacred love.

Verses XIX

IF THOU speakest not I will fill my heart with thy silence and endure it. I will keep still and wait like the night with starry vigil and its head bent low with patience.

The morning will surely come, the darkness will vanish, and thy voice pour down in golden streams breaking through the sky.

Then thy words will take wing in songs from every one of my birds' nests, and thy melodies will break forth in flowers in all my forest groves.

Verses XXXI

'PRISONER, TELL me, who was it that bound you?'

'It was my master,' said the prisoner. 'I thought I could outdo everybody in the world in wealth and power, and I amassed in my own treasure-house the money due to my king. When sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was for my lord, and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure-house.'

'Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?'

'It was I,' said the prisoner, 'who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip.'

Verses XXXV

WHERE THE mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action-
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Verses XXXVI

In "Song 36," Rabindranath Tagore offers a prayer to his god in the hope that Tagore can gain the strength necessary to achieve virtue. The virtues Tagore seeks to embody are matters of balance and moderation. He wants to manage his joys and sorrows, for his love to benefit others, to treat both the poor and the powerful as his equals, and to transcend frivolous aspects of daily life. Finally, he wants to surrender all this strength to his god's will.

In Song 36, Tagore describes the cry of every Hindu penitent. The song is a prayer to transcend the earthly soul through a wholehearted surrender to God.

Tagore prays that God will strike at the root of "penury" in his heart. This "penury," or spiritual poverty, originates from the elevation of Self. Tagore continues his song by praying for strength. This strength is, of course, of a divine nature.

Verses XLI

WHERE DOST thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadows? They push thee and pass thee by on the dusty road, taking thee for naught. I wait here weary hours spreading my offerings for thee, while passers by come and take my flowers, one by one, and my basket is nearly empty.

The morning time is past, and the noon. In the shade of evening my eyes are drowsy with sleep. Men going home glance at me and smile and fill me with shame. I sit like a beggar maid, drawing my skirt over my face, and when they ask me, what it is I want, I drop my eyes and answer them not.

Oh, how, indeed, could I tell them that for thee I wait, and that thou hast promised to come. How could I utter for shame that I keep for my dowry this poverty. Ah, I hug this pride in the secret of my heart.

I sit on the grass and gaze upon the sky and dream of the sudden splendour of thy coming--all the lights ablaze, golden pennons flying over thy car, and they at the roadside standing agape, when they see thee come down from thy seat to raise me from the dust, and set at thy side this ragged beggar girl a-tremble with shame and pride, like a creeper in a summer breeze.

But time glides on and still no sound of the wheels of thy chariot. Many a procession passes by with noise and shouts and glamour of glory. Is it only thou who wouldst stand in the shadow

silent and behind them all? And only I who would wait and weep and wear out my heart in vain longing?

UNIT II(PROSE)
FROM THE RELIGION OF THE MAN
Man's Universe (chapter I)

“. . . on the surface of our being we have the ever-changing phases of the individual self, but in the depth there dwells the Eternal Spirit of human unity beyond our direct knowledge. It very often contradicts the trivialities of our daily life, and upsets the arrangements made for securing our personal exclusiveness behind the walls of individual habits and superficial conventions. It inspires in us works that are the expressions of a Universal Spirit; it evokes unexpectedly in the midst of a self-centered life of supreme sacrifice. At its call, we hasten to dedicate our lives to the cause of truth and beauty, to unrewarded service of others, in spite of our lack of faith in the positive reality of the ideal values.”

At the beginning he describes true solitude as going out into nature and leaving behind all preoccupying activities as well as society. When a man gazes at the stars, he becomes aware of his own separateness from the material world. The stars were made to allow him to perceive the "perpetual presence of the sublime." Visible every night, they demonstrate that God is ever-present. They never lose their power to move us. We retain our original sense of wonder even when viewing familiar aspects of nature anew. Emerson discusses the poetical approach to nature — the perception of the encompassing whole made up of many individual components. Our delight in the landscape, which is made up of many particular forms, provides an example of this integrated vision.

Unlike children, most adults have lost the ability to see the world in this way. In order to experience awe in the presence of nature, we need to approach it with a balance between our inner and our outer senses. Nature so approached is a part of man, and even when bleak and stormy is capable of elevating his mood. All aspects of nature correspond to some state of mind. Nature offers perpetual youth and joy, and counteracts whatever misfortune befalls an individual. The visionary man may lose himself in it, may become a receptive "transparent eyeball" through which the "Universal Being" transmits itself into his consciousness and makes him sense his oneness with God. In nature, which is also a part of God, man finds qualities parallel to his own. There is a special relationship, a sympathy, between man and nature. But by itself, nature does not provide the pleasure that comes of perceiving this relationship. Such satisfaction is a product of a particular harmony between man's inner processes and the outer world. The way we react to nature depends upon our state of mind in approaching it.

Chapter II: The Creative Spirit

Rabindranath describes early Earth as a struggle for success mainly decided by size. The large seemed able to win in the struggle for survival, but slowly he describes a new tactic – wit, and the coming of humans as the most successful of beings.

“The physiological process in the progress of Life’s evolution seems to have reached its finality in man.”

This seems very limited, perhaps even an unimaginative view. However, it is 1930, but great fictions, at least, have already been imagined, Jules Verne comes to mind. In only a short 40 years the movies will give us “Hal” taking over the space ship in “2001.” And, now the micro technologies of our early 21st century point to more and more technologies which are approaching the nature of life, a life certainly created by humans, but seemingly running off on its own with humans, gratefully, limping along, thankfully, but less and less in control, more and more dependent.

For me he seems to take a sort of defeatist position (from evolution’s standpoint) when he writes:

“The physiological process in the progress of Life’s evolution seems to have reached its finality in man.”

However, he does make a fairly compelling argument that “physical” evolution in man, at least, is not likely the future. The direction he sees whether “humans” always remain in control or not, seems plausibly

“. . . the spirit of life boldly declared for a further freedom, and decided to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This time her struggle was not against the Inert, but against the limitation of her own overburdened agents.”

Nonetheless his historical perspective seems quite plausible:

“It is the consciousness in Man of his own creative personality which has ushered in this new regime in Life’s Kingdom.”

At the same time man’s foolishness is now in our own time threatening the very existence of the environment which allows us to continue to exist.

He does make a strong case for the use of human intelligence (and feeling) as able to create a life of meaning for humans. However, it is also the case that these same humans have quite different views, even contradictory views, of what this future utopia is to be and for whom (all humans, some humans or even others).

UNIT III (DRAMA) SACRIFICE

Sacrifice play by Tagore relies on the tradition of worshipping the Hindu goddess Kali, once a poor, lady named Aparna complained to the King of Tripura, that one amongst her goats was taken by force for sacrificing. The king(Govinda) asked (Jaisimha), the son of (Raghupati) Priest of the temple to understand the explanation for having taken it. When Aparna knew that the goat had already been sacrificed, she cried with a shock. Seeing her in such a tragic condition, the choice to prevent the tradition of sacrificing. Raghupati protest against the king's order and his fury urged jaisimha whom he had mentioned from childhood and whom he loves, to kill the king for the sake of the god, Jaisimha offers himself to save the king.

THEME OF THE STORY

'Sacrifice' is the Rabindranath Tagore play conveyed the message of kindness as well as love to prevent unwanted sacrifice of living beings in the name of religion.

The faith of priest was shattered as he failed in his attempts to sacrifice either the king or the little boy but instead his dearest Jaising was killed.

Tagore's relationship on the Indian Independence movement was complex.

Summary of sacrifice:

Rabindranath Tagore was a great play wright and a social reformer. In "Sacrifice" play, he condemned the ritual of offering animal sacrifices to appease Gods. King Govinda ruled the kingdom of Tripura. His wife was Gunavathi. They had no children. The king banned animal sacrifices to the Goddess Kali in the temple. He did not allow even the queen to offer animal sacrifices.

The priest Raghupathi and the king's brother Nakshatra did not like the King's decision. The king loved a boy called Dhruva and wanted to leave his kingdom to him. So, Nakshatra and Raghupathi conspired to kill the boy. But King Govinda punished Nakshatra and Raghupathi by exiling them. Raghupathi provoked Jaising, the servant of the temple to bring the king's blood to offer to the Goddess Kali.

But Jaising, who was a Kshatriya stabbed and offered himself to the Goddess. The shocked Raghupathi prayed to the Goddess to revive Jaisingh. When his wish was not fulfilled, he threw away the image of Kali. Queen Gunavathi came to the temple to offer her blood. The king also came there and declared that Jaisingh conquered death. Finally, the king consoled the queen that the Goddess Kali burst her prison of stone and came back to the woman's heart. Raghupathi, broken-hearted, left the place with the beggar girl Aparna.

UNIT IV (SHORT STORY) KABULIWALA

Message Of kabuliwala

The story of Kabuliwala was written by Rabindranath Tagore. It tells the tale of a poor man from Afganistan who lives in India befriends a girl who reminds him of his own daughter. The theme of "Kabuliwala" is mainly friendship.

Theme of kabuliwala

The theme of "Kabuliwala" is mainly friendship. The writer has beautiful portrayed the friendship of an Afghan trader and Mini, a little playful child. Though, Rahamat was almost of the age of Mini's father, he and Mini shared a very unique bond of friendship. They used to share all there feelings and even understood each other to a great extent. Apart, from their friendship, the relation of a father and a daughter has been portrayed very nicely. There are two such father-daughter relations mentioned in the story, Mini and her father and Rahamat and his daughter. All these relations causes deep effect on the reads mind as well as his heart.

Kabuliwala Characters

- The Narrator. Mini's father and the story's unnamed first-person narrator and protagonist. ...
- Rahamat / The "Kabuliwala" Rahamat is a traveling fruit seller from Afghanistan, or a Kabuliwala, and is often referred to as such. ...
- Mini. ...
- The Narrator's Wife / Mini's Mother. ...
- Parvati.

Kabuliwallah" opens with the narrator describing his five-year-old daughter, Mini. She "can't stop talking for a minute" and is frequently scolded by her mother for it. The narrator, on the other hand, thinks that it's "unnatural" when Mini is quiet, and so he spends a lot of time talking to her and answering her many questions. One morning, Mini chats with her father while he's working on an adventure novel. She looks out the window and spots a Kabuliwallah named Rahamat and starts calling to him. However, when he comes over, Mini runs into another room, convinced that his large bags are full of children, not goods.

A few days later, the narrator finds Mini sitting next to Rahamat and talking to him with a pile of raisins and nuts in her lap. The narrator tells Rahamat not to give her any more treats and gives him a half-rupee, which Rahamat takes. Later, Mini's mother scolds Mini for having a half-rupee, which Mini says Rahamat gave her. The narrator saves Mini "from her mother's wrath" and brings her outside where she tells him that Rahamat has come by almost every day to listen to her talk. Among the numerous jokes they have together, one starts with Rahamat telling Mini, "don't ever go off to your *śvaśur-bāṛi*." Mini doesn't understand what this means because the narrator and his wife are "progressive people" who "don't keep talking to [their] young daughter

about her future marriage,” and so she innocently asks him if he is going to his. Rahamat jokingly shakes a fist and says he’ll “settle him,” making Mini laugh.

It is autumn, which the narrator associates with kings setting out “on their world-conquests,” which further reminds him that he has never left Calcutta even though he longs to explore the world. He has an active imagination and frequently imagines distant lands, but he is “a rooted sort of individual” and whenever he does leave his “familiar spot” he will “practically collapse.” Because of this, the narrator is happy to spend a morning just listening to Rahamat’s stories of Afghanistan and traveling. Mini’s mother is very different: she is scared of the outside world and imagines it is full of extreme dangers. Unhappy with Rahamat, a complete stranger, spending so much time with Mini, she warns the narrator to keep an eye on him. When the narrator tells her there is nothing to worry about, she talks about the possibility of Mini being kidnapped and sold into slavery. Rahamat, however, continues to come and the narrator continues to enjoy seeing him with Mini.

Rahamat is preparing to go home. Part of these preparations is to go all around Calcutta and collect money that customers owe him, but he always makes time in the evening to stop at the narrator’s house to talk with Mini. One morning, the narrator hears something going on in the streets and looks out the window to see Rahamat, covered in blood, being led down the street in handcuffs. The narrator runs outside, and Rahamat tells him that he got into a physical altercation with a customer who had refused to pay and, during the fight, he stabbed the customer. Mini comes out and asks Rahamat if he’s being taken to his *śvaśur-bāṛī*, and he says that he is. Rahamat is sent to jail. It does not take long for Mini to forget Rahamat and find new friends, first with the groom (someone who takes care of horses) and then with girls her age. She stops visiting her father’s study and the narrator says he “dropped her,” as well.

A few years later, the narrator and his wife are preparing for Mini’s wedding day. The house is full of people setting things up and the narrator has isolated himself in his study. Rahamat suddenly arrives and tells the narrator he had been released from jail the day before, which reminds the narrator of his crime and sets him on edge. The narrator tells Rahamat that they are busy and he will have to go, but Rahamat asks if he can see Mini. Once again the narrator tries to brush him off and Rahamat prepares to leave, but as he walks out the door he asks the narrator to give Mini some grapes, nuts, and raisins he brought for her as a reminder of their past friendship. The narrator gets some money to pay Rahamat for them, but he refuses payment and tells the narrator that he had come with his own daughter “in mind,” not to do business.

Rahamat pulls “a crumpled piece of paper” out of the breast pocket of his shirt and shows the narrator the handprint of his daughter, Parvati, that he carries with him while he travels for work. Seeing it, the narrator “forgot then that he was an Afghan raisin-seller and I was a Bengali Babu,” instead recognizing that “he was a father just as I am a father.” This changes the narrator’s mind about sending Rahamat away and instead he calls Mini down. When she comes in, she’s “dressed as a bride” and acts shy and uncomfortable. Rahamat tries to joke with her as

he used to, asking if she's going to her *śvaśur-bāri*, but instead of laughing and asking questions, Mini "blushed [...] and looked away." The narrator's "heart ache[s]."

When Mini leaves, Rahamat suddenly realizes that his daughter, like Mini, will have grown up and be different from the little girl he once knew. As Rahamat thinks about Afghanistan and his daughter, the narrator pulls out some money and asks Rahamat to use it to get home. He tells Rahamat that, "by your blessed reunion, Mini will be blessed." Giving Rahamat the money means that Mini's wedding party is not as grand as it might have been, but the narrator is happy with it, believing that "the ceremony was lit by a kinder, more gracious light."

SUBHA

Summary

Subha" is near heartbreaking tale of the isolation of a deaf and mute girl. Subha is born into a financially comfortable family. She is the youngest of three daughters. Her mother feels a sense of shame she never overcomes when the family realizes that Subha will never be able to speak or hear. In the culture of the time congenital impairments of children were seen as sign of a moral defect or depravity in the mother. Her mother tries to love her but she can barely force the emotion. Her father loves and accepts her. In due time her older two sisters are married to proper men and given a proper dowry. Finding a husband for Subha is not so simple. Future mother in laws fear she will give birth to children with the same impairments she has. Subha has learned to cope as best she can within the context of her family by communicating with gestures understood only within the family. Her only friends are the two family cows.

One day Subha meets a fisherman. It happens that the man is somehow viewed as simple. His only interest in life is casting his fishing net. His family has long ago accepted that he will never amount to anything. The man appreciates her silence as talking might frighten the fish. She comes to enjoy seeing him cast his net. She begins to feel romantic about him.

Theme of subha

The theme of fear, isolation, loneliness, connection, selfishness, innocence, tradition and control. Taken from his Collected Stories collection the story is narrated in the first person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Tagore may be exploring the theme of fear. Subha's parents don't really know what to do with Subha. Her mother looks upon her with scorn while her father knows that it will be difficult to find Subha a husband because of the fact that she is dumb. If anything both parents are afraid and rather than embracing Subha's uniqueness worry about her future. It is as though Subha is a burden to her parents. Something that Subha herself understands. Subha also lives a very isolated life apart from Pratap she has no other human friends. All her friends are the animals that her father owns particularly the two cows. This may be important as Tagore may be suggesting that Subha identifies with the cows because they too are dumb. It is also interesting that the only affection that Subha receives is not from any of her family but from the two cows. Along with Nature they are her connection to her emotions.

It might also be a case that Tagore is suggesting that Subha's parents are selfish. Though they are following tradition and marrying Subha off to a total stranger. There is no sense that Subha is in agreement. She is doing as she is told to do not what she wants to do. It is also interesting that while Subha's mother is getting Subha ready for her bridegroom that Tagore uses words like 'imprisoned', 'hung' and 'kill.' It is as though Subha knows that the world she wants to live back in the village is over. Her life is to change dramatically again without her consent. Which might be the point that Tagore is making. He may be suggesting that the tradition of marrying of daughters to complete strangers and providing the stranger with a dowry is not suitable to everyone. Subha's life is to change dramatically. From living an innocent and simple life she has been thrown into a complicated world in which she has no way of expressing her feelings. Apart from crying. Which Subha's bridegroom misinterprets. If anything Subha's parents are not acting responsibly and are following a tradition that they are afraid to go against. In case they themselves become outcasts like Subha.

What is also interesting about the story is the feelings that Subha has for Pratap. She obviously likes him and there is a sense that she would be happy to marry Pratap rather than being brought to Calcutta where she is to marry a complete stranger. However Pratap is as much an outcast as Subha is and as such Subha's father does not consider him to be a suitable bridegroom for Subha. It is as though Subha's whole life is being controlled by her father and mother. She has no say in any matter that directly involves her. Even her tears do not register as sadness with her parents. Which would play on the theme of selfishness again. Despite it being obvious that Subha is sad because she is marrying a stranger who she does not love. Her parents do not take Subha's feelings into consideration. Subha is not being treated as the individual she is. She has become a problem for her parents and as such they consider that the best thing to do is to marry Subha off.

The end of the story is also interesting as Tagore appears to be further exploring the theme of isolation. Not only has Subha been taken away from her village but she is to live her life with not only a man she does not know but also she is to live in a city in whereby she knows no one. It is as though the pain the Subha feels is even more internalized. Not only can she not tell anyone she is sad but she will know no one after she has been married off. If Subha felt isolated by her inability to communicate with others while living in her village things will be much worse for her living with a strange man in a strange city. Life is going to be more complicated for Subha. Any happiness that she had felt while living in her village is gone due to the fact that her parents are following a tradition of marrying Subha off in order that they themselves will not be viewed as outcasts. At no stage in the story has Subha's feelings been put to the forefront by her parents. Though Subha cannot talk her tears speak louder than words yet her parents do not realise this. A young innocent girl who longs for the simple things in life has had her life destroyed because of her parent's fears and selfishness.

My Lord, the Baby

Theme of My Lord, the Baby

My Lord, the Baby by Rabindranath Tagore. the theme of sacrifice, guilt, responsibility, gratitude, letting go, selflessness and shame. ... Raicharan rather than living with the guilt of feeling responsible for his master's son's death gives his only son to his master.

Summary

The main character here is named Raicharan. He was only 12 years old when he became a servant. His Master made him a private servant to his Son. He took good care of him, until the time that the little Master Anukul grew up and got married. When Anukul had a son of his own. Anukul still made Raicharan his Son's private servant. But fate got in the way, the little Master disappeared when Raicharan was taking him for a stroll. No one knows whether the Baby was taken by a group of Gypsies who were hovering nearby or He drowned in the river. Anukul's wife got so distressed and furious that there is no reasoning with her. They made Raicharan go back to his Village. There he learned that his wife just gave birth to a Baby Boy but she died immediately. At first Raicharan didn't want to accept his Son because he knew that he cannot sire a child. But as the Boy grows, he can see similarities with his young master. And so he thought that his son is the reincarnation of the young master. Raicharan gave everything and anything his son would want, he made his son live like a rich man up to the point that he is stirring himself to death. When he can no longer give Phailna, his son, all that he wants, he decided to go back to Anukul and told him that his son was with him all along, Raicharan let them think that he's the one who kidnap their son. This just goes to show that a Father can and is willing to sacrifice almost anything just for the good of his beloved son. Even if it means that he will lose his son forever or it would mean his death. Also, the story relates on the belief that there is reincarnation, life after death.

UNIT V(NOVEL) GORA

Gora is a true Tagore novel, rich in philosophical debate on politics and religion with a deep understanding of human emotions. A burning topic of social reform in pre-independence era intertwined with the sweet sour love affair of young hearts makes for quite an interesting read.

Though, as a die hard fan of Tagore's realistic approach towards the intricacies of life, there is hardly a piece of his writing, that I could ever look over. But, Gora is a different class in itself!

The novel begins on a light note of a young man Binoy being affected by the pangs of love on hearing a Baul singer, and almost instantaneously, falling in love with a beautiful young girl, Sucharita. It turns out that they are next-door neighbors, and a curious turn of events makes Binoy a fast friend of Sucharita's younger brother, giving him easy entry into her house and social circle. Binoy, with the honest zeal of an ardent lover pines to embrace his lady love in a life long vow of bliss and joy.

But, in keeping with the curious tradition of human heart always being attracted by the forbidden fruit, pretty soon, it turns out that our two young lovers are opposite banks of a flooded, weather struck, naughty monsoon river. A wide gulf of social inhibitions color the understanding of Binoy and Sucharita. And, it becomes apparent that they belong to two different societies- one is a staunch believer of Hindu idols and the other is a passionate modern day reformist. Even before their affair could begin, Binoy is assailed with the doubts of their union, apprehensive of opposition by vehement Brahmanical traditions and overflowing zealous reproach of Christian influenced Brahmo Samaj.

At the crucial point of Binoy's doubts enters GORA- the main protagonist of the novel. He is a man of contradictions. He is fair-faced, broad-shouldered and excessively tall, resembling more a Britisher, than his own short statured, stocky Brahmin father, Krishnadayal. But, despite his christian looks, Gora is a true blue Hindu. Though, well educated in English and modern studies, he strives for the age old orthodox beliefs of Hindu society. He firmly believes that India can gain freedom and foothold in the modern society, only by strengthening her traditional religious roots. He believes in turning a blind eye to all the bad customs, and continues to look at the brighter side of religion, in bringing unity to a scattered samaj

A loving son of superstitious Krishnadayal and easygoing Anandamoyi, Gora is a perfect blend of modern ideas bubbling on the potent liquor of age old customs and rituals of Hindu society. It appears as if he is the only man in the entire novel, who has a clear perspective of religion and can comprehend the necessity of saving an old culture from being disintegrated in the name of politics and social reforms. But, what would happen, if it becomes known that the man who is so proud of his Hindu roots, is not a Hindu himself! What if, the whole identity of Gora is challenged by his very own blood? How would he react to his father's indifference bordering on untouchability? Would his experience with poor Muslim villagers change the way he sees religion? Or, would he continue to believe in the sanctity of old traditions, restricting the poor from living with dignity and respect.

All this and more is explored in this philosophical study of human emotions. Gora is not just a novel, it is an epic. It brings forth the shallowness of man's beliefs in the purity of his body and his ignorance of soul's true agenda in this life. It exhibits the path of self discovery that the characters undertake to understand their true purpose and inclination in life, with great drama being played in the name of religion, freedom and reforms.

The novel is choc-a-bloc with interesting characters. There is self evasive Binoy, who is under deep influence of Gora, and comes across as a genuine friend, muddleheaded with wrong notions of friendship being equivalent to slavery and subservience to your friends' ideals, juxtaposed against lively, free spirited Lolita, who is not shy of revolting against her own family and society, for following her heart's desires and true calling. The aggressive Gora is offset against the reticent Sucharita, a symbol of female power, that can bring a man to his knees and change the society with her innocent charm. There is lovable Ananadmoyi, a sharp contrast to contriving Barodashundari and Harimohini, belying the difference between liberal Hindus, revolting Brahmos and traditional ritualists.