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**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.

**My lord the baby**

Rabindranath Tagore was one of the most celebrated Bengali-language poets of his time, although he has received greater acclaim for his short stories. His stories, including *My Lord The Baby*are reminiscent of an eastern Anton Chekhov, another master of the form.

Part One of *My Lord The Baby*begins with a twelve-year-old boy named Raicharan. He leaves his village and enters the home and service of a man who shares the same caste as Raicharan. Raicharan becomes the private servant of the man’s so, Anukul. From birth up until the day that the boy leaves for college, he is Anukul’s personal attendant.

After Anukul marries, he makes Raicharan the servant of his new son, who is called The Little Master in the story. Raicharan takes pride in his work and finds great pleasure in the child. The story contains several passages in which the reader sees Raicharan’s joy in reading to the boy.

When the child begins to walk, it is an “epoch in human history.” He plays with the child night and day. When it utters the words “Ba-ba,” “Ma-ma,” and “Chan-na” (this is what the baby calls Raicharan), “Raicharan’s ecstasy knew no bounds.”

Anukul buys a small go-cart for his son, and drapes him in silks and finery, including golden ornaments, bracelets, and more. When the rainy season approaches, the child is dreadfully bored while confined indoors. One day, on which the rain has lifted, Raicharan puts him in the cart and pulls him down to the riverbank.

The boy sees a lovely tree covered in flowers, and Raicharan can tell that he wants one. He tries to distract the boy by showing him birds and various other diversions, but the child is intractable. Finally, Raicharan asks him to stay in the cart, forbids him from going to the water, and wades in to get the flower. When he returns, the child is missing.

When evening comes and Raicharan has not returned with the child, Anukul and the mother go out searching. They find Raicharan running along the banks, calling out “Little Master!” over and over, heartbroken. Under questioning, he says that he knows nothing about what happened. They promise him anything if he will tell them, but he has no answers. He is sent from the house. The mother tells Anukul that she suspects that Raicharan had stolen the child, possibly to sell it to the gypsies, who were also rumored to be in the area at the same time. “The baby had gold ornaments on his body,” she says. It is enough to convince her.

In Part Two, Raicharan returns to his village. His wife bears him a son named Phailna and then dies. Raicharan initially feels an intense resentment of the child, feeling that it someone intends to replace the little master who was so recently lost. He feels extreme guilt at the prospect of being happy about his own child in the aftermath of such tragedy.

Soon he is as affectionate and loving with his own son as he ever was with the little master. However, there is an unsettling development. As the baby develops, begins to walk, and to do all of things that babies do, Raicharan is reminded of the little master. His son’s actions seem uncannily similar, and he manages to convince himself that it is the little master, reincarnated in his own home. He considers the following three facts “beyond dispute:”

1. *The new baby was born soon after his little master’s death.*
2. *His wife could never have accumulated such merit as to give birth to a son in middle age.*
3. *The new baby walked with a toddle and called out Ba-ba and Ma-ma.*

The logic is far from ironclad, but he remembers that the mother accused him of stealing her child. If this is truly the little master reincarnated, he feels that he deserves her accusation.

In the final sequence of the story, Raicharan begins spoiling Phailna just as Anukul did for the little master. He spends money he does not have to clothe him in satin, and send him to fine schools. When he visits Phailna, the other students are amused by his country manners and they wonder how the elegant Phailna could have such a bumpkin for a father.

Soon Phailna is asking for more money and there is nothing Raicharan can give him. He visits the city where Anukul is practicing as a magistrate and tells him that he lied about the little master. He had kept him all along and now wishes to make it right. Anukul is suspicious of the claim, as there is no proof that Phailna is the little master. However, his wife’s reaction makes it irrelevant. She accepts the child whole-heartedly, believing that he is hers, and they send Raicharan away.

They story ends with Anukul sending money to Raicharan’s village, but there is no longer anyone there with that name.

*My Lord The Baby,*and many of Tagore’s other short stories, is a precursor to sprawling stories of Indian families such as Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance*and many of the novels of Salman Rushdie. Its central themes are duty—particularly the duty to one’s master and one’s son and father—and sacrifice.

Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. His work has been venerated by countless critics. His stories are sufficiently straightforward, however, and therefore have not been dissected as more thematically complicated, ambivalent tales like those of Kafka and Chekhov.

Gora

Gora is an Irish child whose mother dies in childbirth and whose father perishes in battle. He is adopted by a Hindu woman who has no children of her own. It is in this orthodox Brahmin family where Gora is raised, and learns Hindu traditions and culture. Although Gora is an Irish child with a white complexion, he believes that he is Brahmin. Through his adopted family he finds himself interacting with a prominent Brahmo family which helps to solidify his belief that modern India can only be saved by returning to its roots in Hinduism. This in opposition to the beliefs of the Brahmo family who reject idolatry and the caste system, but live a life that is able to combine a feeling of love and respect for India with those of universalism.

As he matures, he develops a group of devotees of young Brahmin men who share his beliefs and feel conflicted by modernism and Westernization. As the novel progresses it chronicles the struggles of the educated class of India in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Themes that emerge in the book include the life of modern Indian women and children through the character Anandamovi who adopts Gora, and the relationship of Gora with the more liberal Brahma Samaj.