

GORA

AN EVALUATION OF THE NOVEL

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Nobel laureate, world famous versatile genius scholar and poet Ravindra Nath Tagore created history by dint of his marvelous contribution to the Bengali literature in particular and to the Indian literature in general. Moreover, by establishing a unique type of university namely, "Shanti Niketan University", he again achieved an unprecedented goal.

He wrote several short stories, dramas, novels and poems in Bengali language. His poetry Gitanjali originally written in Bengali language and afterward translated into

English by the poet himself, was adjudged as excellent creation for the prestigious award. 'Nobel Prize' in the year 1993.

Though he wrote twelve novels but among them, 'Gora' novel is peculiar for many reasons. On account of its peculiar qualities, it was considered as Mahabharata of the contemporary period. As the hero 'Gora Mohan' popularly known as Gora plays dominant role in the novel. Rather entire story mainly revolves around him it therefore, rightly has been entitled as "Gora" itself. Though 'Gora' is the son of Irish parents, he was brought up by his foster Bengali parents, namely Krishna Dayal and his wife Ananand Mai.

Actually, during the first Indian independence war in 1857, an Irish couple fled out of fear in search of any shelter somewhere within the country. While the husband is shot dead in the way itself, the wife luckily escape and gets shelter in the house of a Bengali couple i.e. Krishna Dayal and Ananand Mai. The Irish lady gives birth to a son in their house and thereafter dies soon. Krishna Dayal is a staunch orthodox Hindu, his wife Ananand Mai is not so fanatic. But still they have good understanding between them. That is why they anyhow agree to adopt the newly born child as their foster son. So as has been brought up in such a complex atmosphere, he too imbibe same type of faith and spirit, though sometimes he seems to be inclined towards orthodox faith and because of fair skin is named as 'Gora Mohan' who, is popularly known only as 'Gora'.

The plot of the novel has been woven so skillfully by the great author that in spite of its so complexed technique it really exhibits a true picture of the contemporary period of the then Bengal.

Actually, the plot of the novel revolves mainly around two Bengali families residing in Calcutta city. Both are ideologically divided into two. Each of hem have been dominated by their own faith. While one family is headed by Krishna Dayal, a staunch orthodox Hindu though his wife Ananand mai and son Mohim are not so fanatic, as they are somewhat liberal and do not agree with Krishna Dayal blindly to follow the traditional orthodox principles, whereas the other family headed by Paresch Babu along with his wife Varada Sundari, three daughters and their constant guest Haran Babu follow modernized liberal thinking Brahmos i.e. Braham Samaj. They vehemently oppose idol-worshipping. With the result both the families sometimes indulge in criticizing each other. Not this much

only sometimes they even go for severe clash with each other. In spite of that both the families are victimised of their own hypocrisies, contradictions and weaknesses. Interestingly, because there was British rule over the country during those days, so the English education was becoming more and more popular for the younger generation. With the result the intellectual awareness was rising amongst youths. Engulfed as they were in such a new social background barring aged ones, the young-ones were following their own individualistic identity. Naturally, it was all due to the English education and also due to the advent of the Western civilization. In fact, that was a transitional period in our country starting from the 2nd half of the 19th century continues through the end of the 1st half of the 20th century.

Tagore, having created these various type of characters, let them to be free to act as per their own free will and desire and then starts watches their day to day behavior and activities. Some of them have narrow mindness and orthodox faith. As per the need of the novelist, Tagore also has woven some sub plots, inter mediatory stories and events. Though some of them help to proceed main plot further, some seem to malign the beauty of the main theme. Gora, the hero of the novel is a tall, stout and fair young man. By nature he is stubborn and arrogant, self-assertive, youth who never allows his principles to be compromised easily. On the other hand he thrusts his opinion upon others. This is why he always dreams of welfare, happiness and prosperity of his own country. Only then our country can be prosperous if all the people irrespective of caste and creed be united as one religious class-under the banner of liberal Hinduism. Actually, at heart he is very much helpful for the

downtrodden. Being a true patriot and optimist he always is dreaming for India's prosperity. Both he and Sucherita are attracted towards each other as they like each other from the core of their hearts but as Gora being dedicated to a mission of serving his country with full devotion, marriage like wordly- affairs are negligible for him. On the other Sucherita being a daughter of Paresh Babu's already expired Sanatanist friend Ram Sharan never agrees to the proposal of having married to Brahma Samaji Saran Babu. Gora, however, has made his place in her heart.

It is a shocking news for him that his fast friend Vinaya is going to marry Lallita, one of the daughters of Paresh Babu and as such is inclined to join Brahma Samaj. On the other, Gora's other friend Avinash does not involve himself in such matters.

When Gora is informed about his real identity and parentage by Krishna Dayal who is already on the death bed, he becomes very much shocked. Then his mind's psychology vibrates rapidly and he cannot decide what to do and where to go. Then first of all he approaches Paresh Babu and seeks his advice. Thereafter he goes to his foster mother Ananand Mai and touches her feet and says -O my mother, you are my real mother. I was in search of a real mother, whom I found this very soon. You are above caste, creed and religion, you are a symbol of virtues.

All the characters in the novel seem to be living characters as all of them are very active and do act as per their roles. This novel is a true picture of the contemporary period of India.

The story of the novel being so complicated can only be interpreted either in various ways or as per the

intellectual capacity of the reader. The end of the novel also does not give definite message except a new beginning of the concept of secularism and universal brotherhood.

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