Chapter Three

MALE OB DURACY

"Men, by associating in large masses as in camps and cities improve their talents but impair their virtues; and strengthen their minds, but weaken their morals; thus a retrocession in the one, is too often the price they pay for a refinement of the other". COLTON.

Tagore’s male characters are mostly drawn from the Bengali ‘bhadrolok’ of upper middle-class status and elite refinement. Most of them are from the Brahmin families with their ageless tradition for advanced cultural awareness. With the lone exception of Chaturanga, the other eight novels do have the main characters from such Brahmin stock. There are three male characters, Mahendra and Bihari in Binodini, and Nikhil in The Home and The World who belong to the zamindari class. They have a princely style of living as in the zenana. The Renaissance movement in Bengal brought into these men the spirit of individualism as a benefit of Western education. In this context, they had no need to shed any kind of inhibitions whereas the contemporary womenfolk had to labour under social oppression, while struggling to liberate themselves. All the
other male characters of the other novels are professionals and gentlemen of social honour.

These men of high status particularly the heroes of the novels, put forward their claims towards establishing their self-identity. In this process of self-realisation they get entangled in emotional dilemma. Relevantly there is dichotomy of values in juxtaposition of opposite pulls. The dichotomous tangle arises in relation to dichotomies such as present and future, truth and untruth, love and sacrifice. The modernity and tradition are the most relevant dichotomy for these lovers. The modernity lies in the fact that the lover is poised for promoting his love. It is a matter of interpersonal agreement and adjustment. More often it leads to a crisis. It may be due to the operation of external forces like religion or society. Adjustment in the form of compromise is feasible. And the dilemma is solved when the concept of modernity which involves a compromise regarding one’s religious beliefs is willingly accepted. It means that the opposites will have to be sublimated into compromise in the act of bringing harmony to the situation. The concerned character is relieved of the tension of the dilemma and all ends well.

All the principal male characters of Tagore including Gora are to pass through this mill of dichotomous dilemma so as to make their
ambition for self-realisation a practical reality. The male characters of Tagore are classified into categories in relation to their dominating concern for external sentiments like patriotism. They fall into groups according to their lovelife on the one hand, and according to the dominating emotion that agitates them, on the other. They have their feeling of love towards their lovers while bringing into this lovelife the tension and faith of the external force that they choose as their style of living. Accordingly the male characters belong to categories like men of ideals like patriotism. They lead others who belong to the categories of men of spiritual quest, men of compromise, men of profound ideas and men of dual love.

Tagore’s creation of Gora in the novel *Gora* as a bifocal character is unique in its design and development. He belongs to the category of men of patriotism. It is in consonance with the prevailing spirit of Renaissance in Bengal during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Gora is at once a ruthless agitator as a modern and a modest lover by tradition. Thus two roles are integrated into one personality. Significantly this lover in him saves the agitator in him from the danger of the disintegration of his soul. This is the gist of the story of *Gora*. Little attention is given to the subject of Gora as a lover in literary criticism. More is known of him as a character of the Hindu agitator. It is possible to judge his character accurately only through knowing fully about his lovelife.
Positively there are two streams of consciousness in Gora’s character. The first is his love for Sucharita. It is her modern curiosity of mind and traditional charm with ‘two enticing eyes’ that agitate Gora from within. He keeps this love affair unknown to others. So does Sucharita. But being a lover of emotional commitment he is in violent contrast to the other half of his being as a neo-Hindu agitator.

Tagore’s literary creations have relevance to the present and future, modernity and tradition and the locale and universe. His social novels dealing with the theme of love exhibit such universal relevance. Gora as a character has this kind of double relevance. Furthermore his character is to prove that human emotion and not intellect will be the deciding factor in attaining happiness for all. Annotatively Gora is born in India but not as an Indian. But he is awarded Indianness. He is proud of his Indian nationality and Brahminical heritage. In reality he is neither of the two but a young man of Irish parentage. The mission of his life is to regenerate India’s past cultural glory. He is to achieve it by means of his intellectual, offensive moves against defectors like Brahmos. V.R. Bhattacharya remarks ‘Rabindranath believed that India could March ahead only when the spirit of Indian culture has been properly spread among one and all. He placed priority on human values. This was in keeping with the tradition of the ancient spiritual path finders’.

(Vivek Ranjan Bhattacharya. “Tagore’s
Vision of a Global Family" 161). Tagore creates Gora as the spiritual pathfinder with the idea of revitalization of Vedic culture in the context of mobilising the Brahmins, the rural brethren and the Muhammadans alike for the sake of upholding the human values, Gora is presented as an embodiment of the ancient system. However, the above critic observes further: ‘But he (Tagore) was not sacrosanct of anything and everything that the ancient system offered’ (Ibid. 169). No emotion towards the country is needed in this context. While intellect is to rule supreme, India’s heritage of Vedic knowledge will have to be inspired. The Vedic followers are to emerge as the vanguards of the revivalist India. Gora aims at Brahminical exclusiveness. He is highly agitated from within over the issues of tackling the hostile Brahmoist, the misguided elite and the characterless masses. This explains why Gora shuns crowds of admirers unlike the Hindu leader doing penance. Gora’s commitment to this idea of Brahminical chosenness is vitiated by the emotional experience of discovering India while on his treks into rural India in suburban Calcutta. This experience in the rural country makes him think on the problem of India in a new light. He asks the local commoners to accept reformation. They silence the guns of Gora when they ask him to reform his own community first, making them accept widow remarriage. He finds the barber woman in the riot-torn village fondling a muslim orphan boy. He is
not able to reform the local Brahmin manager of the white man’s estates. Further there is always his mother Anandamoyi’s argument against the idea of Brahminical chosenness of God. Her remarks are ‘If you alone are the elect of God, why has He made grovel in the dust first before the Pathans, then before the Moghuls, and now before the Christians?’ (G 27).

The observation from Gora’s mother herself takes the wind off the sails and Gora’s arguments lose their validity in favour of segregation. His advocacy of caste leadership for India is found mythical and, therefore, unreasonable. However, Gora realizes the falsity of his philosophy of segregation only when he reaches the day of penance. And he is momentously informed of his foreign birth. In this inevitable context he is saved of emotional devastation by his love for Sucharita. His love for her works is as a transformative power.

An indepth analysis of Gora’s lovelife with Sucharita will yield more interpretive information on how he has been loving Sucharita all along. M. Sarada says, ‘In due course he is attracted by Sucharita. This, in turn, involves Gora in an emotional conflict, his love, his duty and service to his country and to the people vis-à-vis his love for a woman of another faith’. (M. Sarada 56). He finds her attractive with physical charm and intellectual brilliance as suggested by her ‘two entrancing eyes, soft with modesty’ and ‘bright with understanding’. (G 107). He feels it when he
visits the Gangetic garden in Calcutta 'surrendered himself to Nature's overtures since he had been brought up against some point of contact with Nature' (107).

The novelist remarks, "He thrilled through and through with ineffable joy as all his questions and misgivings were completely set at rest by the depth of this experience...." (G 107). Though an intellectual, Gora is very much alive to Nature, he develops communication with Nature like a Vedic sage in the forest. More importantly his intellectual being is sustained by his emotional experience. As for Sucharita she is equally dispassionate in sporting her love for Gora. She too sublimes her love for Gora into love for the country. It is in conformity to all patriotic work of reviving the Vedic wisdom of India's past. It is a clear case of destiny that she loves him for his manly rhetoric on Hindu glory.

When Gora's foster-father Krishnadayal advises him to remain a Brahmo follower Gora's reply to him is 'The merit of some previous Hindu birth has brought me this time into a Brahmin family' (G 24). He appears in the 'war apparel' 'with a tuft, a tilak of Gangetic clay and a dhuti' reminding one of Don Quixote in his knightly outfit. His 'war apparel' frightens others. He has an aggressive manner of delivering his thoughts in defence of neo-Hinduism. Contrastively Sandip (HW) has
similar talent at speech making and he gains his personal power over Bimala. She has her personal grievance that her husband Nikhil is not as aggressive as Sandip who gives masterly strokes of eloquence. Gora argues against all and antagonises all. With the lone exception of Paresh Babu, his arguments are more in number and effective than the Brahmoist-like Haran Babu. Harimohini is said to be bringing him flat on the ground when she touches on Gora’s Hindu sentiments. It happens when she puts him the question on the propriety of his action in visiting the unmarried Hindu girl like Sucharita. Gora’s chief argument is against Brahmoists like Haran Babu who chose to get into English influence while ignoring Hindu power for self-improvement. This tussle of ideas on religion earns this novel its label of being a novel on religious conflicts. He never wins arguments. Gora’s noble minded mother Anandamoyi advises him not to argue with his friend Binoy and lose him forever. Though he is riding roughshod over all, Binoy visits him on the day of his marriage. Gora refuses to attend the marriage. Gora’s argument is against having the luxury of emotional exhilaration while the country needs men of intellect and not of emotion. However Gora concedes that women are to be inducted into the freedom struggle for making it full-fledged. This is how Sucharita finds a place in his campaign. It is for country’s oneness. Binoy understands Gora as a true but an extremely serious minded patriot. Gora’s step-brother Mohim calls
him a ‘Patriotic Prig’ (G 22). For Mohim, Gora is Harish Mookerjee the Second’ (G 22) suggesting that Gora thinks and acts like a King in power.

Gora dislikes the English for their high handed interference into the traditional Hindu social order based on humanistic culture. Gora has the insightful view that the West is incapable of appreciating India’s tradition for humanistic culture with its universality of timeless glory. Swapon Majumdar refers to Tagore’s view as follows, ‘His reactions…… reveal divergences in his point of view. And this may be explained as a dichotomy caused by the ‘otherness’ for him of Western culture. Then, was it not opposed to his idea of universalism itself?’ (Swapon Majumdar, “The East-West colloquy: Tagore’s understanding of the West”. Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today, 303). For Gora, the reforms of the English are unwanted. Thus he is a conservative while objecting to the Indians following the English cult of making love. His opposition against Brahmos is based on his criticism of their adopting the Anglican practices in religious worship and social relations. Objecting to the English policy of segregation he courts arrest and refuses to come out on bail. Instead he decides to do penance on the strength of his argument that the British prison has polluted his personality of orthodox Hindu inviolability.
Anandamoyi’s love for Gora is of classical motherliness. However Gora understands her capacity for sacrifice only after knowing about his foreign birth. Anadamoyi tells him that she has been afraid of telling him of his foreign birth earlier because he was not born to her. He understands that he can find himself an Indian in the name of Indian tradition and harmony among the opposites. He calls Anandamoyi as his mother real and symbolical. He calls her ‘Mother India’ also. He finds in the Brohmoist Paresh Babu a liberal thinker when he makes a beeline to him after his foster-father informs him of his foreign birth. Sucharita readily agrees to be his wife while he takes liberty with her emotional love for him. Meenakshi Mukerjee says… ‘towards the end of the novel he has undergone a crisis of faith. He has begun to see that the traditional values that he had idealized all his life will not bear close scrutiny in their actual context. Religion, which should be a sustaining faith is in reality reduced to oppressive rituals and the idea of cohesive community is merely a myth. (Meenakshi Mukerjee, Realism and Reality. The Novels and Society in India. 157).

The literary controversy is on Gora getting the knowledge on his true parentage. It is neither a forcible feeding of information nor a mystic contrivance for regularizing a situation of incongruity. Gora fails but he fails grandly. Swapon Majumdar points out in this context, ‘Failures, says
the proverb, stand witness to the majesty of an ideal’ (Swapon Majumdar, 303). Gora misses the ideal of realizing his brahminical identity but emerges as a successful idealist with the revelation of truth about India being the land of humanistic culture of universal relevance.

Gora asks Paresh Babu ‘To-day give me the mantram of that Deity who belongs to all, Hindu, Mussulman, Christian and Brahma alike.’ (G 407). Here Gora shows himself as the patriot with the cultural awareness of the country. Next he shows his political sensibility by asking God – ‘He who is not merely the God of the Hindus, but who is the God of India herself!’ After establishing his cultural and political sentiments he prefers to have emotional stature as the son of ‘Mother India’. He praises his own mother Anandamoyi in the following words, ‘Mother, you my mother!... The mother whom I have been wandering about in search of was all the time sitting in my room at home. You have no caste, you make no distinctions, and you have no hatred – you are only the image of our welfare! It is you who are India!’ (G 407).

The emergence of Gora as the son of the soil with the Indian outlook for universal harmony occurs through several phases. First of all it is of two parallel streams of consciousness. The intellectual sensibility as directed towards discerning the infalliability of Indian culture culminates
his life co-evally. There is an undercurrent of emotional life in terms of sublimation. In the last phase he has the same intellectual abandon during the hectic time of his knowing about his foreign birth. He goes to Paresh Babu the intellectual thinker, and then only to his mother, the embodiment of self-effacing love for him. The intellectualism in his personality is overrun by his emotional enlightenment of the truth of life in terms of the human values of harmony and tolerance. Gora as a character is given the lead in the novel whereas in the other eight novels the heroines are in the lead. Gora is great by all standards of human excellence and spiritual vision.

In the category of patriotic lovers Nikhil is the most serious minded hero with his intellectual ideas passing through the spectrum of emotional realities. He is a self-confirmed patriot as different from the conventional type of popular patriot. His status as the zamindari raja of his estates makes him a man of social responsibility. He holds conservative views on the current politics of Swadeshi agitation. His idea of society and its political features are considered to be of academic interest. But he believes otherwise. He flatters himself that he is essentially a philosopher-king of Plato’s description. He can afford to think of practicing his ideas as the young Bengali Brahmin zamindar who holds semi-governmental charge over his estate and its citizens. He has his estate treasury and official
linkages with the British governmental officials. He can arrest the unruly patriots and cleanse his estate of the elements of political extremism.

Nikhil differs from the young zamindar of Mahendra (B) in the sense that the latter is the ruler in absentia. Mahendra is found pursuing his desires of sensuousness with his easy conscience. An idealist that Nikhil is, his moral conscience is made up of his care for the virtue of accountability. He has social responsibility. Now the problem of his relevance to the existing social environment of political turmoil crops up. It was an age of political agitation everywhere with the Swadeshi agenda for burning the foreign clothes in protest against the British exploitation and political might to divide the Muslims by the partition of Bengal. Nikhil disapproves of the politicians like Sandip for exercising their power of popularity without social responsibility. Apart from the crime rate rising up and political terrorism on the increase, the burning of foreign goods makes the traders the helpless losers. Most of them are Muslims and the vicious cycle of communal disharmony starts leading to the clashes between Hindus and Muslims. According to Anita Desai the Swadeshi movement is ‘an elitist movement, run by the educated and landowning classes, the ‘bhadralok’ of Bengal, who had no connection with and little consideration for the labouring classes’ (*The Home and the World*, Introduction by Anita Desai, Penguin Books, 9). The Swadeshi hark upon their political slogan
‘Vande Mataram’ and it is suggestive of Hindu sentimentality in majority. There is a danger of communal hostility round the corner. Incidentally it is to quell the communal riots in the neighbouring zamindari that Nikhil gallops out on his horse to reach the troubled spot and he is brought back home on a litter half dead. Nikhil is able to seize up the situation in its realistic perspectives. He talks more about it that shows his strength of character. He talks to Sandip and the visiting college students on the futility of such political vandalism in the name of country’s freedom.

Sandip observes, ‘The Nikhil type wants to keep the world always a school’. (HW 69). Nikhil’s ideas of national reconstruction are like seeds sown on the wasteland of political fanaticism. Nobody including his wife Bimala understands that he has to his credit the honour of running within his estate the units of Indian products in anticipation of Swadeshi spirit. Nikhil’s practical wisdom is not accepted. But his tolerance towards the English as a segment of humanity is suspected as the hidden purpose of supporting the alien rule. The elite opponents burn Nikhil’s effigy with all Hindu ceremonies.

Gora is against the English in Bengal criticising both the government and the English people alike. His dislike for English is deep rooted. Because of this he decides to make penance to get rid of the
pollution that he sustains by his stay in the British jail. In the four novels of patriotic sentiments the hero Gora is followed by Nikhil but with liberal outlook towards the British as individual citizens. His political views are for moderation.

Nikhil is in search of ratification of love. It is too sensuous a thought for him to take his wife to Calcutta and love her afresh. He tells her ‘If we meet, and recognize each other, in the real world, then only will our love be true’ (HW 18). He wants to check up whether her love for him is from ‘the deep spring of her heart, or was it merely like the daily provision of pipe water pumped up by the municipal steam-engine of society?’ (HW 43). It is not clear why he expects spirited love from her after nine years of barren married life. He talks about the final result of her seeing the outerworld thus ‘If I discover that I do not fit in with the arrangement of the outer world then I shall not quarrel with my fate but silently take away my leave’ (HW 49). The circumstances that follow are to vindicate these words of abdication by Nikhil. Bimala brings up her make-believe world of outer range into her own zenana. But she is free to give her love to Sandip and not to Nikhil. Nikhil is not to intervene. It is by his deliberate choice. For him Caesar’s wife is beyond suspicion. Being a royal personality he knows the ways of the world. Sandip withdraws himself from the seduction scene with Bimala in the lead. Sandip remembers
Nikhil’s royal doles to him. It is much to the credit of Nikhil’s personality of uprightness that Sandip changes for good his original image of being an anarchist conqueror of women and the world.

It is a mystery whether Nikhil is loved more by Bimala or the Bara Rani, the widow of Nikhil’s deceased brother, is in deep emotional ties with Nikhil by virtue of the fact that they have been together in the world of playful childhood from their younger days. Nikhil enjoys this human bondage. On Nikhil’s advice Bimala is good to the Bara Rani. His words are, ‘our mutual joys and sorrows took on deeper tones of intimacy’ (HW 259). The only success for Nikhil in his issueless married life of nine years is that he has won Bimala’s silence over his ‘deeper tones of intimacy’ with the Bara Rani. At last, after reunion with Bimala he realises that it was ‘this unconscious tyranny of mind which made them gradually drift apart. In trying to manufacture a helpmate we spoil a wife’ (HW 292) that he does not spoil a wife become true when they get started to move out to Calcutta.

Sandip is the most controversial character next to Gora. Sandip is misunderstood as the Swadeshi leader whereas he is a social brigand using his political image for swindling money. Gora is misunderstood as a man of intellectual ideas but the truth remains that he is a man with an
emotional life of love for his lady love. But it is unknown to others. Sandip is a man of villainous urges to make himself a predatory possessor of high riches with ‘all the expanse of romantic brigandage’ (HW 154). In short, he is a social anarchist inpatient to get into easy money. He is for playing for higher stakes. He is recklessly ambitious. He is free with his energy and talents. He passes for an orator keeping the politically inspired audience spellbound. He is a thoughtful villain. Bimala falls for him as a political disciple and treats him as her lover inside the zenana. He uses his talent of oratory for his stay in Nikhil’s zenana with the intention of fleecing the latter’s treasury using Bimala as a willing tool. His tall talk of Swadeshi revolution is to gain for him the inflated social image. It is secured through the passage of political power and prestige. His advocacy of nationalism is with its rascality of using violence as an article of faith for his followers. He is an anarchist with the dangerous philosophy that end justifies the means. On the social level he is a conqueror of women with no moral scruples. Nikhil entertains him into his zenana on Bimala’s express wish.

Sandip turns out to be permanent guest with a hidden agenda. Bimala can now have the home delivered opportunity to experience the outerworld within the premises of her zenana. And Sandip sets up his headquarters for Swadeshi agitation at her zenana while making her the presiding ‘deity’. She finds in Sandip a hero of charismatic appeal
deserving to be awarded her amorous admiration and surrender. E.M. Forster identifies this conquest of Bimala by Sandip as ‘a boarding house flirtation that masks itself in patriotic talk’ (HW, Introduction by Anita Desai Penguthe books 7). Nobody except Nikhil understanda Sandip in his true identity of being a self-seeking politician. Bimala offers him much money as the donor. He declares, ‘I am a nabob born, and it is a great dream of mine to get rid of this disguise of poverty, though it be for a day only, and to see myself in my true character’ (HW 154). Nikhil and Bimala never forget how Sandip has been a confirmed swindler while on the payroll of their estates and how Sandip has been getting Nikhil’s money grants not only for his college education but also for funding the Swadeshi movement, for running the newspaper and visiting the health resorts. Sandip is for them a known devil with his greed for money and also an unknown angel with the newly acquired glory of political image.

When such is the case of Sandip being a social brigand in the guise of the Swadeshi agitator, it is preposterous to evaluate Sandip’s political activism out of proportions. Except for the sinking of the boat as an act of incitement of communal tension no other patriotic activities are reported to the credit of Sandip. He is known to Bimala as a man of manly courage only by his rhetorical words and not by his activities. Nikhil is mirroring the hollowness of Sandip’s claim for courage. For Sandip national
resistance against the brutality of foreign domination is to be evaluated for its content which will be a moral force or a moral necessity. Disbelieving the efficacy of morality as a social virtue, Sandip asks Nikhil, ‘How long should they keep you cool with the wet towel of moral precepts?’ (HW 67). There is no such thing as permanent value in his principles for Sandip. Nikhil sticks to his principles of ethics and morality in politics and advocates the edicts for a civilized society. It is to be the sustenance to the content of political resistance. Again it is to be in terms of its moral necessity or ethical vision.

Sandip knows that he cannot influence Nikhil. They know each other from the days of their college club. However Sandip has several sessions of political arguments with Nikhil. It is not with the ulterior motive of identifying Nikhil as the unyielding opponent to the Swadeshi cause. The gain that he wants to get of this situation is that he can bring about estrangement between Nikhil and Bimala and isolate her. In that case it will be easy for him to fleece her and even seduce her. The tragic part of this love story of the novel is that the villain comes to know that there is a rift in the lute in the sense that there is no love lost between Nikhil and Bimala. Sandip declares that the husband and wife do not know each other. His own words of criticism of the royal couple is as follows, ‘How little these two persons, who have been together, day and night, for nine whole
years. They had cherished the belief that the harmony of the home with the outside was perfect*. (HW 168, 169). The ‘home’ and the ‘world’ are not the same. Accordingly Sandip finds Nikhil as ignorant of the outside world as Bimala. It cuts across the whole knot of the novel’s story as related to Nikhil’s attempt to educate hypothetically his wife on the outer world as a prerequisite for his rediscovering her as a truly inspiring wife at Calcutta. Nikhil treats her as his equal from the beginning while unwittingly giving her fuller power of discretion to decide whether to go with him or with Sandip. Again Sandip knows Nikhil’s policy of masterly inactivity in dealing with Bimala-Sandip love affair. He says of Nikhil, ‘He feels the danger threatening his home and yet why does he not turn me out?..... If Bimala tells him that their mating has been a misfit he will bow his head and admit that it may have been a blunder!’ (HW 74). So Sandip finds that Nikhil is no problem for him in his attempt to seduce Bimala not for the sake of making his conquest of her but for getting money from her. He has the face and imagination to keep on the image of his leadership. His conquest of her is complete and he gets into his regular business of exhorting money. In this context as a juggler of words from his early childhood he states, ‘The wrench of plucking up the plant by the roots is
over. It is now only careful tending and nurture that is needed' (HW 167). For him it is a lust for money and not for physical passion.

Being a social anarchist Sandip has no faith in morality. Finding Bimala amenable to his sensual advances, he encourages her while giving her books on sex. But he stops midway when she yields to him for seduction. The reason is that he remembers Nikhil as a friend. It is too good of him and it shows further that he is not entirely lost to morality as a virtue. Deep inside him there sparks the moral sense so active to be a composite character of Jekyll and Hyde apiece. Anita Desai refers to Lukacs’ mention of Sandip’s character as a ‘caricature of Gandhi’. (HW. Introduction by Anita Desai, (10). The truth is just the contrary. In fact Nikhil anticipates Gandhi by his advocacy of moral values. Tagore creates in Sandip an image of a crazy politician with a taste for mixing politics and religion and also for neglecting the interest of the Muslim brethren. He calls Bimala ‘the deity of Bengal and ‘the mother goddess’. (HW 11) Gora is a novel with the religious issues as a centrality of the plot. Patriotism in its infancy is brought up as the reinforcement of the theme of love. Next follows the novel The Home and The World which scores up politicization of patriotism in its organized form with the patriots up in arms against the alien rulers. The political extremism as advocated by Sandip is so cruel and so cruelly suppressed. Altogether it was an equal
fight. The novelist invited criticism upon himself when he made distinction between the British rulers in power, and the British citizens of culture. About twenty five years later Tagore writes his last novel *Four Chapters* with characters interacting among themselves against the background of terrorist agenda. It was an outgrowth of faith in violence. That was out of tune with the India’s heritage of humanistic love for all. The character of Sandip is an eclipse indicating the erosion of India’s cultural value of universal humanism.

Among Tagore’s heroes in his nine novels no hero has such substantial quality as Atindra of *Four Chapters*. His character is not impressive but important enough to prove that Ela as his lover is far superior to him in respect to forcing the issues with force of character. His individual identity is a matter of love for him. It is the point of strength as well as weakness for him. He yields to her with abiding faith, realizing that she has led him into the human slavery under the terrorist master Indranath. Ela has no direct answer to his question why she takes him not as a lover to marry but as a co-worker in the terrorist outfit.

On the ferry steamer from Mokameh Ghat, he is attracted by her lovely personality with the striking voice, liveliness and flowerslike fingers. Love is a common experience for both of them but it is a special
case of love at first sight for Ela. She takes the initiative, casting a spell on him, and Indranath remarks, ‘This boy, Atin, has joined us for love of Ela. He holds within him dynamite that may at any time explode disastrous by (FC 20, 21). The first word that she speaks of him is ‘Why don’t you wear khadi?’ (FC 29). He allows her to take him into the terrorist movement of Indranath just to be a lover for her and not to be a votary of terrorism. Both of them are disillusioned and turn against the working of the terrorist forum. However he curiously retains his love for Ela and terrorist unit. He is resolved to maintain his self respect against all odds. Indranath is convinced of this dominant trait in Atindra’s character. When Ela begs her master to release Atindra from the unit the master asks her, ‘Who am I to release him? He remains bound by his own resolve. I know he’ll never be rid of his doubts. At every step his finer feelings will be hurt. And yet his self-respect will keep him on till the end’. (FC 16). His being a youthful scion of zamindari stock does not prevent him from running from buffalo sheds to the haunted houses as a terrorist fugitive. But he finds it revolting to rob the widow of her money for his party and food. More despisingly he has to marshal the puppet-like boys against the brutal force of British government and die like victims under the moving Juggernaut’s car of Puri (FC 39). He sincerely thinks that his creative powers are used for destructive purposes of sub-human taste and not for ennobling nation
building. Thus he is not in the cage of love for Ela but in the cage of infamous terrorist agenda. Like Lady Macbeth inviting Neptune’s water to cleanse her soul, Atindra prefers the water of Lethe to give him the gift of forgetfulness of the past happy life. He says, ‘All stains will be washed away by the waters of Lethe, on whose brink we now stand. (FC 76). Ela’s reply to his question of the wrong choice is to show her regard for him. It is on account of her desire to give him over to the nation. She does not want to keep him for herself and she tells him that he lacks manly courage to take liberty with her person. He declares to Ela that he cannot leave the boys in the lurch. He is more concerned with preserving his image of an honourable leader for them than for ending the devilry of terrorism. Ironically enough he allows himself to be the exterminator of Ela himself. He knows that both of them are to be betrayed to their foreign government by their party bosses. It is a sure road to ruinage in terms of gallows. More than the terrorist philosophy, the human responses to such a philosophy with tender emotions like love bring up the human drama in its truth of search for harmony of life. Atindra’s character of opposites will be of the modernity of self-criticism. It overshadows him and finally he ends up in adopting the tradition of keeping up the vow of soldierly loyalty to the leader.
Among the modern lovers young men with spiritual quest are of a separate class. Dr. Nalinaksha of *The Wreck* and Sachis of *Chaturanga* belong to this category. Nalinaksha’s spiritual quest is an affirmative asset for him and he gets married in spite of his ascetic mind. He calls himself a ‘solemn stick’ suggesting his unromantic outlook. He talks more about spirituality as a Brahmooist thinker but with the Indian tradition of high thinking with mystic and cosmic analysis. Sachis (C) is cast into a different mould of an ascetic character. It is so except for the brief period of his wavering between his ascetic quotient and nascent love for Damini. He resists Damini’s amorous advances with his resolution to be an ascetic for ever.

The spiritual attitude on the part of these two ascetic-minded modern lovers is to show how asceticism may be practiced while at home and at forest. Sachis prefers to live far from the madding crowd, in places like the river side close to Nature. Nalinaksha prefers certain poetic sensibility of spirituality with no self love as in the case of Sachis. Rather he has compassion for others, the most winning quality in him.

Once Dr. Nalinkaksha happens to be a physician with the scientific mind. But with his grain of Indian cultural nuances he practices Yoga alone in meditative calmness, in the best tradition of a Hindu ascetic or a
Buddhist monk. He declares to Hemnalini’s father, ‘...I despise nothing on earth. When I came into the world I was utterly dependent on the charity of others. It cost much labour and the fostering care of many individuals to bring my mind and body gradually to maturity. It would be unbecoming arrogance on my part to despise anything. What one cannot construct one has no title to destroy’ (TW 253). By these words of confessional frankness Nalinaksha admits that his intellectual being owes itself to what others have taught him. It is also characteristic of him, to be humble minded as a seeker of knowledge as projected into the realities of life. In helps him to develop perspectives of mind with a sense of balance governing his idealistic aspirations and practical sensibility. His mother who never forgives his Brahmo father is said to be a better judge of her son. When Uncle Chakrabarti refers to the moral safety of Haridashi alias Kamala in Nalinaksha’s house his mother makes her remarks. ‘It’s likely enough that he has been doing things for her and we know nothing about it’. (TW 391). This confirms that she has faith in his moral strength. His love for her is bordering on devotion. Though a man of ideas with Brahmoist orientation and Hindu thoughtfulness he has unquestioned sympathy for his mother’s idea of self-purity. The best part of his character is that he goes with his mother to Kashi. His support is for his mother with her extreme belief in the ceremonial purity of Hindu orthodoxy. He does it
inspite of his Brahmoist heritage and Hindu ways of life. He does it on the occasion of his mother, refusing to forgive his father. But at long last, he accepts Kamala as his wife, assuring her that his mother will forgive her sin of living with Ramesh under mistaken identity. As a doctor he is held in high esteem by all. But he displays a sense of resignation. He lives by his ideas of internal conviction. He believes that his wedded wife is not lost in the boat wreck and she is alive only to come back to him. His favourable disposition towards Hemnalini as a bridal candidate for him does not receive his emotional acknowledgement. He bypasses Hemnalini once on the veranda giving rise to the doubt on his sincerity of purpose as a bridegroom for an engagement. He is for ‘upright conduct, professional skill and fervid piety’ (TW 237). Hemnalini makes the remark that conjugal life with him will be that of a work of piety for him. This sense of piety is inherited by him from his mother. ‘In his passionless altruism he was independent of woman’s love. To serve a man like him was a work of piety’. (TW 336). He himself avers ‘People don’t fall in love easily with a solemn stick like me’ (TW 410). So he is an ascetic of high spiritual strength and stature but moving about in the world of mundane reality. He is a rare combination of spiritual vision and humanistic culture. Harish Raizada commenting Tagore’s idea of humanism remarks, ‘For Tagore there was no dualism between spiritualism and humanism. His humanism
was in fact born of his belief in spiritualism and, paradoxical though it may appear, he was a staunch humanist because he was a profound spiritualist’. (Harish Raizada, “Humanism in the Novels of Rabimdranath Tagore”, 151). Interpretatively Nalinaksha is a spiritualist who prefers his Brahmoist father to his mother in appreciation of her advocacy of spiritual values.

A confirmed spiritualist is necessarily to sympathise with suffering women. Gora as the militant spiritualist is not able to think of Sucharita as suffering in the hands of Kailash, the suitor from the village. Similarly, Nalinaksha is a great humanist sympathizing with Kamala suffering on account of her past life in sin. He calls himself a ‘solemn stick’ but he is a right man with the right mind in the world that he sets aright. Damini (C) is not like Hemnalini (TW) in the sense that the former imposes her romantic love upon the ascetic Sachis and gets repudiated when he renounces the world entirely. Nalinaksha has to make his final choice to give up the modernity of his worldly activities of personal attachment in favour of assuming the tradition of accepting the sanctity of marriage. He accepts Kamala into his life leaving aside public criticism of her past and giving her life certain brilliance of salvation in the name of the sanctity of marriage.
Sachis in *Chaturanga* belongs to the category of men of ideals but with a particular reservation. Unlike the other heroes who have their lovelife, Sachis is the hero of no amorous love. But he has spiritual quest as the core part of his personality. It is for fulfilling his innate desire for enlightenment that he seeks it as Lord Buddha does in his life. It is strange because he is a Calcutta bred post-graduate in English Literature. But his first love is for philosophical thought and not for literature. This means that he goes by his intellectual conclusions rather than by his emotional joys. Both his English professor and his Uncle Jagmohan educate him to be an atheist and not an aesthete. But he has the spiritual quotient in his elemental being. It is inborn. By birth he looks special among the ordinary. His friend Sribilas as the narrator of the entire story bears testimony to this in the following lines,.....’ his complexion is no mere colour, it glows. When I saw Sachis I felt as though I saw into his inmost soul and I loved him at once. But once the inner spirit in man leaps into flame, piercing the grossness, there will always be some worshipping him vehemently,....’ (C 11). This explains how and why Sribilas a college mate becomes the only life long worshipper for Sachis. Sachis is thus a rare young man of soul power. He has no heritage of Brahmanical orthodoxy. Sribilas writes on Sachis thus: ‘But I have since known that he is a goldsmith by caste. We were a family of orthodox kayasthas and looked down upon
goldsmiths…” (C 13). Tagore in his novel, *Farewell My Friend*, refers to the dead husband of Yogamaya, a minor male character of orthodox heritage thus: ‘All his life he waged war against the pretensions of non-Brahmins to knowledge, … he published innumerable pamphlets to save Hinduism from the contamination of science, … (FMF 17). The science of seeking the largest happiness of the largest number shows him the way into atheism with a staunch faith in altruistic humanism. It is on in spite of his spiritual nature. Therefore it is a self-contradiction for him. But his hero-worshipping of his atheist Uncle is responsible for this kind of perversion. Nonetheless he finds his Uncle a failure. His Uncle is to learn the mysterious power of human emotions. Sachis’ neighbour Nanibala commits suicide while he offers to marry her in spite of her being an unmarried mother in widowhood. She hangs herself on account of her faith in the Hindu tradition to consider a man as her husband who gives her a child though by raping.

Sachis is disillusioned at the atheist ‘god’ that fails. The aesthete in him, as a scholar of English Literature, of beautification of sublime emotions, gains the upper hand and he goes in self-exile. Sribilas comments on this thus: ‘Sachis had been as the flower among us: without him our naked thorns bristled savagely’. (C 37). With his atheistic Uncle no longer alive, nothing is to intrude upon his conscience. He never utters
any word in support of atheism as a school of thought. All that he does is to stand by his Uncle’s fanatic activism. His Uncle has proved his faith in the absolute efficacy of science and his stupid death by plague is evident of this fact. During his self exile for two years, Sachis retains his habit of hero worship as directed towards his scholarly Uncle. Accordingly now Sachis has his Vaishnava Guru as an object of hero-worshipping. He massages the Guru’s feet with no inhibition. When Sribilas points out the inconsistency of Sachis violating the sense of freedom of thinking that his Uncle gives him, Sachis replies thus, ‘That was freedom on the land. .... But this is the sea of ecstasy where the boat alone gives you freedom... I am being helped across the sea by each wary grip of this massage.... It is I who am in need’. (C 41). Sachis believes in the guru. He warns his friend Sribilas that Guru’s creed is not to be challenged. His former aesthetic sentiments do not stand in his way to contradict him. Now he is for the spiritual quest. Here again he has his detractors and Damini is one. She is the rebellious inmate of the Guru’s camp in her house. She tries to violate Sachis’ spiritual identity with her passionate love for him. On this Sribilas writes ‘Sachis saw only the grace and not Damini’ (C 48). It is she who relieves Sachis from the spell of the guru.

Sachis resists her three attempts to attract him. Once he runs away seeing her knocking her head in her room floor. At the sea side cave he
kicks her on her chest. Damini dies of it in the end. Finally, she enters into his room during the lightning rains and is driven away. Sachis pities her for her being a destitute in the guru’s camp. Her case is that of miscarriage of justice. She argues her case of how she is not favoured by the guru for the reason that she refuses to be his devotee. Again she finds herself in the camp on account of her husband’s testament that the guru is to be her warden after getting trusteeship over her properties. She proves to Sachis and Sribilas that Guru is a hypocrite with no moral conscience. When the devotee Nabin’s wife dies, the guru is found singing and dancing in the kirtan group as usual. There is no sympathy from the guru for human suffering. Sachis understands the shallowness of Guru’s creed of self-love in terms of self-intoxication by group singing and orgiastic revelry. When Sachis deserts the guru and goes to the riverside on his spiritual quest Damini and Sribilas go with him just to take care of him. Sachis keeps his soul power unsullied when he pervasively asks her to leave him alone forever. This is the occasion of his second deliverance from the worldly ties next to his former liberation from the atheism and his Uncle. Like Buddha, the enlightened, he yells out that he has attained almost Nirvana the spiritual bliss of self-salvation. Sachis experiences spiritual enlightenment after Damini releases him from her supporting love. Like Prakriti in Tagore’s play ‘Chandalika’ her suffocating love. Damini.
abdicates her claim of physical love for Sachis in the spirit of her self-negation while seeing him in the misery of spiritual challenge. (Vivek Bhattacharya, “Buddha’s Influence on Tagore”, Relevance of Tagore 86).

Commenting upon Tagore’s theory of ‘Surplus in Man’ S.P. Banerjee observes, ‘Man has wealth far in excess of his needs… In Tagore’s estimate man is a person where he is in himself; he is not a person if he has only knowledge, but he is a person if he has feelings and emotions flowing out of himself. A man in knowing and loving his God is a person, but not when he is a mere theologian’. (Banerjee, S.P. “Rabindranath’s Concept of Personality and the Surplus in Man”. Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today. pp. 30, 31). Sachis the monkish hero of Chaturanga is not to fit into this Tagorean formula. His renunciation of the world is in terms of denying himself the food that Damini offers him in her outstretching plate on the riverside. However his emotion of renunciation sends him in quest of spiritual identity not as a theologian of scientific frame of mind but as a seer of truth. This shows that he is keeping himself completely free from his previous association with his atheistic loyalty to positivistic thinking. Like Nalinaksha (TW) he retains his human concern for others. He goes to his Calcutta house and blesses Damini’s marriage with Sribilas. He renounces his Calcutta house along with the world. His solid achievement of life is to be found not in his
attainment of spiritual identity but in his capacity to inspire Sribilas to worship him as a hero forever. It is Sribilas who fills up the void of Sachis in Damini’s life. Damini is proud to declare herself as a lover of Sachis. But she marries Sribilas just to gain social respectability. It is the greatest homage that Sribilas can pay for his friend Sachis.

The dichotomy between the intellect and emotion confronts Sachis from the beginning. He has to choose between the intellectual atheism for social uplift and emotional concern for individual worth. Basically he is a man of emotions. His love for his Uncle takes him into the camp of atheists. The same love is given to the Vaishnava Guru. This love is born of his yogic vision of life of intellectual taste as governed by emotional directives. Such a love forms the streak of the heroworshipping nature in him. His Uncle and the Vaishnava Guru occupy his mind as heroes one by one. Then comes Damini, who unchains him from the force of habit of hero-worship. She makes him look into himself, and find out his creative ability to think independently. He has the enlightenment of spirit. Then he encourages Damini to become a married widow. He shows no such human concern for Sribilas who responds to this rebuff with his life of unprecedented dedication. It has an epic glamour. Like Sachis, the vagabond, Nalinaksha (TW) is also an acetic minded youth of yogic intellect but the doctor settles into his life of emotional peace for himself.
and Kamala. But Sachis is born to think and not to live. Damini urges him to see the world in emotional perspectives. As a compromise Sachis brings in harmony to his agonised soul. He cultivates the spiritual humanism with no prejudice to his spiritual vision. His spiritual quest is endlessly on.

Mahendra belongs to the category of modern lovers having dual love with bigamous overtones in the novel *Binodini*. He is a zamindari character of aristocratic abandon seeking new pastures of conquest for sensual satisfaction. It is to be interpreted in terms of his feudal arrogance and impatient desire to grab all things that are best in the world. It is not unusual for a zamindari young man like him to desire for the best of things in life. But he is psychologically aroused only when there is a competitor in the scene. He emerges as a winner in the competition but he does not realise the price that he has to pay for it in future. In his case he defeats his competitor Bihari and marries Asha for her exceptional beauty. But Bihari becomes a permanent competitor for him, in the sense that Asha becomes an object of Bihari’s Platonic love, and he is inspired to keep Asha under his protectorate. Mahendra is not able to anticipate Bihari’s secret decision to save Asha’s marriage right through the period of his disloyalty to Asha and Binodini’s machinations. People around him except Asha exploit his lack of common sense. Thoughtlessly he exhibits his impotent anger and complexes at times of external criticism. He charges Bihari with being in
love with Asha twice in the presence of Binodini and his wife. But he does not chase Bihari out of his house for this reason.

Binodini calls him a coward. He is disabled in mind to force his love upon Binodini. He has ambition but it is not made up of the stern stuff of courage. His inability to behave as a man of physical passion makes Binodini free of fear. He forces her to elope with him since he is in the grip of his infatuation for her. It is a desire for her aflame. She insists that she will not permit any physical advances upon her. He agrees to abide by her stricures. Among many of his shortcomings his lack of sense of direction brings him unhappiness. He has anger for Bihari when the latter appears on the scene of Gangetic travels of elopement and puts an end to his sexual escapade with no sex in it. He is not able to see through the game of Binodini of trying to reach Bihari. He finds them getting united at Allahabad and he backs out. Before leaving he blames Bihari of robbing Binodini. Thus he admits that Bihari deprives him of two women – Asha and Binodini.

With all his aristocratic status, affluence and Western education as a Calcutta medico, he finds it difficult to build up legitimate human relationships in proper perspective. His indifference to his doting mother and his abuse of love for his aunt Annapurna at Kashi identify him as a
man of hypocrisy and self-delusion. In this respect he is like Ramesh in
*The Wreck* in solving the problem of his illegitimate love by the idea of
bigamy. These two men venture the desire for extra marital love.

Mahendra’s defeat in the hands of Binodini is less tragic than what
he loses when Asha feels estranged from him. Asha’s grievance against
Mahendra is that he has broken the sanctity of marriage for his wanton
infatuation for Binodini. However she remains devoted to Mahendra but
not as diligently as before. She gets into the modernity of educating herself
to better her future prospects of being a competent head of the zenana.
Mahendra comes to know of this transformation of Asha’s character when
he is allowed by her to visit his sick mother only after Bihari. He finds his
mother as doting as she has been. Mahendra’s dichotomous spell of
modernity is dispelled. The invasive individuality as the modern myth is
replaced by the Indian tradition that women in India will have the
everlasting belief that the Indian husband never does wrong.

No two characters Tagore’s creations are identical and each
character is unique with exclusive patterns of psychological behaviour.
This literary finding is absolutely true of Bihari’s character in *The Wreck.*
Wiser for his young age he has his mysterious mind and stifled heart. He is
an introvert to the core of his stoic personality. But he has the adroitness to
build up his image of being a man of outgoing nature, and saintly disposition. As a regular visitor of Mahendra’s zenana, he is to fill up the void of gentlemanly competence as found in the former. He is an angel of peace and he has the catholicity of outlook with practical genius. He is always to combine in himself the ability to enlarge the area of agreeability as a true friend but he is equally the pungent critic of others for their misdemeanour. He follows the Johnsonian dictum of keeping ‘friendship in constant repair’. So much so he happens to be the Bosewell for Mahendra of fanciful moods and irregular emotions. He can send the mustard honey to Mahendra’s mother and make himself a doyen for the zenana ladies. A solitary person living in Calcutta he is found spending his time and zamindari income on his altruistic projects like running asylums for the needy clerks and teaching urchins the alphabet. He is as principled as Nikhil (HW) is. He is for his circle of admirers whereas Nikhil is for the society.

Further Bihari is philosophic minded as Dr. Nalinksha is but both of these ascetic minded gentlemen are at variance in respect to their respective love affair. Nalinaksha is left with a clear conscience when he tells Hemnalini and her father about his patient waiting for his wedded wife to turn up from out of oblivion. He is rooted in his philosophic conviction that his faith in himself will bring him the ultimate good. He
thinks for himself independent of others. On the other hand Bihari is given
to credulousness so as to listen to Binodini’s declaration that she is
innocent and free from lax morals. He readily accepts Binodini’s assertion
of innocence and gives up his age long Platonic love for Asha. This kind of
‘volte face’ is unnatural for a man of practical vision as he is for all these
days. The resultant picture is that he is now neither principled to be
unwavering in his amorous feeling for Asha nor philosophic minded
enough to ignore Binodini’s dormant love for him. He goes adrift by
circumstances like Ramesh (TW) who never takes the bull of adversity by
its two horns and forces the issues. Dilemma is the badge of existence for
these two young men of modern education. Ramesh comes to know that
Kamala is the wedded wife of another man but he lives with her while
making a claim for her as her saviour. It is for Ramesh to feel not guilty of
loving another man’s wife. Still worse is the case of Amit (AMF) who
continues his love affair with the girl even after she is declared to be
another man’s wife. Here this prospective wife Labanya returns his love as
subjectively as ever before. Tagore makes a lady character to do so.
Bihari’s case is different. His lovelife is cloaked in secrecy as a stone clung
around his neck. He carries this load on his soul denying himself the life of
uninhibited happiness.
Tagore’s novels of love theme have all the heroes as enjoying the lifetime privilege of having lovelfie. Bihari is the only lover with no beloved to love in terms of direct emotional interaction. It is a clear and odd case of one sided love. Bihari lives in his fool’s paradise deceiving all others. Mahendra’s attempt to unmask Bihari falls through but Binodini is able to size up the situation to her advantage. Her jealousy for Asha makes her a regular rival so as to become a competitive lover for Bihari. Nevertheless his intuitive imagination is that Binodini now in Mahendra’s zenana as the guest will be the Second Poison Tree – Vishavriksha. (B38)

He attributes the young widow’s temperamental desire for sensuous gratification is warned against it but in vain. When Binodini the hunter and not the hunted is sent back to Bihari to her village home he begins to rest on his oars. He congratulates himself on saving Asha’s marriage. But his strategy backfires in terms of Mahendra’s losing his head over Binodini’s feminine charms. Mahendra elopes with her on her own terms of causing no harm to her personal honour. (B 137). She is said to be using as the cat’s paw. Everything about Bihari’s mind is mysterious. His credulousness is matched only by his snap decisions. It is all in the making of a tragic character finding his life in a negative fix.

Ramesh as the hero of the novel The Wreck puts forward his claim for Kamala as his prize property because he breathes life into her in the
wake of boat wreck. The real reason for his attraction towards her is that he finds Kamala irresistibly beautiful. This weakness for feminine charms is insurmountable. Tagore’s other men characters such as Sasanka, the engineer in *Two Sisters* and Aditya, the florist in *The Garden* are described as men who are in need of additional partners as of the beloved kind. But they are found with no libidinous frenzy as Mahendra and Ramesh have. It is a humiliating situation for Mahendra since he is not to have any physical contact with Binodini after elopement. Mahendra is fooled by Binodini who is always the hunter. She went with Mahendra to create a chance to meet Bihari. As for Ramesh he is not able to get over his traumatic experience of living with another man’s wife. Furthermore, Ramesh’s emotional commitment to Hemnalini is a heavy drag upon his conscience. Bihari is also a lover with no sensual desire to put through. That is to his credit. Gora steels himself into being a critic of love dubbing it as the mindless imitation of the English cult. Ramesh’ contemporary Nalinaksha calls himself a ‘solemn stick’ claiming to have no romantic desire. Nikhil (HW) finds himself showing his emotional love as divided between his wife and his sister-in-law, the Bara Rani. There is no need for him to reveal himself as a man of unbridled passion. Nikhil’s gentlemanliness is found in equal measure and depth in the other men characters such as Sachis and Sribilas in *Chaturanga*. Such is the case with
the male characters like Amit and Sobhanlal (FMF). Lastly Atindra, in *Four Chapters* though a terrorist, is devoid of sensual fury.

The significant point about the above men characters is that they are all college-educated and not influenced by their Western outlook into exaggerated notion of individualism. This tradition of male abstinence from sensuality is begun by Bihari of the first novel *Binodini*. He is the trend setter for men characters in Tagore’s literary presentation. Incidentally Bihari refuses to give Binodini a kiss as a memento. This scene of asking for a kiss earns Binodini the prejudice of Bihari who associates her with flippancy, branding her as a butterfly. Bihari’s second nature is that he makes no show of his deeper feelings including amorous sentiments. This kind of frigidity is ideally handy for him to cultivate Platonic love towards Asha. It is to his credit that he never betrays his feeling for her either in words or in action while inside Mahendra’s zenana. He is an expert actor in life. His trauma is responsible for his getting away from Annapurna’s house at Kashi with no word of protest against the charge that he goes over there in pursuit of Asha. Annapurna goes on record lamenting ‘Is he still in love with Asha? (B 83). It is an evident that Annapurna, Mahendra and Binodini know of this secret of Bihari that he is in love with Asha. Bihari wants to keep his mute love for Asha within himself as the lone ship carrying the cargo of his lifetime treasure. It is
with superb dexterity of literary suggestiveness that Tagore portrays Bihari’s character of closed circuitry of emotional inwardness. Bihari’s character is too psychological in its conception and execution. Tagore’s claim for bringing an epoch of psychological novels is amply justified when Bihari’s character of psychological complexities is brought into focus.

Bihari is never a romantic youth. He parades his ascetic temperament by his measured words of self-detachment. Mahendra exploits this trait of Bihari’s and gets off with Asha, as his bride of fraternal friendship. Bihari yields to Mahendra’s whim to marry Asha. He regrets for doing so throughout his life. In fact he was to marry Asha as the original suitor. Nobody thinks that Bihari will be so light-hearted as to take this slip to heart. He becomes a secret lover of Asha without letting her know about it. And this love is that of Platonic genesis. His love for Asha is not on account of his romantic passion for her. In fact he has no such passions to boast. Instead he flatters himself to be a conservationist. Marriage as a conception of social formality has its fascination for him because it lends legitimacy to human union. Here Tagore brings up the profundity of literature in giving him the psychological double faced personality. Bihari finds it emotionally convenient to be on guard to save Asha’s marriage with Mahendra. As a man of dual love, Ramesh (TW)
loses everyone and walks off into negation of life. But Bihari is not estranged from the women of his emotional ties. Credit goes to him for playing the game of being a secret lover showing no sign of it. Again this imaginary marriage with Asha by proxy is in his inward pursuit. He has Asha’s photograph on his lap and he enters into the brooding sessions of conjuring up Asha’s image as if in a reverie as vibrant as the dream children of Charles Lamb. It is strange that Binodini has become the object of his love. As Fate will have it, he is not to marry her either. But she is live close by. Now the option is either to continue his imaginary love life with Asha or to replace her with Binodini. There is also a ticklish prospect of having these two women as his own in his world of imagination. It will be in conformity with the trend of having the dual love that Tagore mentions in his later novels. His decision to marry Binodini may be interpreted as his wish to remove Binodini permanently from Mahendra’s life. It is done to strengthen Asha’s ties of marriage with her husband. What he does not anticipate is that Asha would assert herself in the meanwhile make his support for her superfluous. She will take care of herself. She allows Bihari to get into the sick room of her mother-in-law first as a reward for his being the trouble shooter. It may be taken as the offer of her homage to him as the hero of solving the family crisis. Altogether Bihari’s character suffers because of his wrong headed
idealization of marriage as the summum bonum of life. In the beginning of the novel the proposal is made that he can marry Binodini. In this context he makes the following statement forebodingly; ‘it is better to lose by not marrying than to lose by marrying wrongly’ (B 25). Strangely enough this aphorism forms a prophetic commentary on his life which is yet to unfold. Truly he loses much by not marrying Asha. And he is not to lose his caste by marrying wrongly a young widow. Either way he is interlinked in a dilemma. The choice is to be made by Bihari between the modernity of his intellectual assessment of marriage and the tradition of sentimentalisation of marriage. Finally the choice is between the head and heart. He marries none. Now he and society are in harmony.

Ramesh the hero of the novel *The Wreck* is an engaging character with the self-flattering experience of loving two ladies at a time. On this score he belongs to the category of modern lovers of dual love. With a casual sense of abandon he makes assumptions and goes adrift with the circumstances that he does not choose to control. It is for want of emotional intelligence. His disregard for social values and personal feelings of other is to be traced out to his self-possessive nature. He loves Hemnalini and continues to love her. He is a student law as a practicing lawyer. Therefore he has a legal mind. His reasoning becomes clouded
with arguments, normal or otherwise. The result is that he is irresolute, not able to reach decisions of importance.

As a lawyer he goes by precedents. He gives cognizance to the fact that he marries according to the dictate of his father with ‘hangdog’ expression. He does not realize that his unwillingness for that marriage will not obviate the effect of marriage. Again he makes his claim for Kamala not as a wedded husband but as a man who saves her on the river sand. These two precedents are held by Ramesh as constituting his legitimate claim for Kamala. When he writes the letter to Kamala in all his hypocrisy, he is for the repeat performance of the contact that he had on the river sands in the wake of the boat wreck. What is more dishonest and unrighteous is that he makes this demand calling her ‘the dearest’ in his letter while he knows the truth that he is not her real husband. According to the legal injunction justice delayed is justice denied. After three months of dalliance with Kamala at his village after the boat wreck Ramesh finds out the truth of the occurrence of his ‘terrible mistake’ in his life of ‘erroneous exchange of brides’. What is at stake is moral conscience. He makes compromise over the unenviable situation of loving her through. Keeping her in the hostel, he renews his claim to have the engagement with Hemnalini to be celebrated. This predicament is not reasoned out into a conflict of moral issues. He does not take it as a self-imposed predicament
but a providential gift. In his parting letter to Hemnalini he has the audacity to mention his intention. It is as follows: ‘I can never forget the only two women who have ever found a place in my heart, and to cherish their memory all my life will be an inestimable boon to me’ (TW 386).

His opening sentence of the above mentioned letter to Hemnalini is ‘Circumstances have served the tie with which Heaven linked your life and mine (TW 385). Ironically he is personally responsible for these untoward circumstances with his habitual Hamletian procrastination crippling him into self-complacency. This is traceable to the rationale that he builds up around his decision not to give up Kamala. Accordingly Kamala will be an object of social disgrace in case she is exposed as living outrageously with Ramesh who is not her legal husband. Again if he is to rejoin Hemnalini he will have to make a clean breast of the whole story. By both considerations Kamala is to be saved from anguish. Thus his lawyer’s reasoning power is manifest more to justify the umbrella of protectorate over her. There is no bruise on his moral conscience. Rather he chooses to visit Hemnalini and learns from her the art of playing on the harmonium. Is it an outright hypocrisy or social diplomacy?. It is both and it is disproportionate to his present need for having his love affair with two ladies at a time. The dark part of this animated tableau is that he cares little for the emotional responses that these two ladies will be having.
Ramesh tries to inform Dr. Nalinaksha about Kamala being unblemished when the latter is to marry again around the anniversary of the boat wreck. A person different from others, Ramesh makes sense of situation in relevance to the personal motivations on the part of his contemporaries. Jogendra of egoism, Akshay of malignity, Annada Babu of urbanity, the Uncle of magnanimity and Umesh of fidelity are in the band wagon. But his self-esteem born out of his higher education it is misunderstood as a sign of his weakness. The novelist records, ‘Ramesh’s worldly wisdom was not equal to his erudition, and his infatuation made his outlook on mundane matters cloudier than ever’. (TW 35). But this weakness makes up his character worthy of literary assessment. The lotus of love sprouts up from the slime of desire as vindicated by the different characters of Tagore such as Binodini, Mahendra and Damini. Mulk Raj Anand refers to Tagore’s readiness to confer dignity on the weaknesses of his heroes. Tagore says in his Creative Unity, ‘The ambition of Macbeth, the jealousy of Othello would be at best sensation in police court proceedings but in literary reality they are creations throbbing with Eternal Passion and Eternal Pain’. (Creative Unity, 41). In the case of Ramesh it is his weakness for Eternal Passion that brings him Eternal Pain. His dilemma which his sense of modernity brings forth to him is solved with a
recourse to accepting the tradition of sanctity which prompts Kamala to desert him forever and Hemnalini to forget him.

Amit Roy in *Farewell, My Friend* is the most interesting character belonging to the category of modern lovers with the emotional eccentricity of dual love. Amit is poetic minded being fully representative of Tagore himself in his novel. There is a figure of a poet as created by Amit himself in the novel. Thus the novel has the stamp of three poetic minds. Added to this Amit’s ladylove Labanya too writes literary verses for his benefit. The difference between them is that Amit is poetically inspired on the subjects of the lyrical perspectives whereas she is literary minded but with a practical sensibility. Among Tagore’s creations Amit is the strangest character in terms of easy going nature. He is an example to show that the contemporary intelligentsia were estranged progressively from the roots of their native culture. They were engrossed in a modernity of the Western spirit. A practicing barrister of Calcutta Amit makes himself unworthy of being the hero of the novel in violent contrast to his contemporary Sobhanlal, who shows heroic traits like perseverance and patience.

Amit’s character is still more complex in the sense that he parades himself in the Indian dress just to show that he is too good a Europeanised Indian. It is to make a mockery of both the West and the East. Amit has no
roots in either of these two cultures. At least Gora has an avowed purpose in wearing a tuft and dhoti. It is to show that he is a Hindu patriot. Like Gora Amit argues with people but he confuses them with his paradoxes and fanciful utterances. However it is his poetic sensibility which draws Labanya to him as his lover. But their love is accidental. They begin loving each other under the influence of Nature as in the idyllic Shillong. Amit has to his credit the fact that he becomes a genuine lover leaving aside his flippancy of outlook. But these two lovers part company on finding themselves incompatible by temperament. Labanya as a Post-graduate finds Amit unfit to provide her with a home to live. Therefore she leaves him without trying to change his nature.

Amit is in his world of imagination. His aristocratic leisure has spoiled him. Poetry is the breath of his life. Literary places full of tender emotions of poetic grace do not soften his angularities. Amit’s cynicism is aggressively expressed in his words of contempt for all. He is cross-grained. This trait in him militates against his interest while rendering his life as a perilous quest for unearned happiness. Social irresponsibility is not foreign to his frivolous temperament. Tagore explains this with his portrayal of the scene in which Amit’s oxford fiancé Ketaki throws over to him their Oxford engagement ring. This scene with its climatic sequence reminds one of the aesthetic taste of Kalidasa’s epic of *The Sakuntala*
showing Dushyant’s ring of conjugal union prior to their eventual reunion. Strangely enough Amit shows no anguish over this scene. He is not so sensitive as to defend his love for Labanya. And she solves this crisis by releasing Amit from the bondage of her love. However they make out the final and odd settlement. Accordingly they decide to continue their love not as married people but lovers for ever.

It is Amit who makes her a convert to the idea of dual love. Among the Tagorean heroines she is the lone example of being a woman with no inhibition to having extramarital love with her husband around. With no moral scruples Amit glorifies himself as the happy innovator of this kind of peculiar relationship in the following words, ‘What binds me to Ketaki is love, but this love is like water in a vessel, which I shall daily draw and daily use. The love which draws me to Labanya is a lake which cannot be brought indoors but in which my mind will swim’ (FMF 109). It is a Tagorean way of linking the flow of love from their lady love, with the waters from the natural source and otherwise. Nikhil (IIW) expects his wife’s love to be the water from the natural spring and not like ‘the pipe water pumped up by the municipal steam-engine of society’ (HW 43). Even in his earliest novel Binodini, Tagore refers to Mahendra’s gleeful assertion that the love from Binodini and Asha will be an allegorical equation with the Ganges and the Jamuna.
Amit’s first love is for Ketaki of Oxford University and he is to marry her finally. His second love of emotional sincerity is washed away by his earlier folly of being frivolous. The modernity of his Shillong love in its emotional tension is to be replaced by the tradition of his accepting his commitment to solemnize his first love into a conjugal reality. But his poetic mind survived and saves him from self oblivion in the sense that he is able to continue his love for Labanya as the Platonic love with no suggestion of physical contact. He writes to Labanya in his parting verse thus: ‘Dark was life when I discovered in the heart’s shrine the lighted lamp you had left as your parting gift (FMF p. 110). If character is destiny he is to prove himself suffering from the shortcomings of his character. He is destined to enjoy no reality of life but only to live in a make-believe world of living in the past with Platonic love of imaginary happiness. However Labanya tells him that he cannot know her and her parting message is as follows’ could you see you would not know me now My friend farewell’. (FMF 110). Significantly this forms the title of the novel Farewell, My Friend. As the tragic hero for ever Amit is not to be a lover in the novel of the love theme but only a casual friend.

The self-righteous hero of the novel The Garden is Aditya with his character as fractured by the fossils of his old relationship of human bondage. He lives in his past, refusing to accept the outcrop of hard reality
of the present. His defence of Sarala being his ward shows him as a man of emotional honesty and the uprightness, born out of his college education of Western objectivity. His love for Sarala is of twenty-three years intimacy reacting right through the period of his married life as an interregnum. He had just one still born child to his parental credit. The relationship that he feels with all his power of personality for Sarala raises a storm in his family. It is a regular crisis of identity for him as a man of dual love. Sarala’s place in his life is more for her feeling for his happiness. It is as follows: ‘Since then he has been my guardian, and it could be said with equal truth that I have been his…. It seemed as though our past had been restored, as though once more we were children in years and brothers in spirit’ (TG 149).

Aditya’s wife Niraja refuses to languish on her death bed. She puts up a stiff fight with a view to dislodging Sarala from the garden. It is symbolic of her effort to uproot Sarala out of Aditya’s heart. She is crippled in body and mind. She fights for self-respect tooth and nail. The whole crisis crops up when Aditya refuses to wait for Niraja’s death. Niraja is a wife of devotion belonging to the mother-kind. She is willing to recognise Aditya’s psychological need for the conjugal love of a wife of the beloved-kind. She is ready to concede this privilege to Aditya conditional to his dropping his proposal to legitimatize his amorous
relationship with Sarala. The crux of the problem is assuming the proportions of emotional crisis for all. It is as simple as that.

The situation is to be defused by means of introducing a moderator in this critical context. Ramen as the regular friendly visitor to the garden assumes the role of a moderator. He is what Bihari (B) is for Mahendra. He is the conscience keeper for all including Aditya. He points out to Aditya how unwise it is for him to force the issue of regularizing his love for Sarala. Again, Aditya owes Ramen his gratitude because he brings about a change of heart on the part of Niraja in favour of Aditya. He refers to Aditya as her devoted husband deserving her devotion. Ramen virtuously puts across his advice to Niraja thus, ‘He to whom you gave so much as all these days -- can’t you now give him freely and joyously what you yourself are unable to enjoy?.... You have set yourself today to break to fragments the lamp of your life’s devotion’. He further asks her not to ‘turn your life long magnanimity into niggardliness’ (TG 157). Thus it is Aditya who wins at last.

Niraja cannot forget Aditya’s constancy of love for her right through her illness. Her paranoia of leaving such a devoted Aditya and the garden has its origin in her sense of property driving her mad into a self-killing sensation of possessiveness. At last she dies of this psychic maladjustment
leaving Aditya in defeat. He does not feel that he is let down by Niraja because he has been mobilizing his emotional strength with which to seek her consent to his love for Sarala. He lives through a nostalgic mood with his reminiscences of this past. He describes his past in the company of Sarala for all these twenty three years by saying... 'we two savages spent our days under the shade of forest trees, unaware of ourselves'. (TG 142).

The most significant fact about this florist is that he considers himself not as a florist but as an artist. His garden gains its poetic grandeur while Sarala is around. For him, the garden is an object of creative spirit. It is not a business proposition for him. Niraja’s objection is that Sarala should not touch the point. Aditya honours Niraja’s quantitative perspective of valuing the garden as a property by shifting his seat to the Japanese house in the garden. He transfers Sarala to a different unit outside the garden. But all the time his attachment for his garden is bordering on his artistic devotion to it. It is a surprise that the garden as a feature of Nature does not influence him into having mellowness of spirit of life. As the translator Krishna Kripalani says Niraja’s poverty of spirit causes her tragic death’. (TG 116). As for Aditya it is a case of his keeping his spirit of life towards maintaining the cult of personality. The dichotomy between modernity and tradition is solved. The modernity as in Aditya’s Western oriented personality cult is lifted in favour of Niraja’s traditional mind for
valuing her devotion for her erring husband. He is within his right to be grateful to his mentor, who asks his niece Sarala not to marry in preference to gardening. Now he regrets why he failed to marry her after his uncle is dead. He decides to marry her now in honour of the memory of his mentor. But he is impatient. And he suffers. Sarala pities him. Niraja pities herself. Thus Aditya is torn between this love for Sarala and his concern for Nirja. Ramesh (TW) never tells his lady love Hemnalini about his wedded commitment to Kamala. And he becomes a tragic hero. Aditya is self-righteous to tell Niraja the truth of his love for Sarala. Thus he is a willing victim of his own thought that he is true to himself.

Next comes the category of modern lovers of the compromising spirit. This category includes men of higher education and refinement such as Binoy of Gora, Sribilas of Chaturanga and Sobhanlal of Farewell My Friend. Binoy’s spirit of compromise earns him the goodwill of all. It endears him to everybody. It is in contrast to Gora’s ill-reputation for being a violent controversialist. Binoy though a self-conscious Hindu, finds it easy for him to marry into a Brahmo family. This act of compromise offers him no challenge and he finds harmony among opposites. His love for Lolita leads both of them to marry in compromise of religious affinities. It is to pave the way for Gora’s love for Sucharita. Thus Binoy is the conscience keeper and also the mentor of Gora. It is a strange turn of
events that Gora is to benefit by Binoy’s example. Binoy chooses to love Lolita in spite of Gora’s objection to it. Gora’s argument is that Binoy should avoid love particularly the one in the English style. Binoy’s counter argument is ‘I will admit the claims of society upon me only so long as society admits my claims upon it’. (G 321) It is an eternal tangle of epic quality. He joins hands with Anandamoyi, Gora’s mother, as her beloved son dearer than Gora. Parentless and living alone in the same street with Paresh Babu’s residence he extols the emotion of motherly love so exuberantly that he declares his readiness to die if Anandamoyi of absolute nobility chooses to write his biography.

The first crisis to his faith in emotional enlightenment occurs when he proposes to Lolita. It is not to lose his Hindu status but to honour the Brahmoist status. His lover Lolita comes to his rescue. She tears up the initiation paper. Thus she saves him from the emotional conflict of conversion to Brahmo faith. The differences of the world are not for him for what they are. His view of life is that a man of progressive vision should find good in everything, and his thesis is ‘If love is unable to acknowledge differences then why are there differences anywhere in the world?’. (G 306). For him love is a cementing force. They are pointers of the truth of life that having differences under the stress of intolerance is too
common. Binoy is not intolerant. He is a man of compassionate love for all with the milk of human tenderness.

Binoy cares for the stranger Paresh Babu’s injury in the accident. His concern is for Gora’s getting into deep waters by religious tussle. He is ready with his service in Lolita’s Brahmoist school as a teacher, and his preference is to go to Anadamoyi to be her son when Gora is imprisoned. Next to love for Lolita comes his friendship for Gora. In fact it is more significant than his loving a Brahmoist girl and marrying into a Brahmoist family as a self-styled reformer. Gora is defended by Binoy and also liked for his weaknesses. On the day of his marriage Binoy goes to Gora in the morning and engages him in conversation as usual in spite of Gora’s refusal to attend the marriage. Thus he is able to get over the differences and love people for what they are.

Imperfections on the part of others do not pull him down to any hatred. His getting away from the drama troupe at the Magistrate’s house is more to criticize the British highhandedness than for condemning Gora’s arrest. His love for Gora is to be explained in terms of tolerant affection for Gora. He is with Gora right from the beginning and argues in favour of Gora for his aggressive tone and delivery of his religious arguments. In spite of all these differences Binoy keeps the friendship in ‘abandon’ as per
their covenant. It is Gora who tells Binoy, ‘but a supreme joy will make our different natures. ….. we shall be able to stand together, immovable in an immense passion of self-abandonment’. (G 71). Binoy endorses this view for seeking difference in the nature of friendship by declaring that the ‘love dissipates the differences’. (G 306). Thus his friendship is in its classical virtue of human excellence. There is no parallel for Binoy’s friendship of Gora in the other novels of Tagore. In The Wreck Jogendra fails as a friend to Ramesh. In Binodini, Bihari keeps his friendship for Mahendra above board, but has Platonic love for Asha, Mahendra’s wife. In fact it is a betrayal of friendship by a sermonizing villain laughing in his sleeves. In Chaturanga Sribilas’ hero-worship for his bosom-friend Sachis takes on the archetypal look of compassionate love and duty-consciousness. Distinguished by his refined emotions like love and friendship. Binoy with his scholarship in the English language and Western thought passes for a man of equal poise for appreciating Western and Eastern values of life against the invocation of humanist culture in its universality. He is the harbinger of peace heralding the Utopia of compromise and harmony among opposites.

Sribilas is the character of compromise incarnate. He is the bosom friend of Sachis, the hero of the novel Chaturanga. Sribilas is a born hero-worshipper with no ambition to be a man of self-growth. He has the
makings of the hero as the young Kayastha post-graduate scholar in English Literature but, instead, he becomes a hero-worshipper costing him with no individuality of independence and private happiness. His liking for Sachis as a college mate is for the latter’s look with an angelic aura and academic brilliance. He has academic acumen with scholarship in English language. But he never capitalizes this linguistic talent except when he is reduced to penury. Like Lakshman for Rama of the epic Ramayana, he excels in loving his hero, Sachis, while the latter goes through the woods of ascetic isolation and wanderings. His mental make-up is that of an atheist. Formerly Sachis inspires him to be a follower of the Uncle and his radical views. But when Sachis turns a spiritualist, Sribilas gives his heart to him in the sense that out of love for Sachis, he does whatever Sachis does including massaging the feet of the Vaishnava Guru. This is a super human feat of loving one for his weakness while keeping him a hero of no worldly ties.

Tagore designs, the novel Chaturanga with the fourfold projections of thematic thrust for the rhymic delineation. Fitting into this quartet of musical vibration and crescendo, Sribilas is of the factor of recapitulation. True to this analogy of musicality Tagore speaks up to narrate the whole story of the novel by recapitulation of the events. Sribilas does this as the mouthpiece for all. He does things much against his own personal
conviction of mind. He is in support of Sachis who goes on turning himself into different careers. Sribilas has no hesitation to toe the line of his friend Sachis when the latter gives up the philosophy of atheism and takes up the Vaishnava creed and massages the feet of the Guru. His robust love for Sachis makes him continue loving Damini in the place of Sachis when the latter refuses her his love after a short period of emotional attachment. By destiny and personal choice he is marginalized with no protest. Making no complaint he is as unassuming as a hermit. There is an inner power of serenity in him so much so that he brings about a conciliatory peace in the otherwise stormy scenario, involving the interaction among Sachis, Damini and the Vaishnava Guru. His friendship for Sachis is irrationally uncritical. Sachis is always on the run on his own choice. Their friendship is not a bridge between them but it is of an integration of opposites. It is not fractured by the differences. Sribilas is hard and fast in keeping up his faith in atheism and humanism in spite of keeping company with Sachis and doing what all the latter does. By this personal arrangement they agree to disagree. Likewise Gora and Binoy have a similar concord over their differences and they call it ‘self-abandonment’. (G 306). Like Binoy who has unbroken loyalty to his Hindu faith, Sribilas keeps his intellectual commitment to the atheist philosophy uninjured by doubt or deviation. The uniqueness of his character is that he is emotionally self-effacing as in
stepping into his friend’s shoes by marrying Damini. It is in logical
fulfilment of Sachi’s nebulous love-affair with Damini.
In this context it requires much sense of resignation on the part of Sribilas.
He too massages the Guru’s feet as Sachis does. He does it for the sake of
his lovable friend. The irony is that Sachis ignores this kind of self-
effacing love on the part of Sribilas. This is the most interesting angle of
the story of this novel.

Sribilas lives in the guru’s camp in order to keep his protective vigil
over Sachis. When Damini uses him in her strategy to provoke jealousy in
Sachis, he sees through the game while keeping animal pets for her.
Inimitably there grows some trace of friendly intimacy between these two in
anticipation of their conjugal union in the future. When the ascetic minded
Sachis is released by Damini from her dogged pursuit, Sribilas has the
intuition that Sachis is lost already to everybody. Sribilas resolves to marry
her on behalf of Sachis who renounces her for ever. The self pity of
Sribilas is thrown overboard. Damini makes a man. It is a
marriage of convenience between a humble minded young man and a
young widow with her lifetime ambition to be a normal woman with her
rightful place in the society. They asked mutually the same question. ‘You
know all there is to know about me’. (C 93). It is the right way to get into
the area of agreeability. It is concerned with Sribilas agreeing to have
Damini as his wife while she is still in love with Sachis. By contrast Nikhil (HW) prefers living with his wife while she shifts her conjugal loyalty to Sandip, the visiting Swadeshi leader. Both these husbands have their wives emotionally lost to them but they have their self-satisfaction over their loss for the sake of loving them altogether for their inadequacies.

Sribilas is in much peculiar situation. He has his love for Sachis deeper than his love for Damini. It is a case of love superimposed by another love. He alone will have this kind of disposition of discreet love because his personality is of emotional perspectives in strange proportions of his stranger desire. It is to keep his friend above reproach. Altogether it is a self-sacrifice with no parallel in other novels of Tagore. Earlier Tagore makes Gora to remark that, ‘In the commerce of truth you cannot obtain the jewel and avoid the price’ (G 320). Human effort has its penalties and Sribilas is resourceful to cut across the iron curtain of his intellectual mind so as to reach out to the sources of emotional satisfaction. He prefers to be a dissatisfied Socrates rather than a satisfied pig. His unusual sense of tolerance is evident when he takes Damini to the sea side cave as her last wish. It is to enable herself to relive the moments of her getting kicked by Sachis on the chest. She likes to die with the memory of Sachis’ kick. Again Sribilas finds Sachis as a moving force in her life. He is gratified.
The most striking feature of Sribilas' character is that he has no rewards for his life of self-sacrifice. But he does it to satisfy himself. Sachis never appreciates his dogged loyalty. Damini makes out an initial agreement with him that she is Sachis' woman first and last. But, still, Sribilas goes undaunted in his life of absolute self-negation. He values friendship in a superhuman fashion while dissolving his own personality in that process.

Sobhanlal's character in the novel *Farewell, My Friend* deserves deeper study for its exceptionality on several counts. He belongs to the category of modern lovers having a spirit of compromise. In his case this spirit of compromise is the extreme poise for human endurance. Among the most important male characters of Tagore's nine novels in the present study Sobhanlal is a solitary character speaking a solitary sentence in the whole novel. Strangely enough, he combines in himself a giant of intellectual brilliance and a dwarf in emotional intelligence. His courtship of his professor's daughter Labanya is marked out for his passion of love for her. It is one-sided. He never forgets that he is a poor man and this consciousness overpowers him into being a man of no ambition.

Unobtrusively he amuses himself keeping the portrait of Labanya in his private box. His greedy father exposes him. He lacks the
aggressiveness of a modern lover. Labanya never reciprocates his love. He is not for the survival of the fittest in the realm of lovelife. He is humiliated by her, but he forgives it. He gets into the world of research to compensate for the loss of his love. His choice is to be an archaeologist poised to break the silence of centuries by his noblest researches. This is one with his humble nature.

Sobhanlal does what Tagore expects of a lover. Tagore's statement is ‘The calculation of self-interest can never successfully fight the irrational force of passion— the passion which is perversion of love, and which can only be set right by the truth of love’ (Creative Unity 129). The calculation of his self-interest is in competing with Labanya in the academic proficiency. The library incident goes a long way in giving her the trauma of her life. He is like the Forsaken Merman of Matthew Arnold ready to concede the mermaid's quest for spiritual salvation. Sobhanlal makes an equation between the mermaid's spiritual quest and Labanya's desire for academic stardom. He stoops to conquer which reminds us of Goldsmith's ‘She stoops to conquer’. Risking the loss of his scholarship award he takes his post-graduate exam on a low key and yields the first place to Labanya. His act of favour does not appease her. But his short letter to her is of momentous importance bringing in its trail, some major changes. It fills up a gap of years of self-search for all. His words of
supplication in the letter run as follows: ‘I have been punished by you, but I have yet to understand what wrong I was guilty of and when. I have come to you today because I shall have no peace unless you tell me. Do not be afraid. I have no other favour to beg’ (FMF 102). This letter brings in her a sea change. In her farewell letter to her lover Amit, Labanya makes direct reference to what Sobhanlal means to her in the following lines:

If there be one whose anxious, eager heart
Waits for my footsteps.
I long to give myself to him
Who can see in the infinite compassion of love
The actual me, of good and ill blended, (FMF 112).

And he has infinite compassion as the Buddha of his research. For want of this kind of compassion, Ramesh loses his self-identity as a husband and a lover. Dr. Nalinaksha is like Sobhanlal winning the race for self-fulfilment. It is characteristic of him that he wins her heart with all the sense of situation and time. As an archaeologist he is concerned with time past and present. He gives Labanya time and she gets mellowed. Presently he is engaged in identifying the routes of the Buddhist pilgrimage across the Himalayas. He is to find out the road to reach Labanya’s heart by biding his time. It facilitates his being revealed as a man of infinite compassion and love with a heart to compromise and accept her’ ‘of good and ill-
blended’. Tagore’s literary vision is superb here. The modernity of his archaeological taste for the past in terms of enduring the debacle of love is to melt with the tradition of making compromise in terms of having the compassion to appreciate her for her inadequacies.

Tagore’s direct presence as a novelist with his philosophical words is to be found in the character of Paresh Babu in *Gora*. Quite elderly as a tolerant father for three grown up girls and given to meditative calmness he is stout at heart with a studied self-complacency, with no element of worry on the matters of the world. His even temperament makes him a living legend. No other male character among Tagore’s creations is as accomplished spiritually as he is to balance the matters of spirit. He believes in social righteousness as a way of God. He has absolute humanism for all. With equanimity of mind, he believes in the variety of human aptitudes and with the result he has equal appreciation for opposites like forbearing Gora’s hostility, to the Brahmo followers, Binoy’s devotion to Hinduism, Haran Babu’s brazen claim for Sucharita’s hand, Lolita’s freeminded love for Binoy and his wife Bordashundari’s collaboration with the British Magistrate’s family.

Paresh Babu believes in the divine power in governing the matters of the world. His social liberalism is unique in its contextual validity in the
sense that he allows in his home the Brahmoist zealot Haran Babu and the Hindu militant Gora to discuss religious matters in the presence of his family members. As a retired government official he disciplines himself with regular prayers while reading Emerson and Hindu Scriptures. Though he is a Brahmo follower he thinks and talks as if he happens to be a Vedantic of cosmic vision and freedom of mind. For him all religions are not antithetical to each other and the primary concern for religion is to consider man as man. He says, ‘What to him is the Brahmo Samaj? What is Hindu society? – He sees only Man’. (G 309). Tagore’s plea is for humanistic culture, both absolute and universal. He advocates this, and he gets expelled from his Brahmoist fold. He readily consentsto his daughter’s marriage with Binoy although he insists on the latter signing initiation paper to be a Brahmo. He does it only when Binoy gives his consent for conversion. He maintains an intelligent and polite silence over his wife’s highhanded criticism that he is good for nothing as the head of the family. In contrast Gora’s father Krishnadayal lives his separate life of performing orthodox rituals within the demarcated area in his house at Calcutta. He keeps his wife away from the so called ‘Hermitage’ of his personal use.

Paresh Babu is bright with his moral stature and innate nobility of heart so as to be extremely popular among all including Anandamoyi. Yet Niharranjan Ray passes his critical judgement on him as follows:
Paresh Babu is drawn from life, he is, unlike Anadamoyi, no so much bound by instinct and convention. His actions are guided by reason, his morality based on experience but his actions seldom conform to his preachings; there is the least touch of the heart in his conversations. What is more, his morality, as shade pale and colour less, has not lent any dignity to his character (Niharranjan Ray, “Three Novels of Tagore: Chokher Bali, Gora and Yogayoga”. p. 173). The above critic is for finding angelic qualities in men of ideas like Paresh Babu. Tagore’s literary outlook is to draw the picture of realistic assessment of human character in all its points of strength and weakness. Paresh Babu has to make no choices in a dilemma. He is made up of mental stability and emotional conviction for being good to himself and to others.

Uncle Chakrabarty and Jogendra of The Wreck are traditional minded among the men of ideas where as Krishnadayaal in Gora is enamoured of Vedic rituals. Uncle Chakrabarti is a well-meaning old Brahmin gentleman who has a charitable disposition. He has a natural gift for helping others in need of personal guidance. He has a ready sense of altruism when he befriends Ramesh during the steamer travel on the Ganges. Ramesh’s wife Kamala gets the Uncle’s benevolence. The Uncle brings Kamala the first ray of hope for deliverance from cruel fate. He resolves to take Kamala to her real husband’s house. He sends her to
Kshemankari’s house in the guise of a maid servant. He does it more to satisfy a traditional canon of moral justice than to sympathise with Kamala who is a total stranger to him. On seeing Ramesh’s letter for Hemanalini he behaves like a balanced minded person. His daughter Sailaja is equally a woman of human concern for distressed women like Kamala. Their combined efforts are towards salvaging Kamala’s tortured soul. The novelist records. ‘The father and daughter went on maturing their plans for a few more days’, (TW 352). The Uncle’s advice to Ramesh, the lawyer not to meet the doctor husband of Kamala is superbly appropriate to the thematic lead of keeping the lawyer and the doctor separate and ignorant of their past. The Uncle’s unconditional support is for the tradition of establishing the sanctity of marriage by ceremonial solemnization. He functions as an arbitrator enforcing decisions. In this respect he is likened with Bihari (B) who functions as a corrective force in the novel. This adds to the substance of the novel as being a testament to the inviability of the Hindu marriage though under the stress of Fate, the great arbitrator.

Jogendra of *The Wreck* is in the group of men who favour traditional ideas resulting from a strange mixture of the Western spirit and the oriental lethargy. Though he is a student of law like Ramesh, he is an unthinking young man with no vision of life of his own. Like Mahendra (B) he is beyond the reach of common sense. His lapse of emotional
stability is to be found in his effort to defend the system of arranged marriage. He opposes his sister Hemnalini for her love for Ramesh. This love as between two educated young aspirants for marriage is destroyed by Ramesh’s delinquency.

Jogendra is devoid of the finer instincts of human relationships. His friendship for Ramesh is not strong enough to keep him ever loyal. His concern for his sister blinds him. His ego is bloated with anger. With no human understanding Jogendra uses Akshay to spy on Ramesh. He knows pretty well that Akshay is a well known suitor for his sister’s hand, burning with jealousy for Ramesh, the lover of Hemnalini. In spite of his being a Brahmo, he chooses to be a defender of the system of arranged marriages. This is against the Brahmo style of admitting marriages by love. Again his power over his sister is derived from his being her elder brother who is always looked up for leadership of the family. The big brother attitude is a corollary of the system of joint family. Jogendra thinks that Hemnalini is stubborn in her love for Ramesh because of her habit of reading English novels. Still he has affection for Hemnalini. He tells her that she is wrong in her commitment to loving Ramesh with melodramatic heroics. It is denied by her. Thinking that she is in love with love itself he sets up Akshay first and Dr. Nalinaksha next as prospective bridegrooms for her. He is to inspire confidence in her. Hemnalini takes away the sting of his
criticism by making her disarming confession that she will marry anybody of her father’s choice. In total he is ignorant of the power of love as a sentiment of human bondage for a grown up girl of college education with the Brahmo poise for Western style of living. He keeps the doors of his mind closed. He himself makes his confession ‘Things I can’t understand don’t agree with me’ (TW 389). He refuses to accept women with high intelligence. The novelist records, ‘Jogendra had always rated women’s intelligence low this is traditional thinking and against the Brahmo culture of women of permitting women to be true’ (TW 103). Jogendra flatters himself for his prowess at decision making. He thinks that he is good at it, better than his father and his sister. Lastly he declares ‘I should only go on making decisions and you two would continue to upset them’. (TW 389). Nobody is to disagree with him. He says, I’m quite prepared to tell a man my opinion of him to his face and back it up with my fists if necessary’ (TW 242). He is a braggart as unworthy as Mohim (G) is. Mohim has no genuine affection for Gora, his brother. Both of these brothers clamour for recognition of their concern for matters of matrimony in their family. Jogendra’s impatience is known to all. His father remarks that his son cannot sit in a place patiently very long. His patience with his disagreeing father and disappointing sister is so unbearable that he wants to renounce
the family to work in the village school. He is superfluous in the family like Ramesh in the end of the story.

Tagore’s idea of creating Jogendra’s character is to show how the Brahmos were not able to extricate themselves from the vestiges of Hindu culture and civilization. Jogendra is serious minded in his defence of the system of arranged marriage and also the Hindu joint family system. He thinks that as he happens to be the brother for his sister, it is his duty to get involved in deciding upon her matrimonial prospects. But he is ignored. His reaction follows. His is the character of getting defeated when he asserts his personality in the name of traditional values of the Hindu society under the stress of conservative ideas and practices. Only after the advent of Renaissance, the male members of the Bengali society of bhadralok elitism, got into the spirit of Western education, providing them with enterprising vision. Stated otherwise post-Renaissance men of Bengali became aware of their being individuals of extra sensibility for self-growth. After the Renaissance the Bengali youth had an additional sensibility to their being more powerful due to the Western education and its insistence upon the rise of individualism.

Krishnadayal of *Gora* is the traditional elderly gentle man with his favouritism for the traditional rituals of Vedic sanctions. He believes in the
Vedic tradition that a Brahmin by birth alone can do the religious rituals. His word of command for Gora is not to do the ‘penance’ and this directive is given in the end of such a voluminous novel. With the result Gora finds himself being reborn as the citizen of the world with the Indian badge of existence. But for Krishnadayal’s act of exposing Gora there would be no climax and anticlimax for the story of the novel. Therefore it is he who holds the key to the novel in its complex ending with the explosive revelation of Gora’s alien birth. There is a solid reason for his asking Gora not to do the penance. The reason is that Gora is not a Brahmin by birth but born to the fugitive Irish parents during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.

Krishnadayal is not to be accused of heartlessness for his act of making Gora crestfallen. He has nothing against Gora. But he stands by his faith in the Vedic comment of not allowing a ‘mlecha’ to do Vedic rites. He intervenes only to avoid occurrence of sacrilege. He comes into the picture only when Gora asks him permission to do penance at the Gangetic site. It is imperative that a Brahmin son shall to take his father’s permission to do the Vedic rites in a ceremonial fashion. Gora does this in his faith of being a Brahmin by birth. Gora has to be told of the truth of his foreign birth. His father is not to mislead him by giving him false permission. The question of having the dilemma does not arise at all for him. The poignant truth is that he is not Gora’s biological father. He has to
own it up under the stress of challenges to his religious sentiments. Therefore he is not to blame for this tragedy of human drama of Gora’s exposure and anguish.

Krishnadayal’s issueless second wife is Anandamoyi. Her fancy for Gora as the orphaned child born to the Irish parents in her cowshed is the sole cause of all the troubles. He borrows the Vedic ways of ritual life from his wife who has her past experience of doing Vedic rites at Kashi with the expertise of Vedic pandit. As for Anandamoyi she becomes a ‘memsahib’ during her husband’s tenure of the government office in the upcountry. She develops the modernity of outlook to her credit. She decides to raise Gora as her own child. She does this in the teeth of her husband’s opposition. Gora grows up in her house while his foster father lives in the same house in separation in his ‘Hermitage’.

Indranath of *Four Chapters* is the last of the men of philosophical ideas. He is an advocate of the terrorist philosophy of creating anarchy in support of the cause of country’s independence. He is the only male character among Tagore’s creations having the fortitude of mind to admit no defeat in life. He is inwardly too strong to convert his failure into a door of opportunity: Thereby he gives fuller outlet to his ambition to be the greatest among his equals. His scientific brain distinguished between
love and sex. He holds the prospects of a life of permissiveness in front of
the recruit and drives them into mental slavery. He declares ‘where sex
works I put woman on the pedestal’ (FC 13).

Indranath uses Ela as the sex symbol during the initiation of young
recruits. They are brought under the spell of sexual animation. Ela’s
contention is that the recruits will look at women as mothers and not as
sexual partners. Indranath overcomes this act of dissension by declaring
her expendable. She should die since she wants legitimization for lovelife
of emotional integrity. His agents Kannu and Pattu are allowed to settle
their private scores with the terrorist workers. The agents betray the
terrorist followers to the police for transportation to the gallows. With no
moral scruples Indranath presides over this kind of reign of terror. The
entire terrorist outfit is a laboratory for him. With his commitment to create
real men out of clay he declares to the senior member Kannu ‘I have put
the force of fire in you – that’s what my laboratory is for’. (FC 25). His
practical genius is that he infuses into terrorism the spirit of nationalism.
He blends terrorism and nationalism together so as to serve his personal
purpose of making himself great among equals.

Indranath is impatient with himself as a man of personal ambition.
On this score he is like Sandip in Swadeshi agitation. At least Sandip is the
beginner, in using terrorist tactics like sinking the merchant boat with foreign clothes and looting the zamindari treasures. Indranath as a maniac character is more dangerous than the greedy Sandip. As a Swadeshi agitator Sandip is all out to describe himself as a radical minded conqueror for men and women. His aim is to get money and not the political success. Indranath has to experience no such exposure. Nor is he for sex even though he glorifies it as an instrument of power. Both of them have the common principle of finding the contextual validity for the following dictum—‘end justifies the means’. Indranath quotes the epic Mahabharata profusely in defence of crooked ways of managing people. Indranath’s outfit is loaded with human depravities such ‘meanness, unfaithfulness, mutual mistrust, secret machinations, plotting for leadership’ (FC p. 63). The case of Ela, exposes Indranath as a man of treacherous mind setting the members against other members. Thus he lacks a sense of justice with a complete denial of ethical values.

With all his emotional experience during his stay in the foreign countries he is able to discriminate the English as the British rulers in India from the English as the men of honour and culture. For him there will be still a set of English men to be ashamed of their wronging India. This line of positive thinking directed towards his political enemies in India is the only redeeming feature of his otherwise Satanic character. It also indicated
how Tagore balances his view on the British rulers in India with optimism about their behaviour in India. Swapon Majumdar opines’…Rabindranath had been explaining his countrymen the points of strength of Western civilization and beckoning them to prepare to place themselves on equal terms with them so that the best might be exchanged mutually without loss of balance’ He further adds ‘Man of the East never meets Man of the West’ and therefore Tagore’s optimism is misdirected. (Swapon Majumdar. “The East-West Colloquy: Tagore’s Understanding of the West”, Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today pp. 298, 299).

The modernity of Indranath’s scientific manipulations of his message of terrorism is compromised over by his taking recourse to the Indian tradition of giving tolerance to the English of better calibre. He symbolizes the last phase of Tagore’s familiarity with the development of political thought and action in the context of India’s struggle for freedom. The first is to begin with the concept of India’s self need. It will be for its growth as a land of political will for growing its internal economy.

After analyzing the impact of cultural dichotomy on Male Obduracy we pass on to the technical nuances in the next chapter.