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The Theme of Love and Tragedy in *Gitanjali* by Tagore: An Analysis

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Abstract

An important figure in the developing history of Indian literature in English was Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941). Global prominence was bestowed upon him by his renowned masterpiece, *Gitanjali*. His literary achievement earned him the Nobel Prize in 1913. Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, and numerous other European reviewers praised it for its inventiveness. *Gitanjali*'s songs are the poet's contemplations on God, humanity, and the natural world. *Gitanjali*'s art reflects his humane humour, vibrant curiosity, sharp sense of observation, and his love, life, and God-centered philosophies. The *Gitanjali* by Tagore is hailed as a magnificent poetry about the divinity of love. A universal emotion that is also one of the oldest, love illuminates the inner world of human perceptions and sentiments. It is also the most complicated and diverse feeling there is. Religions

promote and literary works honour the spirit of love. Aside from relationships between men and women, literature has frequently addressed love between father and daughter, mother and son, and man and God. Indian literature has long addressed love in a way that is rooted in classical writing. This analysis aims to examine the concept of love found in Tagore's *Gitanjali*. Rabindranath Tagore's collection of poems "*Gitanjali*," or Song Offerings, was originally written in Bengali and was translated by him. In 1913, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for this collection. The 1911 English-language version of this book came with a unique introduction written by William Butler Yeats. The best poet in India has compiled more than a hundred motivational poems in "*Gitanjali*."

Keywords: Death, Longing, Misfortune, *Gitanjali*, Loneliness, Union with the Infinite, Tagore's Ideas about Death, and the Heaven of Freedom

Introduction

On May 7, 1861, in Jorasanko, Calcutta (Now Kolkata), Rabindranath Tagore was born into a wealthy and well-educated family. Tagore's family in Jorasanko is known to be affluent. He was raised by Sarada Debi and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. When he was only 14 years old in 1875, his mother passed away. From an early age, he started penning poems. In addition to being a poet, painter, and patriot, he was also a philosopher, author, educator, music artist, essayist, critic, and constructive worker. However, Tagore is primarily recognized to us as a poet. His profound comprehension of human nature and vast life experience, as evidenced by his novels and short stories, along with his exceptional language and style, coupled with his refined artistic sense and wisdom, quickly made him the most renowned poet and writer in Bengal and all of India. "*Rabindra Sangeet*," "*GhareBaire*," "*Amar Shonar Bangla*," and "*Gitanjali*" are a few of his notable works. His composition, "*Jana Gana Mana*," is the national anthem of India. For his English translation of "*Gitanjali*," Rabindranath was given the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. As the first Asian and even Indian to receive this prestigious honor, Rabindranath made history. In addition, he established Vishwabharati University in 1902 at Santiniketan. His love for his nation and fellow citizens was boundless. In 1919, Tagore objected to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and rejected the Title of knighthood.

He made lengthy trips to several nations in Europe, America, and Asia, where he spoke at public gatherings and institutions about education. Alongside *Gitanjali*, he considered what was best for the Indian populace. He was great and honourable due to his nationalism and patriotism. Our nation will always remember him with reverence.

Rabindranath is comparable to Rabindranath by himself. He is regarded as the pinnacle of the contemporary Indian Renaissance. To us, he is the fountainhead of wisdom and beauty, the wellspring of all admirable ideas and moral reflection. Rabindranath has departed from this life for his quest of freedom. However, the entire human race will be inspired and

motivated by his ideas and goals in the days to come.

Adore: The *Gitanjali* Theme by Tagore:

In his *Gitanjali* introduction, V. Ramamurthy says that although it is impossible to "love" the Infinite, it is possible to adore Krishna or Christ as they are recalled in one's own memory. Approaches to the divine come in a plethora. However, that of a cherished for her lover is the highest and most personal. This is referred to as "Gopibhav" or "Madhurabhav." Not only does Radha, Krishna's beloved Gopi, appear in the Bhakti hymns but also in the writings of Jayadev, Vidyapati, Chandidas, and Tagore. *Gitanjali*, written by Tagore, is both universal and intimate. It cannot be any other way, in Tagore's words, since a relationship can only be great when it is based on love. (Personality, 158). In contrast to other love poets, Tagore is able to portray both the romantic perspectives of men and women. Three types of love: The sacred love between a man and God, the human love between a man and another person, and the love that exists between other living creatures.

A Man and a Woman's Corporeal Love:

One of the most popular themes among writers worldwide is the love between a man and a woman. Tagore employs this idea as well. He thinks of God as his adored. According to Tagore's song XLIX, God is portrayed as a king who is delighted by the presence of numerous master musicians in His court (Glob. J. Art Soc. Sci. Educ. 156). However, when God heard the poet singing in a corner of his humble cottage, He got down from His throne and approached the poet's door. God gives the poet a flower as a reward because He is delighted by the poet's song. The poet writes, "There are many masters in your hall, and songs are sung there at all hours," to convey his happiness. However, your love was hurt by this novice's simple carol. You came down and stopped at my cottage door with a flower as a prize, and one meek tiny strain blended with the world's best music. [*Gitanjali* – XLIX].

Fascinatingly, God presents the poet with a flower that makes him happy. Tagore is expressing his desire for pleasures and physical contact here. Knowing that you are the source of life and that your living touch touches every limb of my body, he addresses God as "Life of my life." Because you are the truth that has ignited the light of reason in my head, I will make an effort to never again think about anything that is false. I will always strive to keep my love blossoming and keep all evils out of my heart since I know that you have a place at the innermost shrine of my heart. As I am aware that your power gives me the will to act, I will make an effort to show you through my deeds. [*Gitanjali* – IV]. Tagore longs for the touch of the Eternal and strives to maintain his physical purity.

The Divine and Sacred Love of Man and God

A prevalent theme in love poetry is the agony of waiting and longing for togetherness. The cherished uses these words to convey her longings: "Every home has its doors closed, and the woods have quieted down." On this lonely roadway, you are the only traveller. I want you to stay in my home and not just pass through it like it's a dream. You are my best friend and my only buddy. [*Gitanjali* –XXII] One interpretation of this lyric is that it expresses how much our souls long to be reunited with God. The poet beloved has kept her doors open when all other doors are closed, and she commands the

divine lover to avoid passing by her doors "like a dream." The lover is waiting and longing for him; he should enter and accept it. The lovers' agony over being apart lingers in their thoughts during the day and occasionally enters their dreams. In *Gitanjali*, the beloved describes her anguish as follows: "When my rooms are decorated, the flutes play, and there is loud laughter, let me never feel that I have not invited thee to my house—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of this Sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours." *Gitanjali* - [LXXIX]. She thinks exclusively about her beloved, even during the hours of dreams and wakefulness. A feeling of alienation from God frequently renders the unity gloomy and distant. In love poetry, the lovers' tryst and waiting for their spouses is another frequently used topic. Poetry is created about the inability of two people to meet at a scheduled time.

A time of togetherness and illumination is what it means to wait for the beloved. This integration of the heart and the mind is possible only through love. There's nothing like distance to bring people closer together. A new dramatic meaning has been added to the longing for the beloved. Tagore employs this literary device in the poem "I came out alone on my way to my tryst." The one that follows me in the quiet darkness, nevertheless, is who? I try to get away from him, but I can't get away from him. He adds his loud voice to every word I say, making the dust rise from the earth with his swagger. Although he is my lord and my own tiny self, he is shameless; therefore I am embarrassed to walk to your door with him. [*Gitanjali*: xxx].

Theme of loss and grief

For the lovers, death is not a painful experience. They view death as a lovely reprieve from all the agony that comes with being a human in this planet when they are overcome with misery. *Gitanjali* describes Tagore as being prepared to give his life to Death after having previously offered his soul to his beloved, God. Death, in Tagore's view, is the portal through which life perpetually renews itself rather than the denial of existence. "Death, thy servant, is at my door," he says, greeting Death. He has returned home with your call after crossing an uncharted sea. *Gitanjali* [LXXXVI]. Based on Tagore's belief that Death is God's messenger, the poet will greet Death with folded hands when he arrives after traversing the sea of forever. In addition, he declares that he will surrender his life and everything he owns to Death, but he will retain his soul with God. Human love is the third type of love that Tagore depicts in his writings, in addition to spiritual and physical love. Humanism is defined as love for one's fellow human being. Humanism is a way of thinking that places a high priority on people and human values. In an interview, Tagore articulated the importance of humanism, saying, "I am a man of India as far as my origin, training, and outlook, but I am a human being, a man of humanity." Tagore is aware of the relevance of humanism. Only then, when various faces and nations are allowed to develop into their own identities and are united by the common connection of love, would humanity be perfect. [The Times, July 13]. In Tagore's *Visvabharati*, one of the main ideas is the brotherhood of men. Tagore writes in *Gitanjali*, "...thou hast made the stranger a brother and brought the distant near." (LXIII). Serving and loving one's fellow humans is the ultimate form of worship, according to humanists. In addition, they think that God is among the underprivileged

and labourers. *Gitanjali* is where Tagore expresses this idea. As per Tagore, genuine devotion to God entails engaging in their meek acts and living in equality with the lowly human race. The statement "The poor, the illiterate" from Swami Vivekananda comes to mind. The uninformed, the disadvantaged, the wealthy and arrogant can never find God since they remain apart from the underprivileged and oppressed; thus, let them be your God and understand that service to Him alone is. This is according to Tagore. In his opinion, pride has no place where people who are poorest, lowest, and lost walk among those dressed in humility. [*Gitanjali* – X]. Along with preaching about universal brotherhood, Tagore also says, "Leave this bead-telling, singing, and chanting!" And in this remote, gloomy nook of a closed temple, whom do you worship? Behold, thy God is not before thee! There he is where the path maker is breaking stones and the tiller is working the rough earth. His clothes are covered in dust, and he is with them in the sun and the shower. Take off your holy robe and let him land on the dusty ground! [*Gitanjali*, XI]. It illustrates that God is with those who labour in the sun, take showers, and wear dirty clothes. Despite his ragged and soiled clothes, God still loves the modest tiller. The meek and impoverished who toil to earn their sustenance are the ones who will find God. Tagore begs God for his nation's spiritual liberation in one of his songs from *Gitanjali*. Living a complete and moral life is the path to true freedom. Thus, he begs God to grant his country's men courage, integrity, reason, and fear of God, nobility, and charity. His goal is for people to be free and to live in a society where caste, creed, and nationality are not markers of distinction. In places where knowledge is unrestricted, the head is held high, and the world isn't torn apart by flimsy household walls; when the mind is guided by you into ever-widening thought and action—into that heaven of freedom, my father—let my country awake. Where words emerge from the depth of truth; where unceasing striving stretches its arms towards perfection; where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the gloomy desert sand of dead habit. [*Gitanjali* – xxxv]. Notably, Tagore prays for a "heaven of freedom" that is a spiritual haven free from fear, prejudice, and evil impulses rather than a political or economic one. A beautiful example of Tagore's spiritual humanism can be seen in this line. The love that people have for one another, for their nation, for the land, for nature, and for life itself is summed up in Tagore's *Gitanjali*. The many forms of devotion, such as "lover and beloved" and "Finite and Infinite," are embodied in *Gitanjali*. As Tagore tries to bring the ideal and the actual into harmony, love comes to represent the soul's yearning for its epiphyte, for the self.

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