based on her sexuality, and the employment of the poetic mode within the prose narrative to transform the widow's character into an aesthetic idiom that lacked objective and historical vision.

The story of *Chokher Bali* evolves around the passionate love tale of four characters: Mahendra, Ashalata, Binodini, and Bihari. Tagore admits in the preface that the jealousy of Mahendra's mother Rajlakhsmi towards his wife Ashalata is the driving force of the novel, which creates the ground for Binodini and Mahendra's illicit love affair.

Binodini's marriage was settled with Mahendra, but because of his refusal to give in to the marriage at the last moment, Binodini was married to a wrong match, Bipin, who died only one year after their wedding. Binodini's primary jealousy around Ashalata is born out of her recognition of her own qualities to be a better householder than Asha, and unfulfilled sexual desire further flames Binodini's jealousy.

Bihari, Mahendra's friend, is introduced as a counter-force to Mahendra's selfishness and hyperactive sexuality. Binodini's love creates complete unrest in the family, and Binodini, being the product of enlightenment ideology, comes back to her reason and decides to fall in love with Bihari by understanding the wrongness and social impossibility of her relationship with Mahendra.

Bihari, however, refuses to accede to Binodini's proposal, and Binodini is struck by the ultimate triumph of her reason at the end of the novel, after Mahendra's mother Rajlakhsmi's death, when she simply leaves the scene of the Mahendra-Ashalata household, thereby making a rational choice that gives her the chance to be a modern individual subject.

The women's emotions in this novel, love and jealousy, are derived from their passion to master the masculine forces of the novel. The men's emotions, love and selfishness, are derived from their desire to own and master as many feminine forces in the novel as possible.

Bihari wins this race over Mahendra, because at end, Bihari's superior application of reason gains him respect from the overall female characters in the novel. Mahendra's mother Rajlakshmi jealousy towards Ashalata is based on Asha's complete mastery over Mahendra in the first part of the novel. Rajlakshmi's jealousy brings Binodini into the scene, and Binodini's jealousy against Asahlata, and *prem* (romantic love) for Mahendra pushes the narrative to a more complicated state where the total breakdown of moral and emotional equilibrium of the novel takes place.

At the denouement of the novel, reason rules over emotion for each character, and things reach a resolution with Binodini's departure from the scene. The word Tagore uses to describe the feminine emotions of love and jealousy is *maya*; women in this case are shown as *mayabinis*, creatures capable by their sexuality to manipulate and create instability in the masculine mind. Asha is shown as being naïve in the game of *maya*, as opposed to her mother-in-law or Binodini. The absence of the essential female power of *maya* in Asha's character makes her more benevolent than the others.



Two elder brothers of Rabindranath and their wives: Jnanadanandini and Satyendranath, Jyotirindranath (seated) and Kadambari.

Tagore's understanding of *maya* is based on the same idiom as his nationalistic poetic mode described by Dipesh Chakrabarty, where the real nation portrayed in the prose language would transform itself into a poetic transcendental icon to mitigate the