

**Nationalism in Rabindranath Tagore's Translated Gora**

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Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941), sobriquet Gurudev, was a Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of *Gitanjali* and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. Tagore's poetic songs were viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. He is sometimes referred to as "*the Bard of Bengal*".<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore has occupied an exceptional space of his own rank in the field of Indian English Translated Literature. Readers have recognized him as a world poet and short story writer. He has received Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, for poetic work *Gitanjali*. He is the source of many literary genres. Being a great universal poet Tagore was short- story writer, musician, philosopher, painter, educationalist, reformer, critic and propagandists. He has earned a position in the translated literature. His novels are full of promises and potentialities. The settings of his novels are representative and reflective. Their characters are natural and realistic. The socio-religious culture of Bengal during the late half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has vividly described by Tagore. He brings out some of the problems of the woman community of his age. His novels deal with the modern problems of our society and the interest in them centres round his psychological development of characters. He does not follow conventional narrative techniques. He also tries to focus the attention on some of the bitter truths and cruel customs of the lives and society as well. His novels bring out the real fantastic pleasures. M.Saranda an eminent writer acutely says-

*"Tagore's contribution to the Indian Novel is extraordinary. His place is among the pioneers; chokherBalie published at the beginning of this century is regarded as the first modern... Indian novel has not received from the critics the attention it deserves."*<sup>2</sup>

*Gora* (1909) is one of his most famous fictions. He covered various picture of the society. It marks an important phase of his literary development as well as the search for national identity. The novel has two love stories. The characters like Gora, Pareshbhai, Lalita, Binoy, Sucharita, Anandamoyee are representative of a society. All the characters play a vital role but the most major characters in the novel is Gora who has a passionate love for his country. They have hatred for foreigners. He is an orthodox Brahmin and an enthusiastic nationalist. He has stronger nationalist motive. He has additional spiritual attraction which draws them together by physical.

Tagore's *Gora* is integrated to Sucharita. He has so captivated under the guidance of Brahmo Paresh Bapu. The depiction of Anandmoyi is an effective contrast to that of Gora. Lolita is lovely, beautiful, impulsive and restless. Sucharita is calm and quite. She does not like this weakness in the character of Binoy. Lolita likes Gora from the beginning of her first relationship. Two stories are utilized by the novelist to reveal the fanatic behaviour of both the Hindus and the Brahmins. The novel describes love, religion, nationalism. Gora's defense of Hindu orthodoxy gets a severe shock. He wants to liberate from all restraints. The mobility of his discovery is a climax in the novel. The novel very deftly describes the Indian culture, tradition and severe patriotism.

Anandamoyi plays a vital role in the novel. Tagore depicts the character of anandamoyi and show how the barriers of caste, creed, religion and race can be overcome by love and understanding. She is a living example to show that mere religious observances and argument do not bring purity.

She shows from her own experience, how love for fellow human beings can create change in her life. Anandamoyi acceptance of Gora is responsible for the change in her attitude and Sucharita love for him transforms her character. Tagore argues that a modern womanhood has emerged as a result of western education. He changes in the socio-economic set up. She adopts Gora and crisis starts in her life. She is tormented by the conflict between the love of a child and loyalty towards her own religion. All the characters are got in conflict. It raises barriers like race and religion between human beings.

Gora grows up. He becomes an activist of Hinduism and visualizes his ideas of Indian nationalism. Binoy is his close friend. He visits every day to the house of Brahmo girls, Sucharita and Lolita. Gora too goes to their home. He is attracted by Sucharita. Gora involves in an emotional conflict, his love and service to the country. The love story of Gora and Sucharita, Binoy and Lolita is developed throughout the novel. Two stories expose the extreme behaviour of both Hindus and Brahmos. People stand above trivial conflicts. She plays a key role by guiding all the four major characters. She is an ideal mother, a great source of inspiration and the image of his beloved motherland. Binoy was a Scripture. Lolita is a moral supporter and source of silence and grace. She showers the equal love and affection for Binoy.

Sucharita is an enthusiastic to serve the country and the people. She plays a crucial role for the growth of Gora's personality and his self-realization. She is the constant motivator to Gora hence Gora realizes that women have to contribute a major role for the upliftment of the country. She has lost her parents. She and her brother, Satish are brought up by Paresh Babu who was a close friend of her father. She is an extraordinary woman with a different vision. Sucharita is sensible and psychologically developed. Gora is attracted by her understanding, sincerity and sympathetic understanding. Binoy regards her manifestation of love. Her discussion with Gora and his views on Brahmo community is notable. She is unable to tolerate the narrow sectarian attitude and arrogant behaviour of Haran who is regarded in the Brahmo Circles. After meeting with Gora, Sucharita refuses to maintain a mutual relation with him. Binoy finds her a good companion and affectionately calls her Didi. She is a friend. She also a philosopher and guide to Lolita. She has the highest regard for Paresh Babu her friend and guide. She shows concern for his welfare. She feels that her relationship with Gora is not common relationship. Her love is not an ordinary but they are made for each other. She is hurt by his indifference attitude. In course of time she understands Gora She does not agree with his religious views. Gora attacks the Brahmo ideals.

The episode of Gora's arrest shows a turning point in her life. Her psychological conflict subsides and the attraction for Gora is strengthened. The love of Gora and Sucharita is the blending of tradition and modernity. It stands for universal love which knows no barriers of caste, community, race and nation.

He becomes a martyr for a noble cause. So strong are her love and devotion for him that she does not hesitate to ignore Haran Babu when the time comes. The conflict is between the normal human urge for love and the loftier ideals of nationalism. She discovers-

*Sucharita is 'the manifestation of all that was sweet and pure, loving and virtuous in the homes of his motherland'*<sup>3</sup>

Lolita also plays a vital role in the novel, Gora. She considers the real protagonist. Her courage, confidence, and energy make her prominent among Tagore's female characters. She is the pioneer of women's freedom and feminist movements of the contemporary period. Lolita is modern and supporter of women's freedom. She rejects the old and traditional conventions which do exploitation of women by male society? All the female characters are suffered from male dominated society. Labonya in appearance and in her dress, outlook and behaviour is opposite to Sundari. She is taller, darker than her sisters. She ridicules Binoy for being a supporter of Gora and following his opinions.

She admires her father who allows differences of opinion and never imposes his ideas on others. She finds the same thing in Sucharita too. In one of the episodes with her steamer journey to Culcatta along with Binoy. She is impressed by Gora's idealism, patriotism, nationalism and spirit of love toward nation. Therefore, she decides not to take part in the play and also asks Binoy not to allow himself to be convinced by anybody. Her nationalism is as militant. She says Sucharita that *"I couldn't utter a single word... the blood flowed."*<sup>4</sup>

The love and marriage episode of Binoy and Lolita facilitated the novelist to depict the Brahmo-Hindu conflict of his time. Binoy's marriage is not a sacrifice of his friendship with Gora for the sake of Lolita and his love. She does not believe in the gender discrimination on the basis of traditional division of duties between men and women. She strongly likes to contribute for the sake of national service. She says to Sucharita- *"Are we never to be of any use to the world?"*<sup>5</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore describes the female through Lolita who is ready sacrifice her home and join in the national movement. Tagore portrays the impact of Western liberal ideas on the caste-ridden Hindu society. The powerful influence of western ideas, Hindu society divided into two groups of those who imitate the Western ideas consciously and criticize Indian tradition and custom. The true path is followed only by those like Anandamoyi, Binoy, Paresh Sucharita and Lolita belonging to the opposite sects. Binoy revolts against the reactionary Hinduism of friend Gora and tells forcefully. *"I can no longer admit the right of society to be pacified like a demon by daily .... to live or die."*<sup>6</sup>

India is a caste based nation of multicultural and multi-languages. Hence we find frequent conflict on the basis of language or caste and regretting the loss of faith in humanism among countrymen, his comments- *"But what I actually see before me is the intolerable aversion of man ....this is diving good and sub-diving our people"*<sup>7</sup>

Gora's character has been depicted with sympathy. He is shown as an image of the nationalism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He represents the aspirations and sentiments of the educated Bengalis of his times who fought against the injustice of British officers, and tried to search for their cultural heritage and protect it from all types of attack. Gora, therefore is Indian as sacred and everything that is Indian. In one his discussion with Sucharita, he says-

*"I am a Hindu! A Hindu belongs to no party. The Hindus are a nation, and such a vast nation that their nationality cannot be limited within the scope of any single definition."*<sup>8</sup>

Tagore not only emphasizes the value of humanism in life and the cultural unity of India surpassing caste, sect and religion but also points out the dangers faced by the national awakening in the country in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He advises his countrymen against the drifting of the national movement towards a militant Hinduism under the influence of extremist leaders Bhabani Bhattacharya observes: - *"Gora is contemporary and yet timeless, as is the case with many great literary works of the world and it reaches out towards the universal"*<sup>9</sup>

There are several points to make Gora as an epic. This is the first and the only novel in Bengali which got translated in English. It reflects the social, political and cultural life of the entire educated Bengali middle class families. Rabindranath Tagore described the conflict between Brahmo-Hindu and their fanaticism. Narayan Ray states that *"Translated Gora is skillful disposition of events, its masterly delineation of characters, the solid nature of its content and craft."*<sup>10</sup>

**To conclude**, the present novel, Gora is modern in technique, thought and structure. It is remarkable in both theme and technique. Biological, social, psychological and nationalist relations are deftly woven together. Rabindranath Tagore reflects the social, political and moral conditions of the contemporary India. Gora reflects cultural clashes too.

*Today I am Bharatiya. Within me there is no conflict between communities, whether Hindu, Muslim or Krishtan. Today all the castes of Bharat are my caste.....is the ultimate realization that*

*strikes Gora, the central character of Tagore's complex novel by the same name. Sadly, even after almost a century past this novel, how very far-fetching such an understanding within us seems.<sup>11</sup>*

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