

Social Realism in Indian Literature: Comparative Perspectives on Tagore and Prem Chand's Portrayal of Society in the Early 20th Century

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ABSTRACT

Social realism is a literary trend that aims to portray the socioeconomic reality of its era, frequently criticizing oppression, inequality, and the hardships of the underprivileged. Rabindranath Tagore and Munshi Prem Chand stand out as two influential authors who skilfully used social realism to depict the intricacies of Indian life under colonial control in the backdrop of early 20th-century Indian literature. This research explores Tagore and Prem Chand's views on social realism, looking at how their writings capture the social issues, subtle cultural differences, and personal circumstances of their time. Through his complex poetry and prose, Tagore explores subjects like women's oppression, the struggle between tradition and modernization, and the pursuit of identity by an individual within a constrictive social structure. His writings, such as *Ghare Baire* (The Home and the World), combine lyrical with a deep social critique to offer a critical perspective on nationalism and patriarchy. However, Prem Chand, who is frequently called the founder of Hindi-Urdu social realism, emphasizes the caste prejudice, hardships of the farmers under colonial exploitation and the predicament of the rural poor. His celebrated novel *Godaan* (The Gift of a Cow) vividly captures the stark realities of agrarian life. This research proposes that both writers make effective use of social realism to address social injustices, their varied linguistic and cultural contexts influence their narrative techniques and thematic interests. The present study highlights their mutual dedication to social justice and their continuing relevance in modern times by contrasting Prem Chand's realistic and grounded storytelling with Tagore's introspective, frequently utopian critique, and discussions on inequality and cultural identity.

Introduction

In Indian literature, social realism developed into a potent instrument for tackling the cultural and socioeconomic issues of the early 20th century, especially during the colonial era. It gave authors a stage on which they could criticize injustices, draw attention to the suffering of underprivileged groups, and promote social change. Two well-known authors who skillfully used literature to depict the challenges faced by people and civilizations navigating a world characterized by fast change are Rabindranath Tagore and Munshi Prem Chand. Tagore examined the conflicts between tradition and modernity, the intricacies of nationalism, and the place of women in society in works such as *Gora* and *Ghare Baire*. His introspective stories challenged strict social standards and ideologies by fusing poetic beauty with incisive sociopolitical insight. Prem Chand offered a representation of social realities by depicting rural poverty, caste oppression, and farmer exploitation in an uncompromising manner. His works provided an unflinching portrayal of rural poverty, caste oppression, and the exploitation of the agrarian class.

This study explores the thematic depth of the selected stories written by Rabindranath Tagore and Munshi Prem Chand, analyzing how each reflects the authors' distinct perspectives on social realism. By examining their treatment of issues like rural exploitation, poverty, identity, and gender dynamics, this paper highlights the enduring relevance of Tagore and Prem Chand's works in understanding the complexities of Indian society and its ongoing challenges.

1. Munshi PremChand

In Urdu and Hindi literature, Prem Chand is the first outstanding short story writer. Prem Chand was born on 31 July 1880 in the Kayastha caste in Banaras. His original name was Dhanpat Rai, he struggled a lot with his studies. His caste was poor and suffered a lack of status as being at the lowest rung of the middle-class ladder. His father was a petty clerk in the post office. His mother died when he was only eight and the father married again. The stepmother was illiterate, unkind and stingy, and consequently, Prem Chand's life became miserable. She lacked in culture or refinement, and Prem Chand's references to her are not very complimentary. The only childhood companion was a young cousin who lived in the same house as Prem Chand himself and went to the same teacher. After the entrance exam, Prem Chand joined as a teacher and was gradually promoted to Deputy Inspector of the School. He resigned from the job in 1921 and became a full-time writer of Urdu and Hindi. Some important Novels by Prem Chand are *Maidan-e-Amal*, *Nirmala*, *Gosha-e-Afzyat*, *Ghaban*, *bazaar-e-Husn*, etc. Prem Chand's most important Short Stories are *Kafan*, *Poos ki Rat*, *Nai Bivi*, *Eidgab*, *Haj-e-Akbari*, *Boodhi Kaki*, *Do Bahnen*, *Namak ka Darogha*, *Nijat*, *Doodh ki Qimat* and *Panchayat*. In 1904, he wrote his first story "*Duniya ka sab se anmol rattan*". The theme of this story was based on patriotism; he continued to write many stories with the same theme. In 1908, "*Soz-e-Watan*" his first collection of short stories was published, and he was warned by the administration not to write on similar themes again. After this incident, he decided to use another name as a pen name. Prem Chand was an Urdu writer and throughout his life, he wrote in Urdu but

after 1920, he continued to write in Hindi. His famous short story “*Kafan*” was initially written in Urdu when he was staying at Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi.

Furthermore, in Prem Chand's writing, one can find many phases. Initially, he used to write patriotic stories. After this, he highlighted the feudal values and expressed Rajput chivalry as at that time he was influenced by Revivalism. The next phase in Prem Chand's writing was Gandhi's Idealism and the last phase which influenced him was Marxist realism. Prem Chand always targeted to write about the oppressed classes as his stories revolve around the sufferings of laborers and farmers; his stories are matchless and till now, no writer could reach up to his level.ⁱ After the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in April 1919, like other liberal Indians, his illusions were also shattered. Consequences of this massacre came in the form of martial law in the Punjab and imprisonment without trial for those who showed their suppression of public agitation against the Rowlett Acts. When in February 1921 Gandhi visited Gorakhpur, Prem Chand was there to attend that meeting. He was impressed and influenced by Gandhi's personality and his address at the meeting. This interaction with Gandhi gave him the motivation to leave his 20 years of Government service. He was convinced that to work with such authority which was unlawful and dictatorial was immoral.ⁱⁱ

1.1. The Struggles of Rural Life and Agrarian Exploitation (*Godan*)

Godan (1936) was his masterpiece in the classic, written on the Indian peasant class. This novel makes a difference from other writings of Prem Chand in its richness in variety and form. This novel is a good source to realize the failure of the aim of the Indian agricultural civilization of that period. In his writing, Prem Chand always talks about the sufferings of the peasants' class which must suffer either in the form of the cruelty of man or domination of nature.ⁱⁱⁱ Hori is the protagonist of *Godan*, his community always exploits him. His simplicity and pure mind think that they all are his own people and his well-wisher. Dr. Namwar Singh, while critically evaluating this novel has opined:

“Reality stands here unadorned, in its total horror. It is here that Prem Chand realizes that the enemy is nowhere outside; it is within the house itself. In *Godan*, British imperialism is behind the scenes, on stage, there are mill owners, landlords, petty officials, priests and one's own baradari. All these unite to make one side; on the other is Hori, the holder of 5 bighas of land.”^{iv} *Godan* represents two stories parallel which coincides at many points. One is the tragic story of Hori, a poor peasant, along with it, Prem Chand relates satire and pathos to describe the story of rich people of the city who sometimes directly benefit from the sufferings and labor of the poor villagers.

Additionally, the *Godan* refers to a custom of Hindu society, in which when a death has occurred, the heirs of the body present a cow to a Brahmin. This used to be done in the hope that for the departed soul, heaven's gate would open. Protagonist Hori is a poor farmer, who worked hard for the survival of his wife Dhaniam, his son Gobar and two daughters Bona and Rupa. He has a long-cherished desire to possess a cow. For a few days, he gets hold of a cow but due to his ill fate and his jealous and quarrelsome brother, the cow gets poisoned.^v

Hori feels guilty about the cow's death. He was condemned and ordered by some respectable but corrupt people of the village to pay heavy fines to them. Rai Saheb, the landlord of the village, instead of scolding the group of people for their inhuman and selfish behavior, adds all the money for his personal use. Hori never recovers from this financial disaster. Whenever he has a crucial time, he repeatedly borrows money from others resulting in the loss of his two bullocks. He has no money left with him; his family reaches the point of starvation. During all this, the most disappointing thing is that his son leaves his family and moves to the city leaving his pregnant beloved, Jhuniam at his parent's doorsteps. Hori works hard day and night to fulfill the desire of his grandson to buy a cow, but his age does not allow him for this hard work, he dies of severe exhaustion.^{vi} From this novel, Prem Chand highlights that our system has become too corrupt because of the moneylenders. To give money on interest has become their business and with that, they hold the rural economy. But the peasants suffer a lot from this, and they need to borrow money from them again and again. This is the cruel reality of the society of that time and even today, the farmers of the villages suffer. This class of society did not even get relief when the 1917 declaration was made or the Act of India 1935 was announced.^{vii} V.S. Narvane analyses this system as,

“the farmer accepts usury as though it were a force of nature: inevitable, like sunrise and sunset. It is inseparable from living, from breathing. He is resigned to it. And the irony is that he becomes a usurer whenever he has an opportunity”.^{viii}

In *Godan*, it is very clearly shown how peasants are helpless to borrow money from moneylenders on auspicious festivals like Dusshera. That's why, Rai Saheb in every part of the narrative tells Hori that “this year, I expect at least five hundred rupees from the entire village”.^{ix} This is the reason that the lower class actively participated in the event concerning the voice that was raised for their rights which ultimately ended in the partition of India. The aggressiveness of this class also came out in the participation in the riots of 1947.^x

The author was also mindful that the zamindars, to safeguard their selfish interests and profits, kept good terms with the government officials, and they had their representatives in the local boards as well as in legislative councils. To keep themselves in the good books of the higher officials, in turn, these landlords gave tough times to the poor people. Prem Chand through his character Rai Saheb exposed this outlook of the landlords who very hypocritically claim:

“The trouble is that we must kill our conscience to such an extent that not a trace of self-respect remains in us. We must grind down the tenants. If we do not give costly presents to the officers, we are branded as rebels. If we don't live in style, we are dubbed misers. At the slightest hint of political awakening, we tremble with fear and run to the government for protection. We are like spoon-fed babies, healthy to look at, frail inside.”^{xi}

Additionally, *Godan* also highlights the inhumanity that is common in village life towards the lower classes. These outcast people during the time of Prem Chand spent a miserable and despicable life. In *Godan*, Characters like Matadin, the Pandit's son and Digvijay Singh, the zamindar's son-in-law, were immoral and cruel. The backward and lower-class women are victimized by them to fulfill their lustful desires. Not only did they sexually assault the women but also the upper caste landlords forced untouchables for labor.^{xii}

Moreover, *Godan* presents the picture of contemporary urban life which has affected rural life. This makes it easier to analyze the similarities and differences between the two aspects of life. The story revolves around the life of peasants whereas the story of the life of the middle-class revolves around them. The other factor that is responsible for the disgusting exploitation and oppression of the peasants is the social and economic forces that are formed on the benefits of urban life which is a selfish motive. Prem Chand, being a village-oriented person, highly criticized all the new trends of city life in mind. This novel gives many corrective measures based on people who were responsible for the social reforms but wanted only to introduce them to urban life.^{xiii}

The other thing that shocked him was that the Freedom Movement in the mid of the 1920s became a mere toy in the hands of politically ambitious people. The self-centered patriots cleverly used the sensitive feelings of the nationalist people to their benefit. From this, they were gaining high positions which further motivated them to exploit the feelings and emotions of the workers and the farmers. In *Godan*, there are many examples of hypocrites like Rai Saheb Amar Pal Singh and Mr. Khanna. They behave like nationalists, and the way of talking and dressing is like theirs, they even in the name of the Freedom Struggle establish their Bonafide to serve prison sentences. The jail was the passport that enabled them to cross any border whichever they pleased. Prem Chand pursues to reveal their selfishness which lies just under the crust of their so-called patriotism by showing their exploitation of the poor people. The exploiting zamindar, on one hand, was a cunning industrialist, and on the other, made this class more suffered.^{xiv}

Therefore, Prem Chand has drawn a very realistic picture on the broad canvas of contemporary life. He represents the farmer community through Hori. The village Belari represents the pathetic story of all the villages in India. Whereas Malti, Mehta, Khanna, Rai Saheb and others present the economic, social and political life of the Indian cities in the British Era. Indeed, *Godan* emerges as a historical document of its age embodying all aspects in general and the social one.

1.2. Poverty and Dehumanization in Marginalized Communities (*Kafan*)

Another famous story by Prem Chand is *Kafan* which he wrote in 1936, it is the same year in which he died. This is the most famous of all his writings and a controversial one as well. The story of *Kafan* revolves around the life of a Dalit family including Ghisu, Madhav his son and Budhia his daughter-in-law. Their financial conditions are very poor and the whole story describes the poorness of rural society and among them, they are the poorest family. At the start of the story, there is a conversation between father and son related to his pregnant daughter-in-law who is facing labor pain. A new wave of interpretations of Prem Chand's work can be seen here. Before we dwell upon some of the recent interpretations, it is to be noted that these interpretations are taking place amidst an atmosphere characterized by the contemporary political vision that attempts to define and redefine the past, its histories and cultures.

To get rid of the poorness, the people of this class wait for anything new that can bring change in their lives. But unfortunately, most of the local leaders exploit them. To show their reaction, sometimes, they take part in anti-nationalist activities and create violence.^{xv} Ghisu and Madhav both are too lazy to do work for their survival, fearing nothing and living at a sub-human level. They are outside all normal mores of social behavior. While Madhav's wife is writhing in labor pain inside the hut, Madhav and his father sit outside, greedily devouring stolen potatoes, unwilling to go and help her because the other person might grab a larger share. Ghisu recounts in detail a feast to which he had been invited twenty years ago and Madhav listens to the vivid account of food with vicarious pleasure. The wife lies dying inside and both sleep unconcerned about her.^{xvi}

Budhia dies the next morning and mourning is started by both father and son. Meanwhile, for condolence, neighbors start to come and arrangements are going to be made for the cremation. For all these arrangements, they have no money and nothing in the house to sell and get money. They go to the Zamindar who unwantedly gives two rupees to them while other villagers contribute to the donation for cremation. Finally, they managed to collect five rupees to buy the shroud, they wanted a cheaper one but were unable to find one. There, they find a bar where they drink, forget about all their responsibilities and fear nothing. While drinking, they have conversations about different things such as rituals, traditions and systems even they acclaim Budhia "who even in death provide them food and drink". They are too drunk and unconsciously start singing, dancing, and wiggling and they fall on the street, on this note, the story ends.

This is the most controversial story of Prem Chand as critics have many interpretations of it. Meenakshi Mukherjee refers to this story as the perfect understanding which explains the situation with strong and inconspicuous horror that disturbs the readers. She additionally said that by interpreting *Kafan*, one can better understand the advice of Engel to Margaret Harkness that if the writer uses hidden words in his writing, it becomes a better work of art. In the story, those fundamental questions that are raised have no simple answers. The important thing about this story is that it is not prescriptive and ideal but completely descriptive and analytical. This story does not give any solution to the raised question but contextualizes the situation which raised these questions which is mandatory for an artist.^{xvii} Thus, it can be concluded that *Kafan* represents isolation produced by the insensitive and exploitative socio-economic system that leads to dehumanization.

2. Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7 May 1861 and died on 7 August 1941. He reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is universally acknowledged that Rabindranath's reputation as a writer lies primarily in his poetry. He was labeled "*Gurudev*" (Master Teacher), "*Kaviguri*" (Master Poet), and "*Bishwakavi*" (World Poet) for his poetic achievements and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for a collection of poetry, *Gitanjali*. Tagore was also the founder of the short story form in Bengali literature. He wrote 95 short stories over a period starting in 1877, when Rabindranath was only 16 years old, till his death in 1941. He has been described as one of the best short story writers in the world and often has been compared with the best of the European writers, Anton Chekov and Guy de Maupassant. The famous literary critic Thompson, who translated some of Rabindranath's stories into English, once said that there was no greater short story writer in the world's literature than Tagore.

Rabindranath Tagore was a realistic short story writer. He expresses his loyalty to his surroundings and pays truthful devotion to the treatment of its issues in his stories. He has a point of view that political and social actions are related to the universal truth. They can only be realized with their loyalty towards universal truth whereas universal truth can be categorized as family, community, society, or nation. But one important factor is love towards humanity. For this reason, Tagore negates that nationalism does not mean that someone avails his freedom by the exclusive use of territorial prejudice, the strength lies in the unity of man which is a moral law.^{xviii}

2.1. Gender, Modernity, and the Conflict of Ideologies (*Ghare Baire*)

Tagore's writings illustrate the realistic portions of ordinary life precisely and comprehensively. Rabindranath Tagore's *The Home and the World* (*Ghare Baire*) portrays the various aspects of the anti-colonial nationalist struggle against the colonial regime in India. The novel is set in colonial India in 1905, when there was partition of Bengal.^{xix} It was the time of the early twentieth century when nationalist activities made a new turn towards the Mother India. Such type of symbolic writings gives a possible obvious reason. The novel describes the Swadeshi movement which emerged as the response to the Partition Act, planned by the administration of British colonial. It was the time when "*Bande Mataram*" (a song composed by Tagore) was used as a slogan in most of the nationalist rallies. *The Home and the World* challenges the belief that India is exclusively a Hindu nation. It also raises questions on nationalism validity which instead of focusing on economic self-sufficiency and social justice put their attention on emotions. It takes exception to the aggressive masculinity of the nationalist project.^{xx}

The novel *The Home and the World* was published ten years after the event of partition of Bengal. It is the time when the magic incantation of "*Bande Mataram*," began first time in 1915 in Bengal. Later, it was translated into English in 1919. In the consequences of the partition of Bengal in 1905, the Swadeshi movement emerged not only in Bengal but also spread all over India as the "beginning of a truly national movement and a struggle between the men and methods that were to lead it".^{xxi} "*Bande Mataram*" was enthusiastically used showing opposition against the Partition of Bengal. It spreads "over the entire subcontinent" the same as the Swadeshi movement.^{xxii} On the role and function of the Swadeshi movement, a conflict arose within the Indian Congress which then created a split within the movement. The extremists in the Swadeshi movement based on the Indian economy, politics and arts claimed their superiority. On the other hand, moderates wanted to promote social reform for which they dedicated themselves. The challenging tussle among the groups came to an end when both groups neutralized, and they projected nationalism when in 1917 a Declaration was made for India. According to this, India would become more organized in administration and progress economically under the British rule. However, in the early 1920s when all the control of the Indian National Congress was in the hands of Gandhi, the non-cooperation movement again gained popularity all over India. Swadeshi ideas were revived, they emphasized the reorganization of the economic system, and government schools and colleges were boycotted.^{xxiii}

In the novel, there are three main characters Nikhil, Sandip and Bimla representing their perspective of nationalism in various aspects. Nikhil follows the idea of equality, and he considers ultra-nationalism against it as it is very exclusive. Sandip with all his aggressive nationalism wants to achieve independence, he believes that independence is their right which they want by any means. Bimla is Nikhil's wife; she is confused between the two approaches of nationalism.^{xxiv} This novel is an exemplary work that highlights women's transformation. Bimla believes that she is committed to her family besides this, she also wants to take part in patriotic activities. Bimla's character in the novel is a good example to illustrate the element of nationalism. Bimla's voice is like the combination of individuality and collectivity. However, this combination does not portray her meditative conflicts of values. In deep reading of her character, she always talks about others instead of herself. In the late nineteenth century, the writers used similes of "just like a woman needs a home", early nationalists had the same thesis of home in British India. In the nineteenth century, voices of nationalists can easily be found related to "women's respectability".^{xxv} And this projection of nationalism can easily be seen in Bimla's words and arguments which repeatedly appear in the text as, "the outside," "these matters," "womanly guidance," and "what the household stands for". Even Bimla's speech is the repetition of the nationalist rhetoric: "leaving everything in the hands of the enemy nothing short of owing defeat".

In the end, the image of Bimla collapsed, all the qualities that she established to recognize herself as a reputable woman have no meaning when she gives her lover all her husband's money. This downfall basically is the predicament of the nationalist projection. When nationalism creates an unsuitable hybridity of so-called modernity, and project uneducated women by showing intellectual abilities. Consequently, it is the failure of the nationalist projects on both parts of the inner Home, the identity of the nation which is their essence. This is because of the double hegemonic power of "tradition" (women's virtues built by the nationalist projects) and "colonialism" (the echo of modernity). Concurrently, the projection to take women into the outside world is impractical, beyond knowledge and wisdom and a very emotional act. The activities and thoughts of women are stuck under the label of tradition.^{xxvi}

2.2. Identity, Nationalism, and Social Hierarchies (*Gora*)

Additionally, the story of the novel is about its eponymous hero, Gora (means a white man). In the whole story of the novel, Gora advocates the practices of Hinduism. However, he becomes suspicious of his preaching of Hindu rituals when his Irish lineage comes to the forefront. At that point, he was unaware of the fact that he was not a Brahmin by birth. When the truth about his descent reveals, his proclamation of self-identity as a Brahmin becomes doubtful. Before that, he had spent all his life in a virtual-real which does not belong to him now. Both Bengal and the protagonist are the essences of Hybridity which existed in the colonial era of British rule which lasted from 1857 to 1947. Thus, the novel is a good example of finding identity at two levels: individual and national. First, it reveals the reality of Gora and secondly, it highlights the Indianness that lies in the motherland but is stressed under foreign rule.^{xxvii}

Tagore portrays the socio-cultural forces through his different characters, which are narrow and biased against others' position. Harimohini thought that Brahmos "were a sect of Christians", whereas Lolita has a different concept of a Hindu woman but when she meets with Anandamoyi it is shattered.^{xxviii} On one occasion, Gora desires that Sucharita instead of judging people as non-Brahmos consider them in their completeness as the people of *Bharatvarsha*. However, another misunderstanding is that the Indianness of India does not lie in Hinduism. Tagore brilliantly portrays the social and religious intolerance which is related to space and time. For him, one is responsible to justify his social position in society which is ultimately dependent on his own time and space and personal attitude in society. This can be justified when Gora's identity as Brahmin supports Hindu nationalists but when his Irish lineage is revealed, his ideology also diverts to humanism. Besides, Sucharita is not a Brahmo, but is brought up by his Brahmo uncle Poreshe Babu. When she has a debate on polytheism with Gora, it depicts that her faith fluctuates between Hinduism and Brahminism. Similarly, Anandamoyi, whose general identity is as Christian^{xxix} perceives that the Hindu and the Brahmos are the same and have no difference among them. This is because she has a liberal attitude and faced special circumstances in her life: "I can't make out where they are different".^{xxx}

Moreover, *Gora* (1909) represents the picture of human equality in social life during the freedom movement. This story is about the identity issue that led India to be divided into two and in 1940 Muslims of India demanded a separate nation for them.^{xxxi} It is a complex novel and can be studied and interpreted at different levels. To depict the *Bharatvarsha* in the novel, Tagore used many themes such as the play of destiny, nation and nationalism, time and space, religion and spirituality, friendship, motherhood, love, caste discrimination, and woman freedom which provide a panoramic view. The novel is set in Bengal where normally people have dark skin complexion. The protagonist of the novel is a true believer in Hinduism. For him, a nationalistic sentiment only means the rituals, symbols and superstitions of the Hindu religion. For freedom, he believes that every Hindu should sacrifice life for this sacred act. At the end of the novel, his identity becomes questionable when he knows about his Irish family. At that moment, his concepts of nationalism being Hindu are badly shattered. There he realizes the feelings of rootlessness, he considers himself as an unidentified person.^{xxxii} Tagore, in *Gora*, is very disappointed with Hindu nationalism. In this novel, he mentions the shortcomings that are present in Hindu nationalism which intensely captured him. In the end, Gora realizes the meaning of the true *Bharatvarsha* which he initially misunderstands with Hinduism. After knowing his Irish lineage, he becomes a true Indian nationalist. In any phase of his identity, he never negates the respect and love of *Bharatvarsha* that he has in his heart, even though he wants a plurality of India. When he raises his voice against the narrowness of lineage and caste divisions, he then proves as a true *Bharatiya*. In the end, he asks Poreshe Babu to teach him "the mantra of that deity who belongs to all- Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Brahmo the doors of whose temple are never closed to any caste or race the deity not only of Hindus but of *Bharatvarsha*". "The novel then is not just a search for self-identity but for secularism that is inclusive and Indigenous at the same time".^{xxxiii} Thus, roots of Tagore nationalism are deep inside the social life, its acceptance, and tolerance.^{xxxiv} He evaluates the practices through his writings which distract people with so-called nationalism. Through his characters, he very cleverly highlights the constraints and imperfections of the setup. He explores the rights of the people in a family, society, humanity and empowerment. Thus, it makes the concept of the nation a spiritual element. However, in all countries, this unity cannot be achieved by using the same mould. Unity is political in Europe whereas in the Hindu civilization, it is social. Nation cannot be built in India by following the Western patterns, here unity is internal and spiritual instead of political.

Concluding Remarks

The study concludes that the writings by Rabindranath Tagore and Munshi Prem Chand demonstrate their deep engagement with the socioeconomic and cultural issues of early 20th-century India through their examination of social realism. Despite having different writing styles and areas of interest, both authors use literature as a potent tool to expose social injustices and the hardships faced by underrepresented groups. The works of Tagore provide a beautiful yet perceptive analysis of topics such as individual freedom, gender inequity, and the conflicts between tradition and modernity. Prem Chand's stories, on the other hand, offer a more realistic representation of social realities by depicting rural poverty, caste oppression, and farmer exploitation in an uncompromising manner.

The diversity of the Indian social life and the complexity of its struggles throughout colonial control are reflected in their combined contributions. Through their literary realism, Tagore and Prem Chand not only throw light on the sociopolitical climate of their era but also stimulate critical thinking about current concerns about social fairness and injustice. Their capacity to cut overtime and cultural barriers and provide insights into the universal human predicament while maintaining a strong cultural connection to India accounts for the ongoing significance of their works. The works of Tagore and Prem Chand are essential to the current discussions on the role of literature in social transformation because this comparative analysis confirms the significance of social realism as a lens for comprehending and addressing societal difficulties.

ⁱ Robina, K, Sarwar, M, Shabbir, M, The History of the Urdu Language Together with Its Origin and Geographic Distribution, *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Sciences*, vol. 2 (1), 2015, pp. 5-9. Prem Chand was a confined nationalist, and he had always deeply felt the political subjugation of the country. Politics in India had taken on an entirely new complexion with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi. The era of armchair politicians coming to an end, and the new politics of non-violent non-cooperation in which the masses and the lower middle class were taking an increasingly active part, had taken over.

ⁱⁱ Robina, *The History of Urdu Language*, pp. 6. See also, "Jallianwala Bagh Affair Mr. Montagu questioned", *The Pioneer*, 24 December 1919, pp. 1. "Gandhi Swarajist Conference", *The Pioneer*, 9 April 1924, pp. 3. Prem Chand's creativity is contextualized by the National Freedom Struggle, which focused itself against British Colonialism, Capitalism and Feudalism. This context has a very important effect on his writings, and we find that those are essentially anti-feudal, anti-capitalist and anti-colonial. Gandhian and socialistic philosophy, as we have already seen, influenced his political vision and essentially, he

was a humanist his humanism was firmly rooted in material life and was basically practical governed by moral values, by the concepts of the good and evil, the right and the wrong. This essential humanism is all pervasive in his writings, especially novels. He is not a realist in technically strict European sense, but he is a realist with a vision, with a mission and with author's own intensive experience of social process who portray human life with all its charm, excitement, love, affection, faith, morals, tension, pain, trauma, misery, pessimism and optimism.

ⁱⁱⁱ Terathram, "Zaatpat ka Adaha", *Karanti*, August 1931, pp. 11. He was aware of their being victims of an oppressive bureaucracy, ruthless landlords, selfish capitalists and hypocritical priests. He knew that all these classes had connived to grind down the helpless peasants to a living death. When the news of October Revolution (1917) reached him and he heard about the peasants' rule in Russia and Bulgaria, his heart craved for a similar situation in his own country, where agriculture was the chief occupation of the major populace. Prem Chand seems to firmly believe that if all the peasants of India were to be freed from the shackles of miseries, they would have to get rid-off the native enemies before trying to bid off the Britishers.

^{iv} Namwar Singh, ed. Shiv Kumar Misra, *Prem Chand: An Evaluation, Prem Chand: Our Contemporary*, New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1986, pp. 114. See also, Bhagwan Das, "Ashuton ki Faryad", *Karanti*, August 1931, pp. 20. Prem Chand, in his close association with rural life, had become increasingly aware of the nature of peasant's exploitation and oppression. This consciousness brought him into confrontation with the reality that both traditional as well as the modern forces, in this case, Brahmins and village panches as well as the capitalists were responsible for the deplorable plight of the Indian peasants. The oppression by one source was reinforced by the other and against this double assault, the poor Indian farmer had little hope of survival. Hori is borne out of this long-standing anguish of the author against the tyrannical system endangering the very foundation of our agricultural civilization.

^v Sharma, Pradeep Kumar, *Literary expression of political consciousness among dalits: a critical study based on selected works of Hindi Literature*, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2002, pp. 131. See also, "Ashuton ke bare Dushman hein", *Paisa Akbhar*, 10 October 1931, pp. 25. Thus, *Godan* becomes a classic novel on the Indian peasantry and is objectively well knit and carefully interwoven. But if we consider the whole range of works by Prem Chand, we find that *Godan* also represents his disillusionment with the system and from the prescriptive narrative, as unlike his other works including short stories, he does not suggest any solution. *Godan* has no utopia to look forward to or to fall back on. Since there is no system to be saved, the novel begins with a disequilibrium and ends at a disequilibrium. It excites a sense of profound wrong done to humanity. It makes no attempt at papering the cracks or providing a happy ending. In fact, such a piece of literary art goes beyond the text and establishes a living relationship with life. It is literature of this type, that, according to Sartre, succeeds through failure.

^{vi} Sharma, *Literary Expression*, pp. 98. Within this framework, the author has brought before us the contrary situation of the city dwellers who though dependent for their luxuries on the village set up yet, in turn, exploited the peasants up to the hilt. Through Gobar's experiences in the city and through selfish characters like Rai Saheb, the Zamindar, Onkaranath, the newspaper editor, Mr. Khanna, the industrialist, Mr. Mehta, the philosopher, Miss Malti, the over westernized doctor, Mirza and others, the author has depicted the proneness of the middle-class people to indolence and frivolity. Prem Chand believed that Hori's struggle was against the system, which was chiefly represented by the moneylenders who were, in turn, supported in their sinister designs by the bureaucracy, the aristocracy and the priestly classes, all joining hands in exploiting the poor peasants. *Godan* discusses with greater details the role and position of the money lenders in rural society. Any villager able to manage a little surplus cash tended to lend it on interest. Hori was most firmly enmeshed by the dragnet of moneylenders of his village. He borrowed money from Mangru to buy bullocks for himself, to sow potatoes from Datadin, and to give his brothers their share of the family property, from Dulari. Far from clearing the principal amounts, he was not able to pay even the interest on these loans. This situation tormented him the most since Hori had to bear the loss of everything that belonged to him along with the isolation from his son.

^{vii} British Self-Government Act, IOR: V/27/256/16, British Library, London, 1917. See also, Government of India Act 1935: Parliamentary Procedures for passage of order in Council, IOR: M/1/137, British Library, London, 1935. Gazette of India part I, Punjab Archives, Lahore, 1935.

^{viii} Narvane, V.S., *Prem Chand: His Life and Works*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1980, pp. 171. This is another contradiction in Prem Chand's writing, where there may be some instance (in fact, this episode is the one of the very few instances) of individual transformation but the upper castes, in general, have not accepted the lower castes. In fact, this reflects the contemporary Dalit discourse that was prevalent in northern India where, different kinds of activities like Shuddhi and others were taking place to consolidate their position as highlighted by Swami Achhutanand, as discussed earlier. But these paradoxes are to be analyzed contextually along with other paradoxes (for example, characterization of Rai Saheb, Mehta and Malti) and these are coexistence of contradictory traits and the paradoxes inherent in *Godan*, though not always creative or fruitful, have to be seen in terms of the peculiar tensions of Prem Chand's time, both in his life and in Indian literary history.

^{ix} Prem Chand, trans. Jai Ratan and P. Lal, *Godan*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2001, pp. 15. See also, "Kisan Lagaan nhi de ga", *Paisa Akbhar*, 27 November 1930, pp. 1. Prem Chand has also given in *Godan* a convincing estimate of the roles enacted by the zamindars in the lives of the Indian farmers making it more pathetic. The zamindars were a hypocrite lot who adopted double standards and wore the velvet gloves to conceal their iron claws. The proneness of these rich landlords to luxury rested on the exploitation of the peasantry. Besides recklessly exacting rent from the peasants, the zamindars also realized a variety of dues from them. Some of these dues had, with the passage of time, been sanctioned by custom though most of them were rather utterly arbitrary and rested on nothing more than some capricious need of a zamindar.

^x Note on the Sikh Plan, File No. A-33(8), Punjab Archives, Lahore, 1948. See also, Rashriya Swayam Sewak Sang in Punjab, File No. A-33(9), Punjab Archives, Lahore, 1948. Interview with Sardar Avtar Singh Sandhu, London United Kingdom, 23 March 2019.

^{xi} Chand, *Godan*, pp. 16. See also, "Kisan ka Satyagraha krne ka elaan", *Paisa Akbhar*, 5 November 1931, pp. 14. Even the members of the village panchayats have been critically portrayed by Prem Chand. The village panches or headmen have been

depicted as mere 'yes-men' of the landlord and his officers. They were completely kept under the influence of the corrupt officers to do their bidding. *Godan* has no less than four mukhias with her characteristic sharpness, Dhania, Hori's wife, describes them as lootmars. These mukhias virtually constitute the community and set the norms that its members are expected to observe. The novel shows how ruthlessly they deal with poor peasants like Hori for what they construe as a violation of these norms.

^{xiii} Usha Rishi, *Premchand Aur Unke Upanyas*, New Delhi: Prithviraj Publishers, 1974, pp. 92. See also, "Untouchable Agitation Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's Advice", *The Pioneer*, 3 April 1924, pp. 6. These worthy persons of the village also practiced hypocrisy in their dealings with the lower groups. While they accused Hori of giving shelter to the so-called immoral girls like Jhunia and Silia in his house and practically deprived him of everything as a mark of dand or fine, they did not deter from bereaving Bhola of his dignity and honour by allowing Nokheram to wrest Bhola's wife from him. On the same lines, they allowed Matadin to rob the outcasts of their honor by seducing their innocent girl, Silia.

^{xiii} Narvane, *Prem Chand: His Life and Works*, pp. 172-173. See also, "Hindu zaatpat ko torr rhe hein", *Paisa Akhbhar*, 22 January 1930, pp. 8. Yet another category of rural exploiters was that of the religious preachers or pandits. They were one of the most vicious violators of the humanity and took complete undue advantage of their exalted positions. The novel reveals that it was a decadent and corrupt world in which traditional beliefs and religious institutions meant to profess kindness, and compassion had lost all meaning, being reduced to a little more than obsolete rituals. Religion was merely a money-minting organization for the hypocrite religious Gurus. Backbiting was second nature with him. He had never committed a theft which he thought risky; but he had no qualm in sharing the loot. Professing to be poor, he threatened to end his life by jumping in the well when the zamindar's bailiff came to collect his dues. But he gave out loans. A maker of pretty matches, he made the best of both worlds; the gratitude of the parties and gifts for services rendered. A country quack, he suited the treatment to the patient's taste by fake portions or if necessary, elementary witchcraft. No one trusted him: yet he was so sweet of tongue that people repeatedly walked into his trap.

^{xiv} Narvane, *Prem Chand*, pp. 172. Prem Chand has explicitly related Rai Saheb's proceedings in his novel. He writes: During the last Satyagraha Movement Rai Saheb resigned his membership of the legislature council and courted imprisonment. Since then, his stock had risen among the tenants. Thus, the facade of patriotism was only to gain further hold on the poor innocent farmers. However, this did not stop Rai Saheb from cajoling the British officials to keep up his lucrative relations with them. As the novel recounts, despite being a Nationalist the Rai Saheb had kept up social intercourse with officials; customary presents were made to them and fixed annuities provided to petty government servants. Similarly, Khanna acknowledges his follies to Mr. Mehta when he says, "You don't know the bribes I paid and took, the type of men I hired to weigh cane, the fake weights I used". Another character who proves to be a fraudulent nationalist is Onkaranath, a supposedly committed newspaper editor who receives some genuine derogatory reports about Rai Saheb Amar Pal Singh. Instead of abiding by his duties as a member of the esteemed press and bringing to light the shames of Rai Saheb's doings, he agreed to hush-up the matter in consideration of a donation from him. He reveals to his wife if Rai Saheb fails to fulfil his promise of giving him money, he'll teach him the lesson of his life. Thus, Prem Chand has put the light on the falsity that had infiltrated into all aspects of the nation's life and has depicted the harsh fact how these deceitful persons were using the label of nationalism to achieve their selfish ends.

^{xv} Civil Disobedience Movement, IOR: R/1/1/1993, British Library, London, 1930. See also, Chittagong Riots and Armory Raid, Mss Eur C806, British Library, London, 1930.

^{xvi} Mukherjee, Meenakshi, *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 146. However, as a reader and critic it becomes very difficult to condone Ghisu and Madhav for their inhumanity towards Budhiya. But one must remember that mourning is a luxury a starving man cannot afford. Their callousness reflects their helplessness, not their inhumanity. They are compelled to be insensitive. Ghisu remarks how if they had five rupees earlier, they would've bought her some medicine. His remark makes one realize that it was the tragic death of Budhia which enabled them to collect five rupees and had she been alive and writhing in pain, the same people who contributed for the preparations of the last rites, would have turned their back because the sufferer was a Dalit and did not belong to the social structure.

^{xvii} Mukherjee, *Realism and Reality*, pp. 146. See also, "Bangiyon ki Hartal", *Paisa Akhbhar*, 25 December 1930, pp. 10. *Kafan* becomes most memorable of Prem Chand's stories because, although nothing is solved here, the question has been stated precisely and disconcertingly. In a society where even hard work and honest labor do not raise a man's life very much above the animal level, how does one condemn Ghisu's and his son's rebellion? What kind of custom is it when a living person does not get a rag to cover his body, the dead must have a new shroud? asks Ghisu. But even when one rationalizes the mourning is a luxury a starving man cannot afford; it is difficult to condone the action of Madhav and Ghisu. At the same time, it is not easy to take the side of a society that reluctantly proffers a few coins for the dead, more to keep up a pretence than out of any real concern for human beings. The story disturbs because one sees the precariousness of our cherished human values, with bestiality on one side and hypocrisy on the other. The concentrated horror of the story arises out of the reader's inability to take side. Since Prem Chand's style is totally devoid of poetry and resonance, his optimum effect can be achieved in the direction of starkness, and nowhere is this better illustrated than in *Kafan*.

^{xviii} Sandeep Kharvi, Nationalism and India - A Recurring Theme in the Works of Tagore, *Language in India*, Vol. 18, No.4 April 2018, pp. 320-328. Despite such repeated affirmations by the writer, many of his critics accused him of writing unrealistic and fantastic stories, far removed from the actualities of life. These critics saw Tagore, the son of an aristocrat and a rich landlord, incapable of genuine sympathy for the poor. Therefore, they dismissed his depiction of the common, the average, the everyday as a mere figment of his imagination. Tagore responded to such criticisms in a conversation with Buddhadev Bose in 1941, brushing aside his detractors and reaffirming his view that the stories were written in a realistic mode.

^{xix} Partition of Bengal, File No. CAB 37/79/159, The National Archives, United Kingdom, 30 September 1905.

^{xx} Mukherjee, Meenakshi, ed. Franco Moretti, *The Novel: History, Geography, and Culture, Epic and Novel in India*, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2007, pp. 618-619. See also, Santram, "Rabindarnath Tagore", *Karanti*, Mahapursh No. October 1942, pp. 15. The Home and the World is a novel that reads like an allegory on the failure of the Indian nationalist projects, circling around the issues of "Home" versus "World," tradition versus modernity, created by the active involvement of the colonizers in the cultural, economic and administrative life of the colonized. It could be read as an allegory on the failure of Indian nationalism to accept tradition and modernity, home and the world, together. In addition, the novel offers an alternative nationalist project that could free India from its obsession with the colonizing powers: true freedom of the nationalist imagination will be gained by going beyond every form of ideological prejudice and separation and by synthesizing every conceivable value that could be useful for the development and maintenance of the nation.

^{xxi} Rege, Josna, *Colonial Karma: Self, Action, and Nation in the Indian English Novel*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 39. See also, "Angraizi mall ka boycott", *Zamindar*, 5 January 1912, pp. 3.

^{xxii} Iyengar, Srinivasa K.R, Sri Aurobindo: A Biography and a History, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, 1985, pp. 366. See also, "Swadeshi Tehreek kis tarha kamyab", *Paisa Akhbhar*, 29 January 1930, pp. 3. The novel focuses on the swadeshi movement in Bengal, which demanded an exclusive reliance on Indian-made goods, and a rejection of all foreign made products. Tagore's representation of swadeshi typifies his attitude towards any sort of organized political activity as something over which one has little, if any, control. Swadeshi is described in *The Home and the World* as a flood, breaking down the dykes and sweeping all our prudence and fear before it.

^{xxiii} British Self-Government Act, IOR/V/27/256/16, British Library, London, 1917. See also, "Satyagarh and Civil Disobedience", *Paisa Akhbhar*, 6 November 1930, pp. 15. By January 1921 when virtually all the colleges in Calcutta, the administrative and intellectual center of Bengal, were closed, Tagore, unhappy with Gandhi's "narrowness of aims", complained in a letter to Charles Freer Andrews, a professor at Santiniketan, that the non-cooperation movement was opposed to his own notions of the nation which, in his opinion, should be based on cooperation: What irony of fate is this, that I should be preaching cooperation of cultures between East and West on this side of the sea just at the moment when the doctrine of Non-Cooperation is preached on the other side? Tagore argued that the radicalism of nationalist self-reliance, based on the principle of boycott, the central idea of the Swadeshi movement, "uprooted students" and "tempted them away from their career before any real provision was made" his *The Home and the World* should be read as an alternative to the spirit of non-cooperation which was "electrical," "the spirit of sacrifice that was in the very air we breathed".

^{xxiv} Raenee, Mahesh Kumar, The Treatment of Anti-Colonial Nationalism in Indian Fiction in English, *International Journal of English and Literature*, 2013, Vol. 3, Issue 5, pp. 21-26. Tagore is radically critical about this extremist version of nationalism. This form of nationalism is a copy of western model of nationalism that is completely isolated from the social structure and need of the hour of many Indian people. It is nothing to do with Indian masses, consciousness and Indian history. Tagore considers this type of sentiment only as an elite phenomenon which is sectarian in nature and cannot attain freedom. So, he was in the Favor of a parochial and spiritual approach towards nationalism.

^{xxv} Reed, Susan, *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka*, Madison: University of WP, 2010, pp. 200. See also, "Talab haqooq auraton ke hamle", *Zamindar*, 5 February 1912, pp. 3. It is also easy to find in Bimila's narrative the imitation of nationalist projects of womanly virtues in the way she decorates her domestic services with light flowers, supreme powers and feeling of happiness, for instance: I know from my childhood's experience, how devotion is beauty itself, in its inner aspect. When my mother gently waved her fan to dry away the flies while my father sat down to his meals, her service would lose itself in a beauty which passed beyond outward forms. Even in my infancy, I would feel its power. It transcends all debates, or doubts, or calculation: it was pure music. I would cautiously and silently get up and take the dust of my husband's feet without walking him, how at such moments I could feel the vermilion mark upon my forehead shining out like the morning star. Although the paragraph is full of notions of femininity and womanliness domesticity, restraint, discipline and purity they do not present Bimila as a wife but as a politician whose discourse echoes or repeats the discourse of female respectability that was used in Indian nationalist writings. In the early nineteenth Century, Indian nationalisms had built a new image of women who were encouraged to absorb Western education and culture. From the middle of the nineteenth Century onwards, Indian nationalisms imagined Indian women in a superior position and urged them to withdraw from the world and come back home the national tradition and that is how at the end of the nineteenth century Bengali writers glorified specific women's virtues in many ways.

^{xxvi} Chatterjee, Partha, *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1993, pp. 10-13. See also, "Auraton ke haqooq", *Paisa Akhbhar*, 1 January 1931, pp. 21. It is not so hard to explain this failure: the nationalist projects function as alternatives to the colonial cultural project. British policy meant to picture Indian culture as barbaric and then embellish it with Western techniques and modernity, a policy that can be found represented in the emergence of the nationalist projects of the Home and the World. Those who took to the nationalist projects are, as Chatterjee points out, the Calcutta middle class, subordinate to the colonial state in economic and political terms, claiming cultural leadership over the colonized people. Its nationalisms could not escape involvement with and of colonialism.

^{xxvii} Bhabha, Homi K, *The Location of Culture*, Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2004, pp. 76. At a basic level, hybridity refers to any mixing of east and western culture. Within colonial and postcolonial literature, it most commonly refers to colonial subjects from Asia or Africa who have found a balance between eastern and western cultural attributes. However, in Homi Bhabha's initial usage of the term in his essay Signs Taken for Wonders, he clearly thought of hybridity as a subversive tool whereby colonized people might challenge various forms of oppression (Bhabha's example is of the British missionaries' imposition of the Bible in rural India in the 19th century.)

^{xxviii} Tagore, Rabindranath, Trans. Sujit Mukherjee, *Gora*, New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1997, pp. 258. See also, "Non-Brahmin conference at Nagpur Swarajist denounced", *The Pioneer*, 27 April 1924, pp. 5. The novel depicts a constant conflict between human desires and social expectations. *Gora* advocates the observance of all the rules of society, as society is the expression

of the worldly aspect of “Dharma”. He says, “Otherwise society will be ruined if we do not submit ourselves to society completely through rules, then we obstruct the deepest purpose for which society exists”. He believes that one should obey society without judging it. On the other hand, the Hindu society emerges as an anti-human and anti-natural system of human relationships in the novel; it suppresses personal interests of man for the vague and unconvincing collective welfare; it marginalizes those who challenge its mechanical authority.

^{xxxix} Ibid, pp. 312. Tagore’s idea of nationalism essentially carries the spirit of social equality amid sectarian tensions that attempt to divide human beings. Anandamoyi says, nobody is born on earth with a caste. She advocates equality and asks her husband, if you are of such superior caste and so beloved of Bhagavan, why did he allow you to be humiliated first by the Pathans, then by the Moghuls, then by the Christin’s? For Tagore, it reveals, there is no justification of the caste system. The novelist believes that the society must be flexible to welcome change with time. It is of no use to follow the oppressive customs blindly. Gora realizes that oilpressers, potters and other low caste people in the villages perform their tasks with the strength of custom. However, they are scared, helpless, and unable to judge their good. Under the threat of penalties, and through sectarian quarrels, they regard prohibitions as the highest truth. In their society, there is no unity, and the society merely obtains compliance through threat of punishment and does not come to a member’s assistance, when needed. Customs become an impediment to achieve social liberation.

^{xxx} Ibid, pp. 313. Tagore’s idea of Indian nationalism is accommodating; it is above religious and sectarian divisions. On the other hand, Hinduism is presented as a religion of restrictions and self-control, which makes this Bharat only the embodiment of prohibitions. Forbidden, forbidden, there was forbidding all around. When Gora comes to know about his Irish lineage, he understands that from north of Bharatvarsha to its south, the doors of every temple are closed to him now. Hinduism as a ritualistic religion cannot be the real basis of Tagore’s nationalism.

^{xxxi} Pakistan Day Resolution, File No. F-137 Quaid-e-Azam Papers, National Archives, Islamabad, 1940. See also, Presidential Address of Jinnah in Lahore Resolution, File No. F-1092 Quaid-e-Azam Papers, National Archives, Islamabad, 1940. All India Muslim League Lahore Session March 1940 Presidential Address by Mr. M.A Jinnah, Punjab Archives, Lahore, 1940.

^{xxxii} Partha, *The Nation and its Fragments*, pp. 24. See also, “Hindu apne mazhab ki kuch baton se naraz hein”, *Paisa Akhbar*, 15 January 1931, pp. 7. Tagore points out that radical nationalist moment does not have conviction but only anaesthetics with emotions, the idea of nation, one of the most powerful anaesthetics that man has invented. Under the influence of its fumes, the people can carry out its systematic program of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion.

^{xxxiii} Choudhury, Nina Roy, *History as Fiction: Exploring Issues of Nation, Nationalism and Identity in Select Pre-Independence and Post-Independence Indian Writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Amitav Ghosh*, Mumbai: SNTD University, 2012, pp. 65.

^{xxxiv} Gora strongly views Bharat as a Hindu nation and crystalizes the ideology of nationalism through Hinduism with a difference throughout the novel except in the ending. In Hindu nationalism, a la Savarkar, land is birthplace not only of the people and their ancestors but of faith; hence Indian Muslims and Christians do not qualify as full-fledged Indians since their faiths were born outside the land. However, Gora loves all Indians including the Muslims and the untouchables, but he cannot tolerate liberal reformers, who are cultural renegades to him, pale mimics of their colonial masters, trying to destroy something in the name of reform for which they have neither understanding nor sympathy. For Gora, denigrating the Brahmos only shows that a Hindu is a normal healthy person. And it is natural. He claims, otherwise nothing will work, nor will it be worthwhile to live. Gora denounces the Brahmos, who according to him have broken the bonds of Hindu community and show off by becoming Brahmos.

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