THE REPRESENTATION OF INDIAN NATIONALISM IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE’S THE HOME AND THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzes the representation of Indian nationalism in India in the early twentieth century and the gender issues related to nationalism in the novel written by Rabindranath Tagore, entitled The Home and the World. The analysis of this study uses the theories from postcolonial studies, postcolonial feminism and representation of women in literature. This study reveals the representation of India as a female character, named Bimala, and the representation of the ideologies of extreme nationalism and universal truth as the male characters, Sandip and Nikhil.

Keywords: Tagore, The Home and the World, woman and nationalism, postcolonial studies

India is one of the most populous countries in Asia. It accounts for approximately twenty percent of world population. It is a developing country with rapid economic growth. Like many other countries in Asia, India suffered from British colonization. Nationalist movement started to oppose British colonization. India struggles for the independence from Britain. The most notable movement is swadeshi. Swadeshi was started as a protest against the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in early twentieth century. Sharma (2012: 18) states that Swadeshi is the activity of the country in which all people take part. Any action, any product or, service produced domestically in the country qualifies to be called swadeshi, if in its production people and their communities are directly involved. Swadeshi movement can be seen as the attempt to boycott British commodities as a protest against British government. The famous figure of swadeshi is Mahatma Gandhi. He proposes the swadeshi as a form of passive resistance and non-violent movement.

The issue of nationalist struggle in India is represented in postcolonial literature. One literary work that represents the issue of nationalism in India is The Home and the World by Rabindranath Tagore. In this novel, Tagore brings about the nationalist topic related to the swadeshi movement which was popular in that era. Rabindranath Tagore, like Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, rejected Gandhi’s vision on modernity. Gandhi saw modernity as a threat for the
nation and culture, yet Tagore saw it as a provider of the ideological basis for the critique of foreign domination (Bhusan& Garfield, Without Year, http://www.smith.edu).

The novel *The Home and the World* focuses on the narrative of three different characters: Nikhil, a wealthy landlord, Bimala, Nikhil’s wife, and Sandip, a radical nationalist leader. At the beginning of the novel, the story is told from Bimala’s point of view. In the novel, we can see that the narration is given alternately by those three main characters. This novel tells about how Bimala and Nikhil have so many different views of gender, relationship between husband and wife, education, freedom, and national identities. The conflict between this couple emerges after the arrival of Sandip. Bimala is impressed by his charisma and support his view on nationalism and the *swadeshi* movement. This novel ends tragically, in which Nikhil is shot in the head.

This study aims to analyze the representation of Indian Nationalism by focusing on the ideological conflict and how the resolutions of the conflicts represent the idea of nationalism. It is believed that this novel presents a criticism of the Indian tradition and nationalism. Through the key characters that represent different attitudes, Tagore presents his view through the conflict among the characters. The ideological conflicts among these characters can be seen as an attempt of Tagore in presenting his views upon the tradition and modernism in India. In analyzing this novel, this study uses the approach of postcolonial criticism.

**POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES**

According to Webster Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, colonialism is defined as “the policy of a nation seeing to extend or retain its authority over other peoples or territories.” It can also be seen as an attempt of a group of people to form a new community in a new place. Loomba(1998: 2), stated that in the attempt of forming this new community in a new land necessarily means un-forming the existing community in that particular place through many ways, such as trade, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement, and rebellions. Furthermore, the definition of postcolonialism is
stated by Aschroft et al. (2001: 186). They defined postcolonialism as “a field of study that deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies.”

Western’s attempts to bring more sophisticated civilization to the east are influenced by the western philosophy of liberation which can be seen as the philosophy of the center, of white European males. The characteristics of western liberation in the early twentieth century in colonized countries might not get along with the cultural traditions and concept, and philosophy of the eastern countries, for example: the rights of women and the property law in some religions in eastern countries such as Hinduism and Islam. These differences create the clash of the ideology between individuals, both people from the different cultural background or those from the same cultural identities.

In the novel *The Home and the World*, there is a clear representation of the clash between East and West. This novel also presents the issues in India regarding the nation’s instability in facing the new era of modernism and independence.

**NATIONALISM IN INDIA**

In colonized country such as India, the issue of nationalism rises greatly in relation to the resistance against colonization. Nationalist struggle like *swadeshi* in India was affected by the imperialism of European countries that tried to rule the peripheries. Before explaining further about nationalism in India, we can see the definition of the nation as explained by Anderson (2006:6):

> I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

As stated by Anderson above, the paradigm of nationalism has been shaped by the delusions of the people inside the nation itself, finding the similarities among the people and creating the imaginations of being in a single container, called a country.

In third world countries, the discourse of nationalism has been affected by the European standards of liberation and the model of ideal country. Loomba
(1998: 189) states, “…anti-colonial nationalism is itself made possible and shaped by European political and intellectual history. It is a ‘derivative course’, a Calibanistic model of revolt which is dependent upon the colonizer’s gift of language/ideas.”

Nationalism in colonized country like India has its own problems. Partha Chatterjee in Mondal (2003: 48) defines the problems of Indian nationalism, which sets the limits to what could or could not be said in that discourse. Further, Mondal (2003: 48) explains, “Nationalists resolved the problem by constructing a dichotomy revolving around ghar(home) and bahir(the world) which corresponded to the homologous distinction between inner and outer zones of sovereignty.”

In India, there are two distinctive views upon nationalism. The first view of nationalism is reflected through the advancement of Indian industry. The constructive nationalists tend to build things to make betterment for the country. On the other hand, there were extreme nationalists who tend to do brutal things such as burning foreign goods as they think that using foreign goods is a reflection of support towards British colonizers. The novel The Home and the World portrays this issue and reflects it through the conflicts inside the home as a representation of the conflicts of nationalist movement in India in the early twentieth century.

WOMEN AS THE IMAGE OF A NATION

Gender construction is something inseparable from every aspect of life. The construction of gender also influences the concept of nationalism and social life. As stated by Loomba (1998: 215), “National fantasies, be they colonial, anti-colonial or postcolonial, also plays upon and with the connections between women, land or nations.”

The burden of women as the nation is symbolized in the nationalist struggles in the way they protect the nation as if they protect their mothers. The women, on other hand, are expected to undergo the reproduction processes in which the babies born are expected to serve the nation as martyrs. As claimed by Loomba (1998:216) that “Anti-colonial or nationalist movements have used the image of the Nation-as-mother to create their own lineage, and also to limit and
control the activity of women within the imagined community.” This claim shows the using of feminine subject to define the nation and signifies the nation as a form of family. Later she adds that the identification of nation as national mothers rooted from the wider association of nation with the family. The nation signifies home, its leaders and icons assume parental roles (p. 216).

Under the colonial rule, the image of nation as a woman worked to highlight both female’s power and helplessness (Loomba 1998: 218). The depiction of nation as a mother shows the power of women who could protect her children from outsiders, in this term, the colonial ravages, but also needs her children’s protection against the colonists. This framework intersects with feminist theory regarding the representation of women in literature. It can be seen as a model of theory investigating gendered being in specific cultures, especially in colonized countries.

The way women perceived themselves and were perceived was ineluctably shaped by the ways in which images of women were constructed and communicated to the population at large (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004: 135). Women’s identities are shaped by the social, cultural, and religious condition of their surroundings. How society and men perceived women is also shaped by the construction of the culture and social conditions.

In the case of Bimala, nationalism intersects with gender in the way she is described as the nation. She is also on the crossroad of her life that she rejects her husband’s intention to modernize her views upon everyday life. Her attitudes on nationalism is also influenced by the attitudes of the superior males surrounding her, who have different views upon how the nation should be.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
Representations of Ideological Conflicts

Tagore presents several ideological conflicts in this novel among the main characters. These ideological conflicts are represented through the characterizations of Nikhil, Bimala and Sandip. There are three conflicting views in this novel, which is presented in the perspective of each key character.
Nikhil, the main character of this novel, is portrayed as a man who does not want to force his power to people around him even though he is able to do that. Even though his position is more superior than his wife, Bimala, he does not want to force his will to her. In the first chapter Bimala states, “But why did my husband did not compel me to go with him to Calcutta? I know the reason. He did not use his power, just because he had it.” The sentences above show Nikhil’s willingness to consider other people’s concern although he has the power to force them to do what he wants. This signifies Tagore’s view on power and the use of power. Tagore believes that people have the equal rights. It is stated in Gupta (2005: 41), “‘the country must be the creation of its entire people … It must be the expression of all their forces of heart, mind and will.’” This sentence shows that in viewing the country, Tagore does not want to force his will because what is best for the nation is the people’s will inside the nation, not the leader’s will.

Nikhil is portrayed as a very considerate man. He is not easily influenced by the extreme nationalism that he himself considers as a destructive action. He thinks that the love of the people who needs to do dramatic actions in order to show their love of the country do not truly love their country for what it is. Nikhil thinks that the love of excitement is the one that force them to do that, not the love of the country. This love of excitement forces them to do destructive actions such as creating bonfire from foreign goods. Through Nikhil, Tagore tries to show the readers that the motivation behind the destructive actions are not merely love of the nation, but it is merely the excitement of destroying things.

Nikhil’s attitude represents the moderate view on nationalism. Nikhil represents the Tagore’s ideology who opposes the extreme nationalism which existed in India in the early twentieth century, which was reflected through the actions of burning foreign goods.

Nikhil’s view on freedom also can be related to the western concept of freedom. We can see that in the first chapter, Nikhil tries to take Bimala with him to Calcutta. When Bimala rejects him, he does not force his will to her although he has the power to do that. He respects the freedom of choice and does not abuse his power to force Bimala. As explained by Russell (1945), the concept of freedom in western sense can be seen as follows:
It stood for religious tolerance; it was Protestant, but of a latitudinarian rather than of a fanatical kind; it regarded the wars of religion as silly. It valued commerce and industry, and favored the rising middle class rather than the monarchy and the aristocracy; it had immense respect for the rights of property, especially when accumulated by the labors of the individual possessor. The hereditary principle, though not rejected, was restricted in scope more than it had previously been; in particular, the divine right of kings was rejected in favor of the view that every community has a right, at any rate initially, to choose its own form of government. Implicitly, the tendency of early liberalism was towards democracy tempered by the rights of property. There was a belief--not at first wholly explicit--that all men are born equal, and that their subsequent inequality is a product of circumstances. This led to a great emphasis upon the importance of education as opposed to congenital characteristics.

The explanation above also justifies Nikhil’s rejection of the extreme nationalism because he thinks that it violates human rights. The impact of the extreme nationalism causes many loss for the small merchants; therefore, he disagrees with that action because he thinks that all men are born equal and people do not have the rights to make others suffer.

Nikhil is depicted as a highly educated man who adopts western view on humanity. He also believes in universal truth, which is later described as the western philosophy of truth. In chapter one, Nikhil states that “I am willing… to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for right which is far greater than my country.” He is an open minded man who does not believe in radical actions. It can be seen from his help for Panchu, a poor merchant who suffers because his foreign goods are burned down by Sandip and his followers.

Nikhil believes that the devotion to the nation is one of the services to the Right. When Bimala asks him why he does not whole-heartedly accept the spirit of swadeshi, he stated “I am willing… to serve this country, but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than my country.” From this sentence, we can see that Nikhil is portrayed as a considerate person who does not fanatically strive for his nation. Instead, he worships righteousness far greater than he worships his country. His attempts to contribute for the struggle of attaining the freedom seem more social and philosophical. This can be seen in the case of a poor merchant, Panchu, who seeks for his protection from the extreme nationalists. Nikhil’s attempts to give contribution to his nation is not by striving in the streets like other men do, but more on the developing the social conditions of his people. He gave protection for the poor merchant Panchu, who seeks refuge
from the violent actions of the extreme nationalists who burn down his foreign goods.

This perspective of Nikhil is similar to Tagore’s disagreement on the excitement of doing destructive actions in order to encourage nationalism. As quoted by Gupta (2005: 45), Tagore states his rejection of such action:

‘What is the nature of the call,’ he asks, ‘to do this?’ Only, surely, ‘a fierce joy of annihilation’, ‘a disinterested delight in an unmeaning devastation’. He argues that burning of cloth may have some point only if foreign cloth is ‘impure’. But the general question whether to use or refuse cloth of a particular manufacture is, he holds, evidently not a moral one; it belongs solely to economics. Thus when the wearing of foreign cloth is considered as sin, ‘economics is bundled out and a fictitious moral dictum is dragged into its place.’

Here, Tagore’s attitude on nationalism and the excesses of the issues, such as burning foreign clothes is represented through Nikhil. Nikhil represents Tagore’s rejection on extreme nationalism and non-cooperative movement. This view is based on the considerations on the philosophy of harmony among people. Gupta (2005: 46) acknowledges Tagore’s view on this issue:

In general, his reaction against the non-cooperation movement springs from his vision of the grand harmony of all human races, from his desire not to see the world broken up by narrow domestic walls. If we embrace noncooperation, we would engage in strife with the West and help to destroy the wonderful mosaic that is India. His favorite metaphor is the bird which resides not merely in its nest, but also spreads its wings in the sky. He derives from the bird the lesson of being in intimate touch with the wider span of humanity from within one’s own culture.

The next character, Bimala, Nikhil’s wife, is portrayed as a traditional woman who follows her mother’s examples as a wife. She is a traditionalist who happens to have a modern husband. Her view on the role of women in the family is influenced by her mother. The way Bimala sees her mother’s devotion to her father shapes her into a woman who worships her husband as exemplified by her mother. Her view on the beauty of devotion is shaped by the actions of her mother. The inner aspect of beauty as stated in the sentences above shows how the society constructs her. She sees the beauty of a woman in the form of her devotion and love for her husband which is
described in the way she tells the rhythm of beauty of how her mother serves her father.

Bimala is depicted as a passionate woman. She is portrayed as a very impulsive woman and her passion is in fire. Her attitudes on nationalism and destructive actions that follow are very much affected by Sandip’s opinion. Bimala’s impulsive and passionate characteristics make her do unexpected things such as stealing her husband’s money just because of the influence from Sandip who persuades her to worship her country. She has different views on nationalism from her husband because she was enchanted by the vigor of the radical nationalism.

Bimala, who is enchanted by Sandip’s charisma, starts to think that nationalism also means violence. Tagore proposes the side effects of the swadeshi and compares it to his ideology through the voice of Nikhil. Bimala, as the female main character, agrees with Sandip’s idea of nationalism and rejects her husband’s ideology. In the early of the story, Bimala tells her husband that she wants to burn her foreign clothes to show her rejection on British colonization and as a part of national movement. Yet, her husband rejects that notion. He says “You should not waste even a tenth part of your energies in this destructive excitement.” Her attitudes on nationalism and destructive actions that follows are very much affected by Sandip’s opinion. In the fourth chapter, Bimala states:

At first I suspected nothing, feared nothing; I simply felt dedicated to my country. What a stupendous joy there was in this unquestioning surrender. Verily had I realized how, in thoroughness of self-destruction, man can find supreme bliss.

Bimala does not think much before she does any of her action because of the influences from what happens around her. The enchanting charisma of Sandip raises her impulsive characteristics. Bimala shows her courage in facing the destructive action of swadeshi. Bimala’s impulsive and passionate characteristics make her do unexpected things such as stealing her husband’s money just because of the influence from Sandip who persuades her to worship her country.

The supreme bliss in self destruction signifies her view on the radical nationalism. She agrees on the destructive actions done by the extreme nationalists because she can see that from the excitement of destroying things,
men can find enjoyments. Bimala’s excitement represents the excitement of nationalism which arises in the early twentieth century when the *swadeshi* became popular. As stated by Aurobindo, the actions of burning foreign clothes and other commodities are considered as self destruction because it directly destructs the economical structure, where the small merchants have to suffer from losing their goods.

As written by Gupta (2005: 44), Tagore presents the facts of the extremist actions in *swadeshi*. He states “There was a newspaper which one day had the temerity to disapprove, in a feeble way, of the burning of cloth. The very next day, the editor was shaken out of his balance by the agitation of his readers.” This extremist action influences Bimala in viewing the essence of nationalism. The joy of burning foreign goods has influenced her to the massive eagerness of nationalism.

Furthermore, Nikhil’s moderate attitude makes Bimala think that her husband has done nothing to be involved in this nationalist struggle, so that she adores Sandip even more. She favours Sandip’s ideology, while she loses her respect for her husband because of his ideology. Later, Bimala’s view on her husband is quite clearly stated in Nikhil’s story. He states:

> I had hoped that when Bimala found herself free in the outer world she would be rescued from her infatuation for tyranny. But now I feel sure that this infatuation is deep down in her nature. Her love is for the boisterous. From the tip of her tongue to the pit of her stomach she must tingle with red pepper in order to enjoy the simple fare of life. But my determination was, never to do my duty with frantic impetuosity, helped on by the fiery liquor of excitement. I know Bimala finds it difficult to respect me for this, taking my scruples for feebleness -- and she is quite angry with me because I am not running amuck crying *BandeMataram.*

Nikhil perceives the attitude of Bimala on nationalism as a love for tyranny. The tyranny here means the destructive actions and Sandip’s nature of forcing his will to get what he wants. From Nikhil’s perspective, Bimala’s love of Sandip’s ideology is caused by her lack of knowledge on the cases of humanism and nationalism. Tagore allegorizes Sandip’s ideology and his excitement of the destructive movements as a tyranny because it forces the will to shape the country as it wishes.
Next, Bimala rejects her husband’s notion of going out of the house. It represents her view on freedom in eastern sense. In the first chapter, Bimala states:

I have read in books that we are called "caged birds". I cannot speak for others, but I had so much in this cage of mine that there was not room for it in the universe—at least that is what I then felt.

This view is related to the concept of freedom in the colonized country, especially Asia. The concept of freedom is perceived differently from the western countries. In Asia, self identity is determined by the existence of the family unit (Zakaria in interview with Lee Kwan Yew). By this notion, we can see that Bimala’s perception of freedom is affected by the existence of home and family surrounding her. It seems that Bimala's concept of freedom is being in the house with her family to support her, because it is as much as she needs.

Bimala is portrayed as a woman in her time of hesitation. It is shown in the way she is described as a round character, that she is the one who changes her opinion and view on several things, like nationalism and gender. This signifies the changes in India in that era, which is in the crossroad of the fate of the nation. Swadeshi movement is no longer deniable by the British government and the transformation of the constitutional politics that was caused by swadeshi(Mondal,2003). As stated in chapter two of the novel, in Bimala’s story:

I was utterly unconscious of myself. I was no longer the lady of the Rajah's house, but the sole representative of Bengal's womanhood. And he was the champion of Bengal. As the sky had shed its light over him, so he must receive the consecration of a woman's benediction ...

Bimala realizes that she becomes the symbol of the nation when she listens to Sandip’s speech. Her heart bursts and full of excitement because she is no longer the ordinary lady like before, instead she becomes the representation of women in Bengal. She thinks that it is a part of her fate. We can see that this signifies the representation of women as a symbol of the nation.

Bimala can be seen as the representation of the view on nationalism in India and eastern view upon freedom. Bimalastands between extreme nationalism and moderate nationalism. Through Bimala’s dilemmas in choosing between her
husband’s and Sandip’s ideology, Tagore presents the anxiety of Indian people in choosing between liberalism and extreme nationalism.

The third character is Sandip. He is a young and passionate man that promotes the extreme nationalist movement in Nikhil’s region. Sandip is portrayed as a man who always forces his will. Sandip truly believes that if he wants something, he must struggle for it, even if he has to force others. His radical thought shows his characteristic as an ambitious man, the opposite of Nikhil’s character. Sandip’s ideology signifies the extreme nationalism. In this novel, Sandip shows his passion and his willingness to do everything in the name of the nation, including burning foreign clothes and foreign goods despite the sufferings felt by small merchants. People are marching down the streets to burn foreign commodities and claim that as a form of love to the nation. Sandip adopts the idea of extreme nationalism.

Furthermore, the representation of India as a woman can be seen from Sandip’s attitude to Bimala. He worships Bimala as a queen and believes that she is the sole representation of Bengal itself. As stated in chapter three, In Bimala’s story, Sandip says:

Do you know, Nikhil, when I first saw our Queen Bee, she was sitting there so demurely in her gold-bordered sari. Her eyes were gazing inquiringly into space, like stars which had lost their way, just as if she had been for ages standing on the edge of some darkness, looking out for something unknown. But when I saw her, I felt a quiver run through me. It seemed to me that the gold border of her sari was her own inner fire flaming out and twining round her. That is the flame we want, visible fire! Look here, Queen Bee, you really must do us the favor of dressing once more as a living flame.

Sandip expresses his excitement when he sees Bimala because he thinks that Bimala can inspire him and give him more strength. This is symbolized in the form of flame. The flame itself signifies the spirit of swadeshi in that era. As stated again in chapter four, in Sandip’s story:

I shall simply make Bimala one with my country. The turbulent west wind which has swept away the country’s veil of conscience, will sweep away the veil of the wife from Bimala’s face, and in that uncovering there will be no shame. The ship will rock as it bears the crowd across the ocean, flying the pennant of BandeMataram, and it will serve as the cradle to my power, as well as to my love.
Sandip shows his ambition of shaping the figure of Bimala as the figure of the nation. From these sentences, we can see that Tagore presents the representation of the nationalist movement which ambitiously creates the figure of a nation in the form of a woman because it serves and caters its people’s needs, just like a mother.

In the national anthem, nation is considered as a mother that must be protected as she nurtures her children (Aurobindo, 2002). Tagore makes Bimala as the female symbol of the nation. The symbolization of India in the figure of Bimala can be seen in several aspects. The first aspect is from her physical appearance. In the first chapter she is described as a woman who has dark features. This can be seen as the symbolization of India in the way that it is perceived as dark which signifies the dark times in the early twentieth century which happened in India caused by the colonization.

Nikhil and Sandip, are portrayed as flat characters, different from Bimala who is portrayed as round character. Sandip and Nikhil represents different ideologies existing in India in the early twentieth century. They have the tendency to be flat characters as they symbolized ideologies which do not change throughout time. The existence of these two characters brings different insights for Bimala and changes her mind, molding her into a round character. Nikhil and Sandip represent moderate nationalist ideology and extreme nationalist ideology, and those ideologies are portrayed as contradictory. This contradiction shows Tagore’s objection on the issue of extreme nationalism.

The Resolutions of the Conflicts and the Significances

The first resolution is shown from Bimala’s side of the story. Bimala, an impulsive yet traditional woman came to realize that her devotion to Sandip is not appropriate. It can be seen as Tagore’s prediction that the Indian people will change their view on nationalism and reconsider extreme nationalism which is brought by swadeshi. Tagore portrays his hopes that India will open its eyes and see the darker side of the extreme nationalism. It also represents the answer of Tagore’s anxiety towards the fate of the nation. His anxiety is explained by Gupta
(2005: 49) that he (Tagore) is afraid that a political movement like non-cooperation will isolate India from other nations and so threaten human solidarity.

In the end of this novel, Nikhil tries to stop the riot but then he is shot in his head. This tragic event shows a kind of irony in terms of gender and nationality. Along the story, Bimala is pictured as the one who sticks to the tradition and does not want to accept the ideology from her husband. On the other hand, Nikhil is pictured as the representation of western thoughts. The two contrasted ideas are shown in the way they perceive tradition of worshipping husbands. In the first chapter, we can see that Nikhil does not want Bimala to worship him. It is stated in Bimala’s sentences. “But my husband would not give me any opportunity for worship. That was his greatness. They are cowards who claim absolute devotion from their wives as their right; that is a humiliation for both.”

If we relate this case to the ending of the story, we can see that Tagore tries to open the minds of the readers by presenting his ideology through the character of Nikhil. Yet, in the end of the story, he makes a twisted plot which seems to undermine and doubt his own ideas of freedom. The tragic death of Nikhil signifies Tagore’s skepticism towards the future of India. He was anxious that India’s future will be ideal as dreamed by many people inside the country. Bimala’s fate can be seen as the representation of India’s fate. Readers cannot predict Bimala’s fate because of the tragic accident that happens to her husband. This event raises many questions upon the continuity of her life, which symbolizes the future of India. India still does not have certain future. The crossroad of her life makes the story more complicated. We can see that Bimala’s confusion upon the choice is India’s hesitation in facing new era.

CONCLUSIONS

There are three distinctive views upon nationalism presented in this novel through the key characters, Nikhil, Bimala and Sandip. Nikhil represents the moderate view on nationalism. He represents the ideology of Rabindranath Tagore. He carries the most perception of the nation in Tagore’s point of view. On the other hand, Sandip represents the extreme nationalist view. Between these two
distinctive views, Bimala represents the dilemmatic view on nationalism. Tagore also depicts India in the form of a woman, Bimala. Bimala is portrayed as the physiological and psychological resemblance of the nation. This novel reveals several aspects of the conflict of ideologies including the conflict of gender and nationalism.

Along the story, Tagore proposes new insights to the readers, yet in the end he metaphorically kills his own ideology. This is shown as the signifier that in the struggle of infusing modernity, Tagore has found hard times to make people understand. Therefore, he exposed the tragic ending to his own ideology in this novel. By giving this ending, indirectly, he also drags the readers into wondering what is going to happen to Bimala and India.

This novel represents Tagore’s perspective in seeing the effect of swadeshi to India. Furthermore, we can conclude that this novel reveals the ideological conflicts which are happening in the society as the result of modernization and British colonization. This revelation can be seen in the way Tagore contrasts the views of western ideology and eastern ideology through the characters Nikhil, Sandip and Bimala. It signifies that ideological conflicts could happen everywhere, even in the inside of a house.

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