Name: Ahtesham Ibne Mostafa

Id: 21201342

Section: 22

Final Book Review on “The Home And The World”

“The Home and the World”, written in 1916 by Rabindranath Tagore. His mental conflict over his views on Western civilization and urge to rebel against it is depicted in this novel. In 1913, he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for the remarkable fusion of his singular English-language poetic thought into Western literature through his immensely sensitive, ground-breaking, and exquisite verse. By rejecting rigorous classical forms and defying language conventions, Tagore modernized Bengali art. His books, short tales, songs, dance plays, and essays covered both political and private subjects. Tagore’s lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural introspection were praised—or criticized—for inclusion in his poetry, short tales, and novels. His best-known compositions include Ghare-Baire(The Home and the World), Gora, and Gitanjali (Song Offerings).

This book is divided into multiple chapters, with three main characters. The importance of religion and nationality in contradiction to one another is one of the book's central topics. In contrast to the competing forces in their environment— India and Southern Asia represent the modern and the old, realism and idealism, the means and the end, good and evil, Tagore decided to focus on the inner turmoil of his characters. Despite being succinct and simple, the plot is meaningful and believable. We'll need to pause occasionally to appreciate his insightful remarks. My favorite feature of the book is how Bimala goes from being a traditional woman to becoming an active member of the movement. Here are Bimala's descriptions of herself at several periods in the novel to demonstrate Tagore's prose and to show how she changes. Rabindranath Tagore's The Swadeshi Movement is depicted in "The Home and the World" as a backdrop. The anti-colonial movement served as the movement's starting point. The author has included both home and foreign conflicts in the plot. This book does a great job of handling both the nationalist idea and the independence struggle. Individual decisions and trauma are also given enough room in the story in addition to that. This narrative focuses on the social movement that began as a protest against Bengal's separation from India in the first ten years of the 20th century, which also features Bimala, Nikhil, and Sandip. Which pushed for the boycott of British products and the support of Indian industry. It continued from 1905 to 1908 (Roy, 2021). At a large gathering held in August 1905 at Calcutta Townhall, the Swadeshi Movement was formally proclaimed (Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, 2021). Since the people had been inspired to define and actualize their national identity by social, economic, and political situations, the movement's objective was to self-help with national industries, national schools, and village improvements. Nationalist leader Aurobindo Ghose made a memorable statement in several journals, which were published in April 1907 that were ultimately collected under the title "Doctrine of Passive Resistance." With the help of the prosperous growth of Swadeshi enterprises, schools, and arbitration tribunals, he envisioned a campaign of "organized and relentless boycott of British goods, officialized education, justice, and administrative administration." Additionally, he anticipated engaging in civil disobedience, a social boycott of loyalists, and engaging in armed conflict if British repression became intolerable(Ghose, 2021). Rabindranath and other literary men were interested in the restriction on the movement's spontaneity. Rabindranath pointed out in a series of remarkably astute articles in the middle of 1907 that just blaming the British for the riots was quite an inadequate reaction, seeing the effects of communal strife, despite having been greatly inspired by revivalism for some years(Roy, 2021). This book concentrated on how it affected common people, especially the poor class, and how they suffered in the name of "Bande Mataram," a movement whose significance and impact on the country's struggle for independence are well known (Basu, 2020). It presents an original, insightful, and captivating examination of the movement's shadowy side.

Two main characters serve as examples of two ideas: Sandip, who will stop at nothing to achieve his objectives, and Nikhil, who is calm and abhors violence. By juxtaposing these two diametrically opposed points of view, it is possible to understand the history of the Bengal region and its current problems. The story opens with Bimala remembering her mother's vermilion mark, a sign of Hindu wifehood and love. When she marries the Rajah's family, she feels better about her lack of physical beauty, but her heart is still troubled by her husband's dark face. Bimala loves her husband so deeply that she enjoys giving her everything to him. She initially seems to be stuck in the usual role of a woman and has little desire to leave it, despite her husband Nikhil's encouragement. The sacramental nature of Nikhil and Bimala's love and the union is shown throughout the narrative. Nikhil demonstrated his undeniable devotion to his wife. He first demonstrated this by accepting the darker skin and impoverished family background of the woman he married. He went to considerable lengths to ensure that she understood not only her role in their home but also her place in the wider world. He gives her freedom as a sign of his affection. However, Bimala's love for her husband is less materialistic. This can be seen in Bimala's daily practice of "taking the dust,"( Tagore, 1916, p. 1) an uncommon for a wife to conduct for her husband's Indian custom of respect. Bimala, like most women in the society she describes, worships her husband without question. When Bimala is asked her opinion during an argument between Nikhil and Sandip and says, "Never before had I [Bimala] had the chance of being there during a dispute between my husband and his men friends," this is one of the numerous cases which discuss the place of women in this society(Rabindranath Tagore, 1916, p. 39). This line demonstrates the stark disparity and the fact that women typically had no place in discourse in the actual world. Tagore compares the iconographic representation of Bimala to the "divine feminine strength (Shakti) for the sake of creation and (Kali) for the cause of destruction." (Banerjee , 2021).

Nikhil wants Bimala to leave her house and venture outside. They have a lovely connection, but he persuades her that he won't know whether she truly loves him unless she has the chance to meet other guys and choose him over them. Nikhil lavishes Bimala with sophisticated, western items and attire because he appreciates them. But according to Hindu tradition, Bimala never leaves the confines of the house compound. Her world is a collision between modern Indian living and western culture. Bimala appreciates the contemporary items Nikhil brings her, but when Sandip appears and starts fervently discussing nationalism, she worries about the security of her way of life. She battles with her identity. She belongs to the nation, but she only has experience with her own home, which is a cross-cultural fusion. She must decide whether to work to make her home, her entire world, free from conflict or to support her husband as an Indian woman is expected to do. Bimala struggles with maintaining the ideal of the country she feels she ought to adore. It is expected of Bimala that she investigates how her traditional way of life and the modern world may live in harmony. This theme is connected to the theme of nationalism because Tagore uses it to warn against the possibility that nationalism may do more harm than good.

Sandip is the third main character in the book. Sandip, a radical friend of Nikhil's, is introduced to her. A charismatic nationalist leader named Sandip is a visitor to the palace. Although he is driving the boycott of products created abroad, his anger appears to be centered toward Muslim-majority importers of goods. His radical ideas and words had a profound effect on Bimala. Sandip triumphs over Bimala. He stands in stark contrast to her placid, calm, and rational husband. The head of the Swadeshi movement, Sandip, is likewise a parasite who uses Nikhil's money to fund his lavish lifestyle. Due to her desire to collaborate with Sandip, Bimala becomes deeply entangled in the Swadeshi movement. Bimala starts to doubt her marriage to Nikhil because Sandip embodies all she desires in a guy, and she can tell that he is interested in her. Bimala experiences an emotional meltdown and oscillates between her spouse and Sandip when she sees him. As the title suggests, there is a prominent issue with how the home and the outside world interact.

Though a flaw in the story, the characters' representation of concepts may have been the author's force to compromise. The characters become shallow and one-dimensional because Sandip, Nikhil's polar opposite, represents everything dishonest and terrible, and Nikhil, who has too much Tagore in him, represents everything great. Throughout the story, neither of these people seems to undergo any transformation. In contrast to Sandip, who displays greed, manipulation, irrationality, oppression, and tyranny throughout the book, Nikhil retains his coolness, kindness, understanding, forbearance, liberality, reason, and altruism. When Nikhil declares in chapter 8 of the book, "It is my ambition to plant something better than Swadeshi. Nikhil expresses a symbiotic voice of compassion, adoration, preservation, and provision: "I am not pursuing dead logs, but living trees—and these will take time to grow" (Banerjee, 2020). Because of his calm demeanor, When his wife makes out with his friend in front of him when they are at home, Nikhil doesn't lose it. “The best possible gain is perfect gain, but if that is not possible, the perfect loss is the next-best gain” ( Tagore, 1916, p. 24). This is uncommon because in patriarchal India, in their connections with women, especially in marriage, males rarely allow complex emotions to surface and instead take their wives for granted. Bimala must decide to accept Nikhil's unwavering love for her on her own. Nikhil will suffer greatly if she chooses differently, but he must respect her right to freedom of action because of how much he cares for her. Oppression has no place in a partnership. He hopes that the spell will soon break and Bimala will once more come to her senses. He anticipates that Bimala's ideological and sexual obsession with Sandip will fade as she grows up and comes to terms with the outside world. He should wait and keep his faith till then. Of course, if she decides otherwise, it will be his end. Nikhil argues: “The passage from the narrow to the larger world is stormy. When she is familiar with this freedom, then I shall know where my place is. If I discover that I do not fit in with the arrangement of the outer world, then I shall not quarrel with my fate, but silently take my leave. Apply force? What, though? Can truth be defeated by force?”( Tagore, 1916, p. 45). Only constitutional values may serve as the foundation for Indian society. These are the concepts that we all agree upon via daily vote, and they serve as the cornerstone for rapprochement between India's many ethnic groups. The solution to India's terrified minorities lies in Tagore's notion of welcoming variety despite its flaws.

Nikhil takes Bimala out of the home's interior, where she appears content, to meet his old buddy Sandip, a move that will have disastrous results. In the future, Nikhilesh will be troubled by his choice and question if his desire to mold Bimala into a statue hasn't exacted a horrible price. Fast-moving political changes, Sandip's forceful swadeshi, the burning of foreign goods, which affects the poor by forcing them out of business, and the start of riots overwhelm the love story itself. Nikhilesh has been compared to Tagore by others; Bimala, who has been swayed by Sandip's style of nationalism, is practically shocked by her husband's opinion on the topic. In response to Sandip, in the song “Vande Mataram,” Nikhilesh sings, “I am both afraid and humiliated to deploy a magic incantation and cast a hypnotic spell on others. I want to comprehend the notion of my country as the reality and pass it on to others.”

Nikhil loves his nation just as much as Sandip does, if not more, but he won't let that passion cloud his judgment. He declares, “Despite my desire to serve my country, which is much larger than I do, I save my worship for Right. Worshiping my country as a god will bring bad luck” ( Tagore, 1916, p. 29). Contrarily, Sandip contends that a "country's necessities must be converted into a god" ( Tagore, 1916, p. 122) and that one should "put the country in its position by putting aside conscience" ( Tagore, 1916, p. 165). Due to his reckless nation-glorification and he gradually develops into a terrible terrorist and a revolting criminal due to his idea that any action, no matter how horrible or immoral, is acceptable if done for the interest of the nation. Even if it means harming his followers, he has no problem utilizing deceit or violence to further his goals. The goal justifies the methods as long as it is achieved. He deftly manipulates Bimala into giving him all of her jewelry as she unknowingly becomes drunk by his nationalist appeal to raise money for the organization. Additionally, he steals money from the family safe for Bara Rani, Bimala's older sister-in-law and a widow whom Nikhil respects as his sister. He also has his sights set on Amulya, a passionate but idealistic young who represents the other young people who were affected by the campaign. When Muslim boatman Mirjan refuses to quit transporting foreign products because it will cost him his job, Sandip plans to scuttle his vessel in the middle of the river.

The story has an allegorical element, showing Bengal balancing between the two possibilities, with Bimala torn between the two and unclear of what should be her guiding principle. It appears that Nikhil and Sandip stand for two competing ideas in the nation. Nikhil's vision is grounded in the sincere equality and peace of peoples and nations and has an intelligent humanitarian and global perspective. On the other hand, despite imparting in them a strong sense of patriotism, Sandip's radical, restrictive, and violent nationalism threatens to weaken people's moral consciousness in favor of heedless zeal and national intolerance. From this perspective, Nikhil's departure toward the novel's conclusion, which also communicates Tagore's pessimism about Bengal's future and takes place just as, after a prolonged preoccupation with Sandip and his goals, Bimala is turning the corner and regaining her composure..

We learn about the intense nationalism of the time from this book. It clarifies the Swadeshi movement's Bengal-specific elements, which encouraged the prohibition of and cremation of foreign goods in favor of native ones while the British were in control of India. But because the affluent and strong forced the poor to purchase the more expensive indigenous goods, the latter suffered. They were additionally made to burn all of the imported goods at home without being given any sort of payment, which left them in utter poverty and excruciating misery. Each of Tagore's characters is different and an archetype, and, he seems to argue, is an individual all the more so because s/he is an archetype. This method of character creation needs comprehending this. The political moment is described in archetypal terms, just as each individual is an archetype. As a result, the book is more than just a critique of the distinctive historical period that the Swadeshi movement symbolizes. Tagore transcends insight into his specific moment to an insight into the unchangeable character of the human problem itself because he uses the allegorical literary style. A general principle manifests itself in the particular.

I adored how Tagore narrates the tale from three different perspectives and captures Bimala's voice so perfectly. In times of fervent patriotism, this needs to be required reading so that we might draw some lessons from history, although fictional ones. The philosophical conflicts it is packed with—illusion vs. truth, pragmatism vs. spiritual idealism, passion vs. virtues—are what make the book so compelling. They address important problems that apply to all such journeys, and they are fascinating and pertinent. The book, in my opinion, is exceptional and essential for both this generation and the one after it. I've been following the most recent political catastrophes in the nation.

Although I appreciated learning about the social and political dynamics of Bengal India in the early twentieth century, there were points when I felt a little bored with the book. I frequently became aware of my thoughts straying throughout the conversations and descriptions of thoughts and feelings. Although the love triangle was intriguing, Sandhi and Nikhil were portrayed in a way that made it too simple to like them and loathe them. The fact that Tagore conceived the figures more as symbols than as living beings may be the cause. I felt that not enough was said about the character's behavior. The book did become more fascinating as it went along, but I felt the conclusion's climactic events were handled too quickly. Even though Tagore most likely wanted the abruptness to produce a mildly shocking effect. Although Tagore probably intended for the abruptness to provide a moderately frightening effect.

References

· Banerjee, A. (2021). Bimala in Ghare-Baire: Tagore’s New Woman Relocating the “World in Her Home”.

· Banerjee, A. K. (2020, March 9). Ghare Baire: An Eco-Critical Perspective. pp. 48-67.

· Basu, S. (2020, May 18). Gender, Sexuality, and Nation – Tagore’s Ghare Baire (Home and the World).

·     Ghose Aurobindo. (2021, 06 18). Retrieved from Banglapedia: https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Ghosh,\_Aurobindo

· Rabindranath Tagore. (1916). The home and the world. Calcutta.

· Roy, R. (2021, June 18). Swadeshi Movement. Retrieved from Banglapedia: https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Swadeshi\_Movement

·     Swadeshi and Boycott Movement. (2021, 06 15). Retrieved from TO THE POINT: https://www.drishtiias.com/to-the-points/paper1/swadeshi-and-boycott-movement

·     Swadeshi and Boycott Movement. (2021, 06 15). Retrieved from TO THE POINT: https://www.drishtiias.com/to-the-points/paper1/swadeshi-and-boycott-movement