Chapter-I

Representation of the Nationalist ‘Self’ — Novelistic Portrayal of a New Cultural Identity in Tagore’s Fiction

I am talking of millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement.

Aime Césaire, Discourse sur le Colonialisme

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks

…it is not the literal past, the ‘facts’ of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language... we must never cease renewing those images, because once we do, we fossilize.

Brian Friel, Translations

In this chapter I shall focus on the ways in which the process of nationalist ‘self-formation’ is represented in the major novels of Tagore. That the process is an extremely tortuous one, full of inner contradictions and sudden reversals is a postulate which will be critically looked into in different sections of the present section. But at the outset, it is necessary to define the important co-ordinates of the discussion. At first, we will attempt a brief exploration of the colonial conditions responsible for the ‘loss’ and the subsequent ‘recovery’ of ‘self’ of the colonized. The element of ‘cultural miscegenation’ involved in the act of ‘fashioning’ selves will be analysed in the next section. After that, the discussion will move from the ‘macro’ to the ‘micro’ - level of literary representations.

It is important to bear in mind that we are dealing with texts born out of a complex colonial encounter, the experience of which turned out to be debilitating as well as invigorating in an irreversible way. Colonization can never be merely viewed as the unleashing of processes of economic exploitation. It always has cultural aggression as its necessary corollary. It destroys civilizations. It empties the colonized subjects of all their traditional belief-systems, cultural practices, ritualistic moorings — it undermines their very sense of self. The loss of ‘self’ under colonialism when ‘humanity reduced to a monologue’, to use Aime Césaire’s phrase, results in the
colonization of minds. Addressing this loss in psychoanalytical terms, Ashis Nandy writes, ‘This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all’. Colonialism brings with it the colonial forms of education as part of its hegemonic construct in the colonies. The ‘encounter’ with the West — its knowledge, and culture gave rise to a class of Europhone intellectuals in the colonies whose conditions of ‘bilingualism’ brought along the painful realisation of their lost ‘selves’ and called for an urgent need for ‘self-fashioning’ in order to formulate some kind of anti-colonial nationalist consciousness. In the Indian context, the condition of ‘bilingualism’ of the western-educated intellectual class under the British rule — according to one school of cultural history was greatly instrumental in the construction of nationalist consciousness. David Kopf in his thesis, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* writes:

> The Orientalists served as avenues linking the regional elite with the dynamic civilization of contemporary Europe. They contributed to the formation of a new Indian middle class and assisted in the professionalization of the Bengali intelligentsia . . . They both historicised the Indian past and stimulated a consciousness of history in the Indian intellectual. It was they who transmitted a new sense of identity to Bengalis.⁵

Césaire writes about this coming to consciousness as being very concrete in nature: ‘we lived in an atmosphere of rejection, and we developed an inferiority complex . . . I have always thought that the black man was searching for his identity.’⁶ Fanon writes: ‘. . . alterity for the black man is not the black but the white man.’⁷ — ‘It is because the Negro belongs to an ‘inferior’ race that he seeks to be like the superior race.’⁸ Fanon’s observation is applicable to the Indian colonial context too. The ‘superior’ standard of the colonizer’s civilization gave rise to a sense of ‘lack’ among the Indian subjects who developed their knowledge of western civilization through colonial education. In this context Homi K. Bhabha identifies the act of mimicry which the colonial subject in India was involved in. Bhabha writes, ‘(From such) a colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance, there emerges the question of the ambivalence of mimicry as a problematic of colonial subjection.’⁹ So, a desire for emulation became enmeshed in a drive for disavowal of the colonizer’s civilization. This gave rise to elements of ambivalence and hybridity in
the anti-colonial discourses of nationalist self-formations. The feeling of hatred for the colonizers was never unmixed — its discursive formation was formulated in terms of mimicry — thereby becoming hybridised. It is to be noted that anti-colonial feelings were replicatory of colonial idioms to a certain degree in India. An element of hybridity which is built to a great extent upon the ‘fear / desire’ oscillatory movement is, therefore, ingrained in the language of the programme for nationalist ‘self’-formations.

We shall, first of all, have a short discussion about colonial India’s particular historico-cultural contexts for the ‘coming – into – being’ of nationalist consciousness and the nationalist concerns for the recovery of the ‘self’ – a programme in which the search for the nation and the search for the self are uniquely blended in one inseparable unit. Thereafter we shall move on to the fictional plane of Tagore’s novelistic world where the representation of the nationalist ‘self’ is problematized, fractured and reformulated.

**Nationalist Self-fashioning**

The replicatory tendency of the colonized people has another strong psychological drive behind it – the desire for revenge. To do to the enemy exactly what the enemy did to him, so that colonizer and colonized would meet eye to eye – is the fantasy of envy and violence that has been the *leitmotif* that keeps coming back in the mainstream masculinist anti-imperialist discourse. The discourse of identity was primarily articulated by men and gender was very central to any articulation about the self. The fantasy of counter-machismo has a touch of oedipal complex in it; — the fantasy of the one of wanting to have what the other has. Rey Chow writes: ‘The fate of the native is then like that of Freud’s woman: Even though she will never have a penis, she will for the rest of her life be trapped within the longing for it and its substitutes.’

Thus the process which psychoanalysis calls ‘identification with the aggressor’ gives rise to a case of cultural co-optation. Nandy writes, ‘In the colonial culture, identification with the aggressor bound the rulers and the ruled in an unbreakable dyadic relationship.’ As a result, like Fanon’s Negro who is enticed to assume the attitude of the White Man, many Indians saw their salvation in becoming more like the British, in friendship or in enmity. The rising nationalist consciousness
during the latter half of the nineteenth century in India resurrected the traditional idea of ‘kshatriyahood’ (nature of the warrior-caste) — a martial Indianness which became a sort of interface between the ruler and the ruled. It is necessary to mention here that this idea of Kshatrarej (potency of the warrior-caste) — the indigenous version of virile masculinity turned out to be a major driving force behind the violent, anti-colonial protest against colonialism during the first few decades of the twentieth century. The figure of the ascetic warrior-monk who figures in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Anandamath is another avatar of the ‘virile, national self’. This became clearly evident in the immensely courageous yet ineffective extremist movement in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab, led by semi-westernised, middleclass, urban and most often bilingual youth.

In this way, the nationalist consciousness was formulated by championing the first term of the three-point scale of type-differentiation: purushva (the essence of masculinity), narita (the essence of femininity) and klibatva (the essence of hermaphroditism). The emergent nationalism which to a great extent essentialised a Hindu culture showed one more manoeuvring strategy — to redefine the Indian masculinity largely in spiritual terms. Partha Chatterjee in his critique of Benedict Anderson’s idea of ‘nation as imagined community’ highlights the discursive strategies adopted by Indian nationalism:

. . . anti-colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains — the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the ‘outside’, of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology . . . The spiritual, on the other hand is an “inner” domain bearing the “essential” marks of cultural identity. The greater is one’s success in imitating Western skills in the materials domains; therefore, the greater will be the need to preserve the distinctness of one’s spiritual culture.¹²

Therefore, the need arose to transcribe the masculine martial Hindu masculinity into the terms of all-renouncing tendency of the sanyasi (religious mendicant) in order to valorise the spiritual principle of the rising nationalist consciousness. This particular ideological manoeuvring was targeted to serve many purposes. The resurgence of the spiritual Hinduism would relink the nationalist
generation with the country’s ‘Aryan’ past. The masculine spirituality of the Hindu race would distinguish itself from the ‘barbaric’ virility of the Muslim. This would also be able to successfully incorporate the overt masculine tendencies of the colonizing ‘West’ for reformulated nationalist race without disturbing the race’s inner core. The reinterpreted and reconstructed figure of the sanyasi was there to prove the easy interchangeability of martial and spiritual values. Kshatratej and Brahmatej were projected as the two sides of the same coin, the coin of nationalism and this caught the imagination of the young, middle-class western-educated colonized subjects. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay’s novel Anandamath, as we mentioned earlier, is one such fictional discursive plane where attempts are made to bring into the centre of nationalist imagination the so-long marginal figure of the sanyasi by the projection of santan dals; a militant group of ascetics who would take active interests in the political future of a subjugated race. It was the phenomenal entry of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) into the national scene with his victorious return to the country after participating in the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September, 1893 that made it all too easy for the legitimisations of the spiritual principles in the national life, propounded by Bankimchandra in both his fictional and polemical writings. To quote Tapan Raychaudhuri:

... though a vivid interest in the Hindu religious spiritual heritage was very much a part of the Bengali intellectual concerns, in the nineteenth century the expression of this new religiosity was modally within the limits of a colonial middle class life-style. The social origins of the young men led by Vivekananda... were in no way different from those other well-known protagonists of the new enlightenment, Children of bureaucrats, men in the learned professions or zamindars, they were also products of the Western education dispensed in Bengal’s schools and colleges.13

Indira Chowdhury deals with Swami Vivekananda’s impact on the nationalist politics in her research on the colonized male subject and his problematic relationship with the history of nationalism.14 She quotes Swami Vivekananda’s letter from America to his disciple Alasinga Perumal to highlight how his version of asceticism blended successfully the strength of the kshatriya with the potency of knowledge – a merger, possible only within the precincts of ‘Celibacy’:

... strength, manhood, Kshatra Virya + Brahma Teja. Our beautiful hopeful
boys — they have everything, only if they are not slaughtered by the millions at the altar of this brutality they call marriage . . . educated young men will stand aside from the world, gird their loins, and be ready to fight the battle of truth . . . 15

Thus Vivekananda’s construction of masculinity was buttressed with the militant virility of the kshatriya as well as the sterner self-denying aspect of the brahminical asceticism. The ‘new’ masculinity was to be for the Hindu a more desirable masculinity as its aim was to subvert the colonial projection of a ‘superior’ western masculinity. This way was born the figure of the devoted nationalist sanyasi whose spiritualism was directed towards the moral and political purposes of the emerging ‘nation’ — its embodiments in political figure like Aurobindo and other Swadeshi activists who devoted their lives for the cause of liberating the Mother Country. The newly-fashioned masculinity marked the recovery of the ‘self’ for the colonized subjects whose loss was recorded during the first phases of the colonial experience and also the streamlining of the new ‘self’ for the service of newly-risen nationalist aspirations. The close intertwining of the processes of the construction of the ‘self’ and imagining of the ‘nation’ created a curious effect of simultaneity. The temporal coalescing of their processes of arriving point, therefore, to their common telos — to bring an end of the British Raj and transform India into a modern nation-state — a telos which to a large extent was responsible for the shaping of the contours of both constructions. The strong bonding existing between the search for the lost self and the construction of the nation created a sense of interchangeability and a high degree of sameness — so much so that it created a common discursive framework. The biographies and autobiographies written during the last years of the nineteenth century are proofs of the fact — the birth of the nation can be and should be encoded in the form of the birth of a ‘new individual’. Partha Chatterjee points out that that the first comprehensive social history of nineteenth century Bengal was written in the form of a biography [Sibnath Shastri, Ramtanu Lahiri o tatkalîn bangasamaj]. Surendranath Banerjea, the foremost political leader of his times in Bengal entitled his autobiography A Nation in Making. 16 History therefore, witnessed a unique case of the merger of the concepts of ‘Nation’ and ‘Self’ in the colonial period of India.

But the narrative of nationalist self-fashioning was hardly an unruptured ‘grand narrative’. It had its share of fissures, overlappings, and splittings and even
ruptures. Its inner tensions could be made visible if one could only decode its natures of ‘constructedness’, its process of qualified appropriation and rejection of the West, its workings as an ideological sieve. In the ideological projection of any dominant discourse are always inscribed tendencies of discords, dissents and alternative points of view. Let us make a very brief attempt to analyse the specific notes of discord in the construction of the nationalist ‘self’.

While discussing the ‘drama of consciousness’ performed in Black Skin, White Masks of Frantz Fanon, Benita Parry diagnoses the dilemma involved in ‘fashioning / disavowing black identity’. She records this as due to the longing for a transition from Négritude to universal solidarity signaling disalienation and the transcendence of ethnicity. Nationalism, for Fanon in the later stages of his critical formulations, became a necessary stop-over for the journey towards an international dimension and of universalising value. We can refer to his statement made in the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Rome in 1959:

The consciousness of self is not closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension. . . It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this twofold emerging is ultimately the source of all culture.

Similar aspirations can be identified within the construction of the nationalist discourse of our country as well. Its formulation chronologically followed the shaping of currents and cross-currents in the cultural history of Bengal which has traditionally been collectively labelled as the ‘Bengal Renaissance’. Historians have, on numerous occasions, emphasized the heterogeneity of cultural experience of this movement. Attempts have been made to identify incompatible elements within it and how the leading figures of it imbibed almost contradictory essences from this collective experience. Rabindranath Tagore was one such figure in whose shaping of ideas was recorded the problematic of this so-called ‘Renaissance’. We shall refer to S. C. Sarkar’s Bengali article Rabindranath o banglar nabajagaran in this connection. Before going to the original article, let us take a look at the gloss of that article made by Sumit Sarkar in his essay ‘The Radicalism of Intellectuals’: 
On the model of the famous Russian Westerner-Slavophil dichotomy, S. C. Sarkar in an influential and important paper made a sharp distinction between two trends within our ‘renaissance’, ‘westernism’ (or ‘liberalism’) as contrasted to ‘traditionalism’ (or ‘revivalism’). ‘Westernism’ explicitly proclaimed by him to be more progressive, was further defined by him to include the components of social reform, rationalism and secular humanism.¹⁹

Now to quote one relevant comment from S. C. Sarkar’s Bengali essay: ‘The future enlightened unified India must rise above the Hindu-non-Hindu dichotomy in order to embrace humanistic ideals, therein lies the correct realisation of western ideals.’²⁰ These words echo somewhat similar sentiments articulated in Fanon’s words quoted a little while ago. What, according to S. C. Sarkar, is Rabindranath’s ideological position in this ongoing conflict between ‘liberalism’ and ‘revivalism’? Does it undergo any susceptible changes in his long career as a creative artist and an avid polemicist? Let us get back to S. C. Sarkar’s text:

From 1907 onwards there can be perceived a susceptible turn in Rabindranath’s writings. For ten years after this, the tide of writings flooded the country was the creation of the matured Rabindranath. In them, the side to which his face turned from Orientalism is not Hindutva, but the dream of a new India — that cannot be but labelled as Western perspective in our analysis.²¹

S. C. Sarkar, in order to establish the synthesising, universalising nature of the western perspective in Rabindranath quotes from Tagore’s essay ‘Rajbhakti’ written in 1906 as a forecast for the shape of things to come, ‘O my nation . . . in front of your seat Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, are waiting for a long time, being attracted by the call of the Almighty.’²² S. C. Sarkar quotes from Tagore’s novel Gora extensively to prove his point. At the end of this long essay, S. C. Sarkar, however, sticks to his conviction about Tagore’s western perspective which had remain unscathed even after the two world wars. He concludes by referring to Tagore’s essay ‘Sabhyatar sankat’, a lecture which was delivered during the fag end of the poet’s life in 1941. In his view, Rabindranath in that speech whipped not the western perspectives but the perverted distortions of such perspectives manifested in the British rule in India and the age-old beliefs in the benevolent nature of the British imperialism.²³
Thus, we arrive at a strange kind of psycho-existential bind, located at the heart of the nationalist ‘self-fashioning’; a contradiction that seems almost insurmountable. The essentialist national ‘self’ is fashioned in the codes of western, overtly virile masculinity and the universalist, nationalist consciousness – almost its alter ego – has also drawn largely from the western value-systems. The western *episteme* seems to be at work in both cases, with two completely incompatible results. Ashis Nandy’s influential study, *An Intimate Enemy* offers a valuable lead in this connection. According to him, forces unleashed by the post-Enlightenment Europe to propagate all-encompassing spirit of ‘reason’ and the unitary model of nation-state resulted in absolutizing the ‘West’ — a domain of vigorous, enterprising, rational race to whose masculinist spirit the ‘non-West’ must bow down. The colonial experience only helped to legitimise this kind of western consciousness as the mainstream which engulfed all other dissenting voices. This necessitated for the newly-fashioned western ‘Subject’ to construct the ‘Oriental-Other’. Nandy writes:

Colonialism replaced the normal ethnocentric stereotype of the inscrutable Oriental by the pathological stereotype of the strange, primal but predictable Oriental — religious but superstitious, clever but devious, chaotically violent but effeminately cowardly . . . the cultural arrogance of post-Enlightenment Europe (which) sought to define not only the ‘true’ West but also the ‘true’ East.24

The immediate reaction of the East, especially those classes of the East which received western education, was an act of vehement disavowal of its supposed ‘effeminacy’ by fashioning a counter-masculine ‘self’. Let us look at the point that Nandy raises about the existence of the other-West as well as the other-India. Nandy recognises traces of certain Apollonian elements in the western civilization — articulated through the benign, tolerant tendencies of Christianity which lost out to the onslaught of the imperialist ‘self’ of the West. Nandy also wants us to direct our attention to another India (distinctly dissimilar from the nationalists’ construction) ‘which is neither pre-modern nor anti-modern but only non-modern.’ In his words:

It coexists with the India of the modernists, whose attempts to identify with the colonial aggressors has produced pathetic copies of the Western man in the subcontinent, but it rejects most versions of Indian nationalism as bound irrevocably to the West – in reaction, jealousy, hatred, fear and counterphobia.
This is the underside of non-modern India’s ethnic universalism.\textsuperscript{25}

Nandy identifies Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi as the two leading players in the battle of supremacy between the ideologies of the ‘official imperial West’ and ‘virile’ anticolonial ‘East’ on the one hand and the oppositional, marginal voices of both alternative ‘West’ and ‘East’. A cursory glance at Gandhi’s manoeuvering could consolidate the idea about the ‘constructed’ nature of the ‘nationalist’ self. While Nandy refers to the oppositional tendency in Tagore as ‘classical universalism’ in Gandhi he sees its manifestation in the form of ‘folk-based, critical traditionalism’. About Gandhi he writes, ‘Albeit a non-westerner, Gandhi always tried to be a living symbol of the other West.’\textsuperscript{26} It is, therefore, extremely interesting to note that the act of fashioning a folksy, rural Indian ‘self’ posited at the centre of traditional organic community (gemeinschaft), and simultaneously ‘provincialising’ the western epistemology of ‘nation-state’ and ‘citizen subjects’ is to a large extent built upon the other, alternative cultures of the ‘West’ of which perhaps the ‘West’ itself has lost track of. To quote Nandy:

\ldots Gandhi’s partiality for some of the Christian hymns and Biblical texts was more than the symbolic gesture of a Hindu towards a minority religion in India \ldots some of the recessive elements of Christianity were perfectly congruent with elements of Hindu and Buddhist world-views and that the battle he was fighting for the minds of men was actually a universal battle to rediscover the softer side of human nature, the so called non-masculine self of man relegated to the forgotten zones of the Western self-concept.\textsuperscript{27}

Nandy also refers to the fact that ‘Gandhi himself said that he had borrowed his idea of nonviolence not from the sacred texts of India but from the ‘Sermon on the Mount.’\textsuperscript{28} Therefore, it seems that the counter-hegemonic discourse of the colonized is articulated by the act of highlighting the ‘marginalised’ elements of the hegemonic culture of the colonizer. This brings us back to Rabindranath Tagore, after a short detour of Gandhian non-violence, as ‘Brahmoism’ the religious sect to which Tagore belonged was built also largely upon the building blocks — western in nature — like concepts of ‘organized religion’ a ‘sacred text’, ‘monotheism’ and a ‘patriarchal godhead’ (Parampita). Tagore’s comments about Raja Rammohan Roy, the founder of Brahmoism is extremely relevant here. He makes these comments in his famous essay, ‘Purba o paschim’ (1908) : ‘Rammohan Roy ... one day stood alone in order to
align India with the whole world on the basis of humanism (\textit{manusatva} in original Bengali). No custom, no prejudice could obstruct his views.\textsuperscript{29} Tagore’s views here are somewhat similar to Fanon’s formulation of a ‘national consciousness’ within which ‘international consciousness lives and grows.’ Thus, a split occurs in the ‘self’ fashioned by ‘nationalism’, brought about by the ‘national consciousness’.

We know that literature is one and at the same time form and site for ideological contestations. Tagore’s fictions are important artifacts in that respect. We shall begin with \textit{Gora}, Tagore’s longest and artistically perhaps the most successful novel. The period of its composition (written between 1907 and 1910) is the period of consolidation for nationalist discourse; the temporal background of the novel is the period for the formulation of such discourse. The novel is situated at that point of history where the emergence of the nationalist ‘self’ and its problematisation in the form of a ‘split’ occur simultaneously. And, the ‘split’ within the ‘self’ as recorded in the text, to my mind, has been largely instrumental in the text’s canonization and the turning of its central character into some sort of an ideological icon, a century after the publication of the novel. We shall try to look at the textual strategies embedded in the novel which, to a large extent, conditioned its reception and the nature of the narrative of conflict between ‘nationalism’ and ‘nationalist consciousness’: a conflict, which to my mind, is instrumental in arresting the imagination of the Bengali intelligentsia till today.

\textbf{Dialogic Elements in \textit{Gora}}

In an essay published in \textit{Desh}, a leading literary journal in Bengal, the noted Bengali litterateur, Debesh Roy comments that he cannot recall of any other novel, written in any language of the world apart from \textit{Gora} where the search for a motherland has become the main story; the only notation to be exchanged between the main characters of the novel, the chief source for the drama of emotion and the basis for logic.\textsuperscript{30} He compares the ‘process of becoming’ present in Gora’s character with that discernible in the character of Hans Castorp in Thomas Mann’s epic novel \textit{The Magic Mountain} (published in 1924, 16 years after the publication of \textit{Gora}). The points are relevant as the text’s narrative strategies create an effect of simultaneity between the hero’s search for his true self and his search for the nation to which he belongs. In the
beginning of his book, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* Ashis Nandy quotes a comment made by Tagore, ‘A country is not territorial (*mrinmaya*) ; it is ideational (*chinmaya*)’. The nature of the manifestation of this *chinmaya* nation, its multilayered encoding in Tagore’s perceptions, torn between deep influence of European Romantic idealism on him and his readings of the country’s rich philosophical tradition has been dealt with at length by Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay ‘Nation and Imagination’. But my present concern is to trace the process of internalization of the nationalist concerns, and the interplay of diverse currents and cross-currents within the psyche of the hero of the novel. It seems that the process of ‘self-fashioning’ is necessitated to a large extent by the process of imagining the nation. This resulted in a curious case of merger of the process of ‘subject’ formation and the ideational conceptualisation of the ‘nation’. Cross-cultural comparisons are always potentially dangerous. Therefore, I wish to very tentatively propose, that the predicaments of Tagore’s hero, Gora and of Mann’s hero Castorp are like those of Derek Walcott who once commented, ‘... I am a nobody or I am the Nation.’ Closer home, in coping with nationalist cross-currents as inner vectors Gora has real-life counterparts in flamboyant, contemporary iconic figures of Swami Vivekananda and Brahmabandhab Upadhyay. Both of them were restless spirits struggling to overcome their inner contradictions.

The point I am trying to make is that Gora’s character could be considered a replica of a certain identity type in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Bengal and the fictionalised act of fashioning ‘selves’ were very much a part of contemporary concerns for a longish period of time during the composition of Tagore’s major political novels. In both *Ghare baire* (1916) and *Char adhyay* (1934) the split between ‘nationalism’ and ‘nationalist consciousness’ is formulated by the conflicting discourses enunciated within the common space of the tripartite sets of relationships of Nikhilesh-Bimala-Sandip and Atin-Ela-Indranath. In *Ghare baire* the ‘constructed’ variety of mainstream ‘nationalism’ is projected through the conception of Sandip’s character. His point of view unmistakably emanates the politico-cultural agenda of the anti-colonial discourse of the times: ‘He (Sandip) knew about my husband’s views regarding the *Bandemataram* hymn and by referring to that he asked, ‘Do not you agree, Nikhil that there is place for the ‘imaginative’ faculty of man in the service to the country?’ ‘Our countrymen will not awake until they can visualise
the country. The country needs a deity . . . the deity which has been a traditional icon has to be remade as the nation’s deity ‘I cannot leave my nation, especially today; I shall merge Bimala with my nation.’ Nikhilesh’s is the dissenting voice. He believes that God must be manifest in other countries, too, and there is no scope for hatred of them. He believes that countries which live by oppressing others have to answer for it; their history has not yet ended. He says to Sandip. ‘When you wish to make current unjust action as responsibility, irreligion as virtue by calling the nation a deity my heart aches and I cannot sit still.’ He clarifies his position: ‘My India is not solely Bhadralok’s India. I clearly know that the deeper the downtrodden sink the deeper my country sinks, the more they die the more my country dies.’ He diagnoses the malaise of official nationalist discourse; its limitation for being an eminently Hindu, upper caste, elite discourse. The unhappy consciousness of the chasm between the elite and the subaltern in the project of ‘imagining’ the nation, dogs Gora too, naggingly throughout the novel. Sandip’s and Nikhilesh’s competing discourses are played upon the psychological space provided by Bimala’s consciousness in Ghare baire.

In Char adhyay, Ashis Nandy refers to a curious psychological bonding between Indranath and Atin over and above their differences in appropriating and articulating the nationalist discourse. He says, ‘neither can disown the other, for each is the other’s double’: we shall see more of this process of doubling during our discussions on the textual strategies of Gora. Discussion of this novel will follow in the concluding section of this chapter.

We shall, however, keep in mind that any literary text has ‘verbal-ideological life’ which is different in nature from the real world. Of late there has risen a tendency among cultural historians and social scientists to take up literary texts as supportive examples for cultural theories — a kind of critical practice where texts serve the purpose of being discursive planes where theories of social science can be fitted into. Literary works usually have a far more complicated nature, heavily nuanced multifaceted structure for such kind of straight-forward critical correspondences. We should do well to remember, following Bakhtin, that when a man is in art, he is not in life, and vice versa. We, therefore, need critical models which are more flexible and more dynamic — capable of decoding the multi-layered language of a novelistic ‘chronotope’ — which can sometimes show, during minute analysis, encoding of discursive formations quite different in nature from the dominant ideological
structures of contemporary society.

Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay ‘Discourse in the Novel’ brings up the concept of ‘heteroglossia’:

. . . the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a ‘unitary language’ operate in the midst of ‘heteroglossia’ . . . Stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work . . . The authentic environment of the utterance; the environment in which it lives and takes shape is dialogised heteroglossia.\(^{36}\)

According to Bakhtin, while poetic genres largely develop ‘under the influence of the unifying centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal ideological life’ — the novel and other similar genres offer, with the help of the creative potentials ingrained in their artistic forms, an autonomous, well-defined plane where the play of dialogisation of discourses of — heteroglossia – takes place. I shall show in my discussion how the unifying discourse of ‘official nationalism’ which is centripetal in nature, is dialogised with the discourse of national consciousness, which is centrifugal in nature. This happens in and around the act of fashioning a nationalist self — exemplified by the shapings of Gora’s character and the search for the ‘imagined’ nation, again a motive largely articulated by Gora’s character — and the innumerable comments uttered from the subject positions occupied by characters like Paresh Babu, Binoy, Anandamoyi and others.

Let us begin with the formulations of the domains of the material and the spiritual and their mutual alterity in this nationalism when it attempts to articulate a ‘modern national culture that is non-Western’\(^{37}\) — in the words of Gora:

It is just because India has desired to acknowledge, fully, both the opposite aspects of subtle and gross — inner and outer, spirit and body — that those who cannot grasp the subtle aspect have the opportunity to seize upon the gross, and, their ignorance working on it, results in these extraordinary distortions, . . . it would never do for us to cut ourselves off from . . . the One who is true, both in forms and in formlessness in materials as well as in spiritual manifestation . . . or to commit the folly of accepting instead . . . the combination of Theism and Atheism, dry, narrow and unsubstantial, evolved
by eighteenth-century Europe.\textsuperscript{38}

And when Binoy asks Gora about the whereabouts of his India — his ‘imagined community’ Gora’s answer is extremely rhetorical:

“And where is this India of yours?” pursued Binoy.

“Where the point of this compass of mine turns by day and by night,” exclaimed Gora, placing his hand on his heart. “There — not in your Marshman’s ‘History of India.’” . . . “I may miss my task; I may sink and drown, but that port of a great Destiny is always there. That is my India in its fullness — full of wealth, full of knowledge, full of righteousness. Do you mean to say that such India is nowhere? Is there nothing but this falsehood on every side! This Calcutta of yours, with its offices, its High Court, and its few babbles of brick and mortar! Poof!” (p.17)

Sudipta Kaviraj in his essay ‘The Imaginary Institution of India’ comments that the narration of nation (of Gora’s kind in this case) is accompanied by the formation of a national collective-self and its entry into some sort of a narrative contract with the history of the nation – narrated as a history of a community.\textsuperscript{39} In Gora’s words: ‘This message of India some may understand, some may not — that makes no difference to my feeling that I am one with all India, that all her people are mine; and I have no doubt that through all of them, the spirit of India is secretly but constantly working.’ (p.104) This feeling is just one step away from the merger of processes of fashioning the nationalist ‘self’ and imagining the nation. Echoes of the programmatic nationalist discourse for the construction of a new Bangali race can be heard quite distinctly in Gora’s utterances:

. . . said Gora to himself, “it has always been the rule in our country for those who have to bear the burden of the welfare of all to remain aloof. The idea that a king can protect his subjects by mixing intimately with them is entirely without foundation . . . The Brahmin too should preserve this aloofness, this detachment. . . . Gora was ready to-day to devote himself to the realisation of the life-giving mantram of the Brahmins. He said to himself that he must keep absolutely uncontaminated. “I do not stand on the same level as others.” He said, “for me friendship is not necessary, and I do not belong to that common class of people for whom the companionship of woman is a sweet to be
enjoyed ... (p.385)

Just as in the world there can be no rest for Brahmins, so in the worship of the Gods there is for them no room for the enjoyment of devotion. This is the Brahmin’s glory. In the world, restraint and obedience to rules was for Brahmins, and in their practice of religion, knowledge. (p.386)

For a man like Gora it would not do to be deluded by his own desires — he must be indifferent to joy or sorrow. He was a Brahmin of India, it was for him to worship the Divine Being on behalf of India, and his work was that of religious austerities. Desire and attachment were not for him and Gora said to himself, ‘...I am a sanyasi, in my realisation and worship it can have no place.’ (p.378)

The words quoted above are perhaps the truest possible articulations of the reformulated idea of nationalist ‘masculinity’ — one that blends the virility of Kshatratej with the wisdom of Brahmatej; one which is ascetic in nature and one who follows celibacy and shuns romantic involvements and most importantly one who is devoted to the cause of the colonized nation. To quote Indira Chowdhury:

‘The devoted nationalist sanyasi ... was dedicated to liberating the Mother Country. Vivekananda’s reconstruction of this alternative masculinity, powerfully redirected the purpose of spirituality within Hindu religious norms.’

This observation reminds us of another one of hers made earlier in the same essay — about nationalism’s act of valorization of the Hindu culture, ingrained in Hindu religion and its customs. The act of ‘self fashioning’ delineated through Gora’s character also seems to be encoded in staunch ‘Hindu’ idioms. The discursive formations of Hindutva find articulation in Gora’s voice too:

...you (Sucharita) must understand that the Hindu religion takes in its lap, like a mother, people of different ideas and opinions; in other words, the Hindu religion looks upon man only as man, and does not count him as belonging to a particular party. It honours not only the wise but the foolish also, and it shows respect not merely to one form of wisdom but to wisdom in all aspects ... We fail to see that through this diversity Hinduism is coming to realise the oneness of all. (p.296)

So far I have been referring to the centripetal forces of the verbal-ideological
world of the period of Gora’s composition in the form of the rising ‘nationalism’. Now is the time to notice how the dominant discourses are ‘dialogised’ by the centrifugal tendencies of that period. Paresh Babu’s observation regarding the nature and the existing manifestations of ‘Hinduism’ will throw up what Bakhtin would call ‘dialogised heteroglossia’:

“In other words,” commented Paresh Babu, “you (Sucharita) mean to ask me why I myself do not call myself a Hindu? . . . there is a very deep inner reason, and it is that there is no way of obtaining entrance into the Hindu society. At any rate there is no royal high road, though there may be some back doors. That society is not one for all mankind it is only for those whose destiny it is to be born Hindus.” (p.355)

If I live in England long enough and follow their customs, then I can be included in the English Society . . . Now for a Hindu it is just the opposite. The way for entering their society is altogether closed, but there are thousands of ways out . . . The Hindu society insults and abandons men, and for that reason nowadays, it is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve our self-respect. (p.356)

Now if we look closely at Gora’s and Paresh Babu’s speeches we shall notice that while Gora’s speech exudes the confidence in the lenient face of Hinduism (having a touch of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa’s famous dictum Jato mat tato path in it) arrested in a synchronic idealistic state, Paresh Babu’s comments point our attention to the diachronic metamorphoses of Hinduism and its current state of affairs. Readers are given an opportunity to choose their pick.

Gora’s vow of celibacy and choice of the life of an ascetic, built around his love of country —and which draws out, in his own words, ‘my blood, the very marrow of my bones; my sky, my light, in fact my all’ (p.70) — a goal which is in turn, legitimised by Gora’s comment to Binoy, ‘We must select for ourselves the field on which we would focus our attention and forgo our greed for all the rest outside it, else we shall never find the truth at all’ (p.69) — is made to face the heteroglossia — through the discourse of romantic love uttered by Binoy:

“Gora,” said Binoy ecstatically, “I can tell you for certain that one means by which in a single moment man’s whole nature can be awakened is this love —
no matter what the reason is, there is no doubt that amongst us the manifestation of this love is weak and therefore all of us are deprived of a complete realisation of ourselves . . . (p.375)

The ‘split’ which I have mentioned earlier in this chapter present in the project of fashioning nationalist ‘self’ — brought about by the articulation of the national consciousness — synthesising in spirit, is clearly discernible in the dialogical encounter between ‘centripetal’ and ‘centrifugal’ forces — Gora’s and Binoy’s conflicting discourses: ‘“I see!” exclaimed Binoy. “Either Binoy’s course or Gora’s. I am out to fulfill myself — you to give yourself up.”’ (p.69) The dialogic principle, therefore, we can say, is most consistently observed in this text. The chronotopic plane of the novel is the battleground not only for the rival discourses of Hinduism and Brahmoism, present in the novel with their orthodox faces, but also for the conflict between the monoglossic tendencies of these discourses and the universalising discourses of national consciousness. The conflicts between two orthodox discourses or between the orthodox and liberal discourses are represented in the novel through innumerable exchanges of dialogue involving mostly Gora and Haran Babu — Binoy, Sucharita, Paresh Babu, Anandamoyi providing necessary counterpoints in turn. The text of Gora seems to be a perfect example of Bakhtin’s principle, ‘A unitary language is not something given [dan] but is always in essence posited [zadan] — and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia’.

On a deeper psychological level, the overt masculinity of Gora’s character is counter-balanced by the positive androgynous natures of Binoy and Anandamoyi. Binoy is soft-natured, sensitive, and romantic and not at all domineering — one who is less likely to lead a team of followers. His emotional resolves are achieved after much trepidation. His characteristic bent is very much like what we call the ‘caring’-type, in contemporary terminology. His suavity at times seems somewhat effeminate in comparison to Gora’s macho, virile demeanour. In short, there are manifestations of certain characteristic qualities in Binoy which during the period of the rise of the ‘masculine’ nationalist ‘self’ are categorised as woman-like i.e. qualities which befit the female-folks. On the other hand, Gora’s mother Anandamoyi’s character shows signs of robust mental strength, clarity of thought, and power of differentiating customs and superstitions and most importantly rigorous reasoning ability. These are
all qualities which would have suited immaculately with the image of a ‘liberal’ ‘male’ social-reformer of Bengal in the nineteenth century. Binoy’s and Anandamoyi’s characters are fictional representations of the breaking down of male/female ‘binary opposites’ of nationalist discourse and also projections of alternative ‘androgyny’. Ashis Nandy has draws our attention to how Mahatma Gandhi changed the colonial culture’s ordering of sexual identities, from

\[\text{Purushtva} > \text{Naritva} > \text{Klibatva}\]

to,

\[\text{Naritva} > \text{Purushtva} > \text{Kapurushatva}\]^{43}

Nandy also refers to Gandhi’s act of picking out the doctrine of power through divine bi-unity which was prevalent in some of the \textit{vamachari} sects. Their equation was as follows:

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Androgyny

\[\left\uparrow\right\downarrow\]

\text{Purushtva}
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\text{Naritva}

Nandy writes, ‘Manliness and womanliness are equal, but the ability to transcend the man-woman dichotomy is superior to both, being an indicator of godly and saintly qualities.’^{44} Whereas Binoy’s ‘self’ shows positive androgynous qualities, thereby serving the purpose of acting as the ‘double’ of hyper-masculine Gora, it is Anandamoyi’s everyday womanliness which enables her to touch the true spirit of synthesis found in the rich Indian tradition.

But the idea that is most seriously dialogised in the novel is the idea of ‘national’ community and the element of casteism ingrained in it. This happens not through the encounter of two contradictory consciousnesses. It is through the event of internal splitting that takes place within the process of change discernible in Gora’s consciousness. The narrated form of his India — the ‘imagined community’ uttered by Gora himself:

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But there is a true India, rich and full, and unless we take our stand there we shall not be able to draw upon the sap of life either by our intellect or by our heart. Therefore, I say, forget everything — book-learning, the illusion of titles, the temptations of servile livelihood; renounce the attractions of all these
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and let us launch the ship towards its post . . . It is because it is so vital for us that I at least can never forget the true and complete image of India. (p.18)

The idea of this ‘India’ is severely fractured once Gora’s encounter with the subaltern India takes place:

But Gora saw the image of his country’s weakness, naked and unashamed, in the midst of the lethargy of village-life where the blows from outside could not work so readily. He could see nowhere any trace of that religion which through service, love, compassion, self-respect and respect for humanity as a whole, gives power and life and happiness to all . . . In these villages the cruel and evil results of this blind bondage were so clearly seen by Gora in all kinds of ways . . . that it was no longer possible for him to delude himself by the web of delusion which his own mind had woven. (p.368)

Homi Bhabha, in a larger context, identifies this ‘split’ as the one between the ‘pedagogical’ and the ‘performative’ in the production of the nation as narration.45 I want to refer to one small incident of ‘silence’ present within the narrative framework of the text that can give us important clues about the ‘split’ between the empirical life of the nation and the officially narrated nation. In chapter XVII Gora and Binoy go to visit the neighbourhood for doing the rounds of their regular social work. On reaching there they come to learn about the sudden and extremely unexpected death of Gora’s enthusiastic follower, Nanda — the youthful son of a carpenter. Nanda, we are told, used to be a very accomplished cricket player. In the mixed company of the elite and the subaltern members of the Sports and Cricket club founded by Gora in the neighborhood ‘Nanda stood easily first in every kind of manly exercise.’ (p.78) Nanda could have been an ideal signifier for the virile young generation of the emerging nation in its anticolonial struggle. But Nanda dies even before the early glimpses of his potential could be noticed. And the manner in which he dies — spread of tetanus infection in a small wound inflicted by a chisel as Nanda gets treatment from a local exorcist — speaks volumes of the chasm existing between the elite, nationalist projects of fighting with the imperial rules and setting up indigenous institution of nation-state and the real mass of illiterate subaltern classes, living amidst poverty, superstition, caste systems, unhygienic surroundings and other social evils. Sumit Sarkar in his essay ‘Early Nationalist Activity in Bengal’ gives a list of social groups attracted by the Swadeshi movement and their class orientations speak everything for
the class-character of the ‘constructed’ nationalism. In his words: ‘The groups attracted by Swadeshi comprised educated youths, lawyers, teachers, journalists, doctors, zamindari officials some (though by no means all) big landlords, as well as section of the clerical staff of government office firms and a few industries.’46 Thus, we are back again to S. C. Sarkar’s argument that both the ‘Revivalist’ nationalism and the ‘Liberal’ national consciousness were products of the ‘Bengal Renaissance’. So, here is an inescapable cultural bind that existed for the anticolonial consciousness which was brought about by the encounter with the western civilization and learning under the western education systems. The advocates of both ‘nationalism’ and liberal ‘national consciousness’ were in no position to bypass this cultural bind. In the text, the impasse is recorded by a comment made by Mohim, the pragmatic to the point being cynical, elder brother of Gora: (to Gora) “‘Is this the kind of Hindu you are?’ broke out Mohim. “For all your caste-marks and tikis, your English education has got right into your bones.”’ (p.63) In the next section of the essay, the fictional representation of the inescapable cultural bind, borne out of colonial encounters will be discussed. I hope to show that heteroglossia does not operate only through verbal articulation. The ‘silences’ and unconscious drives of a text also fall under the broad spectrum of different heteroglossic possibilities.

The Desire of the Metropolitan-West

Parallels are sometimes drawn between the traits of ‘in-betweenness’ present in the conceptions of characters in Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* and Tagore’s *Gora*. Both characters are treated as curious cases of ‘cultural miscegenation’. But there is a fundamental difference between the predicaments of the two characters. Kim is an orphaned Irish boy who lives like any other Indian street-child in Lahore. He is vaguely aware of his whiteness which is, however, tanned by the Indian sun and he has picked up the Indian tongue exceptionally well whereas for Gora, the disclosure of his foreignness comes at the very end of the novel (chapter XXVIII). Till that point Gora struggles hard to live up to his status of an upper-caste pious Hindu in a society that is going through rough times due to the arrival of the Christian missionaries and the establishment of ‘Brahmoism’. His attempts are always directed towards bridging the gap between ‘self’ and the ‘Imaginary Other’ which is manifested to him in the guise of the saviour of his country:
Gora had a firm conviction in his mind that the majority of events in his life were not accidental and that they were not merely the result of his own individual wishes. He believed that he had taken birth for the fulfillment of some special purpose of the Ruler of his country’s destiny (p.377)

“Those whom you call illiterate are those to whose party I belong. What you call superstition that is my faith! So long as you do not love your country and take your stand beside your own people, I will not allow one word of abuse of the motherland from you” (p.50)

We have already shown that this emotional drive of jealously guarding or even resurrecting the country’s Hindu heritage in a newly ‘fashioned’ spiritual, masculine way is a colonial construction that is tied to the cultural bind, borne out of the country’s encounter with the colonizer’s civilization.

Thus breaking into the unconscious of the text we can see that Gora’s character is a migratory signifier of the colonized’s ‘desire of the Other’ and the textual strategy of deferment of Gora’s true identity to Gora offers different perspectives within the text as well as the text’s relationship with the reader so as to make sense of colonial experience retrospectively. This idea can be represented in the form of triangles:

I. 1. Realist’s pure objectivity

2. Imaginary delusion

3. Symbolic perspective

II. 1. Gora

2. Anandamoyi

3. Reader
While the first triangle is a representative of the general process of how meaning is produced in a text, the second triangle is the specific conditions of the text *Gora*. In the first triangle position 1 might be seen as that of pure objectivity and position 2 might be seen as that of pure subjectivity and a subject in position 3 understands both kinds of limitations retrospectively and arrives at his own interpretation. In *Gora*, Gora’s character is posited at position 1 as the authority figure who is lost in the sense of his own supremacy (that he is born with a special mission, that he is not equal to others - that he is the protector of Hinduism) and Anandamoyi occupies position 2 as she is endowed with the knowledge of Gora’s Christian blood. She thinks, as a result of this factor, that she is in possession of a pure private meaning: that all of Gora’s attempts to become an ideal Hindu will be futile. The Hindu society will not accept him once the secrecy of his birth is disclosed. The reader’s position is at the third point of the triangle. He understands the futility of Gora’s gestures of traditional Hindu piety and also Anandamoyi’s faith in Gora’s uniqueness as well as her apprehensions regarding the possible disclosure of the secret. But, the alert reader understands that Gora’s western genealogy is a symbolic representation of the cultural bind faced by all colonized subjects. Fanon says, ‘what is often called the black soul is a white man’s artifact’. Thus in the novel Gora’s search for authentic forms of patriotism and his true self is, somewhat like the purloined letter of Poe’s famous story — a signifier of the unconscious desire — in search of a stable signified. The deferment of Gora’s arrival at a stable subjectivity and true patriotism is, thus, a hint of the character’s presence in the novel as a form of free-play of a migratory signifier. As the inter-subjective perceptions regarding Gora’s nature are revealed in the text, these perceptions, in turn, determine in what the characters in the text do and are. Binoy’s perceptions of Gora’s nature, Anandamoyi’s and those of Sucharita are evidences of the colonized’s, arrival at ‘subjectivity’ in respect to the ‘desire of the Other’:

He (Binoy) said: “Our scriptures say *Know thyself* — for knowledge is liberation. I can tell you that my friend Gora is India’s self-knowledge incarnate. I can never think of him as an ordinary man. While the minds of all the rest of us are scattered in different directions by every trifling attraction, or by the temptation of novelty, he is the one man who stands firm amidst all distractions, uttering in a voice of thunder the *mantram*: ‘*Know thyself*’.
. . . said Anandamoyi, “Whatever I have learnt comes from Gora all the same! — How true man is himself and how false the things about which quarrels divide man from man. What after all is the difference, my son, between Brahma and orthodox Hindu? There is no caste in men’s hearts — there God brings men together and there He Himself comes to them. (p.183)

. . . she (Sucharita) thought to herself: “Gora’s words are not mere words, they are Gora himself. His speech has form and movement, it has life; it is full of the power of faith and the pain of love for his country. His are not opinions that can be settled by contradicting them. They are the whole man himself — and, that too, no ordinary man. (p.122)

The migratory nature of ‘Gora – the signifier of unconscious desire’ can be traced by the embedding in the narrative of Gora’s disappearance. Gora gets arrested by the Police due to flimsiest of reasons — for trying to protect a group of young students from the wrath of a police constable and picking up a fight with him — not for any great ‘nationalist’ cause — and disappears from the narrative of the text from Chapter XXX. He returns in Chapter LI — after his release from prison — after more than 100 pages of the text. But the ‘phonocentrism’, evident in Sucharita’s consciousness quoted above, ensures the metaphysics of Gora’s presence even in absence not only for Sucharita but for other characters as well. Therefore, as regards to the text’s unconscious, the signifier of desire never disappears completely. It keeps on coming above the surface in different guises — as different signifieds for different characters.

The disclosure of Gora’s true identity from the point of view of the textual strategies — is an act of exhausting the signifier of all kinds of commonly perceived signified. Gora’s self is not to be conceived in any conventional racial or religious categories — he is neither Hindu nor Christian — not even a non-Hindu or a non-Christian. He is neither Indian nor an Irish, not even a non-Indian or a non-Irish. So since the signifier has no fixed signified it has the capacity to stand for almost any kind of racial and religious combination. We have, once again arrived at a kind of internationalism (or, it would be more appropriate to call it ‘cosmopolitanism’, following recent polemical trends) — the universalism where national consciousness
should ultimately lead us to. And S. C. Sarkar tells us that Tagore’s sense of universalism is largely built on his unshakable faith in the positive aspects of western civilization.49 The colonized can never be completely free from the cultural persuasions of the metropolitan West. The ‘West’ permeates all the liberal actions of colonial subjects, albeit in a varying degree — and in this respect Gora’s call for the low-birth Lachmia in the ‘Epilogue’ of the novel is perhaps the most famous fictitious account of a gesture made by an enlightened nationalist to show his universalist liberal self. This is due to the bilingual intellectual’s inescapable cultural bind — his irreversible gaze towards the metropolitan — ‘West’.

Nationalist Self Fashioning and the Question of Violence

At the heart of power is the cultivation of cruelty; forgiveness may come in the end.

Indranath, Rabindranath Tagore, Four Chapters50

. . . to use physical force against those with whom we are totally unequal, to engage fist upon fist with them using brute force can only end in brutalising our very being.

Atin, Four Chapters51

In this section we shall discuss ‘violence’ and the intricate nature of the relationship that exists between nationalist self and the idea of violence. From Gora Tagore’s first political novel we shall now move straight to his last, i.e. Four Chapters. I shall now try to see how within a passage of time, spanning roughly three decades, Tagore’s views regarding the nature of a national identity evolves and he ultimately concentrates his attention on the question of violence, political and other kinds, and its intricate relationship with notions of a ‘nationalist self’.

Shibnath Shastri published a comprehensive study of the nineteenth century Bengali society in 1904. He decided to name it Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Bangasamaj, after a major figure of the society of the times. In 1925, Surendranath Banerjea, an important political figure and one of the makers of early modern India, published his autobiography, A Nation in Making: Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life. So, as we have mentioned earlier, during the formation of the nationalist discourse in India history witnessed a unique merger of the ‘Nation’ and the
'Self'. Thus, imagining the nation and search for a self became the twin projects of early nationalist leaders in our country. In the world of Bengali fiction too, during Tagore's times, the works of major novelists (from Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay to Saratchandra Chattopadhyay) contained a consistent concern for the search for a 'national self.' The list of such texts should include, among others, *Anandamath* (1882) and *Pather Dabi* (1926). Rabindranath's major novels, too, written over the span of almost three decades – from *Chokher Bali* in 1903 to *Char adhyay* in 1934 – show similar concerns, through the portrayals of important male protagonists in all the texts. The idea of the 'national self' is presented, like a *leitmotif*, in texts like *Gora*, *Ghare baire* or *Char adhyay*, following a clear dialogic principle. This principle is realised by pairings of two contrasting individuals in the texts. So, if one reads these texts one after another s/he will surely witness a fascinating array of studies of opposite personalities in them. It all began with Mahendra-Bihari; and the list includes Gora-Binoy, Sachis-Sribilash, Nikhilish-Sandip and finally Indranath-Atin.

Just to recapitulate a little bit, in western epistemology, the idea of 'universal man' has been largely synonymous with 'white, European male.' Similarly, in the colonial context in India, in the dominant nationalist discourse, the issue of fashioning a 'nationalist self' was deeply embedded in ideas like masculinity and virility, circling around an 'ideal male self.' (*Kshatratej* and *Brahmatej* are two common coinages, denoting 'Eastern,' essentially Hindu-ascetic brand of counter-machismo of a colonized race, which enjoyed powerful currency during the rise of the nationalist discourse in late 19th and early 20th century India). Social scientists in India have unearthed this tendency evident in nationalist consciousness fairly a long time back. I would like to refer to two such important studies, among others: Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy* and Indira Chowdhury's *The Frail Hero and Virile History*. Chowdhury, in her book, discusses at length, how the new 'nationalist' brand of masculinity was to be for the Hindu a more desirable masculinity. Its aim was to subvert the colonial projection of a ‘superior’ western masculinity. In this way was born the figure of the devoted nationalist *sanyasi* whose spiritualism was directed towards the moral and political purposes of the emerging ‘nation’— its embodiments in political figure like Aurobindo and other *swadeshi* activists who devoted their lives for the cause of liberating the Mother Country. Nandy, on the other hand, analyses how Gandhi ultimately provincialises the 'nationalist' brand of virility by changing the
colonial culture’s ordering of sexual identities, from Purushtva > Naritva > Klibatva to Naritva > Purushtva > Kapurusatva. My effort has been so far to show how Tagore, too, in his novels, fractures the grand narrative of nationalist masculinity by consistently practising a dialogic principle, realised through debates and discussions among the 'virile' protagonists and their 'doubles' in the text. In fact, he always opposed vehemently against any such process of ideological interpellation, whether it involved 'violence' or 'non-violence.' He believed in the uniqueness of every individual. This led him to protest against Mahatma Gandhi's creed of the 'charkha', a mass of people blindly following a unitary principle. Thus, from his championing the cause of awakening 'atmashakti' to his trenchant critique of the use of violence in achieving political independence – Tagore, the polemicist as well as Tagore, the activist, always stood firm in his faith that each single individual is a unique creation of the Almighty. To him, it is for the best possible interest of all concerned that the individuality of each human being must not be curbed or moulded into a predetermined pattern but be given adequate opportunity to flourish to his full potential. It will, thus, not be an overstatement to say that search for an 'ideal' manhood forms the mainstay of the community that Tagore creates in his novels and novelettes.

I shall now take up Char adhyay (Four Chapters), Tagore's last and most controversial novel from the point of view of nationalist self and the issue of violence. Long shadows of prominent figures of contemporary Bangali samaj fall on this text: the figures of Swami Vivekananda, Brahmobandhab Upadhyay and Aurobindo Ghosh. Satish Chandra Basu formed Anushilan Samiti in Calcutta, the most famous of all secret societies which mushroomed during the Swadeshi Movement, at 21 Madan Mitra Lane, March 24, 1902 onward. On 16th October 1905, the Partition of Bengal was officially announced. In the middle of 1906, Yugantar, the paper for publishing articles on political goals and strategies of many secret societies saw the light of day. Aurobindo Ghosh joined Bande Mataram, the English daily edited by Bipinchandra Pal, in March 1907, and was arrested for treason on 16th August as the government suspected him to be the author of a volatile, anti-state essay published in that paper. On 30th April 1908, two English women died in a bomb attack in Muzzaffarpur and within 48 hours a major crack-down by the police took place in Muraripukur, Maniktalla. These are important dates as far as the beginnings of armed resistance.
against the British are concerned. Those were really turbulent times.

This movement, extremist in direction and goal, forms the backdrop of the novel. In fact, the first edition of *Char adhyay* (1934) carried an 'Abhash' ('Pre-text') by Tagore in which there is a direct reference to Upadhyay. This, in fact, was deleted by Rabindranath himself from subsequent Bangla editions as it was considered by many to be insulting to Brahmatandhab and other revolutionaries like him. Words and expressions such as man, manliness, bravery and valour abound in this text: in fact, in a rather short novel like this, such words occur more than thirty times. The discursive treatment of manhood, however, has an important corollary in the text: violence. The dialogism that we witness between Indranath and Atin here is significantly different from the same feature noticed in Tagore's other texts. Unlike other texts, here, Indranath and Atin do not engage in direct 'wit-combats.' Secondly, in texts like *Gora* and *Ghare baire*, prototypes of 'nationalist self' like Gora and Sandip fail to fundamentally change the natures of their 'doubles' – respectively Binoy and Nikhilesh – till the very end of the novels. But, in *Char adhyay* we see the 'verbal-ideographic worlds' of Indranath and Atin ultimately coalesce. Atin turns ‘swadharmahrashto’ (deviated from the path of one's own ethical framework) and ‘swabhabyuto’ (fallen from one's own nature) in the end when he tries to follow Indranath's instruction to erase Ela permanently. The link that finally binds Indranath and Atin is violence.

In his masterly study of decolonisation, Frantz Fanon, way back in 1961, makes a blanket statement about the relationship between nationalist struggle and violence in the very first sentence of the chapter, 'Concerning Violence.' He writes, 'National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of the nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon.' Fanon goes on to say, 'The native intellectual has clothed his aggressiveness in his barely veiled desire to assimilate himself to the colonial world. He has used his aggressiveness to serve his own individual interests.' Rabindranath goes for an even more in-depth analysis of the malaise, as he identifies that in the 'official' project of nationalism, the self-fashioned nationalist male almost always resorts to violence in the act of self-articulation. *Ghare baire* was written in 1916; and after eighteen long years Tagore writes *Char adhyay*. However, in both the texts, he uses the same imagery to record
the ruthlessly 'violent' nature of representatives of the 'nationalist self,' Sandip and Indranath. In *Ghare baire*, in one of his 'atmakathas,' Sandip writes:

> From time to time I try my followers in their lesson of cruelty. One day we went on a picnic. A goat was grazing by. I asked them: 'Who is there among you that can cut off a leg of that goat, alive, with this knife, and bring it to me?' While they all hesitated, I went myself and did it. One of them fainted at the sight. But when they saw me unmoved they took the dust of my feet, saying that I was above all human weakness.⁶⁰

In *Char adhyay* Indranath says to Ela:

> The other day I gave you a pistol and asked you to shoot a goat, a kid, with a pistol: you said you could never do it. Your cousin came up then and shot that with bravado. When she saw the animal crumpling down on its wounded leg, she feigned indifference and laughed out loudly. It was the laughter of hysteria. She could not sleep all night.⁶¹

The attack on the goat, thus, assumes symbolical proportions. The symbol is of violence for its own sake and cruelty at its most terrible, pathological form. Here, the equation between 'end' and 'means' has gone all haywire. The nationalist intellectual gets confused and is unable to handle heavy-weight issues like selfhood and nationalist liberation; in the process, his human nature encounters a huge blow. Lures of power and exercise of violence devour everything else, even the very fibre of one's own identity. We appreciate the potency of Amartya Sen's comment, ‘And yet identity can also kill – and kill with abandon.’⁶² The turn of events in the text seems to hint at the inevitable outcome of acknowledging violence as a possible means of labouring towards 'freedom.' Atin says:

> There is nothing I am incapable of doing. I've fallen into the very bottom of the abyss. The other day our group looted an elderly widow, living by herself, of all her possession. Manmatha knew her: they were bound by village ties. He had informed the group and directed us to her place. The old woman recognised him through his mask and cried out, ‘How could you do such a thing! For shame, my son!’ Once this was said, the old woman was not allowed to live. These hands carried the money to its destination. It was the nation's need. A need that has meant murdering of one's dharma.⁶³
The question which arises is, whether violence, as a principle, can be justified as the means to even an honourable end. In his essay ‘Chhoto o Baro’ Rabindranath writes:

Since the days of ‘swadeshi’ excitement I have been writing against the extremist movement. I have kept on saying that the reward that one gets by doing a wrong will never be at an affordable price; only the debt of the wrong will become terribly heavy . . .  

Use of violence against other human beings, even by 'freedom-fighters,' might result in moral degradation. In the same essay, Tagore comments, ‘The light of nation-worship has been lit, but what scenes are to be seen in that light – these burglaries, robberies and secret murders . . . the paths of theft and bravery would never ever meet at a crossroad.’

Upendranath Bandopadhyay, in *Nirbasiter atmakatha (Memoirs of a Deportee)*, writes:

Feeling of groupism and animosity against one member and another often resulted in disclosure of many secrets of many *samitis*. It is not at all surprising that the leaders of the race which has not had the taste of power for a long time would turn power-hungry. And if there is the tendency among the leaders to exhibit unnecessary mastery jealousy and dissatisfaction among the followers will be its inevitable result.

The issue seems a grievous one from another angle as violence unleashed in the public sphere will ultimately engulf domestic and other spheres too, albeit in different manifestations. In *Char adhyay* there is mention of domestic violence, meted by mothers-in-law and husbands alike to the hapless daughters-in-law of the Bangali households. Atin says:

I often hear of the inhuman torture inflicted on the new bride and I find the mother-in-law features as the chief heroine. But who gives her this right to commit crimes against which there is no resistance? It is the mother's little darling! Someone who does not have the courage to defend his wife's dignity against a tyrant.

In a poignant short-story, written much earlier, in 1914, named ‘Hoimonti’, Tagore dealt with the same issue of domestic violence, unleashed by the in-laws of the bride and helplessly watched by her young husband, resulting in her tragic, untimely death. Violence, thus, stems from weakness and a sense of inferiority. For a colonized race it
is, therefore, easy to fall prey to the short-term benefits of violence.

*Char adhyay* is a text where identity and violence and the interconnections between the two are shown to be a circular, discursive process in a race labouring under colonial rule. Indranath, the ‘mantradata’ [ideologue], acts as the chief agent for the legitimisation of violence:

It is only with the force of utterance that a demand is realised. Whatever we continue to believe of you, you will become. In the same way, you too must believe that our quest will be fulfilled.68

The circular nature of his argument is quite evident here. His comment is a classic example of the act of ideological interpellation of the individuals into positions of subjectivity. Atin aptly analyses this almost claustrophobic condition with the image of a juggernaut:

. . . that chariot of Jagannath that you call your ‘swadeshi’ duty – your nationalist sentiment. The ‘mantradata’ who initiates you with the sacred word, commands you to shut both your eyes, to shoulder the thick rope that is tied to the chariot, and then – only pull, all of you! That is your only work. Thousands of young men have gripped the rope; many have fallen under the wheels, and many others have been crippled for life. Then suddenly one day, it was the ‘ulta-rath’, the voyage of return . . . dancing the same steps at their leader’s command, they believed, awe-struck, that *this* was the very dance of power, of ‘shakti’.69

Sibaji Bandopadhyay, in his long essay on *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, 'Atho Ma Faleshu Kadaachano,' discusses how during the swadeshi movement, the *Gita* is appropriated both by the extremists and the *swadeshis*.70 The holy book metamorphoses into something akin to the *Thoughts of Chairman Mao* ('The Red Book') during the Cultural Revolution in China. Bandopadhyay mentions that during the first decade of the twentieth century the country witnessed a deluge in the form of translations from the *Gita*. There came out twenty English and nineteen different Bangla translations of this text; twenty-three of the thirty-nine translators were Bengalis. Even Girindrasekhar Bose, the pioneering Indian psychoanalyst and the founder of Indian Psychoanalytic Society came up with his brand of 'psychoanalytical' commentary of the *Gita* in *Pravasi* (his book-length study *Gitabyakhya* was later
published in 1949).™ There was a curious simultaneity between the publications of various versions of the *Gita* and the establishments of a number of secret societies in Kolkata and its neighbouring ‘mufassil’ [suburban] towns. Sumit Sarkar writes, around this time, extremism in Bengal ‘diverted a whole generation of educated youth into the path of elite action’ and in that process postponed ‘any move to draw the masses into active political struggle.’™ Bandopadhyay shows that it is interesting to note that in the rather ‘elite’ swadeshi commentary of the *Gita*, one particular ‘sloka’ (2/47) assumed the importance of an oath for the young, fearless revolutionaries, ‘He demands of those who aspire to do His work . . . to do work for Him without the demand for fruit.’™ This is precisely the ‘sloka’ that Indranath recites in *Char adhyay* too, ‘And after this, *karmenyavadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadacana* . . . You have a right to action only, not the fruit thereof.’™ Rimli Bhattacharya in her ‘Afterword' to the translation of *Char adhyay* makes a separate section entitled, 'The Gita, the invisible text of *Char adhyay*.™ The revolutionaries, in their selective appropriation of this great text and settling for their own interpretation, justified their amoral stance as far as resorting to violent acts is concerned. Krishna’s advice to Arjuna before the commencement of the Kurukshetra battle was often lifted and used in all kinds of contexts in order to justify any action. In his discussion, Bandopadhyay shows how the swadeshi intellectuals overlooked the three-tier structure of human perfection, ‘Ksharapurush’, ‘Aksharapurush’ and ‘Purushottam’. The motive-less, self-less action referred to in the ‘sloka’ is most likely to be realisable for the self, possessing the highest level of perfection. To perform such an action requires an 'ideal matrix.' For such a 'matrix' there is hardly any distinction between *Zeitgeist* and one's own nature. Yet, for an imperfect 'matrix' such an attempt may prove counter-productive. What is relevant for our discussion is that the revolutionaries tried to justify many of their 'actions' (‘Violent acts like killing of the British, robbery and looting were often referred to, in one word, as “action.”’) as 'just' as they thought that they were merely following the *Zeitgeist* and, therefore, had risen above the moral/immoral binary.™ Indranath, in *Char adhyay*, thus, begins to look quite similar to the intellectual Nihilist hero, Raskalnikov, in Dostoevsky's novel, *Crime and Punishment*, who is out to commit a 'perfect' murder, a thoroughly dispassionate act. Interestingly, like Raskalnikov, in the text, Indranath too is a highly qualified intellectual who is without any regular vocation and who has taken up the cause of the nation, and in the process, has fallen in love with the charms of disinterested cruelty.
In his extremely dense philosophical essay, 'Critique of Violence,' (1927) Walter Benjamin makes a distinction between 'mythical violence' and 'divine violence.' For him, law-making is power-making, and, to that extent, an immediate manifestation of violence. Violence, for him, manifests itself both in its law-making and law-preserving avatars. We are reminded of Benjminian 'mythical violence' as Atin comments in *Char adhyay*:

Men are transient creatures, but many — right from *Bhagwan Manu* to his latest incarnation in modern times — have taken on the responsibility of making permanent cages, permanent structures that will last mankind an eternity. ‘Is any non-violent resolution of conflict possible?’ asks Benjamin, and he himself provides a rather Kantian answer:

Non-violent agreement is possible wherever a civilized outlook allows the use of the unalloyed means of agreement. Legal and illegal means of every kind that are all the same violent may be confronted with non-violent ones as unalloyed means. Courtesy, sympathy, peaceableness, trust and whatever else might be mentioned here, are their subjective precondition. Kant figures once again in the most recent writing of Ranajit Guha, the octogenarian historian-philosopher. In 2010, almost a century after Benjamin's essay, he writes:

In the promise and protection of sympathy the community that is formed is, according to Kantian theory, called society. In relation to that, sociability is to be understood as the instinct and quality to form that community, which is the other name for humanity. . . A combination of universal communicability and universal sympathy, according to Kant, is the chief characteristic of humanity wherein lies the chief distinction between human and sub-human beasts. 'Universal sympathy' and 'universal communicability' are what we would term two main pillars of 'cosmopolitanism,' something Tagore tried to practise a century ago even when his own country was under foreign rule. His project of developing a university, following the model of famous institutions of antiquity which were centres of cross-cultural exchange, where the whole world will make its own nest, was a clear step in that direction which resulted in the founding of Visva-Bharati. In *Char adhyay*, we can clearly see how Tagore provincializes the inherently exclusionist discourse of nationalism when he makes Atin utter:
All over the world there are nationalists who have begun to announce in bestial voices the terrible lie that you may save the country only after you've killed its very spirit. I protest this in my mind, racked by an unbearable pain.\textsuperscript{81}

In his \textit{Kaifiyat/Response} to the novel Tagore writes:

\begin{quote}
The only thing that may properly be called the theme of this narrative is the love between Ela and Atindra . . . there is passion within and the conflict of circumstances without. It is in the play of both that love acquires its individual composite character.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

Many would write off Tagore's comments as effusive ones and as defensive gestures on the face of the controversies surrounding the treatment of extremist politics in Bengal, in this text, during his own times. But, we must never forget that romantic love, love between a man and a woman is the most prominent theme in all of Tagore's major novels – \textit{Chokher bali}, \textit{Gora}, \textit{Chaturanga}, \textit{Ghare baire}, \textit{Sesher kabita}, \textit{Dui bon} and \textit{Malancho}. Why should \textit{Char adhyay} be an exception? And, in all these novels we come across female individuals who often outshine or at least match their male counterparts in terms of vitality and mental strength. Most often in Tagore's novels, it is the women who break societal norms and they break them for their 'love' for the beloveds; Binodini, Lolita, Damini, Bimala are such glowing examples. By daring to 'fall in love' and subsequently taking up the age-old traditional role of \textit{abhisarika} they, to a large extent, manage to evade the interpellative programme of dominant 'masculinist' nationalist discourse of self-fashioning. In the chronotopic world of Tagore's fiction, their potentially 'subversive' sexuality most often does not conform to the norms set by colonial male subjects for the women of the households: the emerging species of women for whom a new term – \textit{Bhadramahila} – was coined and widely circulated.\textsuperscript{83} It is their feeling of 'love' that helped them outgrow the exclusionist, tyrannical designs behind the programme of 'virile' nationalism, a programme which was encrypted in the script of violence, both of overt and covert types. 'Romantic/Erotic love' is inherently inclusionist in nature. Erich Fromm writes in his modern-day classic study on 'Love', 'Erotic love . . . it is the craving for complete fusion, for union with one other person.'\textsuperscript{84} In \textit{Char adhyay}, it is Ela's character with the help of which Tagore brings out a fundamental dialogicality of 'civilization,' the one that involves 'love' and 'self.' It is only 'love' that has the potential to break narrow 'nationalist' barriers as Fromm writes, 'Erotic love is
exclusive, but it loves in the other person all of mankind, all that is alive.\textsuperscript{85} In the very end of the novel, Ela's gesture of tearing open her blouse in a desperate attempt to involve Atin in a passionate embrace at the moment of meeting death in her lover's hand, is a symbolic act of sublimation of one's own subjectivity during a 'real' encounter with 'love.' Tagore, in his last novel, interestingly reserves this act of Karmic proportions for a member of the fair sex. Thus, with the help of the mantra of love, we arrive at Tagore's desire to break free from the shackles of nationalism and the creation of a normative nationalist self, its close ally. This makes Tagore our contemporary more than ever when most of the world is trying to put an end to the endless bloodbath, unleashed in the name of political nationalism (the Janus-faced monster, with its twin heads, nation-state and citizen-subject) that is raging all across the globe.

Even so, Tagore in his novel \textit{Char adhyay} is unable to give us an opportunity to share Benjamin's optimism. In the end of his essay, Benjamin says, 'If the rule of myth is broken occasionally in the present age, the coming age is not so unimaginably remote that an attack on law is altogether futile.'\textsuperscript{86} There is no such clear hint in his novel of any possibility of the arrival of Benjaminian Judeo-mystical messianic 'divine violence,' which has a law-destroying power. Sadly, Atin's one statement about the 'nation's cause' seems to ring in our ears like the final words, ‘It is not a path of my making, I am of the path. No one would call a noose a necklace.’\textsuperscript{87} The 'romantic-idealist' characters of Gora and Binoy in \textit{Gora}, penned during the early euphoric era of a new century, ultimately metamorphose into the morally degraded pair of Indranath-Atin in \textit{Char adhyay}, written after the world had already witnessed one world war and was preparing for another. Since the days of the world wars, violence and moral degradation have thus become both a global and a local phenomenon. Ranajit Guha sadly observes, ‘But since patriotism has got initiated into nationalism the narrative of our independence has gradually turned into a blunt political story in which space for moral sense is truly marginal.’\textsuperscript{88} In the aftermath of the traumatic 26/11 days and shocking incidents like that at Abu Ghraib, the issue of individuals indulging in violence appears to be vindicated; an ideologue-Tagore's submission in the hands of the artist-Tagore, towards the end of his illustrious career as a novelist, is almost prophetic. Walter Benjamin's comment, quoted by Zizek in his latest book, \textit{Violence}, ‘[t]he question “May I kill?” meets its irreducible answer in the
commandment “Thou shalt not kill!” and remains very much a voice in the wilderness till this day and age. Till today, a national identity, with a truly ‘cosmopolitan’ nature, remains elusive; in India and probably in other countries.

NOTES


7 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*


14 Ibid. See section ‘Vivekananda and the Ideal of manliness’ in chapter 5.

16 To quote Partha Chatterjee’s words, ‘The “new individual” it would seem, could represent the history of his life only be inscribing it in the narrative of the nation’. See Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and its Fragments, p.138.

17 Benita Parry, ‘Resistance Theory / Theorising Resistance’.


21 Ibid, p.155.

22 Ibid, p.156.

23 Ibid, p.162.

24 Ashis Nandy, The Intimate Enemy, pp.72-74.

25 Ibid, p.74, p.75.


27 Ibid, p.49.


35 Dipesh Chakrabarty’s discussion ‘Nation and Imagination’ immediately comes to mind. There Dipesh Chakrabarty formulates that Tagore’s prose-works are attempts, in a realistic mode, to identify the defects in the nation for the ‘purpose of reform and improvement’ and his poetical works are romantic explorations of the sublime and beautiful in the nation – thereby straitjacketing Tagore’s oeuvre in a reductionist manner. See the section ‘Prose, Poetry and Reality’ in ‘Nation and Imagination’, Studies in History, 1999, p.115.

36 Mikhail Bakhtin ‘Discourse in the Novel’ in Michael Holquist (ed.) Caryl Emerson & Michael


39 See Sudipta Kaviraj ‘The Imaginary Institution of India’ in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (ed.) *Subaltern Studies (VII); Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.16.


41 To go back once again to the comparison between the nature of Hans Castorp’s self-fashioning and that of Gora, while *The Magic Mountain* is a fictional representation of the dialogic play performed upon Castorp’s consciousness between the much-articulated binary opposites of the Western civilization, the Apollonian and the Dionysiac principles represented by the consciousnesses of Settembrini and Leo Naphta respectively in the novel, Gora represents a richer and more complex texture of dialogised heteroglossia.

42 Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 270.

43 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, pp. 52-53.

44 Ibid, p. 53.


48 Homi Bhabha, ‘Foreword’, Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.xv.

49 See Sushobhon Sarkar, ‘Rabindranath Thakur ebong banglar renaissance’.

50 Rabindranath Tagore, *Four Chapters: Char Adhyay*, Rimli Bhattacharya (trans.), New Delhi: Srishti, 2002, p.6. All citations are from this text unless otherwise stated.

51 Ibid. p.78.


54 See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Caryl Emerson (ed. and tr.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, especially chapters IV and V, for an excellent theoretical discussion on the significance of 'doubles' in the portrayal of protagonists in a 'polyphonic' novel.


57 Interested readers may look up Amalesh Tripathi, *Bharater muktisangram'e charamponthi porbo*, Kolkata: Ananda Publishers, 1987, for an authentic account of the Extremist Movement in India.


59 Ibid, p.60.


63 Rabindranath Tagore, *Four Chapters*, p.98.


65 Ibid., p.35.


67 Rabindranath Tagore, *Four Chapters*, p.43.

68 Ibid. p.6.


75 See Rimli Bhattacharya, ‘On translating,’ *Four Chapters* ‘op. cit’, p.119.


78 Rabindranath Tagore, *Four Chapters*, p.39.


81 Rabindranath Tagore, *Four Chapters*, p.79.

82 Ibid. pp.143-144.

83 See Partha Chatterjee’s, *The Nation and its Fragments*, especially chapters ‘Nation and its Women’ and ‘Women and the Nation.’


85 Ibid., p.140. Emphasis mine.


87 Rabindranath Tagore, *Four Chapters*, p.81.

88 Ranajit Guha, *Daya: Rammohan Roy o Amader Adhunikata*, p.90.