Chapter-IV

GORĄ
Unity in Diversity
"On the shores of Bharat,
Where men of all races have come together
Awake, O my mind!
Standing here with outstretched arms
I send my salutation to the God of Humanity
Solemn chanting His Praises.
At whose call no one knows,
Came floating streams of men
And merged into the sea of Bharat,
The Aryans
The Non-Aryans
The Dravidians
The Huns
The Pathons and
The Moghuls-
They all have merged here into one body.
Now the west has opened its doors
And from thence come gifts giving and taking.
All will be welcome on the shores of BHARAT.
Where men of all races have come together"
"Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self idolatry of nation-worship is the goal of human history. And India has been trying to accomplish her task through special regulation of differences on the one hand, and the spiritual recognition of unity on the other."}

This ideal was revealed in 'Gora'. Gora is historically placed at a time when the Hindu society was passing through an identity crisis with a choice between Isolationism and syncretism, between Sanskritization and modernization. It is an exploration of a young man’s search for universal harmony and unity of his country, through the final rejection of caste, race, and religion. It is a quest for freedom of spirit, freedom from tradition, superstition, and religious dogma and final embrace of humanity as a whole. Gora is not only a protest against the discriminatory caste-system of Hinduism, but also against the Brahmo sectarianism and against colonial domination, while embracing the undeniable diversity of India. Krishna Kripalani points out Gora’s significance as the novel on a grand scale depicting India’s crucial transitions cross currents, and intersections:

Gora is...the epic of India in transition at the most crucially intellectual period of its modern history.... It is to Indian fiction what Tolstoy’s War and Peace is to the Russian. No other book can claim so masterly an analysis of the complex of Indian social life with its teeming contradictions, or of the character of Indian nationalism which draws its roots from renaissance Hinduism and stretches out its arms towards universal humanism.

Sukumar Sen has viewed it as “...something likes a Mahabharata of modern India.” Niharranjan Ray is of the same opinion and states that it has the amplitude of
Bhabani Bhattacharya finds that “Gora is contemporary and yet timeless” as is the case with many great literary works of the world and “it reaches out towards the universal.” Commenting on the quality of the novel K.R. Sreenivasa Iyengar says:

“Not withstanding the wide canvas and the multiplicity of character, incident and dialogue, the novel is a unity-and this comes from Gora himself, who is both centre and circumference. The rest serve largely to explain him or are explained by his relations with them.”

**Background: Brahmoism Vs. Hindu Orthodoxy**

Tagore’s biographer, Krishna Kripalani, has speculated that the character of Gora is based in part on Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble) who was a fervent disciple of Swami Vivekanand. Nivedita had unwavering enthusiasm for Hinduism and used to preach Hindu orthodoxy to Tagore. In this connection, Krishna Kripalani writes:

*Those who have read her books know what a passionate advocate she was of everything Hindu. Tagore who liked and admired her for her sincerity and courage must often have smiled when she preached Hinduism to him - more Hindu than the Hindu: once when she was staying as his guest at his Shelidah estate, she would insist when they sat out on the deck of the house boat in the evening, that he tell her a story. So he began telling her the story of Gora and later wrote it down.*

Even some other critics have pointed out the spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda and his Irish-born associate sister Nivedita as personalities whom Tagore might have used as role-models for shaping Gora’s character. Biswa Jiban Majumdar makes a close comparison between some of Gora’s and Swami Vivekananda’s spoken words and concludes that there are many similarities between their thoughts. As Gora is of Irish lineage, Majumdar suggests that Vivekananda’s associate, the Irish lady Margaret Noble, has also provided inspiration for Gora. Gora’s wanderings in the rural areas and his active concern for the sufferings of
people can be paralleled to Vivekananda and sister Nivedita's wanderings all over India and their spiritual quests and social concerns. Yet in his life time, Tagore had witnessed the emergence and popularity of spiritual leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Saradadevi and Sister Nivedita whose teachings revolved around tolerance, inclusion, and humanism, a far cry from the elitism and intolerance of the kind of Hinduism that has surfaced in India time and again. These spiritual leaders could have provided Tagore the inspiration to create a character like Gora, who combines spiritual and socio-political activism, qualities that Tagore hoped to see in the political leaders of India. But he failed to find his 'Gora' or hero in India's political milieu, as his disenchantment with the Swadeshi, and later, the non-cooperation movements, demonstrate.

But beyond the existence of these spiritual leaders, the historical and social setting for Gora is provided by the conflict between the extreme Hinduism of the revivalist Hindus and the extreme Brahmoism of reformist Brahmos like Keshab Chandra Sen. "The area of dialectical discourses between the ancient Hindu religion and the new-fangled Brahmo religion was marked out and extended and the 'relation' between the traditionalist conservative Hindu society and reform-conscious progressivist Brahmo society gradually soured through animosity and sarcastic exchanges" Tagore was himself a dialectical product of these conflicts, and the evolution of his own thought process out of his fluctuating struggle between conservatism and progressivism which serves as background to reveal Gora's character.

In order to have an understanding of the origin and growth of universalism in Tagore, we must acquaint ourselves with the great movement initiated by Ram Mohan Roy.

What was perceived as deeply offensive propaganda of Christian missionaries, a westernization of many educated Hindus, forcible conversion to Islam and Christianity and rising resentment against the practice of untouchability by orthodox Hindus gave rise to reform and revival of Hinduism by leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda and others. Raja Ram Mohan Roy gave a positive shape to this discontent against the decadent Hinduism by
founding the Brahmo Samaj in 1828, which renounced all meaningless superstitions and taboos and aimed at a synthesis of the best in all faiths.

Roy adherence to theism and his rejection of idolatry, Brahmin priests and their rituals sketched the basic outlines of his reconstructed Hinduism. But it should be remembered that his was the vision which none else saw in the nineteenth century – the vision of bringing the three great religions of the world – Hinduism, Christianity and Islam – into a harmonious relationship. Tagore was very much influenced by Raja Ram Mohan Roy as he has grown up in Brahmo environment since his father was Roy’s successor.

Debendranath took up a bold stand on two fronts. Inside Hinduism, his was the reformist movement on the ancient moorings of religion as embodied in the Vedas. Outside, his was the ruthless opposition to the Christian missionaries for their criticism of Hinduism and attempts at conversion. It was in fact a confrontation between Alexander Duff and his band of missionaries on one side and Debendranath and his Brahmo followers on the other. The change was initiated as a consequence of a debate sparked by the conversion to Christianity of Umesh Chandra Sarkar and his wife. Sarkar was a student at Alexander Duff’s school and there was vigorous opposition to the school. Duff responded with a challenge to the doctrines of the Brahmo Samaj, questioning in particular the belief in Vedic infallibility.\textsuperscript{12}

Debendranath himself after a great deal of mental exercise on the scriptures at Benares, doubted many fundamentals of the Vedas. But the Brahmo movement was based on faith in the Vedas and it was thought unwise to shake that foundation. Amid doubts, Debendranath selected those portions of the Upanishads which advocated monotheism and published them as the Brahmo Dharma. Thus the movement was undergoing a philosophical transformation, the rejection of Vedic infallibility made it more radical. When such were the developments Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1858 with more radical views. He rejoiced in the rejection of Vedic infallibility. He saw it as a grand step in the evolution of the Samaj and its embrace of monotheism which “was not confined to Hindu books, to the scriptures of their own country-men, but was to be found in human nature in all the races and tribes and nations of the world.”\textsuperscript{13}
Keshab Chandra established a great hold on the rising generation of progressive intellectuals. In 1862 Sen and his followers secretly celebrated an inter-caste marriage but in 1864 they sponsored an inter caste marriage that was also a widow remarriage, and did so publicity. The more conservatives Brahmans were shocked and orthodoxy horrified.¹⁴

Keshab Chandra Sen’s radical lines of thought and action appeared to the more conservatives as too radical. To Debendranath, Keshab’s views appeared aggressive.

Just as Debendranath acquired anti Christian bias so Keshab followed anti-Hindu views being fired by missionary zeal. In 1866 Keshab split away from the original (Adi) Brahmo Samaj to form the Brahm Samaj of India. He advocated a kind of universalism too much influenced by Christianity. In his opinion, Raja Ram Mohan Ray’s ambition was to build a universal church based on this idea.¹⁵ The Brahm Samaj that Tagore portrays in Gora is the one led by Keshab Chandra Sen and the one with which Tagore’s family associated.

In Gora, Tagore satirizes the extreme Brahmoism of people like Haran and Baroda Sundari who serves the interests of the British through an embracing of Christianity and rejection of every thing Hindu as well as extreme Hinduism of Gora who embraces orthodox Hinduism to serve his sense of nationalism. What is remarkable is that Tagore steers clear of the extremism represented by the obscurantism of the Hindus and the sectarianism of the Brahmos, there by dealing out an “even handed justice” to both these ill-conceived forces.¹⁶

Impact of Brahmo Samaj upon society of those times is thus described by the official biographer of Tagore who was also a historian:

“The impact of the Brahmo Samaj was changing Hindu society in many directions. Just as the young progressives were eager to get rid of outworn beliefs, so too the orthodox were fondly hoping to preserve the past with as little change as possible, with some tinkering and little washing here and there. The spirit of controversy has been presented in some letters written by Tagore and collected in his book ‘Samaj’: under the guise of an exchange of letters between a grand father and
his grandson is revealed in gentle hints, the recurring clash of opinions, the conflicts of generation, and products of a forgotten age."

We see throughout his life, Rabindranath never has clung to one belief. But his thoughts have passed through changes and development and finally achieve its full maturity to proclaim the religion of man. From the very beginning of his life, he has kept an open mind, and therefore he never has followed any religious system blindly just because it is followed by most of the people or people in his surroundings.

As he himself puts it:

_I have not come to my own religion through the portals of the passive acceptance of a particular creed owing to some accident of birth... owing to my idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for me to accept any religious teaching on the only ground that people in my surroundings believed it to be true... Thus, my mind was brought up in an atmosphere by freedom... freedom from the dominance of any creed that had its sanction in the definite authority of some organized body of worshippers._

Tagore in 1884, as a secretary of Adi Brahma Samaj he took up cudgels against the proponents of neo-Hinduism and would not spare even Bankim Chandra. As a severe critic of Hinduism, he started writing articles challenging Hinduism and supporting Brahma-Dharma is identical with Gora's first impulse towards Samaj. In this period he has understood that any religion which is exclusive cannot unite people but create hatred, intolerance among people. Hinduism with its belief in idol-worship cannot let others to enter in its arena. An idolater always narrows himself and his God, thus making his religion exclusive. As religion becomes narrow, it makes him-restricted, therefore the believers of other religions become untouchable for him. His deity becomes deity of a particular group of people. According to Tagore, Rammohan Roy for the first time tried to make religion universal in its appeal. To him Brahmoism seems to be the religion of the entire world which has rejected all idol forms of worship and religious superstitions. Tagore says,
"We find in history many instances of a group of persons thinking of themselves as the chosen people of God, and setting an insurmountable barrier between their religion and other religions. Fortunately, this sense of separation is fast coming to an end. Science has been teaching the grand truth that separateness and distinctness of things are illusions. Every item is linked up with every other and this inner relatedness forms the very core of reality. Today we are feeling the necessity of a religion that is not circumscribed to a particular sect of a particular time. Today we need a religion which is not a sunk in the labyrinth of outward ceremonies but a religion which is as wide as the skies."  

At this period, as a follower of Brahmoism he is against the Hindu’s belief that sins can be washed away by ablution in the Ganges. But this type of belief degrades the standard of morality and position of men. Because if one’s sin is washed away taking a bath in holy river and feeding Brahmin on some auspicious day, then man naturally does not try for not committing sin by controlling himself. Again, when asked for explanation, it is said that this is the proper method for ignorant only. But in this type of reasoning man is insulted and degraded. Instead of giving high place to man’s character and his sense of morality, his ignorance is given indulgence by indicating easy means for getting rid of his sins. Therefore, for common people religion becomes another name for taboos and prohibitions. At every step man has to follow the sastric injunctions of do’s and dont’s. But he does not accept that he has any duty for man. Tagore says, ‘if there is instruction in Sastras about duties to man, it is not followed in behaviour. Because in religious practice man is given a secondary place.’

During the second phase in the evolution of Tagore’s religious philosophy, though for a few years, Tagore becomes a Hindu in a narrow sense. He becomes a strong supporter of Hinduism and wants to follow social practices of Hindu religion as Gora in the novel.
It is obvious that his love for Hinduism rooted from his hatred for alien rulers and Brahmo society who welcomed every foreign idea and degraded Hinduism freely. Tagore felt annoyance whenever he observed his own educated country men criticizing his own people and assuming a sense of superiority over other poor and illiterate of his country. And it is Tagore's own sentiment that has been expressed through the medium of Gora as against people like Haran who never loses any opportunity of pouring scorn upon the Hindus. Gora says:

"We must refuse to allow our country to stand at the bar of a foreign court and be judged according to a foreign law. Our ideas of shame or glory must not depend on minute comparisons at every step with a foreign standard. We must not feel apologetic about the country of our birth—whether it be about its traditions, faith or its scriptures—neither to others nor even to ourselves." (Gora, p.23)

Full of these ideas, Tagore had little or no interest in social reform, and devoted much of his attention to the defense of Hinduism from Christian missionary criticism. Tagore feared that Hinduism might be altogether destroyed if all these reforms and changes were carried out. When Haran harps on 'reform'; Tagore, through Gora says, 'Reform'? That can wait a while yet more important than reforms are love and respect. Reform will come of itself from within, after we are a united people. Because, forsooth our country is full of superstitions, you the non-superstitious, must kept superior and aloof! First acknowledge kinship with us then come to reform us- we are not going to submit to outside attempts to reform us, whether it is from you or from foreign missionaries. (p.51)

In this novel all Gora's attempts to stop Binoy's marriage with Lolitha are nothing but Tagore's attempts to stop conversion from Hinduism to Christianity.

The fact is that, it is the new Brahmo-Samaj that formally dissociated itself from the Hindu and the original Brahmo communities, especially after the passage of the civil marriage Act of 1872 by the colonial government, an act which required a Brahmo to declare himself or herself a non-Hindu in order to get married under its jurisdiction. This step made the new Brahmo Samaj the only Brahmo community in
the eyes of British law, while the original Brahmo Samaj stayed within the scope of the Hindu community in any legal sense.  

Tagore said I was born in a Hindu family, but accepted Brahmo religion... the religion we accepted is universal in nature: however it is basically the religion of the Hindus. But the Brahmo Samaj wrote Tagore is belittling Ram Mohan Roy by judging him as a Brahmo minus the Hindu society. Thus the new Brahmo Samaj receives a satirical representation in Gora.

Eventually reconciliation occurs in Tagore’s thoughts when he came into close touch with the village people of Bengal, who were victims of blind tradition, superstition, ignorance, poverty and all the more their strong belief in Karma or fate. When troubles came they said “It is the will of God” or “it is the fruit of the sin of my previous birth”: they did not really believe that they could get rid of diseases.

Rabindranath’s intimate knowledge of the problems of the villages of Bengal dates from the year 1890. During this period Tagore saw the difficulties by rigid customs and thought that many things were necessary for the welfare of his country. He wanted to save Hinduism from its degraded state by synthesizing it with the best in all the religions to form one religion. He also realized the necessity of unity of East and West. He says that if the west is trying to save man from death, the East has for its goal the secret of attaining immortality and that both the West and the East will be frustrated, if they remain disunited.

Tagore’s repeated experiments of sticking close and distancing from the Samaj reveals his conflicting sense of priority over which religion is best suited to man. His final realization that different religious organizations only divide man and man prompts him to speak at last simply the religion of Man. So the freedom of outlook that Gora gains in the end has been thrust upon him not by mere accident but by own experience.

Krishna Kripalani says that there are four types of people in Gora: the genuinely progressive type who seek progress for the good of the people, the pseudo-progressive type who blindly emulate foreign ways in the name of progress, the orthodox type whose orthodoxy is linked to genuine love and pride for the country, and the other orthodox type who seek no other purpose but self-interest and
superstition. Gora’s mother Anandamoyi, Paresh Babu, and his daughters would be among the genuinely progressive type: the Brahmo Samaj activist Haran Babu and Paresh Babu’s wife would be among the pseudo-progressives: Gora and his friend Binoy, initially, would be among the orthodox type who have a genuine love for their country; and Gora’s father Krishnadayal, some of Gora’s followers and Sucharita’s aunt Harimohini would be among those who practice orthodoxy without purpose. While some characters like Haran Babu, Barada Sundari, and Harimohini stay narrowly true to their type throughout the novel, and the characters like Gora, Binoy, Sucharita, Lolita and Paresh Babu are not merely mouth pieces of certain opinions, they are living men and women with certain principles and their whole lives are modeled according to these principles. Their personalities have influenced one another and are able to transcend the limitations of caste, race and nation.

Gora, is the son of Krishna Dayal Babu, who once held a post in the commissariat, but has now almost become an ascetic, though he still lives with his family. Krishnadayal has enjoyed the pleasures of life- has even indulged in wine and meat – in his younger days. But he now leads the simple life of an orthodox Brahmin of the older type, and wears the ascetic’s yellow robe. His wife Anandamayi, is gentle quite, deeply attached to her adopted son Gora.

Gora’s elder brother, Mahim, is employed at the Government Treasury. He hates his British bosses and curses them at home, obeys meekly at the office and even flatters them to secure the maximum advantage. Mahim has a daughter, Shashi, a home-loving girl who is engaged to Gora’s friend Binoy, though he is unwilling.

Gora and Binoy are said to be members of the Hindu patriot’s society and the former is supposed to have just begun his orthodox Hindu phase. But Binoy is not an ascetic like Gora, he is thinking of marriage and women as well. Binoy does not like Gora’s orthodox views as he is an intelligent and thoughtful man, capable of independent judgement. But dominant is Gora’s personality, so eloquently does he argue his points that Binoy’s resistance is usually over come.

Not far from Binoy’s residence, on the same street, an elderly gentleman named Paresh Babu, a prominent member of the Brahmo Samaj. At one time he was quite friendly with Krishna Dayal and both were branded as iconoclasts. But in
course of time, the differences between their religious beliefs became so acute that they drifted apart. The differences between Paresh Babu and Krishna Dayal remind as those of Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen.

Paresh Babu has three daughters, Lolita, Labanya and Leela. These women are some what of a variety because, they are ‘free’ women who are not committed to the seclusion of the inner quarters of the house hold. In addition to their own daughters, Paresh Babu and his wife Baroda Sundari, have adopted two children: a girl Radha Rani, whom they have given a more modern name, Sucharita; and her little brother, Satish.

Paresh Babu who rejected Hindu orthodoxy and preaches and practices the tenets of the Brahmo Samaj in a spirit of tolerance and good will. As indicated earlier, the Brahmo dogmatism is represented by Haran Babu who is a scholar and a frequent visitor at Paresh Babu’s house and hopes to marry Sucharita. It must, however, be said to the credit of Rabindranath that all the characters in this novel are distinct and alive and we have Haran and Mistress Baroda who as Brahmos, are as narrow minded as Mahim and Harimohini are as orthodox Hindus. Haran and Mahim are equally selfish and worldly-minded but the one is a staunch Brahmo and the other is an orthodox Hindu. The blind faith and superstitious nature of Harimohini is beautifully expressed in her conversation with Sucharita.

“One word, though my dear. Do as you please about eating with them, but atleast don’t drink water drawn by that bearer!”

“Why Auntie!” exclaimed Sucharita. “Isn’t he that very Ramdin who milks his cow for you and brings you your milk every morning?” Harimohini’s eyes opened wide in astonishment as she said: “you take my breath away my dear! To compare water with milk – as if the same rules apply to both!” (p.223)

Even being under the roof of Paresh Babu, Harimohini observes appropriate food and other caste taboos. In this regard, it is easy to sympathise with Baroda Sundari’s dismay at this unforeseen intrusion into the established order of her house hold. She also looks down upon the intimacy between Lolita and Binoy and regards it as a Christian kind of behaviour and calls it “shameless intimacy”, she does not spare
even Anandamoyi and says that; perhaps some missionary lady had seduced her towards Christianity (p.307). Just as Harimohini hates Bhrahmos, so Baroda Sundari cannot tolerate even the presence of Hindus. She blames Krishna Dayal, a strict orthodox, in the very presence of Gora that “is he not ashamed of himself?”(p.41)

Tagore presents five women characters in Gora. Among them Sucharita and Lolita are products of western education. They oppose conservative Gora’s view that woman’s place is in her home. Anandamoyi is the most ideal character among Tagore’s women. Harimohini and Baroda Sundari represent the average women of the middle class of Bengal. Through the characters of Harimohini and Baroda Sundari, Tagore not only represents the narrow minds in two organizations but also his balanced view of the two sides.

The most interesting factor is that for the first time in the novels of Tagore, a male character dominates the action. No where else do we find a character like Gora “So masculine in the whole of Tagore’s writing.” In no other novel does Tagore describe the Brahmo-Hindu conflicts and their fanaticism. No wonder then, Gora is given the highest place in literature not only for its intellectual content or debates or its historical association but for its “skillful description of events, its masterly delineation of characters, the solid nature of its content and craft.”

In this novel Gora’s character has been depicted with wider catholicity and sympathy. He is shown as a symbol of the rising nationalism of the early twentieth century in India. He represents the aspirations and sentiments of the educated Bengalis of his age, who agitated against the injustice and arrogance of the British rulers, and being conscious of their slavery, tried to seek out their cultural heritage and protect it from all types of onslaughts.

Early in the narrative we are provided with insights into Gora’s nature that he is an earnest and dedicated person, not one to do anything by half. As “the acknowledged leader of a band of little revolutionaries”, he always felt “too delighted if he got a chance in the street of quarrelling with an English man.”(P.22)

As an enthusiast of the Brahmo Samaj, he was in the habit of harrying the Brahmin pandits who gathered round his father but when an English missionary publishes criticisms of Hindu scriptures and cultures in a local news paper with the
aim of opening up a debate with Indians, an inflamed Gora jumps into that debate. Although he himself had often been critical of many aspects of Hindu practices, Gora would not tolerate any criticism of anything Indian from a Foreigner, so he turns strictly orthodox.

He writes articles to counter the attacks on the Hindu Sastras and Hindu society by an English missionary and is locked in wordy duels with the Brahmo Haranbabu to establish the supremacy of the Hindu religion. Gora, a sturdy Hindu patriot defends customs, practices and everything of Indian just as Haran a narrow minded Brahmo glorifies everything British. Gora says:

"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 mother land from you". (P.51)

The opposition between the Brahmo and the Hindu views is no where more evident than in the dialectical verbal exchanges between Gora and Haran, a Brahmo dogmatist. Through the words of Gora, Tagore has not lashed any of his characters so heartlessly as he does Haran. In response to Haran’s contention that the Bengali Hindu customs have many evils, Gora remarks scorn fully:

"You have merely learnt off by heart from English books – you know nothing at all about the matter at first hand. When you are able to condemn all the evil customs of the English with as much honest indignation you will have a right to talk." (P.44)

However, the irony embedded in Gora’s practice of orthodox Hinduism and opposition to the British is that Hindu blood does not flow in Gora’s veins. He was born of Irish parents who lost their lives during the 1857 war of independence, his father dead in a battle and his mother dead after the delivery of the child. Gora is taken in by a child less Hindu women Anandamoyi and raised as son in an orthodox Brahmin family. Gora who believes despite his white complexion, that he is a Brahmin, is convinced that the redemption of modern India can be achieved only as
its people return to their roots in Hinduism and tradition. He even convinces that Hinduism is a very liberal religion and accommodates all shades of opinion within its fabric:

You 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 its aspects. Christians do not want to acknowledge diversity. (P. 296)

There is however a difference between what he professes and what he practices. In practice, he resorts to orthodox traditions and superstitions of Hinduism. Bathing regularly in the Ganges, performing ceremonial worship, up-holds the so-called faults of Hinduism like casteism, untouchability, idol worship. Orthodoxy excessive Gora would not even eat in his beloved mother's room but also tries to dissuade Binoy from eating because of Christian maid, He says:

"No, no... I can't allow Binoy to eat in your room" it is impossible to take food in your room, so long as you keep on that Christian maid servant Lachmi" (P. 11)

A crisis develops in the life of Anandamoyi on the day she adopts Gora. After the adoption of Gora she becomes unorthodox and forsakes everything including Krishna Dayal's property only to bestow her affection fully upon Gora. But Gora's sense of untouchability and his militant antagonism to English makes her restless. When Gora admonishes her indifference to brahminic caste, is incapable of comprehension, she answers:

"But do you know that it was when I first took you in my arms that I said good-bye to convention?... ... if I looked down upon any one for being of low caste, or a Christian, then God would snatch you away from me... I will accept water from the hands of any one in the world!" (p. 26)
Anandamoyi strongly believes that Gora is the strength of her mind to break away traditions, customs and oppose the whole society. She says:

*If Gora had been like an ordinary child to me, from where could I have got the strength myself?* (p.35)

But Gora’s patriotism is synonymous with Hinduism. It can’t be separated from the religion. He gives expression to his patriotism in terms of Hinduism. In one of his discussions with Sucharita he boasts of his Hindu identity:

> “I am a Hindu! A Hindu belongs to no party. The Hindus are a nation, and such a vast nation that their nationality cannot be limited within the scope of any single definition. Just as the ocean is not the same as its waves, So Hindus are not the same as sects.”(P.294)

Gora’s patriotism moves within the parameters of Hindutva and Hindu India concept, which is partial, not complete. There is no liberality in this kind of patriotism or worship of the country, no expansiveness of vision and judgment, no touch of the vast ideal of man’s nobility, no chance to understand and adopt different ideals. For turning it into a whole, he needs a new realization which comes with the revelation that he is no Hindu. Rabindranath ironically makes Gora an Irishman in order to reveal that his vision of India is beyond the vision of Gora a Hindu patriot.

The story centres around the love episodes of four major characters. Gora-Sucharita, Binoy-Lolitha. The entry of Gora and Binoy into Paresh Babu’s house not only produces the dialect of contending ideologies of orthodoxy and Brahmo Samaj, it also sets in motion the plot of romantic love.

The love of Gora for Sucharita is more complex and interesting. Gora visits Paresh Babu’s house only to watch over his intimate friend Binoy who develops an admiration for the charm, courtesy and liberalism of that Brahmo family. Curiously enough, the first awakening of love in the heart of Sucharita can be traced to Gora’s indifference towards her. The first time that Gora comes to Paresh Babu’s house he completely ignores the presence of Sucharita and never speaks a single word to her.
This neglect makes such a deep, painful impression on her mind that she cannot have sound sleep that night. She remembers:

*The picture of Gora's face, all aglow with excitement and lighted by the rays of the setting Sun, flashed out, and all the arguments which she had heard, but forgotten, now came back to her together with the sound of his deep, strong voice.* (P.50)

The love of Gora and Sucharita is not a love at first sight, but it is a love born out of attacks and counter-attacks, for the ideals they stand for. In the midst of their attacks and conflicts, they are moulded by each other. As we see Sucharita's entanglement with Gora starts with Gora's attacks the Brahmo ideals she stands for. Sucharita at first amazed by his dogmatism, but the more he attacks her beliefs and ideals the more she is attracted to his radiant personality and patriotism. As Niharranjan says "every successive onslaught against her ideals has made her feel fascinated all the more." Sucharita who was brought up in a Brahmo household under the spell of this vehement champion of Hinduism, she regains her Hindu identity and wants to free from the clutches of narrow minded Haran.

It is interesting that Paresh Babu who honours the freedom of the individual permits her growing attraction for Gora but for Haran. He is a counter part of Gora, a typical representative of conservative Brahmos. The hostilities of these two groups created an atmosphere in which religion became a wedge between man and man, instead of being a unifying force. If light comes to Gora belatedly it never penetrates through the closed mind like Haran. Whose puritanical attitude is satirized by Tagore:

*At that time in Bengal, English educated people did not study the Bhagavadgita, but Paresh Babu used to read it occasionally to Sucharita, .... Haran disapproved of this, for he wanted to banish all such books from Brahmo house holds... The fact that Paresh Babu drew no line between Brahmo and non-Brahmo in such things as the study of the scriptures ..... was a thorn in the side of Haran.* (P.75)
On the other hand, Gora, in his turn, cannot remain unaffected by the charming personality of Sucharita. In his discussions with Sucharita, he derives intellectual pleasures and discovers that Sucharita is “the manifestation of all that was sweet and pure, loving and virtuous in the homes of his mother land.”(P.272) But Gora still a begot, represses his natural inclination and sticks to his orthodox views.

Sucharita and Lolita are both lovable, modern characters but their temperaments differ from each other. Sucharita is the daughter of Ramsharan Haldar of Dacca. She has lost her parents. By birth she is a Hindu, as she is brought up by Paresh Babu, she follows Brahmo culture and ideals. She is deeply attached to her foster father and he too feels closer to her than to any of his own daughters.

Sucharita and Lolita are like two opposite poles. Sucharita is sweet-tempered, charming, calm, where as Lolita is fiery, rebellious, self-willed and out-spoken girl. Sucharita is calm, mentally matured and introvert. Lolita is bold, courageous and extrovert. Sucharita is a hidden rebel where as Lolita is a open rebel. And “Sucharita is no less revolutionary than Lolita.”32 Despite their differences Lolita and Sucharita are intimate friends.

Lolita is introduced to the reader as a revolutionary character from the beginning of the novel. But Sucharita, to begin with an obedient girl, later turns out to be revolutionary due to the attitude of Brahmo dogmatic Haran and her aunt Harimohini, who is a typical example of the narrow minded orthodox woman.

Like Asha and Kamala she is not tradition bounded woman, like Bimala, she is not materialistic either nor is she anglicized like Hemanalini. But Sucharita represents the best of tradition and modernism. As Gora wonders; why there is not “the least trace of the immodest forwardness which he had always associated with educated girls.” (p.101) She unfolds to him a new aspect of reality. The influence of Sucharita upon Gora is such that he almost forgets his identity and crosses his restricted circle to meet Sucharita. As Niharajan Ray says:

*It is Sucharita again who administers the necessary dose of liberalism to his too narrow ideals and brings him towards the path of universal love and harmony.*33
Lolita is the second daughter of Paresh Babu and Baroda Sundari. She is deeply attached to Sucharita and loves her more than her own sisters, Labanya and Lila. Like Sucharita, Lolitha too is more attached to her father than her mother. She is the first to oppose her mother Baroda Sundari, who is the Brahmo counter part of Harimohini degrades Hindus to win European’s favour. Lolitha has the highest regard for her father. She does not spare any one who tries to belittle her father. So she cannot tolerate dominating behaviour of Haran and keeps him at a distance. She plainly tells him:

"We have put up with your superior airs long enough, but let me tell you that if you want to lord it over father, not a soul in this house will stand it—not even the servants!"

(p.169)

Lolita is impressed by Binoy’s non-sectarian and liberal outlook. Though she dislikes Gora’s dogmatism, she has high regard for Cora’s sense of patriotism. She cannot tolerate the unjustified arrest of Gora by the magistrate, so she decides to return to Calcutta with Binoy without participating in the play in his house. Such impulsive action soon becomes the target of wagging tongues.

Niharranjan Ray considers the incident of the steamer excursion “a superb touch in the progressive movement of the plot.”

Lalita is an individualist who initiates courage not only in Sucharita but also in Binoy who recollects:

How often had he failed to be his own true self for fear of displeasing Gora or lest-Gora should think him weak and then had deceived himself by subtle argument into the belief that Gora’s view was his own! (p.152)

Parallel to the love story of Gora and Sucharita, Binoy’s love for Lolita is developed. The love and marriage episode of Binoy and Lolita helped the novelist to depict the Brahma-Hindu conflicts of his time.
Although Gora and Binoy are fast friends, the latter is dominated by the masterful personality of the former. The individuality of Binoy cannot find full scope for development under this friendly domination. This is a kind of weakness in the character of Binoy and Lolita marks this weakness in the initial stage of her acquaintance with him. She likes Binoy at the first sight but doesn't like this weakness in a person whom she likes. She says to Sucharita:

"His friend has overshadowed him so completely that Binoy Babu has no chance of showing himself. It is as though a cockroach had swallowed a midge. I have no patience with the midge for allowing itself to be caught, and it doesn't heighten my respect for the cockroach"

(P.90)

Lolita plays a major role in the novel. She may be called the real heroine though Sucharita wins over Gora's heart. She is far more advanced than Sucharita in one respect. She does not consider religion an obstacle to marry Binoy. Her resistance to Binoy's adoption of the Brahmo religion is a pre-condition for marriage. She says:

*It can never be necessary for a man to cut off all connection with his religion, his beliefs or his society, no matter of what nature they may be, in order to be united with other men. If that were necessary then no friendship could exist between a Hindu and a Christian.*

(P.305)

On the other hand Binoy has to face a tremendous conflict - a conflict between his love and his life long friendship with Gora. Eventually, the shy, reticent, mild, orthodox Binoy, who is a shadow of Gora, is transformed into a bold, independent and sophisticated man by the influence of Lolita's love and guidance. In the words of Niharranjan Ray:

*From a comparatively inferior position he rises to a height of magnificence: from a rather shadowy associate of Gora*
he comes to discover his separate identity. All credit is
due, for this transformation, to his philosopher and guide,
Lolita.35

Lolitha is a Brahmo girl and Binoy is an orthodox Hindu youth. As their
determination grows stronger, they forget “that they were Hindu or Brahmo, and only
remembered that they were two human souls.” (P.306) and feel that:

If love is unable to acknowledge differences, then why are
there differences anywhere in this world? (P.306)

Binoy’s marriage is not a sacrifice of his friendship with Gora but a final
revolt against his die hard Hinduism. Many a time he yields to his friendship for
Gora and we are inclined to think that he will sacrifice his love on the altar of
friendship but each time the temporary surrender gives places to a sense of greater
devotion for the girl whom she loves. Lolita’s rebellious spirit infuses courage into
his soul to declare:

“Today I stand on my own feet!” “I can no longer admit
the right of society to be pacified like a demon by daily
human sacrifices. And whether I have to live or die, I am
not going to wander about with the noose of its injunctions
fastened round my neck” (P.320)

Despite the opposition from Gora, it is Anandamoyi, who never cares for
differences in caste and creed, supports the marriage of Lolitha and Binoy since she
considers:

Marriage is a matter of hearts coming together – if that
happens, what matters it what mantras are recited? It’s
quite enough if the ceremony he performed in God’s
name.... There is no caste in men’s hearts – there God
brings men together and there he himself comes to them.
(P.183)
On the other hand Baroda Sundari and Haran work as antagonists and blocking agents. Paresh Babu does not have the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of Haran Babu. He has a liberal outlook on life. He has a serenity of temper which is unruffled by the storm and stress of worldly life. He has the capacity to appreciate the others point of view without sacrificing his own. He has a sympathetic attitude towards the short comings of others. 'Gora in his moments of excitement and Haran Babu in his moments of exasperation at the behaviour of Lolita and Sucharita, speak provocatively to Paresh Babu but he never loses his patience and forbearance even for a single moment. It is significant that Lolita and Sucharita have the deepest reverence for their father although he never imposes his will upon them.

That Paresh Babu is a man of strong will is evident from the way in which he stands as a pillar of strength and support to Lolita in her predicament. He believes in the freedom of the individual and has the moral courage to stand against social tyranny. He says to Sucharita:

"It can never be right that man should remain narrow and confined out of regard for society- rather society ought to become more liberal out of regard for the individual. Therefore I can never find fault with those who are ready to face the suffering their actions involve."

He does not yield to the threats of expulsion from the governing body of the Brahmo Samaj. He has the strength of conviction and is prepared to face the consequences. Therefore in reply to the letter of warning from the Brahmo Samaj Committee, he writes to express his determination to do what he thinks to be right:

"Lolita's wedding will have to be managed by me, and if for this reason you give me up I will not regard it as wrong of you. In this matter I have only one prayer to offer to God, and it is that when I have been driven out of every society, He will give me shelter at His own feet."

Commenting on the uncompromising stand of the two sects who opposes Lolita-Binoy's marriage or insists on the marriage being performed according to their own ritual, Paresh Babu says:
"What is to him the Brahmo Samaj! What is Hindu Society? He sees only man” (p.309)

Gora, however is no novel of romance. Tagore’s narration of romantic love and marriage transcending the barriers of caste, race and ritual is pre-cursor to the universal humanism that Gora realizes towards the end.

Some critics have expressed dissatisfaction at the way the denouement has been brought about B.C. Chakravorty regards it as “an artificial solution” and Nirad C. Chaudhuri opines that “.... A victory for liberal cosmopolitanism is pulled off only by means of a deux ex machina.” Sujit Mukherjee considers it “the most serious weakness of the novel” and S.C. Sen Gupta comments as follows:

If Gora had been able to resolve the contradiction through a spiritual struggle, his story would have made a great novel. But Rabindranath betrays here indolence about fundamentals: rather than portray the intricate spiritual struggle that is aroused in Gora’s heart, he ends it mechanically almost as soon as it begins.

It is evident as G.V. Raj opines that these critics have not paid adequate attention to the subtle changes of Gora’s consciousness traced in the novel. A close perusal of the text indicates that the freeing process commences the moment Gora steps into the home of Paresh Babu right at the start of the novel, soon after which he is seized with a new restlessness, brought about by “.... The memory of the questioning glances of two entrancing eyes, soft with modesty, bright with understanding....”(P.107). The conflict between his intellectual dogmatism and emotional resilience thus begins early, though outwardly Gora does not betray signs of it.

Tagore now introduces incident by incident that shakes the revolutionary idealism of Hindu nationalist. If his personal experiences set him on the path of self-introspection, the disclosure of his mysterious birth opens his inner eye. Gora’s interest in Rural Bengal has its roots in Tagore’s own connections, concerns and involvements with rural Bengal. In this connection he said with reference to his early life in Shileidah.
"I was filled with eagerness to understand the villagers' daily routine and the varied pageant of their lives... Gradually the sorrow and poverty of the villagers became clear to me, and I began to grow restless to do some thing about it. It seemed to me a very shameful thing that I should spend my days as a land lord concerned only in money making and engrossed with my own profit and loss. From that time onward, I continually endeavoured to find out how the villagers' mind could be aroused, so that they could themselves accept the responsibility for their own lives."

These quotations from Tagore show the evolution of mind towards the betterment of his people of India. Tagore takes Gora to rural Bengal to grow out of his romanticization of the masses of India. Gora witnesses that his rural Bengal is no more a dream land that he had first imagined, but riven by casteism and plagued by superstition.

To Gora it was a constant agony to be brought face to face with this terrible load of ignorance, apathy and suffering, which had overwhelmed rich and poor, learned and ignorant alike, and clogged their advance at every step. (P.133)

Hinduism reduced in popular practice to "prohibition, prohibition nothing but prohibition" (P.164) has proved more a hindrance than a help for national regeneration.

"He could see no where 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. The tradition which merely divided men into classes and separated class from class, driving to a distance even love itself, did not want to carry into effect the results of man's intelligent thinking and only put
obstacles at every step in the way of man's coming and going. 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 mind had woven"(P.368)

During his wanderings in the villages, Gora realizes the real weakness of rural Bengal—her ignorance, her superstition, her incapability and her aloofness that moves Gora. Untouchability and caste barriers are common things: diseases are considered as a penalty for some unknown sins that had committed in the past life: widow-remarriage is a low standard of conduct to them, when Gora approaches to reform them, they reply:

"That's all very well, but you Brahmins should first adopt widow remarriage and then we will follow suit". (P.369)

Now Gora finds that it is very difficult to bring them out from their customary beliefs unless major reforms. He realizes that Europe's religion is the religion of love that expresses itself in the service of mankind. At the same time he also condemns how the British policy of economic exploitation and lack of self-help and equality lead to economic in equilibrium in India particularly in rural Bengal.

In one predominantly Muslim village of Ghoshpur, Gora witnesses that Muslims could meet other Muslims on the basis of equality. But Hindus are unable due to the caste-system. Gora admires the unity and courage of the Muslims as they rise in resistance against the English Indigo planters who were forcing the tenant farmers to work on indigo plantations for meager money instead of letting them grow food crops as they had always done. For clashing with the indigo planters, all the male villagers of the village of Ghoshpur have been arrested by the police along with their leader Faru Sardar. The only Hindu resident of the village, a barber, had given shelter to Faru Sardar's son when Gora reproaches him for his un-Hindu conduct, the barber replies:

*What is the difference, Sir? We call him as Hari, they as Allah, that's all.* (P.133)
Gora is struck with the contrast between the simple humanity of the unorthodox Hindu barber and the evil conduct of the Brahmin rent collector of the Indigo factory — "A regular limb of Satan"(P.135) Gora rejects his hospitality and goes back to the barber's house, to cook his own meal. But his one remaining follower Rampati is visibly disgusted by the barber's sheltering of a Muslim boy and goes to the Brahmin rent collector's house to eat a meal. Gora questions the notions of his purity:

"Shall my caste remain pure by eating from the hands of this oppressor of the poor Mohammedans and be lost in the home of the man who has not only shared their miseries but given shelter to one of them at the risk of being out casted himself"(P.136)

Gora goes to jail opposing the tyranny of Government officials on the villagers of Char-Ghospur and does not appoint a lawyer to defend his case, because the majority is too poor to appoint lawyers to defend theirs. Similarly in his scheme of things, Gora takes it as a personal loss when Nanda falls a victim to superstition and says in a voice chocked with pain and emotion: 'The death of my Nanda at the hands of exorcists hurts me, hurts my whole country'! The idealistic image of India that Gora had formed in his mind gets a big jolt when he sees with his own eyes the misery and distress of the People of char — Ghospur and the unenviable condition of the prejudice bound rural Bengal.42

Tagore's disillusionment with the caste system finds best expression in Gora. Contact with village reality helped to dissipate Rabindranth's romantic illusions regarding the virtues of the traditional Hindu Samaj. In a letter to Monoranjan Bandyopadhyay dated 30 July 1908, we find the explicit recognition that the nature of caste ridden Hindu society as distinct from the Muslim, was hindering at every step efforts at collective self-help in Shiledah.

"Having seen all this at first hand, I no longer feel any desire to idealise the Hindu Samaj through delusions pleasant to the ear, but ultimately suicidal — a big contrast indeed to the Swadeshi samaj of just four years before. The
other illusion was not unnaturally more persistent – that of
the benevolent Zamindar, and that too was broken soon by
undertaking this programme of agrarian reform.43

Having become conscious of short comings of Hinduism, Gora is again ready
to defend Hindu practices but now not at all as a fanatic but as one with a higher
understanding of them. According to Raj G.V. Gora’s obscurantist defence of
Hinduism is rooted as much in his militant antagonism to the English and the
Anglicised Brahmos as in his firm conviction about “the blameless excellence of
Hindu religion and society.44

The key to Gora’s ideology lies in that he identifies his religious orthodoxy
with patriotic resistance to the foreign rule. He considers colonialism had created a
schism in the Indian consciousness where by the traditional form of Hinduism was
coming into disrepute among the Anglicised elite. He is in the mistaken notion that
only the Hindus are a nation and hurting the Hindu sentiments in his opinion is
hurting the nation itself. Apparently fearing the possible attack of Samaj, he defends
Hinduism, since Gora believes that offence is the best form of defence. To
Sucharita’s question about Gora’s touch-me-notism” Binoy replies:

“I know quite well that is merely his dogmatism, the more
absurd his opinions sound to his hearers, the more positively
will he express them. He insists on rigid, in discriminate
observance, last, by his yielding on minor points, foolish
people may be led to feel a disrespect for more vital matters
or lest the opposite party should claim a victory. So he dare
not display any laxity even to me.” (P.88)

Gora rejects social reform but he is not anti reformist but anti colonist and anti
anglicized Brahmoist. Even his Hindu nationalism is as against Brahmo sectarianism.
He regards Brahmo’s reforms are remained in the confinement of sectarianism being
fired by Evangelism, to alienate from his own people. Gora refuses to accept Binoy’s
marriage with Lolitha a Brahmo girl. According to Gora marriage with a Brahmo girl
is a matter of losing Indian identity in his terms Hindu identity. Suspecting that the
Brahmos are enticing his friend Binoy away from the Hindu fold, he warns him:

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“But that you should want to separate yourself from the people of your own country, by marrying a Brahmo girl, is a matter of intense pain to me personally... when the whole world has forsaken India and heaps insults upon her, I for my part wish to share her seat of dishonour – this caste ridden, this superstitious, this idolatrous India of mine! If you want to separate yourself from her then you must separate yourself from me also.” (P.267)

Hindus in general are known to be passive and unused to convert others to their faith. But Gora more like an Evangelist convinces Sucharita. In this regard he succeeds in bagging Sucharita and Lolita who turn their back to the Samaj under Gora’s influence.

“To you I make only this request: come inside India, accept all her good and her evil: If there be deformity then try and cure it from within, but see it with your own eyes, understand it, think over it, turn your face towards it, become one with it. You will never understand if you stand opposed and imbued to the bone with Christian ideas, view it from outside. Then you will only try to wound and never be of any service” (P.102)

It must be remembered that Gora’s great deal of universalism started from narrow Hinduism to nationalism and to universalism. Critics say that Gora’s search for India’s true identity or fundamental unity irrespective of her good and bad qualities before his sublimation to universal humanism has an existentialist character. His native and spontaneous love for the country and its people may look narrow and partial, yet the unseemly features of the country’s cultural life like superstition, paganism etc. He accepts forcefully like the existentialists who ‘give emphasis upon whatever is despicable, insignificant, terrible, horrible and unclean: because it exists...’ To Gora India’s ugliness has a different significance. His love for India in her totality is an ideal of wholeness and inspite of the basic contradiction in his outlook – his bias for narrowness (Hinduism) and love for totality (India in her totality) is a step towards his sublimation to world humanism. His metamorphosis
into a global man is the culmination of the evolutionary process that started with his narrow Hinduism and gradually passed through the love of India in her totality and universality.

Gora covering a wide canvas marks an important phase of his mental development as well as search for national unity. As we see in the initial stage of the novel, Gora is shown as a strict Hindu as if Hinduism is a breath of his life. Progressively he considers it as ornamental and society showing. His remarks with Paresh Babu provide an ample evidence of his mind:

"Religion has two aspects to it", "One aspect is the eternal, the other the worldly. Where religion is revealed through the laws of society, you cannot disregard it without bring ruin on society." (P.344)

The later Gora is not too rigid to break his orthodoxy. He had earlier much to the annoyance of Anandamoyi, an unorthodox, rejected food because of a Christian maid, but much more annoyance of Rampathi an orthodox, the same Gora prefers to cook his own meal at barber’s house. His common gaol life is another milestone in his personal thinking. Though outwardly not expressed, he wishes to attend Binoy’s marriage but for society, on the same grounds he opposes Anandamoyi’s participation in the marriage ceremony and says:

"Mother you must remember that you are a member of a society and that you are indebted to that society." (P.341)

It is interesting to observe that in the light of self-evolutionary process, there is another milestone in his rational thinking towards women. At first he lacked any intellectual stand but gradually it grew into a positive outlook. The progressive outlook of Gora espousing women’s emancipation is not only the result of Sucharita’s influence but also the author’s own personal thinking. Earlier Gora did not like liberated girls. He accepted fully the orthodox view of a girl’s place in the home. He argued with Binoy’s liberal attitude towards women. Gora says:
"Like the Englishman", said Gora. "You want to see women everywhere in the home and in the world outside: on the land, the water, and in the sky; at our meals, our amusements and our work—where the result that for you the women will eclipse the men and your outlook will remain just as one sided". If we try to drag our women out into the field of outside duty then their characteristic quiet work will be interfered with, the peace and happiness of society will be destroyed" (P.84)

Gora who was a bigot till then now understands the people outside his community, like Sucharita, and Paresh Babu. The womanhood of India is revealed to him in the figure of Sucharita:

Gora was astonished at his own thoughts. He had never realized before how imperfect his perception of India had been so long as he had failed to acknowledge the women of India. What a lack there had been in Gora's conception of his duty to his country so long as its women were so shadowy and unreal to him! It was as though his idea of duty had power but no life, muscles but no nerves. Gora realized in a single moment that the further we banish woman from us and the smaller the place we give to her in our lives, the weaker does our manhood become. (P.273)

At first Gora has no conscious awareness of this new development in the hidden recesses of his mind. But a time comes at last when it can no longer be hidden and he feels that without Sucharita his life would be empty and meaningless. Despite Harimohini's sarcastic remarks Gora yearns for her companionship:

Gora had never spoken to anyone as he had been speaking to Sucharita... But today when he suddenly heard Harimohini's words, he remembered that once he had laughed mercilessly at Binoy and reproached him for a
similar infatuation. He was startled at seeing himself landed in the same situation (P.337)

In the course of his association with Sucharita, Gora reaches a stage when he cannot do justice to both his faith and love. On the one side his heart would by no means give its consent to end the relationship with Sucharita and his rigid stand on the ceremonial purity on the other side. There is a conflict between love and orthodoxy. He ponders:

I begin to see that my heart is entangled in desire! How can I shift this stone which weights upon me? My father has some how discovered that in my heart of hearts I am not a Brahmin, not an ascetic. (P.394)

It is obvious that his religious orthodoxy is only a strategy to fight the incursion of foreign ideas: his ceremonial purity is a half-hearted attempt; even his self-imposed asceticism is nothing but self-deception. So it is not fair to say that Tagore solves a knotty problem “by the application of dues ex machina”:

The excellence of Tagore’s artistry is seen in his reserving the revelation of Gora’s identity to a moment when he is about to be proclaimed as “The Light of Hinduism”. If accomplished, it could have been an inversion of his inward process of revaluation, which underlies the plot structure of the novel. Having detailed Gora’s muffled voices from within about the incalculable damage done to Hindu society by the prevalence of superstition and obscurantism, Tagore clinches the insights with the final discovery of his identity. Thus, the final denouement is in the nature of a coup de grace rather than a deux ex machina device.47

Gora’s father’s illness precipitates the disclosure of secret of his birth. When preparations for Gora’s penance reach a climax, Gora’s true identity is revealed by Krishna Dayal in the fear that the non-Hindu Gora’s ritual penance will be a sin for all of Krishna Dayal’s family, according to the belief that only a true Hindu or a
Hindu by birth has the right to such a ritual. Though the revelation that he is not a Hindu causes him quite upset in the beginning, later he feels immense mental relief for that he can never be afraid of contamination even in the house of the lowest of caste. As Bhabani Bhattacharya observes, the shock of the revelation is readily absorbed by Gora, because he had been yearning for an escape from the "inner strains of his self-imposed obligations."  

Describing the mental torture he had to undergo in an effort to realise India through Hinduism alone, Gora says to Paresh Babu:

"Paresh Babu, so long I have been trying to realise India with my whole life - I was finding obstacles at every turn - and day and night I have been trying always to make these obstacles objects of devotion. And in order to make that devotion firm in its foundations I have not been able to do any other work - that was my one and only task. For that reason every time I have come face to face with the real India. . . . . . . To-day in a single moment that fortress of my own creation has vanished like a dream, and I, having got absolute freedom, suddenly find myself standing in the midst of a vast truth! All that is good or evil in India, all her joys and sorrows, all her wisdom and follies, have come in their fullness close to my heart. Now I have truly the right to serve her, for the real field of labour is spread out before me - it is not a creation of my own imagination - it is the actual field of welfare for the three hundred millions of India's children!" (P.405)

Gora with immense joy of freedom from bandages moves across the lines of Hindu nationalism to the heritage of universal religion:

To-day give me the mantram of that Deity who belongs to all, Hindu, Mussulman, Christian and Brahmo alike the doors to whose temple are never closed to any person of
any caste whatever. He who is not merely the God of the Hindus, but who is the God of India herself!

"Written in the historical context of colonial India, Gora remains relevant even today not only because of the recent theoretical interest in nation and narration or because the problems of colonialism survive in a disguised and insidious form in modern India but also because of its passionately exploratory urge stemming from and nourishing a warm and inclusive humanity of vision."

Anandamoyi and Paresh Babu are two outstanding characters representing the humanity of vision. If Paresh Babu is worshipper of truth, Anandamoyi is an epitome of love. Both have non-sectarian liberal outlook and sympathetic understanding of the people around them. Both are free from Hindu Brahmo conflicts. Both face identity crisis and become the targets of attacks from their respective communities, for their unflinching faith in humanity. Anandamoyi represents Tagore's vision of India, while Paresh Babu represents the role of its citizen, with key message of Tagore:

"Sectarianism"... is a thing which makes people entirely forget the simple and obvious truth that man is man. It creates a kind of whirlpool in which the society-made distinction between Hindu and Brahmo assumes greater importance than universal truth—all this time I have been vainly whirled round in this eddy of falsity" (p.242)

Anandamoyi, as Tagore presents here is a simple women who represents the grand truth that men can be united only through heart. She discards tradition of seven generations and chooses to be an outcaste only to adopt Gora. According to Sengupta, the adoption of Gora is a soul shattering experience that 'shakes the foundation of her beliefs and gives her a new religion'.

In the critical appreciation of Gora, Shri Buddhadev Bose has remarked that a character like Anandamoyi, so full of life and vitality, has not appeared for the second time in the literature of Rabindranath Tagore. In his portrayal of Anandamoyi one may see Rabindranath's transition from Nationalism to Internationalism. Through
the character of Anandamoyi, Tagore defines his motherland as a cultural unity of all races. Gora says:

You have no caste, you make no distinctions, and have no hatred- you are only the image of our welfare! It is you who are India! (p.407)

B.C. Chakravorty questions what about a person who is Indian by birth? He (Gora) sees the light of reason and the futility of orthodoxy only when he learns that he is an Irishman. But behind Tagore's creation of this Irish origin there is grand intention, universal purpose, and deliberate attempt to establish kinship with the west.

The Union of Gora and Sucharita, Lolita and Binoy, represent not merely the union of Hinduism and Brahmoism, but also of East and West, tradition and modernism, superstition and science. The protagonist Gora and his sublimation from narrow Hindu nationalism to a grand concept of universalism reflect the evolution of Tagore's own thought process.

According to Tagore:

"The inmost creed of India is to find the one in the many, unity in diversity. India does not admit difference to be in conflict, nor does she espy an enemy in every stranger. She repels none, destroys none, and strives to find a place for all in a vast social order. She acknowledges every path and recognizes greatness wherever she finds it. Since India has this genius for unification, we do not have to fear imaginary enemies. We may look forward to our own expansion as the final result of each new struggle. Hindu and Buddhist, Muslim and Christian shall not die fighting on Indian soil; here they will find harmony."

Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyya has rightly said,

"The message that Rabindranath has given us through his literature is that every kind of barrier is false and to break the barrier has been his-life long ideal."
NOTES


17. Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, Life of Tagore, Tr. Sisir Kumar Ghose, (Indian Book Company, New Delhi, 1975), p.49


23. In a letter of 18, 1913 to Ajit Chakraborti from Urbana Illinois.


37. B.C. Chakravorty, p.198.


52. Bimanbehari Majumdar, p.231.

