

## The Theme of Betrayal in Tagore's Home and The World

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### Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore was a prolific author who earned name and fame worldwide for his contribution in literature. Tagore depicts the different shades of man's life through the characters of his novels. Tagore touches the different issues like : the struggle for freedom, the existence of good and evil of the world. Tagore's *The Home and the World* deals with the theme of betrayal and the relationship of husband and wife and how the wife realizes her mistake at the end of the novel This paper is a sincere effort to display how the betrayal of Bimala effects Nikhil's life and how she is deceived by her idol Sandip.

Rabindranath Tagore is also known by his pen name Bhanu Singh Thakur and also called 'Gurudev', 'Kabiguru' of India. Tagore reshaped Bengali literature and music as well as Indian art with contextual modernism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tagore has been famous for a collection of beautiful verses called *Gitanjali* for which he won the Noble Prize in 1913. In an interview with Einstein, Tagore said; "our passion and desires are untruly, but our character subdues these elements into a harmonious whole. Does something

similar to this happen in the physical world? Are the elements rebellious, dynamic with individual impulse? And is there a principle which dominates them and put them into an orderly organization?" (en.m.wiki/ Rabindranath Tagore) It seems that there is always a conflict between our passion and desire but our character subdues both the elements.

Tagore is mainly known for his poetry. Besides poetry, he wrote novels, essays, short stories, travelogues, dramas, and thousand of songs. Tagore wrote eight novels and four novellas among them *Chaturanga*, *Shesher Kobita*, *Char Odhay*, and *Ghare Baire* brought him name and fame in literature. Tagore advocates nationalism and swadeshi movement in many of his novels. Being a witness of freedom struggle, he raises a question about Indian identity in his novel *Gora*. *The Home and The World* draws our attention on the issues like: self identity, personal freedom, and religion. The plot of the novel is developed in the context of a family story and love triangle.

*The Home and The World* was published in 1916 that illustrates the battle between Tagore with himself, between ideas of Western culture and revolution against the Western culture. The novel tells us the stories of not only of the personal struggles of three main characters but also little details of the family structure as well as the traditional families were like. Nikhil, Bimala, and Sandip are major characters in the novels. Tagore intends to display contrasting nature of these characters. Nikhil is presented as an educated gentleman who belongs to an aristocratic family of landlords yet he married to a poor woman Bimala. She is not pretty at all. Nikhil has his own views for the world and denies taking part in Swadeshi movement because he keeps branded things in his home. Nikhil has compassion for the poor so that he marries Bimala and tries to make her able to stand before the world by making her educated. It seems that Nikhil believes in virtues of man rather outer beauty. Nikhil thinks that beauty is only for time being but virtues for a lifetime. Sandip appears like a leader who supports the Swadeshi Movement, is a shrewd person and a close friend of Nikhil. He is an

intriguer in the novel. Bimala, on the contrary, first appears like a devoted wife but later on she betrays her husband under the influence of Sandip.

There is a depiction of two types of love in literature. One is conjugal love, happy and pure and complete in itself. This type of love is approved by everyone in the society. Such love is found between the husband and the wife. The other one is love between man and woman that is without any limitation as well as boundary. Marital infidelity is highlighted through the character of Bimala in the novel. First, Bimala appears like an ordinary girl who is unaware of outer world. It is Nikhil who gives her the strength to stand in the world by giving her education, culture, sophistication, and transformed her into a self conscious woman. It is notable that Sandip is a close friend of Nihil and stays at his home by wearing a masque of goodness. Sandip is a villain with mal intensions even he is not hesitated to pursue Bimala to betray her husband. Sandip is an exploitative person hence he wants to attract Bimala by addressing her in a strange language:

I can see that you are that beautiful spirit of fire, which burns the home into ashes and lights up the larger world with its flame. To give us indomitable courage to go to the bottom of ruins itself. Impart grace is baneful. (Ray, p.41)

It seems that Sandip is aware of weaknesses of Bimala so that he compares her with a flame which burns home into ashes and lights up the larger world with its flame. She should be aware of her of her hidden strength to help the world. Lack of maturity is clearly seen on the part of Bimala as she believed whatever Sandip said to her. On the contrary, Bimala's love for her husband is limitless:

You loved my body as if it were a flower of paradise. You loved my whole nature as if it had been given you by some rare providence. Such lavish devotion made me proud to think that the wealth was all my own which drove you to my gate. (Ray,p.42)

It seems that Bimala is aware of selfless love of her husband. Nikhil's excessive devotion towards her made her proud and she considers his wealth as her own. Nikhil is a loyal and faithful husband of Bimala who supports her to gain freedom from her conventional thoughts but he does not aware of mal intentions of his friend and wife. Tagore seems to highlight betrayal of Bimala and raises a question regarding marital relation by presenting the story of Nikhil, Bimala, and Sandip.

Bimala steals Rs.6000 from Nikhil's house but later on she realizes her mistake and repents a lot. She says;

I could not think of my house as separate from my country; I had robbed my house, I had robbed my country. For this sin my house had ceased to be mine, my country also estranged from me. (en.m.wiki/ Rabindranath Tagore)

It seems that Bimala is aware of her sin hence she felt as if she robbed her country. Her country may not forgive her for this sin of betrayal. Sandip betrays Bimala at the end of the novel.

Hence Tagore has shown the impact of good and evil on this world. Nikhil represents goodness and Sandip represents evil of the world. Nikhil is such an idealist who marries with Bimala and gives her status in the society. Nikhil is interested in her moral development but he is failed to understand the real nature of his friend Sandip. Nikhil is interested in Bimala's outer growth but he is deceived by Bimala. She doesn't care for Nikhil's feelings but she is duped by Sandip at the end of the novel.

## References

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