

PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF TAGORE'S GORA

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Abstract

The present paper exposes the protagonist in the novel Gora by Tagore, who is the mouthpiece of Tagore's own unconscious, repressed desire. The protagonist's thoughts about religion, nation and women in country are but the condensation of collective unconscious of the era in which Tagore lived. Here the work like Gora is treated as certain dream dreamt by Tagore at that time. Such a dream a creative work became the safety valve for author's thoughts about nation, religion which were repressed due to British rule in India. Thus protagonist is the mouthpiece of Tagore at the unconscious state of creation.

Key Words: overt context, repressed desire, collective unconscious, covert context, occidental culture, subalternization, primordial conservative outlook, projection..

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Gora by Tagore is said to be 'the epic of India'. The society and national condition depicted in the novel are the reflections of the pre-independent India. Tagore at that time was living under the British rules. But this fictional creation is indigenous in cultural impact though it was influenced by western literature. Similarly his poetic work like Gitanjali became the first Asian work to be awarded for Nobel Prize in 1913. In case of Gora the main protagonist in this novel is Gourmohan actually belonging to Irish race, as his foster-father looked after him due to having influence of British people on him. This very idea reveals the part of unconscious imagining in the overt context of this novel. Author has displaced his own personality in form of protagonist like Gora. It is said in psychoanalysis that '*there is always return of the repressed*' (Barry, 100). So what was repressed in the overt contextual mind of Tagore is the idea of nation, religion and society. Due to which creative work like novel became the proper media to express his own repressed desire of Indian people. As Freud states, '*A strong experience in the present awakens in the creative writer a memory of an earlier experience from which there now proceeds a wish which finds its fulfillment in the creative work.*' (Freud, 41) Each and every thought of Gora is but the subordinated voice of Tagore himself. Thus Gora like novel is the result of '*the collective unconscious*' enrolled among the minds of pre-independent Indian society. Tagore only became the representative of that voice. Though novel stands for personal voice of author, it represents impersonal hidden thinking taken place into the covert context of the novel. Let's study this intermingling of overt and covert context of this novel studied at various stages like Religious thinking of protagonist, National spirit in protagonist and Feminist outlook of protagonist.

Religion and culture play vital part in Tagore's all creative works. But in case of this novel as it is called the epic of India, it constitutes these factors as the soul of novel. At psychological level religion and culture do not only depict one's unconscious but these are the product of '*collective unconscious*' have been saturating in the mind of author. '*Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument..*' (Jung, 186). Such a cultural subversion has been taken place in this novel.

Tagore has taken into consideration the costume of Gora which will prove the protagonist as the common Hindu citizen of pre-independent country.

He is addressed as the 'the rajatgiri' or the silver hill by his friends. (Gora, 8)

His costume like dhoti, strings were general costume of common men at that time.

He appeared like the embodiment of revolt against the modern times (Gora, 46).

This is the purposeful creation of protagonist by Tagore. This costume nearly resembles same as that of Tagore. So he has reflected his thoughts while concerning about the costume and old-life style of Gora. The extinct desire in the mind of Tagore was to resist the materialistic life style of western world had been dominating on Indian people. The religious impact is shown further when Gora is asserting about the spiritual set-up of Hindu religion. He says,

Hindu religion accepts the ignorant as well as the wise and it recognizes not just one single form of wisdom but the multifarious manifestations of that wisdom. The Christians refuse to accept this multifariousness; they claim that on the one hand there is Christianity and on the other hand there is eternal damnation, and there is no midway in between." (Gora,353)

He admires the so-called *variegatedness* in Hindu religion. Gora further claims that Hindu religious gods are having the spiritual and devotional origin while western culture has only aesthetical origin about their god's creation. Tagore has compared Hindu religion with Christian and western culture. He did not compare Islam. As it was the result of *collective unconscious* subdued within the protest against occidental culture. Beyond only religious thinking it was the conflict between colonised and colonisers, where Tagore's subaltern voice has been uprooted through his protagonist like Gora. The urge and insistence of Gora is not for only materialistic development but he asserts for spiritual and social revolution in India. Here subalternization is the result of both overt thinking of Tagore and covert expression of protagonist in the novel. The contemporary thoughts are reshaped in both voices.

Gora has the background of pre-independent India. Nationality and the revolutionary appeals were the needs of society then. The novel also has adjoined background of 1857 mutiny and its effect both on Indian people and British government. Tagore's idea of nation is revealed through his mouthpiece Gora. Once again here unconscious of author manifests into subaltern voice and it protests against colonisers who were ruling on the creative mind. The repressed desire is surely the freedom of nation. This desire and wish is fulfilled through the thoughts of Gora. Note these patriotic appeals and Gora's idea of nation-

'that is my vision of India in its fullness-it is full of wealth, wisdom, faith-that India does not exist in reality!' (Gora,21)

'We should not allow ourselves to dragged into such debates where my own country is put in the position of the accused, and the argument or judgment is done according to the rules laid down by a foreign court and decided by their foreign standards' (Gora,28)

'But for me it is my umbilical cord. I belong to my India-however much you may blame her, accuse her, I want precisely her' (Gora,320)

'India's change must come by the Indian way; a sudden mimicry of the British history may nullify and ruin it all the way' (Gora,389)

These all opinions of Gora are the signs of acute sense of patriotic feelings in him. But at a time it opposes the foreign rule in very fierce manner. The repressed desire has taken shape of patriotism which will be hardly taken place nowadays. It was the need of that age. This is not thought of single author, but after the 1857's mutiny and Gandhi's entry on political stage these happenings have made this illusion as an honest dream. Gora does not want only freedom of his country, but he also has certain dream which will reshape his colonised country in form of new world. The primordial vision of the country was actually derived from the mutiny of 1857. The covert thinking is modified in such way. It did not become individual but social appeal for Indians. Thus collective unconscious behind the mind of author has been condensed in form of revolutionary thoughts of Gora. Once again Gora speaks like subaltern who was suppressed due to colonisers rule. It is advocated as, *'Actually, we can never give anything up; we only exchange one thing for another.'* (Freud, 37)

Feminist approach is the last part of this discussion. The female portrait made by Tagore is an amalgam of his collective-unconscious. *'Tagore gives feminism a meaning of his own- he provides his feminists lead to find themselves in the face of society without hurting others'* (Rani, 37). Where like his national thought his protagonist speaks further for devotional women rather than realistic women. The same problem which Freudian psychoanalysis faced like masculinity has been observed in case of Tagore's thought on women. We must note that through protagonist he preaches for women worship, pleads for the need of her hand in the development of nation. The substitution of female after male is revised by protagonist. Characters like Sucharita and Anandimoyee later substituted for the male by which they are influenced. Like all other novels Sucharita the main female character has been shown as finally followed by Gora the male protagonist. Though there is touch of western outlook which is different from Eastern thinking. As said by Gora-

'They are to be worshipped because they make the house radiant .not the male heart for which they may be valued in the West-that is better not called worship' (Gora, 11)

The women worship rather than loving proves the influence of cultural unconscious on the mind of author. Later this women worship has been modified into their inferior position which male dominated culture has made compulsion on them into the domestic lives as below-

'Men and women are the two faces of social energy...-let us the men; perform the yagna in public fora, while the women guard the storeroom' (Gora, 108)

The works are divided actually what they have been preserving since from long ages. Women are stamped by male as bearing the defect of *penis envy*. One sex has appealed for social while another sex has insisted for domestic development. It enforces the inferiority complex resulted due to social status of women at that time. Tagore affirms for revolutionary changes in his country but he does not go so much beyond feminism. He has revised the same well fed thoughts of our culture like women worship and their radiance at domestic level. But an appeal from Gora to involve Sucharita for the revolution which he is going to dream is

optimistic at another side. He does want to guide her to take her help in finding the 'great cause' for what he is struggling. See the following lines-

'I long to see my country with you by my side; this longing to see our country has been consuming me. We the men of India can only labour for her, but without you who will light the lamp to welcome her? Service to country will remain devoid of beauty so long as you keep away from her' (Gora,373)

Once again this is the dream vision altered after primordial conservative outlook. It signifies the changing in the psychological condition of the writer. *'He has depicted women who have tremendously courage and strength in trying situations and have played a key role within their ambit of operation to break down those changes of restrictions'* (Rani, 38). Before coming into the contact of Sucharita, Gora was conservative and he was asserting for only devotion of women worship rather than treating them as human entity. After close affection with Sucharita his thoughts are modified. He does want to be with her. He is hopeful for her support. Here the masculine approach of unconscious mind has been slightly loosened. Thus situations in the novel are but the games between conscious and unconscious thought process of creative mind. Writer has full control on his protagonist. He changes his thoughts according to the changes in his mental situation. Hopefully he has fed with all situations through his psychological desire in such a way that keen reader of the novel can experience the dream, the thoughtful dream like the beautiful dashes painted on the tapestry.

The last incident of revelation of real identity of Gora must be mentioned here as it depicts the certain awakening from the thoughtful dream. It also symbolizes the colonial impact on author's creation. His purpose seems to be satiric in nature where revolutionary thoughts of nation are dreamt by a young man who is not actually belonging to Indian race and Hindu religion. Here the psychoanalytic process '*projection*' i.e. contradictions are disowned and transferred to others has been taken place (Barry, 97) Revelation of own identity depicts Gora his futility about those all ideas. But in reality this is only a breakdown of beautiful dream. It appears for the integration in all sects, religions and castes in India. It involves an idealistic representation of the role model in form of Gora. It is said by Jung, *'A great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and is never equivocal.. '* (Jung, 187). If Tagore had used the original Indian protagonist then the necessary *cathartic effect* needful for sensitive end could not have been taken place. So it will be said as both *projection* and the need of story, which symbolizes the unsatisfied nature of authors mind. This dissatisfaction has created the present work. We get the clue of this creative need at the last event like revelation of protagonist's identity. In such a way Tagore's Gora stands for a psychological panorama influenced by the contemporary age.

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