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# Bridging the Nationalism-Cosmopolitanism Divide: A Critical Analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's *The Home and the World*

## Abstract

This paper explores how Eurocentric ideas of nationalism and cosmopolitanism differ from Indian thinker and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore's views and in what ways the intersection between nationalism and cosmopolitanism takes place in his novel *The Home and the World* (1919), originally published as *Ghare-Baire* in 1916. The novel will be analyzed mainly through Kai Nielsen's philosophy of cosmopolitan nationalism (1999) and Kwame Anthony Appiah's concept of rooted cosmopolitanism (2005). Tagore yearned for the conglomeration of different cultures and despised narrow perspectives on nationalism as constricted by geographical boundaries. As per his humanitarian worldview, he prioritized cosmopolitanism as his forte. The novel does not propose any conflict between 'the home' and 'the world'; rather, it suggests a state in which the home and the world would be negotiated to form a harmonious whole. In the Swadeshi period (1905-1911), when the future of Indian self-rule was being mulled over, Tagore began to renounce aggressive nationalism and envisioned India as a land of all communities. The novel's depicted vision of cosmopolitan nationalism received critical appreciation globally after the English translation of the original Bengali text became available. Here, Tagore called for a transnational understanding of empathy and fellow feeling in which humanity would thrive beyond fishy earthly gains.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism, nationalism, humanity, Rabindranath Tagore, Home, World.

## 1. Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the Nobel laureate and a versatile genius, infused humanitarian philosophy in the corpus of literature and was influential in shaping the state of the Indian freedom struggle through his writings. Besides being a litterateur, he had a keen interest in sociopolitical issues that established him as a myriad-minded persona. It can be argued that Tagore experimented with Eurocentric ideas of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, which are often treated as polar opposites, by combining the essence of both terms in his own way. In his examination of the concepts, cosmopolitanism and nationalism could be combined together to reach a peaceful coexistence. Some of his literary works still bear the traces of such novel approaches he initiated. Although he was engaged in societal issues and nationalist politics, he had a marked predilection for internationalism/cosmopolitanism (Quayum, “Rabindranath Tagore’s Political Imagination” 245). *The Home and the World* is based mainly on three characters—Sandip, Bimala, and Nikhilesh. While Nikhilesh believes in cosmopolitan humanism, Sandip indulges in narrow material interests, and Bimala is in a quandary about which ideal to choose. She therefore represents the situation the population of the region then known as Bengal (or India) faced, oscillating between the two ideas. The scholarly articles discussing the novel have focused mainly on the author’s interest in cosmopolitanism; however, there has scarcely been an attempt to define the idea of cosmopolitan nationalism/rooted cosmopolitanism by situating it in a broader context. This paper will apply critical textual analysis to explore how Tagore propagated the need for both cosmopolitanism and ethical nationalism in the abovementioned novel.

In *The Home and the World*, Tagore did not simply comment on politics; he presented a deeper philosophical inquiry into how the world, rooted in history and tradition, could engage with the global forces of modernity without losing its soul. In the article “Cosmopolitan Nationalism” (1999), Kai Nielsen—a prominent Canadian philosopher—also bridges the gap between nationalism and cosmopolitanism to create a world where both national and global identities can coexist harmoniously without undermining one another. The consensus between nationalism and globalism—between the “home” (the local/rooted identity) and the “world” (the larger/universal community)—forms the central theme of the novel. In this context, Mousumi Mukherjee’s

observation in “Tagore’s ‘Rooted-Cosmopolitanism’ and International Mindedness against Institutional Sustainability” (2020) is highly relevant, as she argues: “Among Eastern thinkers, Rabindranath Tagore from colonial British India has been considered by many as one of the most cosmopolitan thinkers. The uniqueness about Tagore’s cosmopolitanism is that, it did not uproot him from his rural Bengali roots and sense of ethnic identity. He was very much a ‘rooted-cosmopolitan’” (49). Though “rooted cosmopolitanism” is an early-twenty-first century term coined by Kwame Anthony Appiah—a British-born Ghanaian-American philosopher and an important figure in the arena of cosmopolitanism—in his book *The Ethics of Identity* (2005), Tagore advocated the same almost hundred years earlier. His critique of ultranationalism also led him to propagate cosmopolitan views to unite the human beings not only of India but also of the whole world. His vision was of a congruous world where people could live in mutual respect and peace in spite of various sociocultural differences. He believed in forming unity by embracing diversity. The subsequent sections of this paper will elaborate on how Eurocentric notions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism differ from those of Nielsen and Appiah and in what ways Tagore anticipated their concepts almost a century ago.

## **2. Eurocentric Concepts of Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism: A Critical Overview**

Nationalism is a concept that resists easy definition. Many Western scholars have hitherto tried to delineate the idea of nationalism, but their concepts are mostly Eurocentric. In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson opines that nationalism is correspondence among the people of a particular nation (7). Another very well-known philosopher and social thinker, Ernest Gellner, argued in his seminal work *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) that if the members of a particular category strongly believe in their mutual duties toward one another and recognize each other as fellow members, they turn themselves into a nation (66). Two other famous historians of that particular time—Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger—declared in their groundbreaking work *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) that the many traditions that seem to be old are, in most cases, quite contemporary in origin and sometimes also invented. This is highly related to the gradual emergence of the nation and nationalism, which tends to promote national unity by creating a

national congruity and thereby validates some specific cultural practices (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1-3). This homogeneous notion differentiates between us and them—those who belong and those who do not. The sense of belonging is also essential to understanding the variegated depictions of nationalism.

The idea of Cosmopolitanism can trace its roots back to Diogenes of Sinope, the Cynic philosopher who claimed he was “a citizen of the world” (Brown 750). Though the term originated with Diogenes, the Stoics later helped it become a vast and comprehensive philosophy. Stoic Cosmopolitanism was mainly propagated by Zeno and Chrysippus, who advocated the idea that despite their various differences, all human beings belong to a single community and are the citizens of the entire universe (Heater 82). Cosmopolitanism gained momentum and was significantly developed with the input/contribution of great philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Though Kant’s idea of cosmopolitanism sprouted from a distinguished eighteenth-century tradition, his approach toward cosmopolitanism and the tradition itself tended to follow Roman Stoicism and ancient Greek culture. Kant’s conception of cosmopolitanism has humanity at its base as he addressed cosmopolitanism and construed it in a sense to fulfill the wider purpose by suggesting some humanitarian approaches, such as lessening the probabilities of war, the non-interference of army into the internal matters of other countries (Political Writings 121). He also noted/argued that each country should maintain a general alliance with all other countries, which is unavoidable in achieving world peace (Metaphysics of Morals 73). The critical writings of John Rawls, one of the most important followers of Kant’s sociopolitical thought in the twentieth century, bear remarkable traces of Kant’s theory of cosmopolitanism. Rawls (1971) argues that cosmopolitans owe their allegiance to the entire universal community of human beings but, at the same time, face conflicts of identity (10). So, the ways Western scholars devised concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism have failed to bridge the divide between these two terms. They have enormously shaped the modern political discourse, but their interpretations seem exclusionary, sidelining non-European perspectives. In a twenty-first century globalized world, the challenge prevails to attune the local and the global in many ways that respect both national sovereignty and universal liberalism.

### 3. Nielsen's Cosmopolitan Nationalism and Appiah's Rooted Cosmopolitanism

Nielsen and Appiah both share a commitment to cosmopolitan ethics by maintaining a balance between local identity and global community. Their ideas form a reasonable amalgamation of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Nielsen claims that liberal nationalism is committed to individual rights and justice within the nation, while cosmopolitan nationalism extends this framework by considering the responsibilities toward others beyond the national borders, thus promoting a form of ethical global citizenship alongside national loyalty (448). He also expresses that human beings “need, along with whatever cosmopolitan identities [they] aspire to and, perhaps to some extent attain, also to locate [themselves] as members of a particular human community, with its distinctive ways of being and doing” (453).

According to Appiah, nurturing global harmony by transcending narrow boundaries ultimately leads to an ethical cosmopolitan world. He argues that the idea of cosmopolitanism has two intertwined parts—the first being the obligation toward other people, going beyond immediate family members, kith and kin, or formal bonds of a shared citizenship. The other is valuing not just human life in general but each individual human life, which refers to taking an interest in the ideologies and customs that give significance to their lives (Cosmopolitanism xv). He continues:

*People are different, the cosmopolitan knows, and there is much to learn from our differences. Because there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, we neither expect nor desire that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life. Whatever our obligations to others (or theirs to us) they often have the right to go their own way. (xv)*

In essence, cosmopolitan nationalism/rooted cosmopolitanism commits to creating a sociocultural framework in which national pride and global solidarity coincide, endorsing a more synchronized world.

## 4. Theorizing Tagore's Concept of Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

Tagore observed that Eurocentric nationalism has a nominal connection with Indian nationalism (T. Sarkar 41). He, therefore, raised some valid questions regarding the influence of the former on the latter. He was well aware of the fact that Eurocentric nationalism is based on the homogenization of cultures, and he believed that Indian nationalism should be recognized for its unity in diversity. And this unity is not only concerned with the diverse cultures within India but also with the cultures of the world (T. Sarkar 43). According to a renowned Indian educationalist Humayun Kabir, Tagore was one of the most important figures of India who renounced the nationalistic ideologies initiated by colonialism. In this context, Tagore vouched for India's ancient bonds with Asia and Africa (Kabir 125). Moreover, Tagore's notion of cosmopolitan nationalism is deeply ingrained in humanity and cooperation, and it goes beyond national and continental boundaries, as reflected in his appreciation of European civilization and humanist tradition. Ramachandra Guha, in the "Introduction" (2009) to Tagore's Nationalism, highlights Tagore's belief in creating harmony between the East and the West, which broadens the scope of Indian nationalism. Guha also claims that Tagore not only contemplated it but also strove to make congruous international relationships, conveying India's message to the whole world and bringing the messages of coexistence from all other countries to India (xi-xii). He therefore rightly opines that "Tagore was a patriot who loved his country, without being a nationalist who saw his nation as necessarily superior to other nations" (Guha 37). Nielsen's opinion is also analogous to Tagore as he claims, "for nationalism to make match with cosmopolitanism it must be a liberal nationalism" (448). To further explain liberal nationalism, Nielsen affirms: "As a social liberalism it will have substantively egalitarian principles of justice that acknowledge the equal human standing of all human beings" (449). Nielsen's ideas therefore deeply resonate with Tagore's attempt to converge various cultures of the world within India and work toward social justice and egalitarianism. It also emphasizes his desire to spread humanist values by crossing national boundaries and reaching international heights. Tagore also envisaged the views of Appiah, who propounded the thought-provoking concept of "rooted cosmopolitanism," which recognizes individual duty toward all other human beings, as well as

upholds the necessity of addressing the concerns of those people who are considerably “closer” (Ethics 118).

Tagore’s India was not territorial, that is, concerned with boundary, but ideational, as he wrote: “True India is an idea, and not a mere geographical fact” (Letters 110). He perceived “India” as a spiritual entity in the iconic song *Jana Gana Mana*, the national anthem of India, in which he celebrated the diversity of India and called for a unified nation. This message of unity in diversity also extended beyond the geographical borders of India and broadened the scope of humanist perspectives. To discuss the philosophical approaches of Tagore, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan states:

*Rabindranath puts forward a plea for mankind by advocating the ideal of a family of nations to which every member will bring his unique gift. This ideal international unity and national independence will break down the barriers of nations and make for sweet harmony. Then will civilizations be inspired by the ideas of the wholeness of the world and its oneness. (169)*

This cosmopolitan nationalist outlook of Tagore is accentuated by his own assertion that “I am not for thrusting off Western civilization and becoming segregated in our independence. Let us have a deep association” (Soares 115). In this context, Martha Nussbaum’s views are worth mentioning as she suggested that the United States should adopt Tagore’s ideal, rooted in sympathy, morality, and justice. These would help create better American citizens who would not only develop empathy for people of other cultures in their homeland but also perceive that “they have to share this world with the citizens of other countries” (6). Cosmopolitan nationalism—which Tagore thought about much earlier—is commensurate with the sociological term *glocalization*, that is, valuing both the global and the local, which was conceptualized in 1980 by Roland Robertson. Not only does it attempt to prioritize the interconnectedness among people of all countries, but it also assures the cultural development of each nation. Thus, Tagore saw cosmopolitanism as an antidote to cultural isolation, believing the world’s different cultures could learn from one another and be enriched through their mutual exchanges.

## 5. Critiquing Sandip’s Narrow Materialistic Nationalism



The Home and the World, penned against the backdrop of the Swadeshi Movement—the political mobilization to make India self-reliant by adopting indigenous products—as well as amid World War I, is Tagore’s one of the seminal novels that promulgates the necessity of discarding materialistic nationalism and embracing cosmopolitan nationalism. The character of Sandip is at the center of criticism because of his narrow materialistic view of nationalism, as Quayum observes: “Sandip (...) begin[s] as [a] charismatic nationalist figure but gradually become[s] self-obsessed and vainglorious in [his] cause, losing sight of [his] dharma of dispassionate, disinterested action (...) and use[s] violence as a fetish for personal gain” (“Imagining ‘One World’” 75). Due to his excessive nationalistic zeal, Sandip lost the way to morality and humanity, and his “politics of aggressive Hindu nationalist demagoguery, combined with coercion, through landlord pressure, of Muslim and lower-caste peasants unwilling to boycott British goods, are shown to lead to communal violence” (S. Sarkar, “Ghare Baire” 143). To defend his own immoral action, Sandip states: “Those who can desire with all their soul and enjoy with all their heart, those who have no hesitation or scruple, it is they who are the anointed of Providence. Nature spreads out her richest and loveliest treasures for their benefit” (Tagore, *Home and the World* 50). For him, mundane reality is the ultimate Truth, and that Truth is gross: “Yes, I am gross, because I am true. I am flesh. I am passion. I am hunger, unashamed and cruel” (64). This attitude leads Sandip to moral degradation that debars him from attaining the noble position of a true national leader.

Tagore was never in favor of the selfish nationalist agenda of deifying women as Sandip does by portraying Bimala as the visible representation of the country. He says to Bimala: “Do you not know that I come to worship? Have I not told you that, in you, I visualize the Shakti of our country? The Geography of a country is not the whole truth. No one can give up his life for a map! When I see you before me, then only do I realize how lovely my country is” (Tagore, *Home and the World* 90-91). By idolizing Bimala, Sandip actually reveals his eroticism toward a woman rather than his respect toward the motherland. This veneration indicates that Sandip does not rely on the nation itself to inspire him but needs some concrete “object,” like Bimala, to evoke nationalism within him. Here, Tagore implies that women should be treated as human beings, not as goddesses, because this type of deification hinders the way to moral cosmopolitanism, and attributing divinity to women also silently snatches their individuality. In this context, Radha Chakravarty’s comment is quite apt:



*The discourses of gender and nation intersect in the nationalist representation of a feminized nation cast in the role of motherland. Sandip's courtship of Bimala is couched in an ambivalent idiom wherein her image as Shakti, the motherland as powerful goddess, often becomes indistinguishable from her position as individual object of desire (...) [In such] figuration, the woman is objectified as object of filial love or sexual desire and denied voice and subjectivity. The agency implicit in Sandip's ideal of 'Shakti' turns out thus to be an illusion conjured up by a false rhetoric of worship and devotion. (96-97)*

When Bimala succumbs to the fake eulogization made by Sandip, she proves her vulnerability to the politics of nationalism, which manipulates the image of a woman without acknowledging her singularity. Though Sandip portrays a nationalist vision for Bimala, it soon becomes comprehensible to her that his “devotional nationalism is grounded in his politics of desire” (Datta 12). Thus, in addition to criticizing the nationalist iconography that considers women as the image of the nation, Tagore exposes how a charismatic leader like Sandip leads himself toward degeneration by succumbing to the whirlwind of destructive nationalistic actions.

## 6. Nikhilesh as a Rooted Cosmopolitan

Rooted cosmopolitanism, as reflected in the character of Nikhilesh, Bimala's husband, is based on mutual respect, openness, and a deeper understanding of humanity. He is opposed to the radical and often violent nationalism that Sandip proposes (Nussbaum 15-16). For Nikhilesh, the ideal way to engage with the world is cooperation and an ethical vision that transcends mere geographical borders. Nikhilesh admonishes Sandip's repeated immoral activities by saying “It is my feelings that are outraged, whenever you try to pass off injustice as a duty, and unrighteousness as a moral ideal. The fact, that I am incapable of stealing, is not due to my possessing logical faculties, but to my having some feeling of respect for myself and love for ideals” (Tagore, *Home and the World* 38). Violating ethical duties for the apparent upliftment of own country is not a crime for Sandip and he cannot look at it only through moral principles. So, he argues, “Is not the history of every country, whether England, France, Germany, or Russia, the history of stealing for the sake of one's own country?” (38). But Nikhilesh differs from Sandip and says: “But do you not see one thing: how these political bags of theirs are bursting with lies and treacheries, breaking their backs under their

weight?" (38-39). He further explains that one should love his/her country in a moderate way because excessive love is regarded as an infatuation and a form of insanity in which cosmopolitan humanity is compromised (45).

Nikhilesh's enlightened worldview strives to coordinate global ideas with local cultural and moral values. He appoints Miss Gilby, a European teacher, to educate Bimala, which proves that he is in favor of British education and culture. He believes in the universality of human experience and that one can remain deeply connected to his/her own heritage and identity while embracing global humanity (Datta 88). Nikhilesh looks at things from a broader perspective as Mohammad Jamshed comments:

*Self-realization through the refinement of the soul, the pursuit of truth, a perfect sense of justice, selfless love, and unconditional care for the welfare of the poor and the less fortunate shapes his worldview and directs his actions. He is a true patriot, but he is against undermining moral values and overriding human dignity. Like Sandip, he does not believe in narrow divisions based on colour, geography, or language. Instead, his actions are guided and directed by what it means to be just and human. (203)*

This hints that the moral laws, which should be abided by an individual, are also simultaneously applicable to his own nation or all nations. As a mouthpiece of Tagore, Nikhilesh shows firmness in his belief that the nations deliberately denying the values of humanity will not last long and that they should not be indifferent to essential human values only to gratify some narrow political interests.. This is why the narrow forms of nationalism manifested in materialism and communalism in both national and global contexts led Nikhilesh to feel the dire need to harbor the liberal cosmopolitan feeling.

## **7. Bimala as an Embodiment of the Conflict between the Home and the World**

The character Bimala embodies the internal conflict between tradition and modernity, with her journey indicating the tension between the domestic sphere (the "home") and the public sphere (the "world"), a key theme that Tagore explored in the context of early-twentieth-century India,

during the rise of the nationalist movement (Chakravarty 11). Bimala's daring attempt to come out of the inner chamber of the house to help the people of the nation highlights her compassionate and humane self. Her association with Sandip, a Swadeshi leader, enkindles her dormant desire to serve the nation. She thinks:

*Sandip Babu made it clear how all the country was in need of me. I had no difficulty in believing this at the time, for I felt that I had the power to do everything. Divine strength had come to me. It was something which I had never felt before, which was beyond myself. (Tagore, Home and the World 57)*

This self-realization helps her emerge as a new woman, unafraid of breaking the shackles coerced by traditional Indian society. This endeavor on her part is also an immediate effect of the European culture introduced into India by colonialism. The representation of women in the politics of Indian nationalism is critically discussed by Partha Chatterjee in the chapter "The Women's Question in Nationalism" of his seminal work *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1999), in which he writes that "nationalism separated the domain of culture into two spheres—the material and the spiritual" (119). He also notes: "The discourse of nationalism shows that the material/spiritual distinction was condensed into an analogous, but ideologically far more powerful, dichotomy: that between the outer and the inner" (120). Chatterjee further opines that the material domain, which is external, is totally unimportant. But "the spiritual, which lies within, is our true self; it is that which is genuinely essential" (120). The broad ideological concept of the material/spiritual dichotomy is applied to the matter of concrete day-to-day life by separating the social space into *ghar* and *bāhir*, the home and the world:

*The world is the external, the domain of the material; the home represents one's inner spiritual self, one's true identity. The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuits of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world—and woman is its representation. (Chatterjee 120)*

This material/spiritual contrariety came to occupy an important place in the nationalist mind. The Europeans, with the power of their superior material culture, subdued the non-Europeans in the

outer world. Nonetheless, the nationalists denied it, claiming that the Europeans had failed to colonize the inner, spiritual domain of the home, in which the East had the supreme power. This binary of material and spiritual in the Indian context justifies the notion that the material domain is controlled and dominated by the male, whereas spirituality resides in the inner space of the home—the domain of the female (Chatterjee 119-20). However, Tagore’s representation of Bimala disassembles the gender stereotypes depicted by Partha Chatterjee and reveals the problematic issue of portraying women as iconic images of the country. Tanika Sarkar argues that Bimala is a “startling new character on the Bengali literary and social landscape” (29).

Coming out of *andarmahal* (“the inner part of the house”) and taking part in the anti-colonial movement was a novel endeavor on her part since the outer sphere was conventionally believed to be occupied by males. Due to her remarkable intelligence, Bimala deserves the position of “Queen Bee” (Tagore, *Home and the World* 48) in the political hive of the nation, but the opportunity for a woman to express herself in the context of national awakening finally leads to the destruction of her inner human spirit. The ending of the novel portrays the dilapidated state of Bimala, who surrendered herself to the wave of nationalism. This daring attempt makes her suffer not only socially and politically but also personally since she is met with a terribly tragic situation, and her fate remains unconcluded at the end of the novel. Unfortunately, she loses both the “home” and the “world” and falls in between (S. Sarkar, “Ghare Baire” 151). Allegorically, her sufferings and dilemma represent the situation the population of the region then known as Bengal, as well as of pre-independent India, faced, and which showed the oscillation between choosing narrow nationalism and cosmopolitan humanism. Her personal expedition reveals the broader cultural and political struggles of colonial India, and her transformation illustrates the possibility of reconciliation between the seemingly opposing forces, the home and the world. Through Bimala, Tagore explored the complexities of identity, love, and nationalism, ultimately suggesting that a balanced, compassionate approach to both the home and the world is necessary for achieving personal and societal harmony.

## **8. (Inter)textual Analysis of Cosmopolitan Nationalism/ Rooted Cosmopolitanism vs Ultrationalism**

Tagore believed that nations should never be characterized by territorial spaces but by the celebration of humanity because a nation would lose its existence if there were continuous violations of moral principles (Kabir 123). In *Nationalism* (1917), Tagore wrote that the “moral law is the law of humanity, and the exclusive civilization which thrives upon others who are barred from its benefit carries its own death-sentence in its moral limitations” (8). He always talked about cosmopolitan nationalism, which, at its core, celebrates morality and solidarity. Nielsen expresses in the selfsame way that every nation should intersect with other nations to create a communal feeling (449). By perceiving the gradual degradation of the high moral nature of ethical nationalism, Tagore felt the urge for international/cosmopolitan thinking to broaden the scope of nationalism. His rooted cosmopolitanism, therefore, tends to commemorate cosmopolitan humanity. Here, Appiah’s comment resonates with Tagore’s idea:

*Cosmopolitanism shouldn’t be seen as some exalted attainment: it begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association (Cosmopolitanism xviii-xix).*

In *The Home and the World*, the conflict between aggressive nationalism and cosmopolitan nationalism/rooted cosmopolitanism is depicted mainly through the contrasting characters of Sandip and Nikhilesh. Nikhilesh is a knowledgeable humanitarian with a global outlook on harmony and equality of people and nations. Sandip, on the contrary, is a man concerned with material gain and mindless violence incited in the name of nationalism. Apparently, Nikhilesh’s character is pale when set against Sandip’s attractive and courageous personality. However, Tagore wanted to portray that Sandip’s glittering persona is not gold and that is why he focused on the cosmopolitan nationalism of Nikhilesh which is an answer to the ultranationalist ideologies practiced and promoted by Sandip. Nikhilesh vehemently shuns being a Swadeshi, but this does not signify that he loves his country any less than Sandip. He is not in favor of sacrificing a humanitarian attitude in order to become a patriot, and Tagore also believed that excessive patriotism is nothing but a veiled form of narrow nationalism, as this unnecessary sentiment brings along with it a sense of jingoism, jealousy, and greed (Festino 66). Tagore’s patriotism is devoid of narrow sentiment, as evident in his letter to Aurobindo Mohan Bose, in which he wrote: “Patriotism cannot be our final

spiritual shelter (...) I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live" (Dutta and Robinson 70). He also wrote, "I took a few steps down that road and stopped: for when I cannot retain my faith in universal man standing over and above my country, when patriotic prejudices overshadow my God, I feel inwardly starved" (Dutta and Robinson 71). This letter is a paradigm of Tagore's philosophy of cosmopolitan humanism as it clearly conveys Tagore's undaunted belief in humanism that he valued more than patriotism. As the plot of the novel unravels, we find that Nikhilesh's idea of nation is not constricted by egoistic and materialistic patriotism; rather, his is a cosmopolitan vision in which every religion and culture of all the countries in the world could coexist. This cultural accumulation has nothing but humanity at its core. Both Nikhilesh and Tagore share the same view, as Mohammad A. Quayum remarkably states, "the view that we are all part and parcel of a self-luminous Brahman, that we are various strings of the universal supreme self; that what is in the macrocosm is also in the microcosm; that, like the petals of a rose, we are all attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love" ("Rabindranath Tagore's Political Imagination" 234).

Through the novel, Tagore attempted to spread the idea of global citizenship, an unconventional effort in his time, which concerned only a few. He heartily accepted the notion that human beings are supposed to build a global society where inclusivity of all cultures takes place. Instead of promoting mindless violence in the name of nationalism, people should cater love and care for everyone in the world: "Nikhilesh harbors very deep sympathy for the poor people of his country since he says that India is not for gentlemen alone and if the lower classes are looked down upon, the condition of the whole of India will deteriorate" (Tagore, *Home and the World* 112). This reveals that these poor and neglected people are an integral part of Nikhilesh's vision of a united India. This narrative reminds us that Tagore shifted his attitude toward the marginalized and neglected section of the country, which is an essential part of the whole nation. After the Swadeshi Movement, Tagore became aware of the divisive and oppressive nature of caste and community and, as a consequence, completely rejected the narrow and prejudiced ideals of the nation and accepted universal values of justice and ethics. As part of the Movement, when foreign clothes from the Sukhsayar market are banned, Nikhilesh protests against this decision and speaks out his grave concerns for the wellbeing of the countless poor people, like Panchu, because foreign

clothes are cheap in rate, but indigenous garments are not, and as a result, it would cause an extra financial burden on them. Nikhilesh's teacher and motivator Chandranathbabu also despises this action and questions Sandip for taking a lead role in such activity: "The country does not mean the soil, but the men on it (...) Have you yet wasted so much as a glance on what was happening to them? But now you would dictate what salt they shall eat, what clothes they shall wear. Why should they put up with such tyranny, and why should we let them?" (Tagore, *Home and the World* 131-32). Unlike Sandip, Nikhilesh has real concerns for the poor people of his own country, and he is always ready to make their lives better. His is not an aggressive patriotism, rather a genuine love for the country and the countrymen.

The Swadeshi Movement, which initially began as an anti-British campaign, turned into an economic one with the emergence of the local industries as the demands for boycotting foreign goods intensified. This novel does not speak in favor of such exclusive movement; rather, the entire plot acts as a warning about the dangers caused by such mindless movement. In his essay "Path O Patheya" ("Ways and the Means"), Tagore wrote: "Come down into the midst of the people of our country, spread out a network of multifarious welfare activities, expand the scope of your work, broaden it in all directions—so that high and low, Hindus and Muslims and Christians, all without exception can come together, mingling heart with heart, effort with effort" (qtd. in S. Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement* 147). This attitude of Tagore reveals cosmopolitan nationalism which proceeds toward humanity. Nikhilesh acts just like Tagore: "I am willing (...) to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than my country. To worship my country as a god is to bring a curse upon it" (Tagore, *Home and the World* 26). On 14th January 1921, Tagore wrote to Andrews that humanity is "rich and large and many-sided. Therefore I feel deeply hurt when I find that, for some material gain, man's personality is mutilated in the Western world and he is reduced to a machine" (Letters 91-92). He then went on to denounce extreme patriotism that leads to dehumanization: "The same process of repression and curtailment of humanity is often advocated in our country under the name of patriotism" (Letters 92). Tagore's idea of patriotism was pure and humane, and his perception of humanity was so great and sacred that he never allowed himself a chance of distraction from such a grand ideal (Chattopadhyay 61). Nikhilesh also not only thinks about the welfare of his own country but shows his urge to break the gender



stereotypes in society, which is still relevant in the twenty-first century. His constant effort to acquaint Bimala with the outer world is also a journey to liberate her from the confines of domesticity. Through the characters, Tagore shows that any overzealous attitude to a nation restricts its citizens from attaining freedom by making them political and materialistic. His ideas were not only a critique of colonialism and nationalism but also an expression of his broader vision of universal humanism, rooted in the interconnectedness of all people.

## 9. Conclusion

Tagore suggested that true progress and harmony come from balancing one's love for his/her homeland with an openness to the wider world, promoting peace and collaboration as a panacea to the peril of division. Therefore, the entire novel—in accordance with Nielsen's and Appiah's concepts—does not refer to any breach between 'the home' and 'the world'; rather it desires for a state in which the home and the world would be united to form an organic whole. Tagore vouched for cosmopolitan nationalism by imagining India as a country where the cultures of the whole world would have the same importance. Love for his own country did not outshine his concerns for the collective well-being of all human beings, and he wanted to convey the message of unity in diversity (of India) to the world. He was a patriot, though not in the narrow sense, and this is why the aforementioned novel questions the constricted, destructive, and competitive version of patriotism developed by colonialism on the one hand but incorporates the importance of European cultures on the other. Tagore was convinced that colonialism and aggressive nationalism were only temporary phases in any other country like India, and, as a conscientious writer, he never tended to sacrifice human values that eventually prompted his allegiance to cosmopolitan nationalism/rooted cosmopolitanism. The novel illustrates Tagore's espousal of a form of nationalism that is rooted in global human values, a cosmopolitan nationalism that does not reject one's own culture but rather uses it as a foundation for global empathy and solidarity. Rooted cosmopolitanism, as envisioned by Tagore, represents the ideal way forward—where individuals and nations are connected both to their local traditions and to the larger human community. This nuanced vision is a critique of the dangers of exclusionary nationalism and a call for an inclusive, peaceful, and interconnected world.

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