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The thesis titled “Conformity and Resistance in the Select Fictions of Premchand” seeks to examine the questions of conformity and resistance that are heterogeneously configured around the themes of nationalism, gender, and peasantry. More specifically, it explores the politics of representation that undergirds the social realism of a writer such as Premchand. In his peasant narratives, the peasant’s conformity to the exploitative agrarian order is almost constantly posited as a virtue. As opposed to this, it is the idea of civil resistance in Premchand’s nationalist narratives that becomes increasingly synonymous with *dharma* (moral duty). This shifting paradigm is also evident in the women-centred narratives where the traditional housewife is sketched out with a different set of aspirations when compared with the modern nationalist subjects who actively participate in the public/political sphere.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter “Introduction” tries to find a new way to situate Premchand’s works within its larger literary contexts. The chapter also looks the way in which Hindi criticism on Premchand is largely hagiographical and laudatory, while the revisionary impulse that one sees through the criticism on Premchand in English is often categorically dismissive and equally problematic. The second chapter is titled “Peasant’s Conformity or Premchand’s Moderate Radicalism.” I argue that even though Premchand envisions a bright future for the peasants of the United Provinces, his fictional works particularly after the arrival of the Mahatma in the political arena do not reflect any authorial conviction vis-

à-vis the idea of collective resistance on the part of the peasantry. In other word, the organized peasantry remains largely conspicuous by its absence in Premchand's peasant narrative. The third chapter "Nationalism and the Question of Civil Resistance" examines the way in which civil resistance to the colonial authority or the representatives of the colonial dispensation virtually becomes synonymous with *dharma*. I argue that Premchand's allegiance to the idea of nationalism should not simply be gauged by the theme of disillusionment and skepticism vis-à-vis the nationalist figures in *Godaan*, but should also be assessed in relation to the way in which he actively campaigned for the idea of one national language and continued to provoke and antagonize the colonial authorities through his radical journalistic writings in the journal, *Hans*. The fourth chapter is titled "Of Conformity and Resistance: Premchand's Shifting Ideals of Womanhood." In this chapter, I illustrate how Premchand, while dealing with the question of conjugal relationships and the domestic sphere, advocates a similar brand of morality to the one that we find in his peasant narratives. And yet, when we examine the nationalist stories of Premchand, we observe how the political/public sphere irreversibly radicalizes even the domestic sphere which ultimately results in role-reversals and a more fluid and equitable gender dynamic. The final chapter "Hidden Transcripts and Everyday Forms of Resistance" offers an alternative approach to studying Premchand's radical short stories such as "Kafan." I employ James C. Scott's idea of the hidden transcripts and everyday forms of resistance to explore the quotidian rhythms of subversion that undergird quite a few short stories of Premchand such as "Nairashya," "Naya Vivah," and "Tagada." Finally, I explore the lesser known stories of Premchand such as "Boodhi Kaki," and "Nasha" in order to demonstrate how the idea of "counter-change of heart" that one finds in a story such as "Kafan" also has some of its thematic precursors in the earlier stories of Premchand, since he could not have turned radical overnight.