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Nationalism and internationalism in selected Indian English novels: 1909 – 1930

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*Nationalism and Internationalism in
Selected Indian English Novels:
1909 – 1930*

Tanmayee Banerjee

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
University of Westminster for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English
School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages
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Affirmation

Herewith I declare that the work submitted is my own. Appropriate credit has been given to thoughts that were taken directly or indirectly from other sources.

-- Tanmayee Banerjee

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Abstract

The thesis aims at analyzing the ideas of Indian nationalism and Indian identity as constructed and disseminated through four Indian English novels published between 1909 and 1930.

The novels to be dealt with in this thesis were authored and published during two of the very important phases in the history of Indian nationalist movement – the Swadeshi Movement (1903-1908) and the Non Co-operation Movement of the 1920s. Thus, this thesis will prove how Indian English novels published before 1930, the majority of which have not been studied with proper attention, bear prominent impressions of the idea of Indian nationalism which was developing coterminously with the publication of these novels. It will show how the novels published in two different phases of the Indian nationalist movement bear similar and dissimilar impressions of the developing imagination of India as a nation.

Secondly, this thesis aims at establishing the unique aspect of Indian nationalism that the authors emphasize through their narratives, that is, the idea of internationalist nationalism. The authors believed in an idea of nationalism in which loyalty to one's own nation does not entail the disavowal or denigration of the interests of other nations. Thus their idea of nationalism, as professed through their works, contained the implication of a humanistic internationalism.

Though some of these novels have been mentioned in previous researches, detailed analytical study of the works from the perspective of nationalism and internationalism has not been attempted till date. Whatever might be the reasons behind their slipping into oblivion, there would remain an immense void if this phase of evolution in Indian English literature is neglected.

তব করুণাকরুণাৰাগে নিদ্রিত ভাৰত জাগে
তব চরণে নত মাথা ...

[With thy beaming bounty rises India out of slumber
I bow down to thee ...]¹

-- Rabindranath Tagore

¹ From the unpublished translation of Tagore's poems by Prof. Suhas Kumar Biswas.

Contents

Affirmation	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii-iii
Abstract.....	iv-v
Introduction.....	1-41
Literature review.....	4
Structure and form of the novels.....	8
Early Indian English fictions which predate Indian Nationalism.....	14
Indian Nationalism: A frame of reference for the narratives.....	19
Chapters.....	38
1. Narrating India: Elite Nationalism and Political Mythology in Two Novels of 1909 ...	42-98
Background of <i>The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna</i>	44
Background of <i>Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest</i>	52
Themes of <i>The Prince of Destiny</i> and <i>Hindupore</i>	57
Construction of India and Indian Identity	60
2. Mass Nationalism and the Gandhi-Novels in the 1920s.....	99-162
Background of <i>My Brother's Face</i>	101
Background of <i>Towards the Dawn</i>	109
The Construction of India and Indian Identity	111
Purpose of <i>My Brother's Face</i> and <i>Towards the Dawn</i>	156
3. Indian Nationalist Fictions in a Global Context	163-214
What inspired cosmopolitanism/internationalism?	165
Relation between India and England	180
Relation between India and other nations	205

Conclusion	215-221
Bibliography	222-239
Appendix	240-259
Outlines of the Novels.....	241
Title Page of <i>Shunkur: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny of 1857</i>	247
About Sarath Kumar Ghosh.....	248
Sarath Kumar's introduction in <i>Pearson's Magazine</i>	251
Letter of Sarath Kumar Ghosh.....	252
Pamphlet advertising Sarath Kumar's Lectures.....	256
Title page of <i>The Romance of an Eastern Prince</i>	259

Introduction

A researcher has to make a brief statement on the topic of his/her research to almost every stranger he/she comes across in the academic community. For me, too, the experience has not been otherwise; and every time I faced this obvious question, I became more and more confident about the importance of the particular area of Indian English writings that my research aims to investigate. The moment I mentioned “Indian English fictions”, people at once spurted out the names of Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao or Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. I took immense pleasure in answering their question, “Indians had written fictions even before Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand?” Such responses reassured me of the relevance of my project to a certain extent. Today a wide range of research is being done on Indian writings in English. But it is quite intriguing that most of the scholarly investigations that have already been attempted are essentially on post-colonial literature, that is, literature produced towards the end or subsequent to the end of colonial rule.

Meenakshi Mukherjee mentions in *The Perishable Empire* that “[n]ovels began to be written in India during and after the crucial decade of the 1850s.”¹ The publications of the earliest novels concurred with the establishment of the universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857, and the Sepoy Mutiny which also took place in the same year. However, it is generally assumed that Indian English novels “took off” in the 1930s.² Mukherjee writes that though the earliest Indian English novels can be traced back to the previous century, novel-writing was in the initial stage and different varieties of “pre-novel narratives”³ appeared in various languages. She mentions the unusually short narratives which did not share the “ideological and other presuppositions of the English novels that were to follow in the subsequent decades in India.”⁴

I shall not be dealing with the nineteenth century novels or “pre-novel narratives” as identified by Mukherjee in this thesis, but I would like to mention that in spite of the “ideological and other presuppositions” which Mukherjee claims are absent in the earliest narratives and which became an essential component of the

¹ Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) 3.

² Ibid. 23.

³ Ibid. 23.

⁴ Ibid. 23.

narratives that followed, there were certain aspects common to both the earliest narratives and the novels published through the early decades of the twentieth century. An integral part of the short narratives published in the nineteenth century as well as of some major narratives published in the early decades of the twentieth century is the construction of India and the dissemination of the spirit of nationalism. In this thesis one of my main arguments will be that an over-simplistic categorization of the narrative fictions published from 1850s to 1930s as the “earliest narratives”, and the claim that they lack in “ideological and other presuppositions”, both disregard the contribution of some of the earliest Indian English narratives to the construction of India and also to the dissemination of the spirit of Indian nationalism. Mukherjee has categorized every narrative published within this span of eighty years in the same bracket. Not only Mukherjee, but the majority of the researchers on Indian English writings have ignored the gradual development of the Indian English novel from the perspective of Indian nationalism which was developing contemporaneously.

In this thesis the argument that I am going to offer is two-fold. Firstly, the Indian English fictions which were published before 1930, and have been labelled as “earliest narratives”, bear prominent impressions of the idea of Indian nationalism which was developing coterminously with the publication of the fictions. The fictions published in two different decades bear the impressions of the developing imagination of India as a nation – the earlier narratives portraying the elite Hindu forms of cultural nationalism and the later ones representing a more self-avowedly popular inter-communal version promoted by Mahatma Gandhi. Secondly, I will show that the authors bring out one of the unique aspects of Indian nationalism through their works; that is, the idea of an internationalist nationalism. The authors believed in an idea of nationalism in which loyalty to one’s own nation does not entail the disavowal or denigration of the interests of other nations. Their idea of nationalism contained the implication of a humanistic internationalism. Thus, their positioning of the idea of Indian nationalism within a global context is another major aspect which I shall be dealing with. I will take up four novels on the basis of which I will establish my argument. The novels are *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (1909) by Sarath Kumar Ghosh, *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest* (1909) by Siddha Mohana Mitra, *My Brother’s Face* (1924) by Dhan Gopal Mukerji and *Towards the Dawn: A Contemporary Political Novel* (1922) by Jatindranath Mitra.

Meenakshi Mukherjee states in *The Twice Born Fiction* that, “[s]ince Bengal was the first region to come in close contact with the British, the earliest Indian novels came to be written in Bengali.”⁵ As a corollary to Mukherjee’s statement we can safely claim that it was probably the same reason why the majority of the earliest Indian English authors were Bangalees.⁶ Thus, the choice of these particular novels, all authored by Bangalees, is a mere coincidence and not purposeful. However, the major criterion for the selection of these novels was the dates of their publications, which we shall discuss in due course.

I will argue through the course of the thesis that a general lack of interest in the Indian English fictions published before 1930, simplistically generalised as earlier narratives, has left certain areas in the research of Indian English fictions unexplored. Moreover, despite the fact that the history of Indian nationalism is generally traced from the revolt of 1857,⁷ the study of the development of the Indian English novel, which originated almost around the same time, has not been appropriated in compliance with the idea that there is a fundamental link between the novel and the nation. I will argue that the four narrative fictions which I shall be dealing with in the thesis are all nationalistic fictions. Despite the apparently pro-imperialistic dispositions in some aspects of the narratives, despite their constant appreciation of the advancement of knowledge in the west, despite their continuous emphasizing of the necessity of maintaining an amicable relationship with England and also with other nations, these narratives represent the unique spirit of Indian nationalism. I will show how the authors employed different tropes in order to construct an India according to their imagination. I will explain how their scheme of constructing a national identity for India was not devoid of their acknowledgement of the fact that this nationalist agenda could only attain perfection within the larger paradigm of a humanistic internationalism.

As we can notice from the list, the novels belong to two different and important periods of Indian nationalism. The first two novels were published in the wake of the partition of Bengal (1905) and the Swadeshi Movement, and the second

⁵ Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English* (New Delhi: Heinemann, 1971) 19.

⁶ People whose mother tongue is Bengali or Bangla are Bangalees.

⁷ Bipan Chandra, et. al., *India’s Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989) 31. Also see R.C. Majumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857* (Calcutta: Mukhopadhyay, 1970) iii-iv, and Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2004) 169.

two were published during the 1920s, while Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was emerging as the first political hero of India. Though the nationalist movement had produced leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak before Gandhi, it did not witness mass-frenzy about any political leader before the emergence of Gandhi in the political arena. Unlike other leaders Gandhi was believed to possess superhuman qualities and cast a larger-than-life impression on the minds of the common people of India. It is because of the mass belief in Gandhi as a superhuman entity with exceptional qualities that I have mentioned him as a hero and not merely a leader. I have discussed it in detail in the second chapter by referring to Shahid Amin's essay 'Gandhi as a Mahatma'.⁸

I have traced the impressions of these crucial political phases in the history of Indian nationalism on the particular narratives. Here I need to clarify why I have not included Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *Shunkur: A Tale of Indian Mutiny* (1874), despite its importance as the only example of an Indian English fiction which deployed the revolt of 1857 as the central axis around which the plot revolves. There are differences of opinion so far as the importance of the revolt in the historiography of Indian nationalism is concerned. More importantly, the revolt received strong disapproval from contemporary Bangalee intelligentsia, which was the think-tank of Indian nationalism. During the nineteenth century Bengal was deeply influenced by western ideas and was seriously considering social reforms in the western mode. Thus, "[w]hen north India rebelled against the British in 1857, Bengal remained quiescent."⁹ I have therefore taken into account the narratives published in the early twentieth century during the Swadeshi Movement, that is, the greatest pre-Gandhian nationalist movement; and those of the early Gandhian phase, that is, the 1920s. I have limited the scope of my research to novels published before 1930, as fictions published since the 1930s have already drawn considerable attention from the scholars.

Literature review

A lack of detailed study resulting in the misinterpretation of the pre-1930 novels is the consequence of an overall negligence of the novels by critics of Indian English

⁸ See pg. 141-2.

⁹ Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition, Bengal and India: 1947-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 8.

literature. An account of the earliest English novels by Indians was first attempted by Bhupal Singh in 1934 as a minor part of *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction*. This was mostly about Anglo-Indian literature and Singh made a detailed study of the fictional work produced from India which represented Anglo-Indian life in India. However, Singh notes in the introduction that “the survey does not exclude Indian novels written by men of nationalities other than the English. It also includes novels describing the life of Eurasians and of Indians.”¹⁰ In the acknowledgement of the literary contributions of Sarath Kumar Ghosh, Siddha Mohana Mitra, P.A. Madhaviah and A. Subramanyam as Indian writers using English, this book is the first record of these writers becoming part of any critical discussion of the representation of India.

In 1945 K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar devoted his attention entirely to works by Indians in English and traced the beginning of Indian English novels to 1876. He identified Raj Lakshmi Debi’s *The Hindu Wife, or the Enchanted Fruit* (1876) as the earliest specimen of an English novel written by any Indian; although the earliest English novel *Rajmohan’s Wife* by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was actually published in 1864.¹¹ He briefly mentioned the two novels published in 1909 from London by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. In *Indian Writing in English* (1962), by the same writer, the discussion of the novels begins with analyses of the works by Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. Hence in this later work the novels published before 1933 remain unacknowledged. In the 1985 edition of *Indian Writing in English*, however, Iyengar acknowledged Dhan Gopal Mukerji’s novels and said, “Dhan Gopal Mukherji can almost be called the Indian Kipling – sometimes, indeed, more satisfying than Kipling.”¹² Overall, this edition has very little to say about the evolution of the idea of nationalism and the nation in Indian literature in English, and even less to say about the writers I am focusing on.

P.P. Mehta’s *Indo-Anglian Assessment* (1979) covers many books written between 1874 and the 1970s. It offers a critical review of *The Prince of Destiny* by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and *Hindupore* by Siddha Mohana Mitra. Mehta examines the fictions in the light of the factors which, he argues, encouraged the authors to write in English. The factors were the desire amongst the English-educated Indians, such as

¹⁰ Bhupal Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934) 1.

¹¹ K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (Bombay: Karnataka Publishing House, 1945) 170.

¹² K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1985) 514.

the authors, to impress the British public; to create an impression for political, social or even personal ends; to get an all-India as well international readership; to imitate western models; and the distrust of vernaculars.¹³ Amongst all these factors, Mehta identifies the sense of nationalism that was evolving during the period as one of the prominent ones.¹⁴ However, the discussion of the representation of nationalism in the novels which I am exploring is disappointingly brief.

Pramila Garg in *The Freedom Movement in Indian Fiction in English* (1993) and Shubhendu Kumar Mund in *The Indian Novel in English: Its Birth and Development* (1997) offer short studies of the representation of the developing idea of nationalism in some of the novels. Garg largely discusses novels published post-1930 in terms of the classic ideas of Indian nationalism as developed by the Indian National Congress. It has very little to say about the novels which are the subject of this thesis. Mund begins his survey from 1864 and continues till just before Independence in 1947. His survey discusses neither nationalism nor the novels examined in my thesis, but rather analyses types of characters and recurrent themes and situations.

The study which is most similar to mine in terms of perspectives and the line of thought is Gobinda Prasad Sarma's *Nationalism in Anglo-Indian Fiction* (1978). Despite the phrase "Anglo-Indian Fiction" in the title (which actually refers to literature produced by authors of mixed British and Indian ancestry, or of British ancestry but settled in India), Sarma makes a determined attempt to study Indian English fictions in the light of nationalism.¹⁵ The wide range of his study, beginning with fictions (both short stories and novels) published since 1835 and ending with those published after independence in 1947, has restricted Sarma in attempting detailed discussions of individual works. Though he offers discussions on the novels I am looking at, he only spends a couple of pages on each one. However, in his study he fails to emphasize that Indian authors writing in English had begun to propagate the idea of nationalism through their works before the Indian National Movement took concrete shape. He does not spell out how, from the earliest prose-fiction authored by Kylas Chunder Dutt, the idea of India as a nation was being proclaimed. Sarma does not attempt a comparative analysis between the socio-political ideas

¹³ P.P. Mehta, *Indo-Anglian Fiction: An Assessment* (U.P.: Prakash Book Depot, 1979) 9-10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 10.

¹⁵ A parallel term for Indian English writing which can be alternatively used with it is Indo-Anglian writing.

represented in the novels and the ideas professed by the prominent political leaders and thinkers of the country. He does not offer thorough analyses of the novels from the perspective of the opposing ideas that the various factions within the Indian National Congress propagated. Consequently, he also misses out the religious and spiritual strains of Indian nationalism which actually endowed this western political ideal (that of nationalism) with an Indian spirit. Thus, major parts of the novels which address the issues of Hinduism and spirituality in the context of nationalistic ideas remain unappreciated. He does not discuss Indian fiction in English against models of India as represented by typical British Anglo-Indian writers such as Kipling. Most importantly, his work being published in 1978, Sarma has not been able to make use of modern theoretical understanding of the idea of nationalism as the modern theories of nationalism, postcolonialism and subaltern studies had not yet been propounded. Thus Sarma's study fails to analyse the way the Indian nation and the sense of nationalism is constructed by the authors through literary narratives. He adopts a more parochial idea of Indian nationalism which does not address the idea of internationalism that is crucial to the project. Most importantly, the analysis of the use of various tropes in the construction of India and Indian identity, on the basis of the modern theories of nationalism, remains beyond the scope of Sarma's work.

What none of the previous studies has focused on is the contextualisation of Indian nationalism in the global socio-political paradigm through these early English novels by Indian authors and how this idea of nationalism was mediated through the texts for the colonisers as the target readers for all these novels were westerners. These novels have always been neglected in the discourse for their lack of "literary excellence". It never occurred to the critics that these novels were unique representations of the convoluted state of Indian nationalism – the immature, yet zealous idea of Indian nationalism that is reflected in the straightforward plot structure and emotional ideas in some of the novels. Such lacunae in the study of the influence of Indian nationalism in Indian English literature has inspired me to look into these obscure novels and argue that the novels I will discuss in the thesis bear footprints of the developing Indian nationalism as they contribute to the construction of India and an Indian identity.

Despite our differing approaches, Meenakshi Mukherjee's scholarly work on the evolution of Indian English fictions and novels has proved to be fundamentally important for this thesis. I will refer to Mukherjee's *The Twice Born Fiction* (1971),

The Perishable Empire (2000), *Elusive Terrain* (2008) and an essay “Epic and Novel in India” in Franco Moretti’s *The Novel* (2006). It is in the light of her observations regarding the growth and development of Indian English novels that I can appreciate the narratives I shall be discussing in the thesis. Though she has offered more extensive studies of the later narratives (those published after 1930) than the earlier ones, she has made some significant observations regarding the earlier narratives. Her overall analysis of the fictional narratives published between 1850 and 1930 has proved beneficial for my thesis as she has explained in the essays the reasons behind the use of certain recurrent tropes in the fictions.

Among more recent works, Alex Tickell’s study of some of the novels published during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has helped me in framing my arguments in the thesis. His works have thrown light on some of the unexplored areas, such as the creation of a Hinduised space in *The Prince of Destiny*, the influence of the terrorist and insurgent activities during the phase of developing nationalism on the literary narratives and the dialectics of the Indo-British relationship as presented in the novels of Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. The chapter titled “The Discovery of Aryavarta” by Tickell in *Alternative Indias* has offered a comprehensive and insightful study on the influence of Hindu nationalism in the construction of the fictional space that Ghosh presents as India of his imagination. However, Tickell does not comment on the later narratives which I have dealt with.

Structure and form of the novels

Before delving into the novels and analysing the use of various tropes and their significance in the construction of Indianness and Indian identity, I will first draw attention to the difference in form and structure of the novels published in 1909 from those published in 1920s. According to Timothy Brennan, the novel accompanied the rise of nations “by objectifying the ‘one, yet many’ of national life” while “its manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that was the nation.”¹⁶ From the discussion of the novels we will notice that the “manner of presentation” of people and their cultures in the discussed novels evolved with time. Though the main interest of the thesis lies in the analysis of the primary tropes which

¹⁶ Timothy Brennan, “The national longing for form” in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990) 49.

the earlier and the later novelists deployed in their constructions of India and Indianness, the fact that these authors were experimenting with literary forms, even at such an early stage in the history of Indian English novels, is worth noticing.

From their experimentations it becomes clear that they were equally attentive to the form as they were to the content of their novels. There was a definite purpose behind the structuring of their narratives which concurs with the status of the nationalist movement at the time of publication of the novels. While in *The Prince of Destiny* we will find an overlap between the epic and novel in the narrative structure as well as in the construction of the hero, in *Hindupore* selected sections from the *Mahabharata* have been incorporated into the content without influencing the form. Again, when we move on to *My Brother's Face* and *Towards the Dawn*, we find that both these narratives have unique structures. The uniqueness of *My Brother's Face* lies in its deployment of two narrators within the autobiographical narrative. *Towards the Dawn* is probably the only example of roman-à-clef among the pre-1930 Indian English novels.

In the first chapter of the thesis we shall see how Sarath Kumar Ghosh took recourse to the epics in search of the fundamental tropes of his construction of India, of an Indian hero and also his references to the past glory and chivalry of Indian men. Alex Tickell has labelled *The Prince of Destiny* as a “national-political epic”,¹⁷ but what is most crucial in a discussion of the narrative structure of *The Prince of Destiny* is Meenakshi Mukherjee’s observation in her essay “Epic and Novel in India” that in the late nineteenth century traditional iconography was being dismissed by the new school of artists and litterateurs whose intention was strongly mimetic.¹⁸ With reference to this particular observation we will find that mythic imagination and traditional iconography were not shelved altogether; we shall see how Sarath Kumar tried to reconcile the two forms, that of the epic and the novel in *The Prince of Destiny*.

The Prince of Destiny offers a reconciliation of the past and the present. The combination of the epic and the novel in its narrative structure is therefore indisputably appropriate and profoundly suggestive. The novel begins with the Delhi Durbar of 1877 at which Queen Victoria was proclaimed the Empress of India. The

¹⁷ Alex Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature, 1830-1947* (Oxon : Routledge, 2012) 170.

¹⁸ Meenakshi Mukherjee, “Epic and Novel in India” in Franco Moretti (ed.), *The Novel*, vol. 1 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006) 597.

immediate mention of Indraprastha, the wondrous city mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, establishes a connection between the narrative and the epic, or in a way, a connection between the present and the “absolute past” in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin.¹⁹ The past which is alluded to at the very beginning is the “past of national beginnings and peak times” when “everything [was] good.”²⁰ Vashista and Viswamitra, the erudite scholars of the epics, appear in the novel as ascetics and as its protagonist’s teachers, who keep on reminding the readers of the epic essence in the novel. Moreover, Barath, the hero born to his mother Koikei, is said to bear the same lineage as Rama as in the *Ramayana*. Thus, the third person narrator occasionally takes up the role of an epic poet within the narrative to create an environment of the past which is inaccessible to him.²¹ Though Bakhtin assigns this role to the epic poet who holds the authorial position, in *The Prince of Destiny* the author manipulates the role of the narrator in such a way that the latter seems to switch his role between an epic poet and the narrator of a novel, as and when required.

The essence of the novel in the narrative of *The Prince of Destiny* lies in its contact with contemporary life and, of course, its language of contemporaneity.²² It does have a sturdy structure and a well-knit plot. Though the world represented in the novel is somewhat unknown and distant to the common readers because of the royalty and nobility of its primary characters, it is still not as distant as the epic world. Moreover, the sub-plot plays a very important role in ascribing to the narrative the status of a novel. The moment the reader begins to grapple with the unknown world in the narrative, the author rescues them by drawing their attention to ordinary people, their lives and their dreams with which the reader can identify. However, we need to keep in mind that this novel was primarily written for English readers, with the purpose of acquainting them with Indian life and culture. Naturally, apart from the events that take place in London, the rest of the narrative is bound to seem unfamiliar to English readers. But this sense of cultural unfamiliarity does not stem from the feeling of inaccessibility which is an essential aspect of an epic. While the epic past in the narrative supplies the tropes for the construction of India and Indian identity,

¹⁹ M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 13.

²⁰ Ibid. 15.

²¹ Ibid. 13.

²² Ibid. 21.

the contemporary space, time and actions that the novel deals with become the narrative of nationalism in itself. Materials from the epic are weaved into the narrative to make it a combination of epic and novel.

In both *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore*, we find a similarity between the issues dealt with in the subplot of the narratives. While the main plots of both the novels deal with the kings and princes, rulers and administrators, the subplots essentially throw light upon the ordinary people and some common important issues which needed to be addressed. In *The Prince of Destiny* the most burning issues of the nineteenth century, such as the abolition of *sati* and widow remarriage, are addressed by Ghosh. Similarly in *Hindupore* Mitra draws the attention of the reader to the Anglo-Indian²³ community and the predicaments they had to deal with in their everyday lives due to their bi-social identity. However, despite their efforts to include the ordinary population and their problems in the narrative, the elite-dominated Hinduised narrative space creates the same hierarchical structure in which the upper stratum overpowers and overshadows the one beneath to a considerable extent. But this, we will find through the course of our discussion, is profoundly indicative of the participation of people in the nationalist movement of India. As the elite-dominated nationalist movement gave way to a strong representation of the peasants after the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi, the narratives began to have a multi-stranded main plot in which each and every strand represented a particular aspect of the society in a non-hierarchical way. The parallel strands were gradually woven together through the course of the narrative to make a compact and unified plot-structure.

It will not be wrong to claim that over a decade after the publication of *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* in 1909, we get a new artistic prose model for the novel – a model which appeared in simultaneity with the birth of scientific thinking, according to Bakhtin. It will not be wrong to characterize the narrative of *My Brother's Face* as an *apomnemeumata* which Bakhtin describes as “a genre of the memoir type, as transcripts based on personal memories of real conversations among contemporaries ... [in which] a speaking and conversing man is the central image of the genre.”²⁴ *My Brother's Face* is a memoir, rather a conflation of two memoirs.

²³ In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the term Anglo-Indian meant colonial European or a person of mixed ethnicity.

²⁴ Ibid. 24.

Naturally, there are two speaking men in the centre of the narrative – the author-narrator and the brother, or, let us call him the brother-narrator. The narrative begins with the author-narrator’s immediate impressions of India on its way to modernization. The author introduces the brother, but leaves it for the latter to speak of himself and his own experiences. By avoiding the direct unmediated voice of the author-narrator in this way, the narrative gains a strong base in reality to command more believability from the readers. In a footnote Bakhtin makes a note of the fact that in a memoir or an autobiography there is a “de-heroizing memory” of “one’s own contemporaneity and one’s own self.”²⁵ The author’s technique of endowing a narratorial voice to the brother of *My Brother’s Face*, who is the eponym of the title, actually facilitates the narration of a de-heroized memoir.

An obvious question which might arise at this point is whether it is justified to consider *My Brother’s Face* a novel. Here we might refer to what Catherine Gallagher believes to be the paradox of the novel, that “the novel slowly opens the conceptual space of fictionality in the process of seeming to narrow its practice.”²⁶ In the discussion of the background of *My Brother’s Face* in the second chapter, I will show how this narrative is largely inspired by real situations and incidents from the lives of the author and his brothers. Again, at the same time, it is not possible to verify if each and every incident, each and every interaction between the author-narrator and the characters of the narrative are actually real, without even a trace of fictionalization by the author. The reader is made aware of the probable fictionality by the form of the novel itself, yet the believability of the characters and the situations is not compromised. In this case the form of the narrative, in which each of the dual narrators narrates his first-hand experiences, facilitates the suspension of disbelief. According to Gallagher, “[n]ovels with first-person narrators reveal their fictionality primarily through the techniques that indicate the difference between the narrator and an implied author.”²⁷ In Dhan Gopal’s novel this difference becomes conspicuous with the deployment of two narratorial voices. In this case the author-narrator and the brother-narrator execute the roles played by the “narrator and an implied author” which Gallagher talks about.

²⁵ Ibid. 24.

²⁶ Catherine Gallagher, “The Rise of Fictionality” in Franco Moretti (ed.), *The Novel* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006) 340.

²⁷ Ibid. 357.

However, in my discussion of authenticity and fictionality in the narrative of *My Brother's Face* I have framed my arguments on the basis of Dhan Gopal's elder brother Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay's memoirs and Dhan Gopal's letters. For readers without the background knowledge of Dhan Gopal's life and activities, the question of reality of the events of *My Brother's Face* will appear less significant than that of its fictionality and believability. Moreover, "the key mode of nonreferentiality in the novel ... that of proper names"²⁸ is used selectively in this novel. Neither the author-narrator nor the brother-narrator has his name mentioned in the novel. We shall see how some of the characters in the beginning, such as the tradesman and the scholar, the Arabian pearl-merchant and the missionary have been introduced by their professions in order to offer stereotypical images which people engaged in such profession generally conform to. Apart from that of the minor characters, the only proper name which dominates the narrative from the beginning till the end is that of Gandhi. But in this case Gandhi is not directly present, and therefore this referentiality only vouches for the reality of ideas associated with him and not for the believability of the readers.

While an autobiographical narrative claims its believability through the diegesis, the roman-à-clef, as suggested by the term itself, contains a key to unravel the mimetic world. According to Sean Latham, romans-à-clef played a generative role in the twentieth-century renovation of the novel "providing a passage beyond Victorian realism and into a far murkier field where fact and fiction pleasurably – and sometimes dangerously – intertwine."²⁹ Tracing the revival of the roman-à-clef in the twentieth century to the emergence of modern celebrity culture, Latham states that this "reviled and disruptive literary form, [throve] ... on duplicity and an appetite for scandal."³⁰ Though there is an obvious combination of fact and fiction in *Towards the Dawn*, the 'clef' or key in this roman-à-clef is the contextual knowledge of the lives and activities of the nationalist leaders of India who appear in the narratives disguised by different names. The purpose of this novel does not, however, seem to satisfy the "appetite for scandal" of its intended readers.

What makes *Towards the Dawn* essentially different from *My Brother's Face* is an equal attention to the public as well as private lives of the nationalists which the

²⁸ Ibid. 341.

²⁹ Sean Latham, *The Art of Scandal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 7.

³⁰ Ibid. 7 and 19.

latter lacks in its narrative. It is not about “marketing private lives to a public audience”;³¹ but the tension in personal relationships which needs to be fought with continuously in order to achieve political goals is what Mitra intends to make his readers aware of. It is not about “encod[ing] salacious gossip about a particular clique or coterie”³² but about the sacrifices one has to make in his/her personal life to serve the motherland. However, Mitra does hint at certain aspects of the lives of the nationalist leaders which Indians in general were, and still are, curious about. These aspects include Gandhi’s conjugal relationship with Kasturba and the mutual fondness between Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita. We will not discuss this in detail as it is in no way relevant to the theme of Indianness and Indian identity and their construction which we are dealing with in this thesis. This discussion of the development of form through the early decades of the twentieth century is only to show that in a mutually symbiotic relationship with nationalism, the Indian English novel developed simultaneously with the development of Indian nationalism.

Early Indian English fictions which predate Indian Nationalism

Before I introduce my thesis, I would like to offer a review of the publications of the earliest fictions in Indian English writings as briefly as possible. The purpose of this overview is to show how Indian English writings have espoused the spirit of patriotism and nationalism from the very beginning, and also to give an idea of how the works which I shall discuss are situated in the continuum of Indian writings in English.

Though there are varieties of perspectives on and definitions of nationalism, the simplest idea which the term implies is a kind of patriotism which entails the identification of a group of people with a nation. The question of when and how India became a nation calls for a detailed discussion; but if we trace the Indian English writings from their earliest date, we find that the patriotic sentiment towards a country called India left prominent impressions throughout the narratives in most of the cases. This is how it all began –

The people of India, in general, are peculiarly favoured by Providence in the possession of all that can cheer the mind and allure the eye, and

³¹ Ibid. 42.

³² Ibid. 7.

tho' the situation of Eden is only traced in the Poet's creative fancy, the traveler beholds with admiration the face of this delightful country, on which he discovers tracts that resemble those so finely drawn by the animated pencil of Milton.³³

The author took up the noble task of introducing his motherland to foreign readers. Through the lines of his travelogue a reader can sense the passion of a patriot in the description of the land called India. He begins by describing the beauty of India, the richness of her soil and the sociable disposition of her people.

You will here behold the generous soil crowned with various plenty; the garden beautifully diversified with the gayest flowers diffusing their fragrance on the bosom of the air; and the very bowels of the earth enriched with inestimable mines of gold and diamonds.³⁴

These were the opening words which opened up a new discourse, that of Indian writings in English.

The author was Sake Dean Mahomet, a trainee surgeon employed in the Indian Army who accompanied his boss to Ireland when the latter retired. In ten years Dean Mahomet learnt English and published his epistolary travelogue *The Travels of Dean Mahomet, a Native of Patna in Bengal, through several parts of India, while in the service of the Honourable the East India Company* (1794).³⁵ And thus he created history, being the first Indian ever to have authored a book in English. We can safely disagree with M.K. Naik's claim that Rammohun Roy was the "first 'begetter' of Indian prose in English."³⁶ Sake Dean Mahomet, who can thus rightfully claim the status of the originator of Indian writings in English, was also the entrepreneur to have introduced the first curry house and establish shampooing baths in Britain. Therefore, it will not be wrong to say that Dean Mahomet was the first to have made a permanent impression as an Indian on the English soil.

Almost five decades after Dean Mahomet's travelogue was published, the first English prose-fiction ever authored by any Indian appeared in 1835. This was

³³ Sake Dean Mahomet, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet, A Native of Patna in Bengal* (Cork: J. Connor (Pr.), 1794) 3.

³⁴ Ibid. 4.

³⁵ For details please see Sake Deen Mahomet, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: an eighteenth century journey through India*, edited with an introduction and biographical essay by Michael H. Fisher (London: University of California Press, 1997).

³⁶ M.K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982) 18.

one of the short narratives that Mukherjee mentions in *The Perishable Empire*. The author was Kylas Chunder Dutt and the fiction was titled “A Journal of 48 hours of the Year 1945”. This was published in *The Calcutta Literary Gazette*, the editor of which was David Lester Richardson, a legendary professor of English at Hindu College in Calcutta (which came to be known as Presidency College in 1851). Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s *Rajmohan’s Wife*, which appeared serially in 1864 in *Indian Field*, a weekly magazine published from Calcutta, is considered the first novel in English ever to be written by an Asian. However, some claim Kylas Chunder’s “A Journal of 48 hours of the Year 1945” to be the first Indian English novel. There is much argument regarding the justifiability of assigning to this work the status of a novel. Pallab Sengupta, who discovered it in 1965, preferred to call it a short story because of its length. However, another scholar, Amalendu Bose, calls it a novel in his article published in the *Bulletin of the Department of English of the Calcutta University*.³⁷ Again Gobinda Prasad Sarma argues, “[i]f we consider the plot which is a combination of many scenes and incidents held loosely together, we shall, of course, have to regard this work as a novel.”³⁸

Whether considered a novel or not, “A Journal of Forty Eight Hours of the Year 1945” was undoubtedly the first ever prose-fiction written by an Indian in English. Regardless of merit and relevance, any piece of literary production claims a position for itself in history if it happens to be the first of its kind. But Kylas Chunder’s “A Journal of Forty Eight Hours of the Year 1945” inspired, and is indicative of, a particular pattern in the ensuing narratives attempted in English and also in the vernaculars by Indian authors. In the epigraph the author quotes a passage on liberty from *Junius Brutus* which was in compliance with the theme of the narrative.³⁹ He begins his narrative with the following lines:

The people of India and particularly those of the metropolis had been subject for the last fifty years to every species of subaltern oppression. The dagger and the bowl were dealt out with a merciless hand, and

³⁷ See Amalendu Bose, “Bengali Writing in English in the Nineteenth Century” in *Bulletin of the Department of English of the Calcutta University*, New series, Vol. iii, No., 2, 1967-68, 5.

³⁸ Gobinda Prasad Sarma, *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978) 142-3.

³⁹ “And shall we, shall men, after five and twenty years of ignominious servitude, shall we, through a fear of dying defer one single instant to assert out liberty? No, Romans, now is the time; the favourable moment we have been waiting for is come.” – *Junius Brutus*. See Alex Tickell (ed.), *Selections from ‘Bengaliana’* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2005) 149.

neither age, sex, nor condition could repress the rage of the British barbarians. Those events, together with the recollection of the grievances suffered by their ancestors roused the dormant spirit of the generally considered timid Indians.⁴⁰

This prose-piece, like a seed, bears the essential traits of Indian English fiction; traits which find full expression in the novels to be discussed in due course. One cannot afford to miss the phrase “[t]he people of India” in the opening paragraph. This is functional in corroborating his vision of a united India as he affixes one single identity for people of the subcontinent irrespective of their specific regional locations as per the norms of his time.⁴¹ Also, he takes upon himself the obligation of speaking of and for the people of his motherland.

The plot of Dutt’s fiction was anti-British revolt. One must keep in mind that the year of its publication was 1835, that is twenty-two years before the revolt of 1857, which is marked by some historians as the first organized anti-British movement in India, and by a different school of historians as India’s first war of independence. If we are to believe that Dutt’s nationalist consciousness inspired his narrative, we will have to acknowledge the influence of Young Bengal and also the contribution of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, considered to be the first nationalist poet in India writing in English.⁴² Moreover, the idea of setting his narrative in 1945 proved an almost accurate prescience on the part of the author as India finally gained her independence just two years from his date, that is, in 1947. Though Bengal responded insouciantly to the first anti-British movement in 1857, it was this part of the sub-continent that eventually came to be considered as the think-tank which planned and co-ordinated anti-colonial uprisings throughout India. Hence the theme of the narrative bears a prophetic import.

The next prose-fiction which was published in 1845 was authored by Kyalas Chunder’s cousin Shoshee Chunder Dutt. It was called “The Republic of Orissa: A Page from the Annals of the 20th Century”. This was also a future narrative like “A Journal”. Set in 1916, the theme of “The Republic of Orissa” is the legalization of

⁴⁰ Ibid. 149.

⁴¹ During that time Indian nation had not yet been born, and people of one specific region referred to others according to their provincial identities, like Oriyas, Marathhis, Rajputs and so on.

⁴² See Rosinka Chaudhuri, “Orientalist Themes and English Verse in Nineteenth Century”. (Dissertation, University of Oxford, 1995) 52, Also see the introduction in *Derozio, Poet of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) edited by Rosinka Chaudhuri.

slavery by the British in the state of Orissa leading to an uprising of the Kingaries tribe led by Bheekoo Barik, a tribal leader. Unlike Kylas Chunder's narrative in which the anti-British rebellion was not successful, in "The Republic of Orissa" the narrative ends with the declaration of Orissa as a republic. Though the narratives end on different notes, it is interesting to note that both of them are set in the future; thus discarding the possibility of an immediate nationalist movement. Moreover, both of them were "annals" or historical accounts, as if, to borrow Priyamvada Gopal's words, "it is only in the future, when Hindustan's national spirit coheres, that a historical approach to the present will be possible."⁴³

The patriotic/nationalist sentiments, which found straightforward expression in the earliest narratives, gradually became more complex with Indian intellectuals beginning to conceptualize and realize the idea of nationalism. It is probably because of this that the first English fiction by an Indian which takes up the revolt of 1857 as the theme was published seventeen years after the event. *Shunkur: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny of 1857*, a novella by Shoshee Chunder Dutt, was published anonymously from London in 1874. The date of publication of *Shunkur* is recorded as 1885 and its creation in 1877 can be disputed as the imprint of the oldest copy at the British Library bears 1874 as the date of publication.⁴⁴ The fact that the revolt is never mentioned in fiction till the publication of *Shunkur* demonstrates the dissension of the intelligentsia of Bengal who initially refused to endorse the uprising. In *Shunkur* Shoshee Dutt shows how both the Indians as well as the English became victims of the mutiny which was instigated by some individuals who were desperate to serve their personal interests and were trying to avenge the East India Company. This impartial approach on the part of the authors is what we will witness in the narratives to be discussed in this thesis.

After the mutiny of 1857 the next significant event in the history of Indian nationalism was the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885. The plausibility of accepting these two events as indications of an evolving nationalist consciousness is a debatable issue. But the fact that the concept of nationalism as it developed through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century left impressions on the literary productions of the age does not leave any scope for doubt. What is worth

⁴³ Priyamvada Gopal, *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History and Narration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 21.

⁴⁴ As mentioned in *Selections from 'Bengaliana'* edited by Alex Tickell. See the appendix for the photocopy of the title page of the first publication of *Shunkur*.

noticing is that for the authors I am about to discuss, nationalist consciousness and the demand for self-government does not always work in tandem. The sense of nationalism does not necessarily entail the idea of self-governance for the authors. Nationalism does not necessarily imply antagonistic disposition to other nations. While the nationalist consciousness identifies a specific group of people within a specific political boundary as a social or political cohort, it does not exclude other nationals from its humanist agenda. These works have quite often been misinterpreted as representing the abject servility of Indians to their colonial rulers; and in some cases scholars have branded these works quite simplistically as narratives of east-west encounter. But neither the anglophilic disposition on the part of the authors, nor their scepticism about India's ability to handle self-government, can deter the readers from accepting these fictions as narratives of Indian nationalism.

Indian Nationalism: A frame of reference for the narratives

Though the concept of nationalism has been a subject of serious academic discussion since the last century, it has been more or less agreed by scholars that due to the complexity and ambiguity associated with the idea, the term nationalism defies an adequate definition. Many definitions have been constructed over the years which are definitely useful but at the same time they have proved to be incompatible and anomalous. Before dealing with the complexities inherent in the idea of nationalism in general, and a subsequent discussion on the multiple strands of Indian nationalism, I would like to offer the simplest definition of the term. According to Anthony D. Smith, the term nationalism is associated with a range of meanings. The one which is most applicable to the narratives under our investigation is that nationalism is “a sentiment or consciousness of belonging to the nation.”⁴⁵ Smith mentions that of all the usages of the term, namely, the formation or growth of a nation, the language or symbolism of the nation, a social/political movement on behalf of the nation, a doctrine and/or ideology of the nation, the sentiment or the consciousness of belonging to the nation needs to be carefully distinguished.⁴⁶ A high degree of national consciousness, according to Smith, does not necessarily imply that it is inspired by an overt ideology or a political movement, though it might possess some national symbols and myths. Therefore, Smith makes a distinction between

⁴⁵ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 6.

nationalism and national consciousness – nationalism implies an organised ideological movement and national consciousness or sentiment is “a more diffuse feeling of national belonging.”⁴⁷ However, he does admit that there is often an overlap between the two.

But before we move on with our discussion, we need to make a note of the definition of nation, without a sense of which the idea of nationalism cannot be substantiated. For the definition of nation, I shall refer to Benedict Anderson as it is on the basis of his definition mainly that I will analyse the narratives in the thesis. In *Imagined Communities* Anderson observes that a nation “is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”⁴⁸ If we combine the definition of nationalism by Smith with the definition of nation by Anderson, this is what we get as a very general and comprehensive idea of nationalism – nationalism is a sentiment or consciousness of belonging to one’s own imagined political community (a community which is both inherently limited and sovereign).

To be precise, our focus is not on the idea of nationalism in general, but on Indian nationalism in particular. Our main subject of investigation is based on the imagination of a political community. The keyword that will play the most crucial role in this thesis is “imagination”. We shall analyse some of the narratives which were authored before India became a nation formally. We shall be dealing with the particular period in Indian history when India was better known politically as British India as it was under the colonial governance of Britain. Also, British India implied almost the entire landmass of the Indian sub-continent which included present day Pakistan and Bangladesh. Under colonial rule, there was no Indian nation, but what marked the period was India’s undergoing the process of becoming a nation. This process of becoming a nation contained a search for some common social, political and cultural parameters to help in the imagination and construction of a homogeneous community with a common culture, a common social structure and a common history.

However, while I find Anderson’s definition of nation quite useful and viable, Partha Chatterjee’s objection to Anderson’s idea of imagination will be helpful for us in our discussion of Indian nationalism and its construction in the fictions. Chatterjee

⁴⁷ Ibid. 6.

⁴⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006) 6.

challenges Anderson's statement that every case of nationalism imagines its respective community from certain "modular" forms already constructed and determined by Europe and the Americas. If this is true, Chatterjee argues, the originality of imagination on the part of the evolving nationalisms will necessarily have to be compromised; and in that case, "[e]ven our imaginations must remain forever colonized."⁴⁹ Chatterjee points out that Anderson's idea of imagination does not do justice to the anti-colonial nationalisms of Asia and Africa. According to him the most powerful and the most creative results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa "are posited not on an identity but rather on a *difference* with the 'modular' forms of the national society propagated by the modern West."⁵⁰ This flaw in the observation and study of anti-colonial nationalisms is common among scholars as nationalism in the first place is considered to be a "*political* movement much too literally and much too seriously."⁵¹

Explaining his idea by citing the example of Indian nationalism, Chatterjee argues that "as history, nationalism's autobiography is fundamentally flawed."⁵² He states that though Indian nationalism is said to have begun with the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885, political associations were being formed, social reforms being introduced and colonial enlightenment was being used in modernizing social customs and traditional institutions through the preceding decades. The political spirit was that of "collaboration with the colonial regime" and Chatterjee mentions categorically that "nationalism had still not emerged."⁵³ But, even though nationalism, per se, had not emerged in India before 1885, the preceding decades constituted a preparatory stage. According to Chatterjee, "anti-colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power."⁵⁴

This domain of sovereignty is created by dividing the world into the outer and the inner domain. The outer domain deals with the material aspects which include the economy, state-craft and science and technology, that is, the specific areas in which the West is superior to the East. The inner domain deals with the spiritual aspects

⁴⁹ Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" in Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (ed.), *Nations and Nationalism, A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) 239.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 239.

⁵¹ Ibid. 239. Also see Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986) 1-2.

⁵² Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" 240.

⁵³ Ibid. 239.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 240.

which bear “the ‘essential’ marks of cultural identity”.⁵⁵ Thus Chatterjee argues that “[t]he greater one’s success in imitating Western skills in the material domain ... the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one’s spiritual culture”; and this, he believes, is a “fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa.”⁵⁶ As we will proceed with our discussion of Indian nationalism and analyse the tropes employed by the authors in their construction of India and an Indian identity we will learn how the spiritual culture of India has been manipulated, reconstructed and asserted in order to establish the uniqueness of a community which the authors imagined as India.

With the mention of a community, the next question to be asked is about the constitutional basis of the community. Here, we might refer to Isaiah Berlin’s observation in his essay “Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power”. Berlin observes that what makes nationalism ideologically important and at the same time dangerous is the conviction in a community, which he prefers to call a “human group”. The conviction which is associated with such an imagined group, according to Berlin, is:

that men belong to a particular human group, and that the way of life of the group differs from that of others, that the characters of the individuals who compose the group are shaped by, and cannot be understood apart from, those of the group, defined in terms of common territory, customs, laws, memories, beliefs, language, artistic and religious expression, social institutions, way of life, to which some add heredity, kinship, racial characteristics; and that it is these factors which shape human beings, their purpose and their values.⁵⁷

From Berlin’s conceptualization of nationalism we comprehend that the sense of nationalism requires one to imagine and construct a unique identity for his or her community or group on the basis of an exclusive collective character of the group which can be appreciated only within that context and by the co-members of the group. The unique identity is to be derived from certain matrices common to the group. Anthony D. Smith offers a working definition of such a unique identity, or

⁵⁵ Ibid. 240.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 240.

⁵⁷ Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (London: Pimlico, 1997) 341.

“national identity” in *Nationalism*. He defines national identity as “the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements.”⁵⁸

The biggest and the most significant challenge inherent in the construction of Indian nationalism and an Indian identity was in identifying the “common” customs, beliefs, memories, myths, traditions, religious expressions, social institutions and ways of life. To understand the complexity and intensity of the challenge, we need to refer to the statements by Sir John Strachey in *India* (1888), which have been quoted and referred to by prominent Indian historians including Sumit Sarkar and Ramachandra Guha. Strachey’s observation will help us to appreciate the attempts of the authors in constructing an India of their imagination, as they were situated in the same phase of Indian history. Moreover the authors, whose works I will be discussing, were trying to resolve the conundrum which had been confounding Strachey. According to Strachey, “there is not, and never was an India, or even any country of India.”⁵⁹ The large stretch of the Indian sub-continent was not “India”, but a number of provinces (which Strachey called “countries”) ruled by provincial rulers along with a large area which was being reigned over by the Mughals.⁶⁰ He observed that the differences between the different countries of Europe were not as great as the differences between the “countries” or provinces of India. This unimaginable diversity made Strachey believe that there was no possibility of an Indian nation in the future; that the “men of Punjab, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, and Madras, should ever feel that they belong to one Indian nation, is impossible.”⁶¹

While Strachey could not imagine a single political community of India which would include all the provinces in the north and the south, the east and the west, this was the challenge that was taken up by the Indian National Congress which was founded in 1885. The Indian National Congress wished to “unite Indians across the divisions of culture, territory, religion, and language, thus to construct what the colonialist thought inconceivable – namely, a *single* Indian nation.”⁶² This idea of uniting India was not at all as simple as it might seem today. First of all, it was not

⁵⁸ Smith, *Nationalism*, 18.

⁵⁹ Sir John Strachey, *India* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench and Co., 1888) 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 4.

⁶¹ Ibid. 4.

⁶² Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi* (Noida: Picador, 2008) xiii.

about “uniting India” as India did not exist. It actually implied bringing the various provinces of the Indian sub-continent under a common parasol. This naturally required reference to and the construction of a common culture, a common history, a common artistic and religious expression, without which the imagination of one single political community was not possible. It is not justified to equate the Indian nationalist movement with India’s struggle for freedom from the British rule, as the latter is only one of the unitary strands which Indian nationalism was composed of (this we shall get to understand as will proceed with our discussion of the idea of Indian nationalism). The more challenging task for the nationalists was to imagine and construct an India which could accommodate all the provinces with their discrete social, cultural and political identities.

The reason behind Strachey’s conviction of the impossibility of an Indian nation was exactly why the idea of Indian nationalism is considered extremely complex. Today, even sixty-six years after India’s independence from colonial rule, Ramachandra Guha calls it an “unnatural” nation in *India After Gandhi* – a book in which he searches for an answer to the question as to “why is there an India at all.”⁶³ We can well imagine how difficult it was to conceive of an Indian nation in the nineteenth century when it really did not exist, as it bewilders scholars even today, when the nation is sixty-six years old. However, this difficult task of imagining India was being attempted by Indian nationalists and the authors of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries whose works I shall be dealing with. Before I move on to the analysis of the narratives in the next chapter, I consider it necessary to offer an overview of the nationalist movement beginning with the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885, followed by the Swadeshi Movement and then leading to the emergence of Gandhi and the Non-cooperation Movement of the 1920s. These particular phases of Indian nationalism are important as the publication of the narratives to be investigated in this thesis were published contemporaneously with them.

In its initial phase the Indian National Congress was not a party but a body of educated and socio-politically conscious people who were trying to offer a common platform to Indians irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, or regional identity. This group included political thinkers, social activists, spiritual leaders as well as

⁶³ Ibid. xxvi

writers, the majority of whom were either English-educated, or had received their education in England. Sumit Sarkar writes that the core group of the Indian National Congress consisted of men from Bombay (now Mumbai) and Calcutta (now Kolkata) who had come to London in the late 1860s and early 1870s to study for the Indian Civil Service examinations or law.⁶⁴ Sarkar describes the first twenty years in the history of the Congress as the Moderate phase.⁶⁵ He observes that the Moderate leaders were increasingly becoming a target of criticism, not because of their objectives, but because of their style of functioning.⁶⁶ About the Moderate leaders Sarkar writes:

The Moderate leaders tended to be Anglicized in their personal life and highly successful men in their professions. The first bred ambivalent attitudes towards Englishmen, with criticism of specific policies balanced by general admiration and even a belief in the “providential” nature of British rule. The second meant little time left over for political activity...⁶⁷

This ambivalent attitude combined with the general admiration of the Moderate leaders for the English was inevitable, as the majority of the leaders belonged to the elite English-educated class. They had either received an English education from Indian universities and colleges, or had been to England for higher education. Naturally they could not be overtly critical of British governance as they could not deny their superior knowledge in science and technology which was indispensable for the progress of India. We shall notice the same ambivalent attitude in the authors we shall be discussing in the thesis, especially in the earlier authors – Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra.

According to Sarkar the first systematic critique of Moderate politics was made by Aurobindo Ghose in a series of articles under the title *New Lamps for Old*.⁶⁸ The “mendicant” technique of appealing to British public opinion was considered futile and dishonourable and Congress had gradually become a movement of a select group of people – the English educated elites – totally distanced from the common

⁶⁴ Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1983) 88.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 89.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 91.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 91.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 97.

people. Thus began the *Swadeshi* enterprises, which had a broader agenda. It will be interesting, at this point, to refer to Bipin Chandra Pal's *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism* which was published in 1910. Bipin Chandra Pal himself joined the Indian National Congress in 1886 and became famous as one of the radical nationalists who were together considered as the extremist trio, Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal). According to Pal, Congress propaganda failed for three major reasons. Firstly, it failed to draw the masses as it was conducted mainly in a foreign tongue, that is, English; secondly, its ideas and ideals had no reference to the thoughts and traditions of the people and were not expressed in terms of national history and literature; and thirdly, it had no religious reference or inspiration.⁶⁹

However, the idea of nationalism, which previously had been confined to the elites and the educated during the early phase of Indian nationalism, began to appeal to the masses during the Swadeshi Movement in 1905. Pal is right when he states that during the Swadeshi Movement the revived sense of nationalism became intensely spiritual and acquired a religious character. Also, it had a strong grip on the actualities of Indian life and thought against the imitative character of the older and earlier social and political activities.⁷⁰ But the most important factor which acted as a catalyst in inspiring the sense of nationalism throughout the population, especially in Bengal, was Lord Curzon's infamous decision to divide Bengal in 1905. The first two fictions that I shall be dealing with in the thesis were written against the backdrop of the partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement. Therefore, a precise discussion of this event is necessary to understand the historical, political and social context in which Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra authored their fictions *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* and *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest*, both published in 1909.

1905 marked a watershed in the history of British India with Lord Curzon's infamous decision to enact the "partition of Bengal". George Nathaniel Curzon (1859 – 1925),⁷¹ better remembered in history as Lord Curzon, has always been a controversial figure in British India. After his appointment as the Viceroy of India in

⁶⁹ Bipin Chandra Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism* (London: Hind Nationalist Agency, 1910) 12.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 29.

⁷¹ For details consult Nayna Goradia, *Lord Curzon: The Last of the British Mughals* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993). Travelogues in which Curzon addressed the political issues of the respective places were *Russia in Central Asia* (1889), *Persia and the Persian Question* (1892) and *Problems of the Far East* (1894).

January 1899 he introduced a series of reforms that led to many disputes which jeopardized his administrative position – one of which was his decision to divide Bengal. He wanted to divide Bengal mainly for administrative reasons. Bengal was too expansive a province to manage via a single regional government and hence it was split between Eastern Bengal and Assam.⁷² India, specifically Bengal, was shocked, as the political scenario became all the more problematic with the bisection of the Bangalee community. The stronghold of Bangalee Hindu politicians such as Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950),⁷³ Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925)⁷⁴ and Motilal Ghose (1847-1922)⁷⁵ was impaired. These Bangalee nationalists were conspicuously vocal about their political demands. Sankari Prasad Basu quotes from a letter by Lord Curzon where he says:

Calcutta is the centre from which the Congress Party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal, and indeed the whole of India. Its best wirepullers and its most frothy orators all reside here. The perfection of their machinery, and the tyranny which it enables them to exercise are truly remarkable.⁷⁶

The above quote actually suggests that administrative efficiency was not the actual reason for the partition of Bengal. The participation of the Bangalee nationalists in

⁷² For details refer to the chapter titled ‘The Bengal Partition’ in Sankari Prasad Basu, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and Freedom Struggle of India* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 2004) and Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal: 1903-1908* (New Delhi : People's Publishing House, 1973).

⁷³ One of the leading extremist leaders of the Indian National Movement Sri Aurobindo (15th August 1872–5th December 1950), as he was also known, was a renowned *litterateur*, and a philosopher. His most famous poetic work was *Savitri, A Legend and a Symbol* published in a quarterly *Advent* during 1946–47. His widely referred philosophical work was *The Life Divine* which was first serially published between 1914 and 1919 in *Arya*, a monthly periodical written by the author himself. For further details refer to Peter Heehs, *The Lives of Sri Aurobindo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁷⁴ One of the earliest national leaders, Sir Surendranath Banerjee (10th November 1848–6th August 1925) was the founder of Indian National Association and twice elected President of the Indian National Congress. In 1879 he founded the newspaper *The Bengali*. For more information on his political views please refer to his work *A Nation in the Making* published by Oxford University Press in 1925. For his biographical details please refer to Bani Banerjee, *Surendranath Banerjee and History of Modern India* (New Delhi: Metropolitan, 1979).

⁷⁵ Motilal Ghose (28th October 1847–5th September 1922) along with his brother Sisir Kumar Ghose started the English daily from Calcutta called *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in February 1868. Though the daily is no longer published, it happened to be the oldest English daily ever owned by any Indian. For detailed information on his life and works please refer to Sachindra Lal Ghose, *Motilal Ghose* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 1970).

⁷⁶ Basu, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and Freedom Struggle of India*, 33-4, Also see Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 18.

the system of governance suffered from laxity henceforth, as a result of the British government's "Divide and Rule" policy.⁷⁷

After partition the Bangalee community was bisected into two broad factions on the basis of religion. While the western part of Bengal still had a Hindu majority, Eastern Bengal had an essentially Muslim population.⁷⁸ A rift was purposely created by British bureaucrats among the Hindu and Muslim Bangalees during partition. The administrators were alarmed by the Muslims who protested against partition and therefore took a faction of the Muslims into their confidence by convincing them that the new province created as East Bengal would bring an end to Hindu dominance over that region and serve essentially Muslim interests. Naturally, Indian politicians were apprehensive, not without reason, that the united voice of the Bangalee community as a whole would be weakened. Hence, the situation was intensely volatile and people formidably charged.

The anti-partition movement which became popular as the Swadeshi Movement was arguably the most successful of the pre-Gandhian nationalist independence movements. During the movement the common people were motivated to consume home-made products and boycott everything imported from England in order to increase domestic production of goods, develop manufacturing techniques and subsequently eradicate the economic exploitation of India and her resources by the British government.⁷⁹ As Basu argues, there was "no other example of any other movement, primarily concerning a particular province, spilling over and influencing national life in so many ways and to such a degree."⁸⁰ It is during this phase that Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra authored and published their novels. Though none of their novels directly addresses the partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement, still the influence of the Swadeshi Movement on their works is prominent.

After the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and the Swadeshi Movement through 1903-1908, the next important phase in Indian nationalism was marked by the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as the

⁷⁷ Basu, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and Freedom Struggle of India*, 102.

⁷⁸ After the partition in 1905, the two Bengals were united in 1911 but the capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. Bengal was again to be divided during India's independence in 1947. East Bengal became East Pakistan in 1947 which again became an independent nation after the Liberation War in 1971 and came to be known as Bangladesh.

⁷⁹ For historical and political details of the movement refer to Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* and Basu, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and Freedom Struggle of India*.

⁸⁰ Basu, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and Freedom Struggle of India*, 13.

first national leader of pre-independent India. The second chapter of the thesis deals with two novels which offer narrative representations of the Gandhi-frenzy in the 1920s. For a better understanding of the zeitgeist in which the novels of Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra were published, we need to understand the factors which led to the emergence of Gandhi as the national leader and the status of the Indian nationalist movement in the 1920s.

Gandhi's early career in South Africa as a barrister educated in Britain automatically placed him in the position of a leader among the South African Indians who were struggling with increasing racial discrimination. Gandhi not only spoke the language of the rulers, but also understood the legal intricacies and the system of their government; "he was the only one who could draft their petitions, create their organizations, and represent them before their rulers."⁸¹ And this was exactly what he was to do for the rest of his life on a much larger scale. Indians, not only resident in South Africa, but Indians in India and in every corner of the world entrusted upon him the future of the nation. Gandhi's political activities and responses to them from 1894 to 1906, classified as the "Moderate" phase of the struggle of South African Indians, led him to believe that the developing situation called for stronger methods of opposition.⁸² He took to the method of passive resistance or civil disobedience which he termed *Satyagraha*.⁸³ Hence, Bipan Chandra writes, "[t]he blueprint for the 'Gandhian' method of struggle had been evolved and ... [t]he South African 'experiment' was now to be tried on a much wider scale on the Indian sub-continent."⁸⁴ This role prepared him for leadership of the Indian Nationalist Movement. South Africa was an example of the heterogeneous Indian society where Gandhi successfully led the Indian population of mixed classes, castes, religions and communities. In South Africa the groundwork of his experiments with his original techniques of struggle, that is, the "Gandhian" techniques, was laid; and before introducing them to India, Gandhi was well aware of the pros and cons of his *modus operandi*. Thus, before appearing for the final show, Gandhi was much better prepared in comparison to other political leaders of his time.

The Non Co-operation Movement (1920-22) was a major step taken by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi towards agitational politics.

⁸¹ Bipan Chandra, et. al., *India's Struggle for Freedom* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989) 172.

⁸² Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi – Prisoner of Hope* (London: Yale University Press, 1989) 140.

⁸³ Chandra, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, 173.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 176.

This movement served to validate some important factors with respect to the development of Indian nationalism: firstly, a change in the attitude of the Indian National Congress which grew stricter; secondly, Gandhi's acquiring the central position in the nationalist movement; and finally, the new awakening of national consciousness among the people of India, which was the most important development. Judith Brown is of the opinion that the years between 1915 and 1920 were marked by utter confusion and indecisiveness on the part of the Congress leaders. The combination of a number of events such as Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta's death in 1915, Annie Besant becoming exhausted, Surendranath Banerjee being pushed by the Bengal politicians into the wrong track, and finally the death of Bal Gangadhar Tilak on the day Non Co-operation began, all made the pathway for Gandhi – "the new leader with a new style of politics".⁸⁵ Thus "Gandhi was now Dictator of the Congress" as R. Palme Dutt puts it.⁸⁶ About the basic concept of Non Co-operation Judith Brown says:

non-co-operation was the antithesis of politics as practised by the western educated, but in its initial stages it depended for its success on their co-operation while challenging their material interests.⁸⁷

According to Brown, Gandhi considered the people of India too weak to offer violent resistance, and many of the political leaders did not agree with the use of terrorism as a mode of protest. This was the fundamental reason behind Gandhi's conceptualization and promotion of the idea of non-co-operation among the people of India as the "peaceful form of resistance".⁸⁸ Valentine Chirol writes:

... if Non-Co-operation attracted only a section of the Western-educated and hardly any of the propertied classes, Gandhi acquired a personal hold, unexampled perhaps since Buddha, on the masses both in the congested slums of the modern cities and in the stagnant backwaters of agricultural India. For if he was a reckless agitator, the

⁸⁵ Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 250.

⁸⁶ R. Palme Dutt, *India Today* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1949) 322.

⁸⁷ Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, 250.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 252.

saint that was also in him was moved like the founder of Buddhism by a great compassion for the poor, the humble and the sinner.⁸⁹

And the most important statement that Brown makes is as follows: “The hartal provided further evidence that Gandhi had broken through at the level of genuine all-India politics, whereas previously political organisations and propaganda had been the preserve of elite groups in specific localities.”⁹⁰ This is how Gandhi gradually emerged as the leader with whom people from the cross-section of the society could identify.

This leader, who was a proclaimed celibate clad in a dhoti with frugal food habits and an overall spartan way of life, was bound to acquire the confidence of the masses who could identify him with the *sanyasis* and *fakirs* (ascetics and Muslim religious mendicants) whom they revered and in many occasions apotheosized.⁹¹ Unlike the political leaders who either showed signs of their elite upbringing or their intellectual accomplishments, or both, who were seen as mere human beings only belonging to a different class of fortune’s favourites, who were in no way in a position to empathize with the real plight of the common people, Gandhi was an intellectually accomplished common man accessible to all. Gandhi, with his saint-like figure and all-embracing affability, gained easy access to people belonging to the margins; with his educational and professional background and his previous political accomplishments he gained the confidence of the educated and the elite section of the population, so much so that the ordinary people began to refer to him as “Bapu”, i.e. father – finally being called the “Father of the Nation” by Subhas Chandra Bose.

For a better understanding of the political situation presented in the narratives and also the importance of Gandhi in its context we need to have a clear idea of the Non Co-operation Movement. The Non Co-operation Movement began in January 1921 and entailed a boycott of government titles, civil services, the police and army, the courts and councils, of schools and an encouragement of national schools, a boycott of foreign goods and an encouragement of homespun cloth or *khadi* and finally the non-payment of taxes.⁹² Shekhar Bandyopadhyay writes: “The Middle-

⁸⁹Valentine Chirol, *India* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1926) 213.

⁹⁰ ‘Hartal’ is a Hindi word which means ‘strike’. Brown, *Gandhi’s Rise to Power*, 252-3.

⁹¹ A ‘dhoti’ is a single piece of cloth to cover one’s body.

⁹² It is interesting to note that the famous Indian author Premchand was so influenced by Gandhian ideals that he relinquished his government employment in response to Gandhi’s call. His Hindi novel *Rangabhumi* (1925) offered a vivid picture of Gandhi’s influence at work among the various sections

class participation was not spectacular, as revealed in the figures for school, colleges and court boycotts, while peasant and working class participation was more impressive.”⁹³ In *My Brother's Face* (1924) Dhan Gopal Mukerji paints an exact picture which corroborates Bandyopadhyay's statement. The narrative shows how the movement inspired the participation of those sections of the population which the Indian National Congress had never reached in the past. However, Bandyopadhyay argues in his discussion that “it was the internal dynamics of the regions that accounted for the success of the Non Co-operation Movement, rather than the Congress mobilizing an as yet inert peasantry into an organised nationalist campaign.”⁹⁴ Mukerji's narrative is successful in presenting the “internal dynamics” of the regions and the campaigns organised by the industrial labourers and the peasants through the journey that the author-narrator undertakes with his brother.

Shifting our attention from the political aspects of the nationalist movement, we need to focus on how social, cultural and religious ideas inspired national consciousness. On the other hand, we shall also need to study how a common social, cultural and religious identity was being constructed by the nationalists. According to Sumit Sarkar, one of the major types of “sectional consciousness” which was a direct product of colonialism was Hindu-Muslim communalism. This observation by Sarkar is in accord with Gyanendra Pandey who claims that communalism “is a form of colonialist knowledge”.⁹⁵ Sarkar writes, “Indian nationalism and Hindu-Muslim communalism are in fact both essentially modern phenomena.”⁹⁶ He observes that though there had been occasional conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in the past, those were primarily local issues. Communal riots were not very common till the 1880s. Drawing reference from Pandey's *The Construction of Communalism* we might infer that the increase in communal riots from the 1880s was probably due to the Cow-Protection movement which became more aggressive from the 1880s through the 1890s.⁹⁷

of the society. Pandey mentions that Premchand was only the famous among a large group of writers and poets who were stimulated by Gandhian ideals. See Gyanendra Pandey, *The Gyanendra Pandey Omnibus* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008) 24.

⁹³ Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009) 302.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 307.

⁹⁵ Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) 6.

⁹⁶ Sarkar, *Modern India*, 59.

⁹⁷ Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism*, 175.

One of the major reform movements which had a significant impact on people during 1880s and 1890s was the Arya Samaj founded by Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83). The Arya Samaj was vehemently critical of some of the age-old primitive practices common among the Hindus, such as idol-worship, polytheism, child marriage, and the idea of caste based on one's birth. But at the same time the Samaj asserted the supremacy of Hinduism over every other religion. Thus, according to Sarkar, the objectives of social reformation became a part of the dominant "pan-Hindu revivalist framework".⁹⁸ The Samaj conducted a mass-purification programme which they called *shuddhi*, and the conversion of lower castes. Even after the Samaj split up into the moderate "college" faction and the militant "gurukul" faction, it retained its main objective of inspiring a Hindu consciousness which was openly communal and anti-Muslim. The Samaj encouraged the Hindus to assert their Hindu identity rather than their Indian identity. Sarkar is therefore of the opinion that "[r]evivalism thus obviously contributed to the assertion of an aggressive Hindu identity."⁹⁹

The Arya Samaj had its base mostly in northern India, that is Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh. Though the Arya Samaj did not have a direct impact on the development of the nationalist consciousness of the people of Bengal, it would be wrong to assume that the political domain of Bengal was free from communal tensions. Social and religious reformations were first initiated by the Brahma Samaj in Bengal. Founded in 1828, almost five decades before the foundation of the Arya Samaj, by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, Brahma Samaj was a society of individuals irrespective of sex, race, religion or caste. This society advocated social reforms. Condemnation of idol-worship and religious rituals, advocacy of women's education, and abolition of *sati* and widow remarriage, were some of the salient elements of their manifesto. However, by the 1870s, Brahma Samaj had almost fallen apart due to internal conflicts. One of the factions tried to organise the samaj with overtones of Christianity and the other fell back upon the tenets of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Naturally, in spite of the fact that the samaj decried the age-old Hindu rituals and customs, it could not keep itself free from religious undertones which were essentially Hinduistic.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 74.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 75.

Apart from the social reforms attempted by the Arya Samaj and the Brahma Samaj, a wave of intellectual revival was brought about by the contemporary authors and poets in the 1880s. One of the leading Bangalee litterateurs of the time, whose works we shall be referring to in our discussions, was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. His novel *Anandamath* (The Abbey of Bliss) which was published in 1882 was set against the background of the Sanyasi Rebellion of the eighteenth century. Though it is debatable whether the Sanyasi Rebellion can be considered an anti-British rebellion per se, due the fact that it was a confrontation between Indian ascetics and the East India Company, the implication of this rebellion in Chattopadhyay's novel has a nationalistic overtone. The poem "Vande Mataram", which can be literally translated as "Hail Motherland" and is sung as the national song of India, was composed by the novelist for this novel. This poem added to the novel's importance as a literary production inspiring nationalist consciousness. Bipin Chandra Pal writes that the new National Movement during the first decade of the twentieth century came into being with the cry of "Vande Mataram" – "the salutation [which] imparted to it a religious inspiration which the Indian National Congress never had."¹⁰⁰ Pal makes a very important observation in *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*. He observes that nothing is purely secular in India: "The sacred and the secular are strangely blended together in every department of the comparatively primitive life activities of the people."¹⁰¹ However, "Vande Mataram" was a new idiom of nationalism. The poem constructed and helped people to visualize a motherland through easily understandable words and metaphors, as opposed to a vague idea which was difficult for the people to conceptualize.

Pal identifies another contribution of Chattopadhyay in the latter's construction of a national hero. He refers to the latter's much discussed essay "Krishnacharitra". According to Pal, Chattopadhyay offered a new interpretation of the life and character of Krishna, the central character of the Indian epic the *Mahabharata* and the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism. Pal observes that Chattopadhyay presented Krishna not only as a "great nation-builder in ancient India" but also as a "divine example to the Hindu people for all time to come."¹⁰² His idea of Krishna as a nation-builder inspired contemporary intellectuals, and therefore

¹⁰⁰ Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, 12.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 11-12.

¹⁰² Ibid. 28. Also see Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* in *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) 58-9.

we will see in the course of our discussion that Sarath Kumar Ghosh tries to identify his protagonist with Krishna as the nation-builder in *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna*.

Discussing the role of Hinduism in inspiring nationalist sentiment, Bipin Chandra observes the advantage that the Hindu religion has over other creedal religions. He points out that the symbols, rituals, sacraments and mysteries associated with Hinduism are “partly religious, partly civic, partly social and partly spiritual.”¹⁰³ Whether it is really an advantage or a disadvantage is a debatable point; but there is no denying the fact that it is the fundamental reason why it was almost impossible to find tropes in the construction of Indian nationalism which have no direct or indirect religious insinuation. Thus when spirituality was being used as an essential trope with reference to the philosophical idea of *brahmacharya* or renunciation, it naturally suggested a religious practice which was common among Hindu ascetics.

The uniqueness of Indian nationalism

While Anderson focuses on the idea of imagination in the construction of a nation, Berlin considers any conviction in the idea of this imaginary community, or the human group, as “dangerous”.¹⁰⁴ The word conviction is potentially stronger than imagination. But the reason Berlin considers this conviction dangerous can probably be explained by the meaning of nationalism as offered by the Oxford English Dictionary. According to the dictionary, nationalism is the “[a]dvocacy of or support for the interests of one’s own nation, esp. to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.”¹⁰⁵ It is the last clause in the definition which is evocative of a potential danger in the idea of nationalism. And this is exactly where the idea of Indian nationalism, as conceptualized by the authors, differs from the general notion of nationalism. The uniqueness of Indian nationalism, as represented in the narratives of our investigation, resides in the respect and appreciation of the interests of other nations. Indian nationalism, as represented in the narratives, is exclusive in its idea of inclusivity. Thus we are going to offer a literary-historical study of selected early novels which position Indian nationalism in the global context.

¹⁰³ Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Berlin, *Against the Current*, 341.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125289?redirectedFrom=nationalism#eid> (Accessed on 20th May, 2013.)

This idea of Indian nationalism, which we find represented in the narratives discussed in the thesis, is free from the narrow or stringent ideas which lead to the perception of an exclusive domain impermeable to ideas and culture not fostered on the native soil. And this is exactly where Indian nationalism stands out as a unique idea. One of the most internationally popular figures in the literary history of India, who decried the parochialism inherent in the popular idea of nationalism, was Rabindranath Tagore. In *Greater India* he says, “This new India belongs to humanity,” and this is the core idea of greater nationalism which has been professed by the authors in their works.¹⁰⁶ This idea of a broader and inclusive nationalism offered an antithesis to the ideas of a parochial nationalism being popularised by certain nationalist leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and V.D.Savarkar.¹⁰⁷ Tagore questions the basic rationale underlying the construction of an Indian identity:

Who is this “We”? Bengali, Marathi or Panjabi, Hindu or Mussalman?
Only the larger “We” in whom all these, -- Hindu, Moslem and
Englishman, and whosoever else there be, -- may eventually unite
shall have the right to dictate who is to remain and who is to leave.¹⁰⁸

We sense in this quotation an echo of the fundamental problem identified by Sir John Strachey in the conceptualization of the Indian nation. We do not find any precise answer to Tagore’s question in the narratives we shall be discussing in the following chapters, rather we notice that the authors have taken recourse to history, mythology and Sanskrit literature in their construction of India and an Indian identity. Whatever their ideas on Indian nationalism and Indian identity have been, they have agreed on the indispensability of the sense of universal humanism in the idea of nationalism. Whether they belonged to the first decade of the twentieth century, or to the 1920s, they conceptualized Indian nationalism beyond the narrow perceptions of self-absorbed nationalism.

It will not be wrong to say that this idea of greater nationalism owed a certain amount to Hinduism. While the pro-English Indian intellectuals realized the practical necessities of maintaining an amicable relationship with all the great powers and

¹⁰⁶ Rabindranath Tagore, *Greater India* (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1921) 86. (Authorised translation of papers read by the author in connexion with the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, circa 1905 – 1910).

¹⁰⁷ For details on Tilak’s promotion of Marathi national identity and Savarkar’s advocacy of Hindu nationalism see Bipan Chandra, *India’s Struggle for Independence*, 107, 130, 410, 420, 429 and 437.

¹⁰⁸ Tagore, *Greater India*, 86.

specifically with England, they referred to history and mythology in support of their idea. Whether nationalism or universal humanism, Hinduism had been one of the integral points of reference which nationalist thinkers as well as the authors had recourse to, either implicitly or explicitly. The presence of non-Hindu Indian characters is therefore quite negligible, if not totally absent, in the narratives which we will be investigating. Two among the four narratives present one or two Muslim characters, but they have no vital role to play in the action. Though their presence in the narratives is an acknowledgement of the Muslim community as a part of the Indian population, the insignificant roles that they are made to play is, however, suggestive of the political choices of the authors.

We shall discuss the contextualisation of Indian nationalism within the global context in detail in the concluding chapter of the thesis. But as far as the idea and evolution of Indian nationalism is concerned, we have seen that the fundamental problem of imagining an Indian nation was the first challenge that the nationalists, as well as our authors, met with. In a country made up of numerous individual provinces, or “countries” in John Strachey’s words, each having an individual culture and a sub-culture, with more than a score of official languages and numerous other spoken languages and dialects, more than six practised religions, and people belonging to more than forty ethnic groups, the imagination of one single political community was almost impossible.

Other than imagining and constructing an Indian nation, the next challenging task was to construct a prototypical Indian identity. There were a variety of factors which affected this construction of an Indian nation and an Indian identity. But the objective of the authors of establishing the superiority of Indian history and certain fields of knowledge over the west was most influential. Three among the four novels were published from London and New York. Thus, the authors considered it incumbent upon them to make western readers aware of the better and brighter aspects of Indian life and culture which remained eclipsed by the popular writings on the east by prominent western authors, especially Rudyard Kipling. But what makes these narratives even more interesting is the fact that the authors were equally appreciative of certain aspects of western culture and their contributions to specific areas of knowledge. The recognition of the practical necessity of an amicable alliance with the west combined with a general non-belligerent approach (encouraged even more by the idea of non-violence advocated by Gandhi)

contributed to the idea of greater nationalism or internationalism that has been professed in the narratives under investigation. Therefore the idea of serving the interests of one's nation at the cost of exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations is not applicable to Indian nationalism as presented in these works.

The narratives that we shall be dealing with were published in 1909 and in the 1920s, that is, in the wake of the Swadeshi Movement and during the Non-Cooperation Movement. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that this study does not offer us an idea of how nationalists and authors from parts of India other than Bengal were visualizing and constructing India for two main reasons. Firstly, this thesis will deal with the novels written by the four Bangalee authors and secondly, it will not be possible to accommodate the nationalistic ideas of the authors from other parts of India within the short space of the thesis. Though, interestingly, only one among the four narratives is set in Bengal, two of them are set mainly in north-western parts of India, and the last one is set in numerous cities and villages across India. Still there is a prominent impression of contemporary Bangla nationalist literature in these works, as the authors are all from Bengal. We will not elaborate on the influence of Bangla works in detail as it would lead to a lengthy discussion. But through the course of discussion we will need to refer to the major Bangla works whose influence on the narratives cannot be denied.

Chapters

In Chapter 1 I will argue that *The Prince of Destiny: A New Krishna* (1909) by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest* (1909) by Siddha Mohana Mitra should be categorized as narratives of Indian nationalism. Ghosh and Mitra's novels have mostly been studied as narratives of east-west encounter. Most researchers have, however, failed to notice the nationalistic elements in the narratives due to the apparently pro-western dispositions and sceptical approaches of the authors towards the issue of self-government for India during the first decade of the twentieth century. Moreover, my discovery of Ghosh's earlier published novel *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* (1902), which has been assumed to be an anonymous piece of work, bears evidence of the author's gradual understanding of the idea of Indian nationalism. In this chapter I will offer a comparative analysis of *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* and *The Prince of Destiny* to show that the latter was a revised, modified and a better-structured version

of the former. More importantly, I will show how the partition of Bengal in 1905 and the ensuing Swadeshi Movement, which occurred during the intervening period between the publications of these two works, left their impressions on the latter narrative.

While Rabindranath Tagore's idea of "greater nationalism" has drawn the attention of scholars from various disciplines, the novels by Ghosh and Mitra, which profess similar ideas of nationalism as Tagore, have remained obscure. Moreover, the ideal of non-violence, which was popularized by Gandhi two decades after the publication of these novels, is professed in these novels. These novels attempted an impartial analysis of the causalities of the political turmoil during the period. The impartiality has been interpreted as the pro-imperialistic attitude of the authors, if not servility to the English rulers, and most of the nationalistic elements present in the narrative have gone unnoticed. Through detailed analysis of the tropes used in the narratives I will show that Ghosh and Mitra were "imagining" a nation, to borrow the phrase from Benedict Anderson. They used myths, legends, epics and history to construct India and present her to the western world, as the place of publication of both the novels was London, and the target readers English.

In the second chapter I will discuss Dhan Gopal Mukerji's *My Brother's Face* (1924) and Jatindranath Mitra's *Towards the Dawn* (1922). While it was immediately following the partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement that the earlier novels were published, these novels published in the 1920s were contemporaneous with the propagation of the idea of mass nationalism and the Non Co-operation Movement. But the most important factor which provoked mass nationalism and Non Co-operation was the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as the national leader of India. While analysing *My Brother's Face* and *Towards the Dawn* as nationalist narratives, I will argue that the general idea that Gandhi began to be portrayed in literature published only in 1930s is erroneous. Thus, I will argue that Gandhian narratives in English actually appeared from the 1920s (in which Gandhi's overwhelming presence is absolutely undeniable). Compared to the previous novels discussed in Chapter 1, in which the political orientation of the authors seemed to be bordering on the pro-imperial propensity, the anti-colonial spirit in the narratives of Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath finds clear expression. But here too, hostility towards the English and settling disputes by violent means are both

severely criticized. Thus, the idea of non-violence or *ahimsa*, as Gandhi preached it, was a common ideal that all these authors championed.

In these narratives too one of the main objectives of the authors was to present India and her culture to the western readers. So far as presenting India to western readers is concerned, Dhan Gopal deserves special mention as he was probably the first Indian author whose target readers were primarily Americans as opposed to others who wrote mainly for English readers. India as presented in the novels by Ghosh and Mitra and in those by Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath is remarkably different. While the previous narratives dealt with royal families, the later ones were influenced by the common people from various walks of life. If we agree that novel and nation formation are connected to each other in a mutually symbiotic relationship, there is no denying the fact that Gandhi's endeavour of carrying the message of nationalism through every stratum of the society left its impression on Dhan Gopal's work. Jatindranath's *Towards the Dawn* has never been mentioned in the history of Indian writings in English, in spite of the fact that it is an extremely interesting roman-à-clef narrative in which the majority of the characters are modelled on real-life nationalists of the period. Dhan Gopal, better known in India today as the first biographer of the nineteenth century Bangalee saint Ramakrishna Paramhansa, was an anti-colonial activist himself. Among the four authors discussed he is the only one who was directly involved in anti-colonial activities. I have tried to throw light on the unknown side of his life and to show how his nationalist beliefs inspired and influenced *My Brother's Face*.

In the concluding chapter of the thesis I will discuss the positioning of Indian nationalism in the global paradigm with reference to the novels discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. I will analyse the novels to establish my argument that one of the many strands in the multi-stranded concept of Indian nationalism was internationalism. The universalism of Hinduism and the cosmopolitan disposition of the authors contributed to this conceptualization of Indian nationalism. Thus the idea of Indian nationalism was deployed as a synonym for amicable and peaceable internationalism by the authors. According to M.K. Gandhi, liberal nationalists abhorred not the British people but their governance. Thus they did not foster hatred towards "the other" race and their culture. Rather they appreciated the advancement of technological knowhow and scientific developments of the west and proposed an exchange of knowledge, where the east would be able to enlighten the west with

spiritual erudition. Humanism and universal fraternity are the core ideas which overpower the nationalistic sentiments in the novels discussed. This is probably the underlying reason why these novels have never been thoroughly studied from the perspective of nationalism. The themes of Indo-British reconciliation in the earlier novels (discussed in Chapter 1) concerned the critics so much that majority of them failed to appreciate the sense of nationalism that left its imprints on the narratives. Subsequently, they failed to notice the uniqueness of Indian nationalism which contained the spirit of greater nationalism or internationalism within it. The later narratives, however, like most of the novels published before 1930, have never been properly discussed or analysed by the critics so far.

The four novels have thus remained excluded from serious critical review as narratives presenting the discourse of Indian nationalism. In my thesis I shall bring them into primary focus to prove that they represented Indian nationalism and the slowly gestating idea of the nation. This thesis will provide the first detailed discussion of these novels in terms of the relationship between narrative and emergent ideas of Indian nationalism in a variety of ways. The central aim of the thesis is to substantially change the way we think about the relationship between nationalism and Indian fiction in English written between 1909 and 1930 and to add several dimensions and contexts to debates about emergent nationalism in the Indian novels written in English. As already discussed, the majority of critical studies have focused primarily on the novels published from 1930s when Indian English novels were supposed to “take off”. By then the classic type of Indian nationalism had already come into being (associated with Congress’ pre-eminence) and the studies did not apply to novels written in the earlier period quite naturally. Moreover, the representation of the nation, nationalism and internationalism as addressed in the novels of the earlier period has not been dealt with in detail.

Chapter 1

Narrating India: Elite Nationalism and Political Mythology in Two Novels of 1909

Introduction

In *Elusive Terrain* (2008) Meenakshi Mukherjee has observed that “[i]n the last quarter of the nineteenth century two beginnings were witnessed in India, the emergence of the idea of the nation and the appearance of the new artefact of the imagination called the novel.”¹ In the introduction I have mentioned the major prose-works of the nineteenth century in which nationalistic elements appear quite prominently. In this chapter I will take up two significant but highly neglected novels. The novels, both of which were published from London in 1909, are *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest* by Siddha Mohana Mitra. According to Alex Tickell, these two novels challenge the most common critical assumptions regarding the development of Indian novels in English published before 1930. Tickell is absolutely correct that Indian English fictions authored and published prior to the 1930s have been considered by majority of the scholars to be “antiquated and derivative, demonstrating what Tabish Khair calls ‘a predictable degree of Eurocentrism or European orientalia and aesthetic slavishness’.”² Tickell also points out the other popular assumption that the early Indian English fictions “had little political leverage, or that these were works with only minimal, elite Anglophone readership in the subcontinent.”³ It is true that the novels were published in London and were definitely intended to cater to the literary taste of the westerners and “elite Anglophone” readers; but the discussion in this chapter, in conformation with Tickell’s observation, will show how the authors had a definite political purpose which finally contributed to their construction of India.

In this chapter I will argue that these two novels which have been mentioned only as “earliest fictional attempts to deal with the East-west relationship, an oft-

¹ Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008) 138.

² Alex Tickell, “Terrorism and the Informative Romance” in Anne Collett (ed.), *Kunapipi: Journal of Post-Colonial Writing*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, 2003, 75.

³ Ibid. 75.

repeated theme in the Indian English novel,”⁴ actually deal with the major nationalist issues of the age. I will show that these novels bear undeniable evidence of the developing Indian nationalism. The theme of east-west relationship, which appears as the prominent issue in the narratives, is actually functional in broaching the vital issues of nationalism and in constructing India and an Indian identity as the authors “imagined”.

In order to appreciate the significance of the novels from the perspective of Indian nationalism, we need to keep in mind the historical and political context in which they were written and published, at the very outset. I have already discussed in the introduction that the first decade of the twentieth century was extremely crucial so far as the history of Indian nationalism is concerned. Lord Curzon’s decision regarding the partition of Bengal was announced in 1903; and this led to violent protests and political unrest not only in Bengal but all over British India. This anti-British movement, called the Swadeshi Movement, lasted from 1903 to 1908, and was probably the greatest outburst of nationalistic sentiment since the mutiny of 1857. The partition finally took place in 1905 and the situation became all the more volatile.

It is interesting to note that the purpose of writing these novels for both the authors was exactly the same. Both Ghosh and Mitra wanted to point out the flaws in the administration of the British government in India which had led to the unrest. But since they were Indian expatriates settled in London and also publishing their works from the heart of the British empire, they could not be blatantly critical of the British administration. Any kind of anti-British statement would not only have risked their publications but would also probably have jeopardized their lives in London. Therefore, they needed to be extremely diplomatic. In order to convey a “more intricate anti-colonial critical mandate,” these novels, according to Tickell, became examples of “an analogous, though more conflicted formal camouflaging.”⁵ With the objective of pointing out the flaws in the administration, both of them created two fictional states which they created in their narrative space. Through these fictional states the authors created a common territorial space which epitomised India. These states were Barathpur (in Ghosh’s *The Prince of Destiny*) – “the most sophisticated early Indian-English presentation of the princely state as a singularly political space”

⁴ M.K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982) 108.

⁵ Tickell, “Terrorism and Informative Romance”, 75.

according to Alex Tickell;⁶ and Hindupore (in Mitra's *Hindupore*). The authors presented Barathpur and Hindupore as ideal states governed flawlessly by two native princes. Barathpur and Hindupore were actually how they "imagined" India to be and their rulers represent those qualities which the authors thought essential for the political leaders of India. Thus, while both of them were trying to present an overview of the political situation and offer their possible solutions to the predicament, they were "imagining" India in their own ways.

In this chapter I shall discuss the imagination of India as a nation and the construction of a national identity and Indianness in the novels of Ghosh and Mitra. I shall analyze how they set the parameters of Indianness and how they use certain fundamental tropes for this purpose.

Background of The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna

A series of letters exchanged between Sarath Kumar Ghosh (1869-1925) and King Edward VII's office provides us with important and interesting information regarding the author's life, activities and ambitions. It is from one of these letters that we come to know that even before he authored *The Prince of Destiny*, Ghosh attempted another "informative romance", to use Alex Tickell's phrase. Over the past years *The Prince of Destiny* has been mentioned and also discussed to some extent by scholars, but Ghosh's first attempt as a novelist, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, has remained unacknowledged. Ghosh's letter, addressed to King Edward VII and dated 12th August 1902, helped me to ferret out his first published novel *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* (1902):

A while ago a book of mine ("The Romance of an Eastern Prince") was published anonymously because it revealed certain sad chronicles in my past life, and because I still desired to remain hidden from my friends, especially those that were coming to England for Your Majesty's Coronation.⁷

⁶ Alex Tickell, "The Discovery of Aryavarta – Hindu Nationalism and Early Indian Fiction in English" in Peter Morey and Alex Tickell (eds.), *Alternative Indias: Writing, Nation and Communalism* (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2005) 31.

⁷ Unpublished letters of Sarath Kumar Ghosh to King Edward VII, 12th August, 1902. IOR/L/PJ/6/610, File 1670A at the British Library. See the appendix for a scanned copy of the letter.

Whether the romance really contains actual events of the author's life is a debatable question which is almost impossible to resolve. But the claim that it was inspired by some of the true events of Ghosh's life is true to a certain extent as there are sources which can vouch for the veracity of such a claim. But most importantly, the significance of *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* lies in the fact that *The Prince of Destiny*, the narrative we are mainly concerned with, is a revised and a better-structured version of the former.

The primary reason behind *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*'s remaining unacknowledged so long was its anonymous publication. The title page does not contain the author's name; instead, it has a photograph of the author printed on the adjacent page. This photograph is almost the same as the one used in Ghosh's introduction in *Pearson's Magazine* by its editor and also the one which appears in the first edition of *The Prince of Destiny*. It is important to note that in the January issue of *Pearson's Magazine* (U.S. edition)⁸ in 1902 this photograph of Ghosh was published along with an introduction to his educational background and literary acumen. A new series of stories authored by Ghosh began to appear under the title *Indian Nights' Entertainment*.⁹ This introduction of Ghosh by the editor of this magazine in this issue is probably the first and the most succinct introduction.¹⁰ Ghosh tries to make a statement through his photographs printed in these texts. A brief analysis of the photographs will help us in a better understanding of the protagonists of his novels.

It is interesting to note that these photographs do not conform to the description of his usual dress as reported by Lt. Col. Sir William Wyllie, the then political A.D.C. to the Secretary of State for India. In a letter to Sir Charles Lyall dated 11th June, 1903, Wyllie wrote about Ghosh that:

Mr. Sarath Kumar Ghosh ... speaks English fluently, wears European dress, and maintains himself mainly by his pen – he writes on Indian subjects for magazines, “Pearson's” and others – he belongs to the Sylvan Debating Club. ... Mr. Ghosh also lectures and has addressed

⁸ *Pearson's Magazine* was founded in Britain in 1896 by C. Arthur Pearson; the U.S. version of *Pearson's* appeared in 1899.

⁹ The title of the series *Indian Nights' Entertainment* was probably inspired by the publications of Robert Louis Stevenson's publication of *Island Nights' Entertainments* in 1892 and *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* by W.E. Henley in 1893.

¹⁰ See the appendix for a scanned copy of this introduction.

audiences at different places on the “Romance and Mystery of English Life”...¹¹

In contradiction with Sir Wyllie’s description, Ghosh, in the photographs, is clothed in typical Indian princely attire with an elaborate head-dress and a choker of pearls adorning his neck. The obvious question, which naturally confounds us, is why did a person so enmeshed in English life and culture appear in such exotic attire as in his photographs?

Though Ghosh portrays himself as a prince of an Indian state in *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, which he claims to be an autobiographical narrative, it is difficult to find out whether he actually had any link with any of the royal families of India. In a letter to King Edward VII, he mentioned that his high-caste ancestors had “lost their territorial rights under Lord Cornwallis, and most of their proprietary rights after the Mutiny.”¹² From this we can assume that he belonged to a high-caste well-to-do family in Bengal, or could have been a part of the landed gentry at the most. Also, the handbills advertising his lectures in New York introduce Ghosh as the prince of a royal state in Bengal. The library of the University of Iowa (USA) preserves a brochure of Sarath Ghosh’s lecture which he delivered in New York on November 1, 1914. The lecture was also advertised in *The Washington Herald* on October 18, 1914.¹³ In the brochure held by this library, the author is introduced as “Prince Sarath Kumar Ghosh of Ghoshpara”. It further says: “A native Prince of India who interprets the lives and the ideals of his people from the standpoint of a European education.” The brochure contains a precise introduction of the author, where he is mentioned as “the nephew of the Rajah of Ghoshpara”, as having been educated in Oxford and Cambridge, and considered as the “best native lecturer on India ... He is an Oriental interpreting to Occidentals the ideals of his people.”¹⁴ However, we cannot verify the authenticity of this ancestral lineage of Ghosh.

Nevertheless, we might assume that there was definitely a purpose behind Ghosh’s claiming a royal lineage for himself. Introducing himself as an Indian prince

¹¹ Unpublished letters of Sir William Wyllie to Sir Charles Lyall, 11th June 1903, . IOR/ L/PJ/6/610, File 1670A at the British Library.

¹² Unpublished letters of Sarath Kumar Ghosh. This letter is dated 12th August 1902.

¹³ *The Washington Herald* was an American daily newspaper which was in circulation from 1906 to 1939. To access the advertisement please see the link <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045433/1914-10-18/ed-1/seq-22.pdf> (Accessed on 13th July, 2012).

¹⁴ See the appendix for a scanned copy of the brochure.

was probably an exaggeration, to manipulate the sense of mystery and awe of western people which they generally harboured with regard to the oriental princes. Moreover, even though the English had a good connection with India because of the imperial rule, the Americans were totally in dark so far as their idea about Indian life and culture was concerned. In the same way it was probably deliberate on part of Ghosh to dress in princely attire for the photographs to be printed in his books in order to proclaim his authenticity. Graham Huggan's observation is noteworthy at this point. He writes, "authenticity is valued for its attachment to the material contexts of lived experience even as it is so palpably the *decontextualisation* of the commodified artifact that enables it to become marketably authentic".¹⁵ Ghosh's photographs in royal costume in his books that narrate stories about Indian princes for western readers can be considered an apt explanation of Huggan's observation. However, Ghosh's intention was probably two-fold – firstly, he wanted to exploit the sense of mystery regarding Indian royalty among his western readers so that it could help in publicising of his works; and secondly, he was making a statement that a typically Indian subject had the ability to produce literary works in English of a respectable standard. Finally, he probably wanted to help the readers in imagining the protagonist princes he had portrayed in his narratives.

As we gather from the title, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* is essentially a romantic novel in which the author-narrator, "an Eastern Prince", is irresistibly attracted to a beautiful English girl, Nora, and falls in love with her. This is the reason why he feels the urgency of gaining access to the English community, and in doing so he projects himself as an Indian prototype – the prototype that he constructs for himself.

... I revered the Shastras, the Puranas, the wise code of Manu – and loved the sweetness of the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁶

This prince has been projected as a product of the ancient wisdom of the east and the Enlightenment of the west. Throughout this novel and also the later one, this has remained the prototype of an ideal Indian who is born out of the marriage between the east and the west. While in the west, he takes up the role of an Indian emissary "informing" the west about India and what it is to be an Indian. He takes upon

¹⁵ Graham Huggan, *The Post-Colonial Exotic* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001) 158.

¹⁶ Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* (London: Grant Richards, 1902) 137-8.

himself the crucial task of explaining the traditions and customs of India to his English acquaintances, especially to Nora. He needs to clarify and rectify some of the misconceptions that the English have regarding Indian customs. Though he situates himself at the intersection of the oriental and the occidental paradigm and claims to be a “contradiction” himself, in specifying the individual elements of Indian and English culture, which he believes to have inspired him, he constructs an essentially Indian cultural paradigm. Through the execution of this role of a native informant, the author-narrator has to “imagine” India as a nation and the various tropes that he uses in the construction of an Indian prototype finally consolidates a sense of Indianness and endows him with an Indian identity. Hence, despite the fact that the novel finally ends up as the romantic rambling of a lovelorn prince, it definitely has its contribution to the “imagination” of India as a nation, thus becoming an “informative romance”.

Meenakshi Mukherjee’s observation, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that the last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a simultaneous emergence of the concept of the nation and the genre of the novel, can be perfectly appropriated to the development from *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* to *The Prince of Destiny*. In *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* Ghosh adopts the autobiographical mode of narration where he employs a first-person narrator who assumes the role of the protagonist. As a result, he fails to achieve the neutral perspective of a detached onlooker who has the privilege of observing the entirety of events occurring simultaneously. In *The Prince of Destiny*, on the other hand, the author introduces the third person omniscient narrator who reflects upon the events of the ancestry of the protagonist, his royal birth, his childhood experiences, his gradual transformation from boyhood to manhood, his life and observations as a student in the west and finally the renunciation of his royal inheritance. Through the use of an omniscient narrator Ghosh is able to weave a sub-plot into the narrative of *The Prince of Destiny* which addresses the prominent social issues of the time which were extremely relevant to the nationalist agenda as a whole. In comparison with the earlier novel, *The Prince of Destiny* is a more mature attempt so far as the narrative structure of the novel is concerned. The maturing of the first novel into *The Prince of Destiny* confirms that the evolution of the idea of nationalism and the development of the genre of novel are both dynamic processes operating in a mutually symbiotic

relationship. The conception of India as a nation appears at a very germinal stage in *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*.

The nationalist issues which become more pronounced in *The Prince of Destiny* are found at the rudimentary stage in *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*. It is in his first novel that Ghosh proposes an indigenous civil service for India. In the Imperial Civil Service (as the Indian Civil Service was known after the administration of India was taken up by the Crown, replacing the East India Company, in 1858) the top thousand officials were British, educated in the topmost educational institutions of Britain. Even by 1914 only five percent of the officials were Indian. Therefore it is easily understandable that the officials on whom the welfare of the nation was entrusted should have the least idea about the socio-cultural characteristics of the nation they were meant to serve. Naturally the probability of misunderstanding between the ruler and the ruled was quite huge. Thus Ghosh makes this proposition of entrusting administrative duties to Indians who would be accountable to the Governor of their respective states and this is how the government of India could be run by Indians themselves.

We have no ready-made Civil Service of our own; wherefore, this is what we would do: we would call together the chief families, and place the actual work of civil administration in to their hands, making them responsible directly to the Governor of each province. Thus would you participate intimately in the government of your country.¹⁷

This prefigures the idea of self-governance which becomes a central issue during the Swadeshi Movement in the subsequent years. Thus, being published in the wake of the Swadeshi Movement, *The Prince of Destiny* becomes a literary treatise of Ghosh's political ideas in which the issues of self-governance and justifiability of India's anti-colonial stance are addressed in greater detail.

The Prince of Destiny, a "highly important contemporary national-political epic"¹⁸ according to Alex Tickell, is the most important literary achievement of Ghosh and serves as the most appropriate piece of work for our area of investigation. The publisher's preface to the novel is worth noticing:

¹⁷ Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, 225.

¹⁸ Alex Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature: 1830-1947* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012) 170.

It draws a picture of Indian life from the inside, with its social customs and moral ideals, its religious fervour, its passionate love. The book also reveals the Indian view of the causes of the present unrest, and Britain's unseen peril in India ... this romance envelops the reader in the atmosphere of India as no work of a European has ever done, and is a storehouse of Indian information which could not be obtained from any other source.¹⁹

The presentation of India by an Indian was therefore the unique selling point for the novel, to use the modern phrase. Thus the publisher assessed the importance of the book with regard to the quintessential information supplied through the narrative about the nitty-gritty of Indian life and culture. The book was also considered to be of great help for the British rulers in understanding and acknowledging the subtleties of Indian culture which could not have been interpreted better but by an Indian, and Ghosh was believed to have done this with great success in this novel.

The principal purpose of writing *The Prince of Destiny*, as the publisher mentions in the preface, was to warn the English administrators of their lapses in the governance of India which might lead to serious consequences for them, to the extent of losing their hold on India. However, from one of the letters written by Ghosh to King Edward VII, we come to know that there was another factor which encouraged Ghosh to write *The Prince of Destiny*. He writes, that overwhelmed with an urge to convey the deepest veneration of the people of India for [His] Majesty, “and depict their joy at the Proclamation of their first English ruler by the right of succession in the ancient heritage of Akbar and Prithviraj and Vikrama” and believing himself to be “the sole Indian writer on India known to the general British public,” Ghosh appealed to King Edward VII to appoint him as the official chronicler. When his relentless entreaties and petitions failed to procure him a permission to write the long coveted chronicle, he settled to write a “popular book, for the use of the general public.”²⁰ This was how *The Prince of Destiny* came into being.

As already mentioned, the partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement intervened between the publication of *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* (1902) and *The Prince of Destiny* (1909). However, Ghosh does not address the issue of partition

¹⁹ Sarath Kumar Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (London: Rebman Ltd., 1909) v.

²⁰ In his unpublished letter dated 29th June, 1903, the word “popular” has been emphasized each time.

directly in the novel. The narrative ends with the end of the nineteenth century, thereby keeping the anti-British agitations of the early twentieth century out of its scope. Rather, Ghosh presents his views on the emerging idea of Indian nationalism, points out the fallacies, and suggests optimistic arrangements in order to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between Indians and the British. The practicality of his ideas is open to debate, but the basic message that the novel conveys is, in various ways, an assimilation of the ideas of the leading thinkers of the age such as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902).²¹ Both Tagore and Vivekananda were against fanatic nationalism and tried to inspire the idea of mutual sympathy and co-operation between the ruler and the ruled for practical reasons. This was exactly what the authors echoed in their novels, and this is the unique aspect of Indian nationalism which we shall discuss in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

Apart from the time-frame in which the action in the novel takes place, another reason which posed an impediment for a candid discussion of the issues of partition and Swadeshi was the place of publication of the novel. In fact, no contemporary novel in English written by an Indian author can be found which directly addressed the issue of the Bengal Partition of 1905. It is understandable that Ghosh had to be diplomatic. Since his work was published from London, and his target readers were mainly English, blatant discussions of such a highly volatile political issue as the partition would have definitely risked the publication and circulation of his novel. Hence a great deal of circumspection was required over such a sensitive situation. Ghosh, however, presented an overall picture of Indo-British dispositions. He attempted to identify the major causes which were resulting in an ever-increasing hiatus in Indo-British relationship. The publisher's note in the first edition of *The Prince of Destiny* is worth noticing here: "The book ... reveals the Indian view of the causes of the present unrest, and Britain's unseen peril in India."²² It is important to note that the publisher certified the book as a treatise which has explained the "present unrest", that is the Swadeshi Movement, from the perspective of an Indian. Though Ghosh made political statements in this novel, he addressed the

²¹ For Tagore's views on Indo-British relations refer to Rabindranath Tagore, *Greater India* (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1921). (This is an authorised translation of papers read by the author in connection with the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, circa 1905 – 1910). Swami Vivekananda's ideas on Indo-British relations can be found in Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Mayavati Memorial Edition. Vol. 5. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1992).

²² Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, v.

issue of the “present unrest” implicitly. This raises an obvious question in the minds of the readers – how much was Ghosh actually affected by the contemporary political agitations in India? The answer lies in a comparative study of Ghosh’s first published novel *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* and his last published novel *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna*.

Background of Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest

As already mentioned, the purpose of writing the novels for Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra was the same. A close reading of *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* shows that their authors used certain common elements in the construction of Indianness and an Indian identity, which I shall discuss after presenting the background of the author and of *Hindupore*, which is probably the only novel Mitra ever published.

Alex Tickell introduces Siddha Mohana Mitra (1856-1925) as a descendant of an aristocratic Bangalee family, a political journalist and ex-newspaper editor. He also mentions that Mitra was a linguist, proficient in Bangla, Urdu, Persian and English, and that before moving to London he lived in Hyderabad and was the proprietor-editor of the *Deccan Post*. He adds that Mitra was “prosecuted for writing provocative pamphlets.”²³ The idea of Mitra writing provocative pamphlets appears somewhat incongruent with the themes of his essays, articles and non-fictional works which were published before and after *Hindupore*. Moreover, he is explicitly critical towards any kind of writing that instigates anti-colonial sentiment. In “Discontent in India” (1907), an article published in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, he condemned the instigation of anti-British sentiments in the vernacular literatures: “it is equally important that some antidote should be applied to the poisonous literature which is now disseminated and broadcast throughout India.”²⁴ His pro-imperial disposition did not seem to be affected over the following years as we gather from his various writings, all published from London till 1922. But what we need to notice in the context of this chapter is that his pro-imperial disposition could not overpower his patriotic feelings and nationalist sentiments.

²³ Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature*, 170.

²⁴ Siddha Mohana Mitra, “Discontent in India” in James Knowles (ed.), *The Nineteenth Century and After*, Vol. LXII, Issue: CCCLXV (London: Spottiswoode & Co., July 1907) 53.

Tickell writes that Mitra continued with his journalism in London and finally opened a yoga centre on the south coast before retiring. It appears that besides working as a journalist he was also popular as a psychologist and used to counsel on mind-training and nervous disorders. In the *Hindu Tales from Sanskrit*, which he translated, Nancy Bell introduced him as “the well-known Hindu psychologist and politician, who has done so much to draw more closely together the land of his birth and that of his adoption.”²⁵ In 1911 two of his works were published from London – *The Position of Women in Indian Life*, which he wrote in collaboration with the Maharani of Baroda (Queen of Baroda) and *The Life and Letters of Sir John Hall*.²⁶ In the preface to the latter, the author mentions being requested by Mrs. Simpson, the daughter of Sir John Hall, to write her father’s biography. This was probably the only substantial piece of work by the author which was not essentially related to Indian culture or politics. Moreover, what encouraged him to write the biography of the English military surgeon was his urge to reciprocate the contribution of F.H. Skrine, the English biographer of an eminent Hindu journalist. It had been his desire to equal this record as a Hindu by writing a biography of an eminent Englishman.²⁷ The first edition of *Anglo-Indian Studies* (1913) contains a list of other works by the author, with short excerpts from the reviews of each of the work. In this list a quotation is cited from the *Times* (date and edition not mentioned) regarding the *Life and Letters of Sir John Hall*. It says, “This volume has a special interest as the first biography of a distinguished Englishman written by a distinguished Indian, who, as in his previous writings, reveals his literary capacity and his right to rank among the scholars of the Empire.” There is no denying the fact that, as the first Indian biographer of an Englishman, Siddha Mohana Mitra deserves an important place among the Indian English authors of all times.

²⁵ Siddha Mohana Mitra (trans.), *Hindu Tales from Sanskrit* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1919) v.

²⁶ Sir John Hall (1795–1866) was a military surgeon who entered the Army Medical Service in 1815 and joined the forces fighting against Napoleon in Flanders. According to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, his writings were published in two pamphlets in 1857 and 1858 which defended the army medical officers deputed to the Crimean War. His defending of his compatriots, against the criticisms of Florence Nightingale and the sanitary commission which was sent to investigate the conditions in the field, brought him in direct conflict with Florence Nightingale. For details please see <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11974> (accessed on 25th July, 2012).

²⁷ Siddha Mohana Mitra, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Hall* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911) Preface. F.H. Skrine, an Indian Civil Servant, was the biographer of an eminent Bangalee journalist Dr. Sambhu Chunder Mookerjee. See F.H. Skrine, *An Indian Journalist* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1895) for details.

In *Peace in India: How to Attain it*, which was published from London in 1922, Mitra mentions his expatriation in London for eighteen years. Settling in London in the early years of the twentieth century, he became a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society in London and engaged himself in literary and journalistic writing. He claimed in *Anglo-Indian Studies* that his previously published book *Indian Problems* (1908) had not only been widely appreciated by the British press, but had also been quoted by Lord Curzon in a debate in the House of Lords. An important contribution that he claimed for himself was the decision to grant the Victoria Cross, the highest military honour of England, to the Native Army.

Among my humble suggestions therein which aroused attention was the granting of the Victoria Cross to members of the Native Army, which was graciously taken into consideration by the King-Emperor, with the result that the much-coveted V.C. is now within the reach of my countrymen.²⁸

On one hand he pleaded for equality in the acknowledgment of the performance of soldiers, whether British or Indian, and on the other he expressed no misgivings at all regarding the necessity of British power in India. If the British withdrew their governance of India, he predicted that despite all the peaceful precepts of the *Mahabharata*, and in spite of the stupendous philosophy and fatalism of the Hindus, the “Maharajas would speedily be at each other’s throats, as they were before the *pax Britannica* was established there.”²⁹ His lack of confidence, in general, in the provincial rulers was probably the reason for his portrayal of a native prince in *Hindupore* who represented Mitra’s idea of an ideal ruler. It was the unreliability of the native rulers that caused Mitra’s sceptical attitude towards the idea of self-governance of India, not his faith in the indispensability of the British government.

Siddha Mohana Mitra’s *Hindupore: A Peep behind the Indian Unrest*, published from London, repeats a picture of royalty and the Indo-British interface that we observe in *The Prince of Destiny*. What we gather from the preface to the novel is that Mitra’s article titled “Discontent in India” caught the attention of his readers who requested him to “deal with the subject in a more popular form. ... That

²⁸ Siddha Mohana Mitra, *Anglo-Indian Studies* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913) xi. In due course he clarifies that by the term Anglo-Indians, he has referred essentially to Englishmen and not the Eurasians “who now call themselves Anglo-Indians”. Ibid. xiii.

²⁹ Ibid. 3.

is the genesis of *Hindupore*.³⁰ The purpose of the article, which Mitra sets forth in the introductory paragraph, echoes precisely the objective of the novel.

My views are those of an Indian who is acquainted with the administration both of British India and Native India. From the Indian point of view, therefore, I propose (1) to examine the causes of the present unrest, (2) to point out some mistakes in the past, (3) to offer some suggestions for the future.³¹

This purpose is absolutely similar to that of Ghosh that we observe in the publisher's note in the first edition of *The Prince of Destiny*. Immediately following the publication of this article, Siddha Mohana published *Indian Problems* in 1908.³² Containing an introduction by Sir George Birdwood and dedicated to the Earl of Cromer, *Indian Problems* offered a detailed discussion of the root causes which led to misunderstanding and mistrust between the English and the Indians, thereby leading to the unrest. Published in an epoch marked by political unrest and insurgency, this book was an attempt to apprise both the rulers and the ruled of the symbiotic necessity and dependence of each upon the other. However, despite the fact that neither Ghosh nor Mitra could deny the indispensability of the technological knowhow of the west for overall progress of India, neither of them endorsed the idea of absolute governance of the British over India. Just like the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century reformers, these authors "were aiming at modernization rather than westernization. A blind imitation of western cultural norms was never an integral part of reform."³³ As already mentioned, neither of the authors could be overtly critical of the British government as they were settled in London and getting their work published from there. Therefore, though in certain cases Mitra seems to be pro-imperialist, an in-depth reading of *Hindupore* helps us in identifying the nationalistic sentiment of the author.

Mitra's novel, which Meenakshi Mukherjee describes as "a variety of historical fiction"³⁴ in *The Twice Born Fiction*, was deemed to hold immense

³⁰ Siddha Mohana Mitra, *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest* (London: Luzac & Co., 1909) Preface.

³¹ Mitra, "Discontent in India", 40.

³² Siddha Mohana Mitra, *Indian Problems* (London: John Murray, 1908).

³³ Bipan Chandra, et.al., *India's Struggle For Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989) 88.

³⁴ Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English* (New Delhi: Heinemann, 1971) 20.

political value by a distinguished Indian expert of the times, Sir George Birdwood. An extract of Birdwood's letter was printed in the first edition of the novel. Just like Sarath Ghosh, Mitra's target readers were primarily westerners. And similar to *The Prince of Destiny*, *Hindupore* was also an attempt to raise awareness amongst the imperial rulers about their flaws in understanding the intricate details of India's social and religious culture which led to lapses in their administration and had been creating an ever-increasing distance between the ruler and the ruled. Thus, the author deliberately made his protagonist, Lord Tara, a parliamentarian, whose Irish descent is functional in adding another dimension to his perception of Indian movements against the British. As Elleke Boehmer states, "[t]he inspiration and guidance which India found in the example of Ireland went particularly deep ... [t]he basis for the contact lay in the contiguity of the national movements."³⁵

The author's choice of the name for Lord Tara is also very significant. He probably intended to imply the historical Battle of Tara Hill during the Anglo-Irish rebellion.³⁶ Lord Tara may be supposed to have derived his name from here and this is how Mitra places him at a liminal position between the English and the Indian – as one who can appreciate the motivating rationale of the English being a parliamentarian himself but also of the Indian by virtue of his birth as Irish because the Irish had a centuries-old history of trying to assert and claim their identity through bloody feuds with the English. Both Mitra and Ghosh, belonging to the privileged groups in the agro-literate society, occupied a liminal space between the ruler and the ruled. Their position was as ambivalent as the Irish people serving the British Government. They were not in a position to vilify the English outright. The "unitary language" that they selected for the construction of Indian nationalism in their novels was English, and they published mostly from the west with the intention of making the westerners aware of the cultural and traditional wealth of India. This is no less than the sentiment of national pride that has been exhibited through their works. Hence the purpose was two-fold – (1) asserting their worth as Indians (2) but not in a belligerent tone which might endanger their own positions.

³⁵ Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 114.

³⁶ Fought on 26th May 1798, Battle of Tara Hill was part of the Irish rebellion, an uprising against the British rule in Ireland. "Tara" is also a common word in many Indian languages, which literally means "star".

Themes of The Prince of Destiny and Hindupore

Barath is the prince of Barathpur, Ghosh's fictional state in his narrative space. He receives his early education in India and is sent to England for higher education, as per the norms of the elite and the royals in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The death of his father brings him back to India as he has to shoulder the royal responsibilities as the only successor to the throne of Barathpur. The journey of Barath from Barathpur to England and all the way back via Japan is, in actuality, a journey mapped beyond mere geographical space. The transformation of his physical journey into a virtual "adventure of interiority" is what is significant in the narrative.³⁷ Georg Lukács in *The Theory of the Novel* says, "[T]he content of the novel is the story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them, and proving itself, to find its own essence."³⁸ Barath's journey from India to England and back entails another journey within. Distanced from his familiar world, Barath meets people from unknown parts of the world belonging to different races and religions and encounters new and strange situations. The voyage by ship, where Barath meets the sick Italian priest Father Zapponi and hundreds of Italian troops on their way to the battlefield of Adwa, induce a sense of oneness in his mind. The dark and squalid backstreets of London, where the poor and the destitute struggle in their lowly existence alienated from the splendour of imperial grandeur bring him face to face with a different London which he could never have imagined. His sense of "the other" is confounded by his interactions with Ellen who mothers him while he is in England, and then with the poet Francis Thompson who appears as an Indian ascetic in the garb of an Englishman. All these new experiences influence his perceptions and inspire in him a much wider sense of the world and a deeper sense of life.

"[T]he hero of a novel ... should combine in himself negative as well as positive features, low as well as lofty, ridiculous as well as serious" according to Mikhail Bakhtin.³⁹ Though every trait in Barath's character is positive, lofty and serious, he is not "portrayed as an already completed and unchanging person but as one who is evolving and developing," and continuously learning from life.⁴⁰ Though

³⁷ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (London: Merlin Press, 1978) 89.

³⁸ Ibid. 89.

³⁹ M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981)

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⁴⁰ Ibid. 10.

there is an epical distance owing to the overtly serious and lofty traits of Barath that disallows the identification of the readers with him, the crucial tension between the external and the internal man can be felt through the course of the narrative. The “unrealized surplus of humaneness”⁴¹ marks the character of Barath, and it becomes manifest with the inadequacy of his fate and his situation. When the narrative ends, a sense of incompleteness frustrates the reader to a certain extent as the author does not bring about a definitive closure. He has made Barath greater than his immediate circumstances but has failed to ensure a certainty regarding his future. Thus, there is a constant overlap between epical and novelistic elements throughout the portrayal of the character of Barath in *The Prince of Destiny*.

The Prince of Destiny is quite well-structured as compared to the earlier novel by Ghosh and also to most of the Indian English novels published since nineteenth century. Referred to as a “national-political epic” by Alex Tickell, the narrative is significantly lengthy with a considerable number of characters and a well-knit and an organically constitutive sub-plot.⁴² The episode of Kamona and Madhava, besides addressing the contemporarily crucial issue of widow-marriage, becomes integral to the development of the action in the main plot. Assuring an unprecedented social sanction of the widow-marriage to Kamona, Vashista manipulates her emotions and inveigles her to help the artists in casting a golden statue of Princess Suvona to utmost precision. A princess’ posing before a male artist was considered as an impropriety. Hence Kamona, as a descendant of a goldsmith family, with a natural flair for artistry and in a vulnerable circumstance of her life as a widow involved in a romantic affair (a sacrilege according to traditional Hindu codes of law) was bound to be Vashista’s shrewd choice. The fear and uncertainty of a future life in Barathpur that was looming in the minds of Madhava and Kamona suddenly get dispelled by the royal priest Vashista’s assurance in exchange of a favour, the gravity of which they fail to decipher immediately. What gets revealed through the sub-plot is Vashista’s opportunism as a guardian of Indian codes of law. On one hand he contends against the abolition of *sati* in the name of religion and on the other he is ready to sanction widow-marriage only to achieve personal ends. Independent of the main plot, self-contained in itself and intrinsically significant, the sub-plot becomes organically decisive of the action as well.

⁴¹ Ibid. 37.

⁴² Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature*, 170.

Similar to *The Prince of Destiny*, *Hindupore* is also about a journey. While Barath's journey was through various parts of England, Lord Tara journeys through Bombay, Hindupore, Barrackpore and Puri in order to get a holistic idea of India. The novel opens with the P. and O. steamer *Nur-Jehan* in the middle of the ocean, on its way to Bombay. The journey brings Lord Tara and Ram Singh together, which changes Tara's initial plans and brings him to Ram Singh's kingdom Hindupore. Here Ram Singh primarily plays the role of the native informant. From the palace of Hindupore Tara is gradually acquainted with the life and culture of the Indians. The décor of the palace, the customs and traditions maintained within the royal family, the role of the ministers as well as the servants, everything contributes to Tara's basic understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of India. However, his visit to Puri endows him with a larger and a more realistic picture of Indian society which he could not have been able to perceive from within the premises of the palace. For Tara, the purpose of this journey was mainly to undertake an expedition of tiger-shooting in India, which he considers to be "a civilized old country much better worth knowing."⁴³ As we have already discussed, the tiger-shoot does not remain a casual sporting event for him, but becomes a serious challenge decisive of his acceptance by Princess Kamala, Ram Singh's niece who Tara falls in love with. Besides, he gets to know India simultaneously with his getting to know himself, so much so that towards the end of the narrative we find him saying, "It is my beloved India, too, now."⁴⁴

In *Hindupore*, too, the narrative has a close-knit structure. The sub-plot in this narrative too is organically woven into the main plot. While *The Prince of Destiny* throws light on issues of great social import in nineteenth and early twentieth century India, such as the *sati* and widow remarriage, *Hindupore* draws our attention to another very important aspect of early nineteenth-century society of India which is totally absent in *The Prince of Destiny*. The Anglo-Indian community which constituted a considerable section, and had an important role to play in the society, has been intelligently dealt with by Mitra. Through the portrayal of the character of Charles Hunt, an illegitimate son of an Indian maid and a British subaltern officer, Mitra shows how the lives of the average Anglo-Indian people are totally isolated from both Indians as well as the English. The Anglo-Indian is neither accepted by

⁴³ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 284.

anyone outside his community, nor can he accept anyone not belonging to his community. The reason, as observed by Mitra, is that the Anglo-Indian is caught between two doctrines. He considers himself Christian and dislikes the natives because of their skin colour. He writes, “India and Anglo-India are two nations without intercourse or sympathy with each other, and yet they have so many interests in common.”⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that though the Anglo-Indians constituted a significant percentage of Indian population in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they are not much represented in the early Indian English novels. Thus, the sub-plot of *Hindupore* is of vital importance as far as representation of various communities in Indian society in the Indian English novels is concerned.

The primary message which both Ghosh and Mitra wanted to convey was that of east-west friendship; they tried to point out the various ways in which India could benefit by maintaining a friendly relationship with the west. They were no exceptions as there were other Bangalee intellectuals of the age who perceived the benefits of British imperialism in India and were therefore sceptical about the practicality of the evolving national movement just like them. The first and foremost example that can be set is that of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore’s novel *Gora* (1910) was based on an exactly similar theme – the justification of a national movement, which failed to appreciate the benefits which India could reap from British rule. But through the process of this comparative analysis of the two cultures, that of India and England, developed an image of India, the study of which is crucial to this thesis.

Construction of India and Indian Identity

According to Anthony D. Smith, a sense of nationalism is rooted in a sense of belonging to one particular territory and to a particular community in which the members share a common ancestry, common myths, historical memories, traditions, values, and culture. The construction of nationalness or a national identity requires a process of “ethno-symbolic reconstruction” which involves “the reselection, recombination and recodification of previously existing values, symbols, memories and the like, as well as the addition of new cultural elements by each generation.”⁴⁶ The assertion of “polyethnic uniqueness” and the universality of “irreplaceable

⁴⁵ Ibid. 278.

⁴⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) 20.

cultural values” are essential in the construction of a national identity.⁴⁷ In the light of Smith’s theory, we shall need to analyze the tropes which have been used by the authors in their construction of a unique Indian identity. We shall identify the common myths, historical memories, traditions and cultures which have been deployed by the authors, and analyze the reason behind the selection of those particular tropes. This will help us to understand the nationalistic aspects of the narratives which have not been appreciated before.

In my overview of Indian nationalism and the fundamental theories of nationalism, which I shall be applying in my analysis of the narratives, I have discussed how Partha Chatterjee pointed out the inadequacy of the word “imagination” as used by Benedict Anderson. According to Chatterjee,

anti-colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society ... by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains – the material and the spiritual.⁴⁸

Chatterjee explains that by material domain he means the “domain on the ‘outside’” which essentially relates to the economic, scientific or technological aspects in which the west was superior to the east; whereas the spiritual domain was the uniqueness of the east which defined its cultural identity. This is exactly what we find in the novels of Ghosh and Mitra where the spiritual wisdom of India has been asserted to claim India’s superiority over the west. Therefore, I choose to begin with the spiritual culture, as deployed in Ghosh’s narrative, which was revived and asserted in the nationalist agenda.

Spiritual culture

In *The Prince of Destiny*, Barath, the protagonist, takes the highest and most difficult path that Hinduism teaches – that of renunciation – which is considered “[t]he national ideal of India” according to Swami Vivekananda.⁴⁹ Barath’s renunciation begins with the forsaking of the love of his life, Nora. In order to maintain peace in his kingdom he decides not to marry the English girl as it could incur the wrath of Vashista and his group of militant nationalists. Barath performs a rite of renunciation of his love by burning Nora’s garland and scattering the ashes in the Ganges. He

⁴⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991) 84.

⁴⁸ Partha Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Community?” in Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (ed.), *Nations and Nationalism, A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) 240.

⁴⁹ Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Vol. 5, 228.

marries Suvona, the choice of Vashista. However, the narrative ends with Barath's acceptance of Suvona as his "disciple", teaching her the final lesson that "even as the essence of love was the union of souls, the manifestation of love in the supremest degree was renunciation. Resigned renunciation."⁵⁰

The core spirit of Hinduism is renunciation. The highest form of love is the love for the Supreme Being or the Absolute, and the union with the Absolute entails complete detachment from all worldly ties and relationships. According to the tenets of Hinduism, the whole world in its materiality is an illusion and whatever is true or real resides in the Supreme Being. Thus, in order to experience the essence of the highest and purest form of love, one has to renounce every worldly connection. Barath marries Suvona only to leave her. But before "Barath [goes] out of the palace, into the world," he entrusts to Suvona the responsibility for adopting a true heir to the throne of Barathpore.⁵¹

Barath renounces the material world in search of the ultimate goal, the attainment of true knowledge. He poses the same question as Swami Vivekananda: "Why do not the English forget their warlike habits and give up fighting and bloodshed, and sit calm and quiet concentrating their whole energy on making religion the sole aim of their life?"⁵² Barath's entrusting to his wife Suvona the task of finding an heir to the throne is suggestive of his refraining from a physical relation with her and his choice of celibacy. Celibacy and *brahmacharya* were part and parcel of traditional Hindu life, the concept and practice of which was highly advised by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in his nationalist agenda, as we will see in the following chapter. Barath renounces his family and kingdom for a mission so that one day he will become "One who will teach all earth anew the doctrine of peace; one who will turn the armaments of West and East of our generation from instruments of carnage into instruments of industry."⁵³

The ending of the novel with Barath renouncing his family and kingdom and setting off in search of true knowledge is profoundly indicative. Here Ghosh's line of thought merges with Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. As Bankim's novels dealt with the issue of nationalism and his essays categorically analyzed the reasons behind the subjection of India to the British rule, it is quite natural that his ideas

⁵⁰ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 628.

⁵¹ Ibid. 629.

⁵² Ibid. 460.

⁵³ Ibid. 629.

inspired the later novelists (especially those from Bengal) as a precursor to the literature on Indian nationalism. In his essay “Sankhyadarshan” (Sankhya Philosophy) Chattopadhyay argues that the philosophy of Sankhya lies at the foundation of the Hindu beliefs in India and that the chief characteristic of this philosophy is *vairagya*, that is, a sense of detachment from the materialistic world.⁵⁴

The present state of the Hindus is a product of ... excessive other-worldliness. The lack of devotion to work which foreigners point out as our chief characteristic is only a manifestation of this quality. Our second most important characteristic – fatalism – is yet another form of this other-worldliness derived from the Sankhya.⁵⁵

As evident from the quotation above, Chattopadhyay claims that Hinduism is inherently otherworldly. And this is exactly what we notice in Barath towards the end of the novel. Combined with the sense of other-worldliness, it is the avid thirst for true knowledge which inspires Barath to renounce his worldly life. This too can be supported by Bankim. The latter explains that according to Sankhya philosophers, the goal of knowledge was salvation: “‘Knowledge is power’: this is the slogan of Western civilization. ‘Knowledge is salvation’ is the slogan of Hindu civilization.”⁵⁶

Common customs and social reforms

While the spiritual culture of India is celebrated, arguments for and against certain customs are offered through the narratives. “The novel”, says Meenakshi Mukherjee, “emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, at first tentatively, purporting to be a vehicle of social reform or a mirror of contemporary life.”⁵⁷ *The Prince of Destiny*, along with the discussions on socio-political issues, also contained messages of social reform pertinent to the contemporary age. Two essential prerequisites of nineteenth-century social reformation in Bengal were the abolition of *sati* and the promulgation of widow remarriage. These appear as central issues in the sub-plot of

⁵⁴ For details refer to Jogesh Chandra Bagal (ed.), *Bankim Rachanabali* (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1965) 222.

⁵⁵ This translation is by Partha Chatterjee. See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World. A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1993) 56.

⁵⁶ *Bankim Rachanabali*, 226. For the translation see Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, 57.

⁵⁷ Meenakshi Mukherjee, “Epic and Novel in India” in Franco Moretti (ed.), *The Novel*, vol. 1 (New jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006) 605.

the novel. Kamona, a young girl, is betrothed to a wealthy “thakur” who dies before their marriage.⁵⁸ Though it is not incumbent upon her to accompany her husband to the pyre and be a *sati*, there is consternation among her in-laws who expected that she would at least express her desire to join her prospective husband on his way to heaven, thereby adding to the honour and prestige of the family.⁵⁹ The death of her intended groom sheds the colours of her life; no jewellery or coloured clothes are allowed to her according to Hindu traditions. But the repressed unfulfilled desires of the beautiful young girl, whose life has nothing to offer, find vent in her closed-door midnight dances in front of the mirror, where her own eyes feast upon the celebration of her youthful grace. Madhava, a neighbour who has been in love with Kamona from the very beginning, is portrayed as another young fellow trained in western education and with a mind full of reforming ideas and beliefs. He, along with other members of his generation, belongs to the coterie of advisers to Barath. They share amongst themselves a motivation to serve their motherland by discarding the vicious, amending the “effete”, and inspiring the modern.⁶⁰ Madhava too, like Barath, incarnates the new stream of reformed ideals, in his case through his marriage to Kamona. They enter into a marital partnership through *Gandharva Vivah* which again carries great significance.⁶¹ Their marriage is not presided over by priests and no rituals are performed; it is essentially a “love-marriage” where the couple in love with each other secretly exchange garlands in absence of members of their families or friends. It symbolizes an exchange of love and love only, and is not associated with any transaction of wealth or gifts as is the norm of Hindu marriages. Thus Madhava, in a way, upholds the ideals of the Brahma Samaj by marrying a widow and marrying her not in conformation with the standard Hindu rites and rituals.

⁵⁸ ‘Kamona’ literally means desire and a person who owned a considerable area of land was known as a ‘thakur’.

⁵⁹ Betrothal for a woman, according to the ancient Hindu customs, was as binding as marriage. Once betrothed, the woman had no right to break the engagement and marry someone else. Moreover, if the intended groom had died before marriage, the woman was considered ill-omened; she would never find a husband and her family would be segregated in the society. Hence, the best option for her was to become a *sati* to absolve herself and her family. It was also a matter of pride and honour for the family from which a woman had been a *sati*.

⁶⁰ According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, the British rulers made every effort to propagate the myth of effeminacy as far as Indian men are concerned. She quotes from James Mill’s *The History of British India* (1817) and refers to Mrinalini Sinha’s *Colonial Masculinity* (1995) to establish her point. Mukherjee quotes from Sinha who in turn quoted Richard Orme’s observation of the Bangalee men in 1770. He stated that all natives in India showed an effeminacy of character in general, but the Bangalees were of still weaker frame and more enervated nature. For details please refer to Mukherjee, “Epic and Novel in India”, 613.

⁶¹ A *Gandharva*, equivalent to an “angel”, is a nature spirit in Hinduism who acts as a messenger between God and humans. *Vivah* literally means marriage.

Kamona is emancipated of the burden of custodianship of oppressive traditional values.

Widow-remarriage, a predominant social issue, thus being addressed, *sati* was the next controversial issue that Ghosh meditated upon. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes that inspired by Colonel James Tod's narratives in which the idea of self-immolation or performing *sati* had served as a vital denominator of women's valour, some nineteenth-century novels "romanticize[d]" and "valorize[d]" these acts.⁶² Though the abolition of *sati* and promotion of widow-remarriage were prioritized in the reformists' agenda, "[t]here was something inherently contradictory in this enthusiasm for *sati*."⁶³ In this situation Ghosh offers a representation of the controversy regarding the abolition of *sati* by the British government which was vehemently opposed by the old school of *pundits* and an orthodox section of the society.

In a conversation with Lord Melnor, the appointed Resident to the court of Barathpur, Vashista points out what he considers the religious privilege of the Hindu women who get the opportunity of becoming a *sati*.

The essence of suttee is the Hindu wife's superior position spiritually as compared with that of her husband. Her status is intrinsically higher than that of any wife in the world – which may be news to you. ...To use the language of Christianity, she confers the crown of martyrdom upon herself and upon her husband by the self-same act. That is suttee.⁶⁴

Vashista vouches for the tradition and interprets the custom as a celebration of women's empowerment over man. He explains how a wife plays an indispensable role in the life of the husband according to Hindu traditions; the husband requires his wife's ratification in matters of religious and political duties. Even when the husband dies it is incumbent upon the wife to ensure that his soul reaches heaven. When the husband loses control over his soul after death, the wife decides to accompany him to the pyre and protect his soul from wandering off.

⁶² Mukherjee, "Epic and Novel in India", 616.

⁶³ Ibid. 616.

⁶⁴ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 437 and 438.

But where suttee is actually practised, if she finds that a vocation for it is denied her and so declines the ordeal, she no more suffers in public estimation than the maiden in Catholic Europe who enters a convent, but finding no real vocation for the religious life, returns to the world, marries, and brings up a family.⁶⁵

He believes that women who were willing to be a *sati* by choice were deprived of their right due to the intervention of the foreigners who had no idea of Hindu customs and therefore abolished the age-old custom not realizing its religious significance.⁶⁶ This conforms to Partha Chatterjee's claim that Indian nationalism, conforming to the nature of anti-colonial nationalism, created its own domain of sovereignty prior to its political battle, through social reforms. Chatterjee categorizes the period of social reform into two distinct phases. In the earlier phase Indian reformers believed that the state had a responsibility to bring about reforms in traditional institutions and customs. In the latter phase while the necessity of reforms was still acknowledged, the intervention of the state into matters of "national culture" was resisted. This, according to Chatterjee, "was already the period of nationalism" and thus, the act of defending the custom of *sati* undoubtedly had a nationalistic purpose on part of the author.⁶⁷

"[T]he women who die at the funeral pyres of their husbands made the merger of history and myth possible, conflating the image of the *sati* with the image of the *veerangana*," according to Meenakshi Mukherjee.⁶⁸ "Veeranganas", as described by Mukherjee, were empowered women "who can make things happen".⁶⁹ In Ghosh's narrative the self-contradiction of the educated Bangalee elites regarding the issue of *sati* becomes clearly visible. Two women characters are presented who face the ordeal. Among them Delini, Barath's sister, decides to become a *sati*; whereas Kamona refuses the "honour" of self-immolation and eventually marries a young man of her choice. Neither of their decisions is critiqued by Ghosh. Again, on the one hand the author makes Vashista justify the age-old custom of *sati* and

⁶⁵ Ibid. 439.

⁶⁶ This reminds us of Gayatri Spivak's argument that while the two parties interpret *sati* to support their respective interests, the voice of the woman herself goes unheard. Refer to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Bill Ashcroft, et. al. (ed.), *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995) 24-29.

⁶⁷ Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?", 240.

⁶⁸ Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain*, 164.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 159.

support the marriage of Madhava with Kamona on the other. Both Delini and Kamona are “veeranganas” in this novel. Delini is brave and strong enough to decide to immolate herself and uphold the honour of her family, and Kamona is bold enough to defy social customs. Mukherjee rightly believes that by subscribing to the custom of *sati* the educated elites, who otherwise promoted gender equality, glorified a dehistoricised pre-colonial past.⁷⁰ Ghosh’s attestation of the decisions taken by both Delini and Kamona is indicative of his respect towards the choice of the women, whether or not sanctioned by the society. Even though not a “revival” of an age-old tradition, in John Hutchinson’s terms, Ghosh definitely attempted an appreciation of a “glorious” or “heroic” deed performed by Hindu women in pre-colonial India; and also conveyed his opinion in support of the social reforms by sanctioning widow-marriage in his novel.

Revival of historical memories

The revival of “‘historic’ names, symbols, languages, heroes and cultural practices” has been an essential element which the nationalists have used in their nation-building projects. John Hutchinson observes: “contemporary nations legitimize themselves by claiming descent from ancient communities.”⁷¹ In *The Prince of Destiny*, Ghosh’s loyalty to England, almost to the extent of obsequiousness in certain ways, did not however intervene in the narrative to obliterate India’s cultural heritage; rather the narrative sings India’s glorious history.

there reigns not a sovereign on earth with lineage more ancient than that of Barathpur. When Rome was not built, when Tyre and Carthage were yet unbegotten, the house of Barath reigned supreme over India. And now when the irreverent tourist from Balham or Ohio carves his name into immortality upon the pyramids of Egypt, when the dried mummies of the Pharaohs are sold like kippered herrings in the markets of Europe, the last of the race of Rama of the house of Barath still survives the shock of time. Gone are the Assyrians, the Medans and the Persians; unmourned is venerable Troy; even the tomb of great Caesar is now unearthed amid the laughter of a vulgar multitude.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 165.

⁷¹ John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994) 2.

Alone among the ancients the sons of India's demigods still dwell
among men.⁷²

Bringing up India's ancient history, the history which precedes the histories of other ancient civilizations of the world, Ghosh attempts a "revival" in John Hutchinson's terms. By the clause "the house of Barath reigned supreme over India", Ghosh calls attention to the ancient root of the autochthonal kingdom which preceded the centuries-long domination of India by the British or by the Mughals. Similarly, in *Hindupore* we find that Mitra also believes in the present glory of what he prefers to call the Indian Empire. We find Ram Singh comparing the strength of the Greek and Roman empires at the zenith of their civilizations to that of the Indian Empire during his time. He claims that the Roman or the Greek empire did not contain more than 125 millions of people, whereas "[o]ur Indian Empire contains 300 millions ... [that is] more subjects than the Greek and Roman Empires put together."⁷³

The Prince of Destiny is a cornucopia of historical references, mythical allusions and symbolism which are entirely and essentially Indian. In the technique of employing history and myth, the narrative confirms Anthony D. Smith's observation that

no great distinction was made between myth and history, since for the sophisticated 'myth' signified a poetic form of history, an archetypal set of motifs thought to embody the real 'essence' of the people and the true character and individuality of the community.⁷⁴

An allusion to the Indian mythical hero Krishna in the title itself ratifies its Indian spirit. The author's intention to present a story of India is explicitly stated through the narrator in the opening lines: "Listen, my brother, and I shall tell you a story of India. *The* story, the one story India has awaited so long to enact."⁷⁵ Describing the grandeur of the Durbar, the narrator recalls the historio-mythical significance of Delhi in the political history of India. Indraprastha, as the geographical location of Delhi is known in the ancient texts, has been the seat of the greatest political power

⁷² Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 20.

⁷³ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 113.

⁷⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 66.

⁷⁵ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 1.

in India since time immemorial.⁷⁶ In the context of the Delhi Durbar, the author mentions quite precisely that whoever ruled Delhi, ruled India. Thus history and myth are woven together in such a manner that, for the reader without a clear sense of either, it is almost impossible to differentiate one from the other. A glorious history had to be alluded to and a hero was essential who could be projected in order to imagine and construct an India. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as poetic forms of history and with a wide appeal to people in general, and the mythical hero Krishna, being the most popular hero of all times, helped the author to construct India and an Indian hero of epic stature.

Epics as the common source of myths and heroes

Ghosh was trapped between the two predominant literary influences of the time – the Indian epics which he had internalized through social conditioning and essential traditional education, and the English novels he had encountered through the academic curriculum and individual pursuits. Thus *The Prince of Destiny* ends up as a novel written in English, in which the inspiration of the Indian epics is explicitly evident. Right from the title Barath's incumbency as the quester of destiny becomes obvious. The narration of his birth and the prophecies associated with it contribute to the construction of his character in the mould of an epic hero, as he is "never an individual" setting forth in search of "a personal destiny but the destiny of a community."⁷⁷ Barath, the hero, is presented as the personification of Bharat, the conceptual nation of the early twentieth century. This is a conspicuous development from *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* where Ghosh never mentions the name of the protagonist in the autobiographical form of the narrative. Bharat, being the name of two important characters in both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* the naming of the hero in *The Prince of Destiny* is one of the factors which demonstrate the serious nationalistic purpose of the author. Before explaining the significance of the name of Barath, we need to keep in mind that the construction of or an allusion to a national hero is another elementary requirement in the nation-building process. Other than the basic characteristics and virtues of a hero, it is essential that he has a nationwide appeal. In a country like India with a large number of provinces, each having an individual history, its own hero and also a distinct sub-culture, the

⁷⁶ A dazzling city said to have been built in 1400 B.C. for the Pandavas in the *Mahabharata*.

⁷⁷ Lukàcs, *The Theory of the Novel*, 66.

construction of a national hero was as difficult as the construction of India itself. The only option was to take refuge in the epics, which every Hindu, at least, could relate to. Ghosh deploys both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in his construction of the hero for *The Prince of Destiny*.

Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur, with whom the narrative of the *Mahabharata* begins, was the son of King Bharat. According to the epic, Bharat's empire stretched beyond the present day Indian sub-continent to Russia and China in the north and Iran in the West. And in the *Mahabharata*, Bharat, the king of Hastinapur, plays a crucial role in breaking the tradition of primogeniture and natural inheritance to the throne, thereby establishing the idea of democracy. Not to anyone bearing the lineage of royalty, but to a commoner did he entrust his sceptre and power. This exemplary decision taken by him changed the course of events and the first foundation stone of the eventual battle of Kurukshetra was thus laid. At the end of the novel, too, we find Ghosh's protagonist renouncing his kingdom and charging his new wife with the adoption of an heir to the throne. Therefore Barathpur, the locale of the narrative and Barath, the hero, are named with a definite purpose. However, the allusion to Bharat, the younger brother of Rama, in the *Ramayana* is even more relevant in this novel.

The birth of Barath to Koikai as narrated in the *Ramayana* occurs in *The Prince of Destiny* as a subversion of the theme of the epic. It is interesting to note that it is not Rama, but Barath who is projected as the ideal ruler of the country; though according to the conventional interpretation, "Ram-rajya" or utopia was supposed to have been established by Rama as the king of Ayodhya. In tune with the feminist rewritings of the *Ramayana* by the sixteenth century women poets such as Chandrabati and Molla, which disabuse Rama of the heroic qualities attributed to him and question his apotheosis on the basis of the inherent flaws in his character, Ghosh has gone out of the way to bring Barath into the centre of the narrative.⁷⁸ He has projected Barath as the ruler of Barathpur, a fictional state in the narrative conceived as "Bharat" or "India" as the English preferred to name it.⁷⁹ This is how

⁷⁸ Refer to Nabaneeta Dev Sen, "Rewriting the *Ramayana*: Chandrabati and Molla" in *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2/3 (New Delhi: Monsoon, 1997) 163-177. Also check the graphic novel by Samhita Arni, *Sita's Ramayana* (Groundwood Books, 2011) illustrated by Moyna Chitrakar.

⁷⁹ According to the *Ramayana*, Rama's half-brother Bharat, born to Koikai, the third queen of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya, ruled the kingdom on behalf of Rama during the period of the latter's exile of fourteen years.

Ghosh modifies, reinterprets and reforms the conventional reading of the *Ramayana* encouraged through generations.

In a subtle way Ghosh attempts a subversion of the *Yoga-Vasishtha Ramayana* in which Rama suffers from a morbid sense of detachment from the material world and Vashista inspires in him the desire for a life of knowledge and action.⁸⁰ In *The Prince of Destiny*, Vashista fails to overpower the convictions of the hero. Hence it is Barath himself who decides and controls his own fate. The title of the novel bears two mutually oppositional ideas in conjunction with each other – apotheosis of human character and the humanization of god – “the new Krishna” and “the prince of destiny”. The phrase “the prince of destiny” requires the prince to master destiny, the power which is believed to lie exclusively in the omnipotent and omniscient entity – god.

Barath’s unusual gift of clairaudience is somewhat suggestive of his supernatural capability. Again the appellation “Krishna” used for the explanation of the previous phrase suggesting an association of the character with Krishna, the mythical figure of the *Mahabharata*, the demi-God, the incarnation of Vishnu, thus deifies the human character and assigns to him a divine status.⁸¹ Here we need to keep in mind that the character of Krishna does not appear anywhere in the ancient literature of India before the *Mahabharata*. Traditionally, mythical heroes have been elevated to a divine status and have been worshipped by Indians. Barath’s birth is preceded by prophecies declaring the coming of the “new Krishna” and from his childhood Barath begins to show signs of noesis; he is extraordinarily sensitive, perceptive and intuitive. The author aims at maintaining the tradition, and has therefore attempted to ascribe to Barath the qualities of a demi-God. But in keeping with the zeitgeist, Ghosh manoeuvres the character in an intellectual way by infusing certain extraordinary qualities such as that of clairaudience, which, if not considered “superhuman”, can definitely be termed as a “psychic ability”.

Barath is made the arbiter of the destiny not only of Barathpur and its people, but also of the characters he meets in England. He rightly prophecies the return of

⁸⁰ An ancient work in Sanskrit based on Advaita Philosophy. For further details refer to D.N. Bose’s English translation of the text – D.N. Bose, *The Yoga-Vasishtha Ramayana* (Calcutta: n.p., 1958).

⁸¹ Vishnu is a Hindu god and one among the Trinity who is worshipped as the creator of the universe. Many passages in the *Mahabharata* refer to Krishna as the incarnation of Vishnu. For details on the main arguments about the construction and development of the image of Krishna in Hindu mythology and folklore of India, please see the chapter titled “The Cult of Krishna” in Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 255-293.

Girbur, the son of Moolraj who was the royal guard of Barathpur; he keeps the request of his teacher Simpson and deliberately restrains from performing to the best of his knowledge and ability in the exam in Cambridge so that Simpson's son can outperform him; the romantic feelings between Nora and Barath are mutual but eventually Barath decides not to marry her and renounces the material world. Quite a number of situations are created in the narrative where Barath is made to control the actions – he manipulates and he becomes the prince of destiny.

Moreover, the political diplomacy in the mythical characters over the ages culminated in the character of Krishna in the *Mahabharata* who is worshipped by Hindus as one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Hence the author manipulates the social, political and religious significance of Krishna which appeals to the entire Hindu population of India irrespective of their regional identity; there is also no denying the fact that the image of Krishna is stronger than any other epic hero. Just as in the *Mahabharata* Krishna plays the key political figure manipulating political relations between the power-factions in the Battle of Kurukshetra to restore the kingdom of the righteous, Barath, the epitome of Indian virtues, plays the role of an active agent in negotiating with the imperial power for the Indian cause. In the *Mahabharata* Krishna decided the destiny of the Kauravas and Pandavas and eventually of Hastinapur; similarly, in *The Prince of Destiny* Barath decides the destiny of Nora and Suvona and of Barathpur.

In her essay “Epic and Novel in India”, Meenakshi Mukherjee argues that the use of intertextual references, “either playfully or ... to tether their novels to a larger, semimythical context,” so familiar in the works of postmodern English writers from the subcontinent actually dates back to the early decades of twentieth century.⁸² This can be confirmed by the title of *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna*. At this point it is important to bear in mind that “Krishna as he is depicted in the *Mahabharata* is the earliest Krishna. In it he is an epic hero, and no god, far less god.”⁸³ Nirad C. Chaudhuri believes that the portrayals of Krishna as god are “interpolations in the main narrative” of the *Mahabharata* and in support of his argument he refers to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's analytical essay “Krishnacharitra” (The Personality of Krishna) in which Krishna had been depicted

⁸² Mukherjee, “Epic and Novel in India”, 603.

⁸³ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 259.

as “the ideal man and hero”.⁸⁴ In *The Prince of Destiny* we find a representation of Krishna’s personality in concurrence with Bankim Chandra’s depiction of the epic hero, which is appropriated to Barath. His Krishna was “a respectable, righteous, didactic, ‘hard’ god, protecting the glories of Hinduism as a proper religion and preserving it as an internally consistent moral and cultural system” according to Ashis Nandy.⁸⁵ Ghosh has created Barath as an ideal man, a hero, with no godlike characteristics whatsoever, except his superhuman gift of clairaudience.

According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, “[t]he conscious use of myth for enhancing the effect of a contemporary situation is a device that the Indian novelist has emulated from the West but has naturalized it to the Indian soil.”⁸⁶ She believes that myths have proved to be an easy solution to the problem arising out of the heterogeneity of Indian population. However, Mukherjee argues that the earliest novelists in India opted for realistic representations by replacing the common tropes employed in traditional stories.⁸⁷ In order to understand the factors influencing the earliest authors and their works, I find it imperative to quote Mukherjee: “utilitarian impatience with mythic imagination and the dismissal of traditional iconography played a role in evolving a school of thinking in Indian art and literature in the late nineteenth century that was strongly mimetic in intention.”⁸⁸ There is no denying the fact that a penchant for realistic representation of life, to which contemporary English novels contributed, influenced Indian writers to write realist novels. But the mythic imagination and traditional iconography was not shelved altogether. The reason is pointed out by Mukherjee in the same essay: “the epics in India do not belong to the past alone – they are also part of the contemporary consciousness.”⁸⁹ Moreover, the mythic imagination and traditional iconography were purposely used to manipulate nationalist sentiments, as we find in the novels authored by Ghosh and Mitra.

Prototypes of Indian heroes

We have already discussed that the authors wanted to project two fictional states (assuming them to be India) ideally governed by two ideal rulers. While both

⁸⁴ Ibid. 260.

⁸⁵ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009) 24.

⁸⁶ Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction*, 31.

⁸⁷ Meenakshi Mukherjee, “Epic and Novel in India”, 596-7.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 597.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 603.

belonged to Indian royalty, Ghosh sought recourse to the epics in his construction of the Indian hero. Ghosh's idea of the Indian hero conforms to Rajat Kanta Ray's observation. In the discussion of Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay's novel *Dhatridevata* (1939), Ray argues that a new ideal of manhood was being defined in the course of the Swadeshi Movement.⁹⁰ He says, "A hero is no longer one who wields power and upholds the honour of the lineage, but one who sacrifices himself for a higher cause."⁹¹ He observes that the psychology of a young patriot who is ready to sacrifice his life for his own country entails a sense of isolation and alienation and that "it is a new conception based on asceticism and self-denial."⁹² Though it is with reference to M.K. Gandhi that Ray observes this, Sarath Kumar Ghosh identified this trend more than a decade before Gandhi emerged as the pan-Indian national hero. Thus Barath, sequestering himself from his ancestral lineage and then sacrificing himself for the cause of his country by setting off in search of true knowledge as an ascetic, becomes a perfect prototype of an Indian hero. However, Ghosh's final presentation of Barath's destiny as a "New Buddha" instead of a "New Krishna" "maintains a sense of the equal viability of a Buddhist tradition as a template for Indian identity" according to Alex Tickell. This revalidates Tickell's earlier claim that the various suggestions "force the 'New Krishna' into a literal identity crisis."⁹³ He believes that "Ghosh cannot allow Barath to transform himself fully into either a rebel-leader or Hindu-nationalist martyr, and the new Buddha provides an alternative figure of the prince (Gautama) as a uniquely apolitical sovereign."⁹⁴ Moreover, Ghosh is able to establish the worth and the practicality of the "middle path" from the Buddhist point of view as well as with regard to maintaining equilibrium in the colonial-national contradiction. The relevance of the idea of the "middle path" in the substantiation of the idea of internationalism in Indian nationalism professed through these literary works will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

⁹⁰ Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay (1898–1971), one of the eminent Bangla novelists, was a staunch follower of M.K. Gandhi and was an active participant in the freedom movement of India. *Dhatridevata* or *The Bearer God*, as it can be literally translated into Bangla, is a famous novel by Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay in which the plot develops around M.K. Gandhi's Non Co-operation Movement.

⁹¹ Rajat Kanta Ray, *Exploring Emotional History: Gender, Mentality and Literature in the Indian Awakening* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001) 175.

⁹² Ibid. 176.

⁹³ Tickell, "The Discovery of Aryavarta", 33.

⁹⁴ Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature*, 182.

The idea of the ideal hero, or the ideal leader to rule India, is the same for both Ghosh and Mitra. It is, however, interesting to note that Barath in *The Prince of Destiny* and Ram Singh in *Hindupore*, who are both meant to represent flawless rulers with perfect administrative skills and sympathetic understanding of the needs of their subjects, have had their training in the west. Both of them have had the experience of closely interacting with English people, have acquired enough knowledge to assess and question the rationality behind some of the customs practised by Indians and the English, and both have had the opportunity to appreciate and adopt the best of both cultures. Thus, it can be inferred that they considered it a prerequisite for modern Indian leaders to be educated in English (if not in England) and to adopt the best of both cultures in order to establish the best governance possible. However, the fact that Ghosh opposed the idea of militant Hindu nationalism, becomes clear when in *The Prince of Destiny* the organised rebellion by Vashista at the court of Barath fails. Ghosh was probably critiquing the revolutionary activities of the extremist nationalists such as those who belonged to the Anushilan Samiti and other secret societies.

From our discussion so far we have seen that the character of Barath as portrayed by Ghosh is larger than the hero of a novel. There is no denying the fact that *The Prince of Destiny* has epic dimensions. As we have already mentioned, Barath is supposed to decide the future not just of himself or his immediate family, but his nation. Naturally, while we read *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* side by side, Barath's character appears larger than that of Ram Singh. The basic attributes of both are the same, but Barath outweighs Ram Singh on account of the epic dimensions of Ghosh's novel. Moreover, Ram Singh, though portrayed as a perfect native prince, is not the protagonist of Mitra's novel. The focus is more on Lord Tara as he is clearly the hero. Thus, we need to focus our attention on Barath in order to understand the idea of the ideal hero or ruler of India as presented by Ghosh, and also a glimpse offered by Mitra.

Barath is not merely a character or a protagonist of a novel which rightfully claims to be an Indian fiction; he is the personification of an ideal – an ideal which is a consolidation of the positive attributes of the east and the west. He strives to be the point of reconciliation between the two polarities of thoughts and beliefs:

In India we love our deep conservatism; in England they cherish their national institutions. In that we are like brothers ... There is no gulf between England and India that cannot be bridged with a little understanding, a little truthfulness, a little forgiveness – on both sides.⁹⁵

In the narrative Vashista represents the orthodox old *pundit* biased in favour of the ancient customs and prejudices and Barath stands as a polymath who is capable of assessing the rationality of the archaic and the modern, of the oriental and the occidental, of the Indian and the English. This was how Ghosh wanted Indian princes to be imagined by the westerners – as epitomes of excellence and personifications of perfection.

The standpoint of the author which finds expression in his letters is similar to the way he portrays Barath. Barath is an Indian who travels to England for the purpose of higher education. He is received by Ellen, who is his foster mother during his stay. Thus the author shows how both the east and the west offer him parental care and pedagogical guidance. The author constructs the otherness of the west and its people through the narration. Through Barath's observation of the socio-cultural pattern of English life, the author constructs the "occident" which is "at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible," thus "lessening" the distance between the coloniser and the colonised.⁹⁶

According to Anthony D. Smith, nationalism can be viewed as "the resolution of an 'identity crisis' of the intellectuals". He believes that this identity crisis actually springs from "challenges posed to traditional religion and society by the 'scientific state'."⁹⁷ At this point we need to remember Partha Chatterjee's argument once again, that anti-colonial nationalists create the outer and the inner domain, of which the latter is related to the spiritual culture. The east is represented as superior to the west in spiritual culture and therefore it is used as an essential trope in the construction of the cultural identity in anti-colonial nationalism. Ghosh and Mitra, just like other nationalist intellectuals, were resolving their probable identity crisis (according to Smith) by facing the challenge posed to their traditional religion and society by the colonial state. They in turn depended on their traditional religion,

⁹⁵ Ibid. 366.

⁹⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994) 71.

⁹⁷ Smith, *National Identity*, 96.

customs and spiritual culture and asserted the same as the foundation of their unique identity.

Intimations of natural wealth and remembrance of past glory

Apart from the revival of history and reference to myths, the remembrance of India's past glory played an important role in the assertion of national pride. This act of remembrance of past glory began with the intimations of the indigenous wealth of India by Ghosh in *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*. Turning to the east, when Ghosh attempts to offer the intellectual classes of Britain through his literary works "a true presentment of the romantic side of Eastern life, as yet unknown to the West,"⁹⁸ the treasures that he claims as exclusively eastern are categorically Indian.

Verily I will fetch [the diamond] from Golconda's womb and place it upon your brow. Would you be clothed in royal robes? Verily I will adorn your beauty with Dacca's "evening dew," that, invisible, will float around your form over the "stars-and-moons" of Dacca's⁹⁹ loveliest brocade. Would you the jewels of Jaipur hang around your neck, and Delhi's "enchanted garland" upon your bosom rest? Would you the "forest flowers" of Cuttack mingle with your hair, and Sakuntala's lost ring slip on your wedded hand? Even these, dearest, and all earth besides shall be yours to command.¹⁰⁰

Here is a list of items exclusively found in colonial India. The literal expression of wealth is very similar to that occurring in Victorian novels. Elleke Boehmer has observed that the "[e]mpire entered the nineteenth-century novel chiefly as commodity."¹⁰¹ She cites the examples of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855), William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847-8) and Charles Dickens' *Dombey and Son* (1846-8) in which the wealth and plentitude of the Empire found literal expression. Britain was considered to be the ultimate destination of all the riches of the world. "[L]ands beyond the seas would manifest themselves in the form of products," in the form of food, clothes, jewellery, as well as exotic items and items

⁹⁸ Ibid. 198.

⁹⁹ Dacca or Dhaka, presently the capital of Bangladesh, was a part of undivided British India before 1947.

¹⁰⁰ Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, 201.

¹⁰¹ Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 26.

of luxury.¹⁰² One such unknown land beyond the seas and beyond the knowledge of most British people was India. Ghosh assigns an identity to such a land manifested in the form of products and offers a counterpart to such Victorian novels as mentioned above. However, the fundamental difference between the two lies in the fact that whereas Britain is portrayed as a land where the riches from all over the world are gathered, India is presented as the “exotic” land which in actuality is the source of wealth. Through the course of the narrative he gradually becomes explicit. His juxtaposition of two antithetical cultural frameworks compared on the basis of a broad categorization as that of east and the west is reduced specifically to England and India.

Both the narratives *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* and *Hindupore: A Peep behind the Indian Unrest* offer lavish descriptions of Indian royalty. Coincidentally both of them exploit the historic legacy of the Rajputs to represent India’s glorious past. Elaborate portrayals of royal grandeur are employed to draw attention to the enormous wealth which the kings of the Indian provinces had. They also depict the artistic excellence that was reached by the various dynasties at a time when there was no sign of comparable western accomplishments, and which is celebrated today as producing antique masterpieces. The literary representation of extravagant artistry in the architecture and decorations of the royal palaces are meant to satisfy the curiosity of the western reader regarding the splendour of the Indian royalty. At the same time it is also a manifestation of the sense of pride in their own country that both the authors harboured in spite of being anglophiles. Through portrayals of the two utopian kingdoms ruled by almost flawless rulers in the narratives, both the authors attempt to present to the west an impeccable picture of provincial monarchy practised in India. This is, however, “the basic deception and self-deception practised by nationalism” according to Ernest Gellner, where a high-culture is imposed on a society substituting the original “complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves.”¹⁰³ Gellner’s subsequent observation that nationalism replaces the high-culture not with the previous local low culture but with an invented local high culture of its own finds validation in the later novels published in the 1920s, which we shall be discussing in the next chapter.

¹⁰² Ibid. 26.

¹⁰³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) 57.

Countering the western propaganda of Indian pusillanimity

According to Anthony D. Smith, “every nationalism requires a touchstone of virtue and heroism, to guide and give meaning to the tasks of regeneration. ... Heroes provide models of virtuous conduct, their deeds of valour inspire faith and courage in their oppressed and decadent descendants.”¹⁰⁴ What is remarkable in the portrayal of virtue and heroism is the specific repetition of the Rajput aristocracy in the novels of both Ghosh and Mitra, two Bangla-speaking English authors whose connection with the Rajput tradition does not seem very obvious. Hence the politics behind the selection of the Rajput legacy needs analysis as it shall lead to the rationale which encouraged the construction of the Indian hero as Rajput royals. Long before the publication of these two novels, Bangla literature had a large repository of poems, novels and dramas where Rajput traditions were celebrated and glory was sung to the legends of their valour and chivalry. The main provocation which incited the Bangalee littérateurs of the late nineteenth century to manipulate the Rajput theme as a necessary trope was Colonel James Tod’s *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* published in two volumes in 1829 and 1831. Though it was the first source which aided the dissemination of the historical past of Rajasthan throughout India, on Bengal it had a more serious impact. The English-educated intelligentsia of Bengal, who considered it incumbent upon native Indians to write their own history, began to project the history of the Rajputs as the prototype of Indian history. James Mill’s *The History of British India* (1817), which professed the “order and justice” of the British rule as opposed to “despotism and anarchy” of pre-colonial India, was countered by projecting the glorious history of the Rajputs by the late nineteenth-century authors, and subsequently by Ghosh and Mitra who presented Bharatpur and Hindupore as versions of the utopia governed by the Rajput rulers. Moreover the colonizer’s account of the history of Bengal was of “defeat and subjugation” and “[t]he absence of popular warrior figures in the history of Bengal made it necessary for them to look towards other groups of people whom the colonial rulers had labelled ‘martial races’, specially the Rajputs and Marathas.”¹⁰⁵ Though Meenakshi Mukherjee claims with reference to the Bangla novels of the late nineteenth century that Tod’s annals “became responsible for creating a militant Hindu nationalism in Bengal where the

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 65.

¹⁰⁵ Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain*, 156.

ground realities were very different from Rajasthan,” the politics of using the Rajput trope by Ghosh and Mitra was somewhat different.¹⁰⁶ Their ambivalent position and diasporic experience was supportive to Hindu nationalism but not militant nationalism, which we shall discuss in detail in Chapter 3.

Sarath Kumar Ghosh’s repertoire of literary works contains certain elementary tropes which are repeated as a refrain in almost all his works one after the other. From his series of adventure stories, which were published in *Pearson’s Magazine* and *Harper’s Monthly*, to his full-length novels, his obsession with the tradition of royalty in India carves a unique pattern in his entire range of literary production. Treasure-hunting by successfully overcoming life-threatening and apparently insurmountable hurdles, along with the application of the ancient traditional wisdom of science, magic and martial arts, is the basic theme of *The Verdict of the Gods* (1905). This novel is a compilation of some of the stories from his adventure series, structured into a compact narrative format. It deals with the popular theme of a princess falling in love with a commoner who has to face maleficent trials and tribulations to prove his gallantry and win acceptance into royalty. Gallantry is presented as one of the most important virtues.

A very interesting trope which has been employed by both Ghosh and Mitra, in order to establish the gallantry of Indian men, is the sport of hunting. Dense forests and mountains inhabited by wild animals and birds are spread over extensive areas in the geographical terrain of the Indian subcontinent. As a result Indian myths, epics, historical narratives and folklore abound in hunting expeditions by kings and princes and also by tribal people and vagabonds. Hunting is an ancient universal sport which is mentioned in the earliest literary resource of India, the Vedas. All these references to the sport of hunting since the age of the Vedas down to the Mughal period affirm Indians’ age-old knowledge of the technique of hunting. This particular trope reconfirms the indomitable courage and prowess of the warriors and kings. But the way in which the authors use hunting as a means of establishing the chivalry of Indians, by portraying the English hunters as cutting sorry figures in the expeditions, bears a deep design. If we remember Meenakshi Mukherjee’s observations on effeminacy as discussed earlier in this chapter,¹⁰⁷ hunting is definitely another trope which the authors purposely used to prove that Indians were not weaklings. In

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 166.

¹⁰⁷ Refer to footnote 59.

addition, the heroic deeds of historical or mythical heroes needed to be asserted all the more to inspire and motivate the young nationalists of the age.

Mitra narrates the hunting expedition of Colonel Ironside. This is an amusing story enjoyed by the young prince and Poltu, the young boy who looks after the much prized elephant of Ram Singh, called Sultan. The English hunters, according to the author, were fond of exhibiting their heroism – for them, India provided ample opportunity. The dense forests of India containing wild animals such as snakes, tigers and elephants, matched the oriental archetype as imagined by Englishmen and provided ample opportunity for them to prove their chivalry. Everything was designed as per requirement – traps set for the tigers by tying some animals to trees in the forest in sure positions where it would not go unnoticed by the hungry beast, the news of the killing of animals spread throughout the neighbourhood creating a panic, the tiger spotted as a man-eater requiring immediate capture, and so on. In this entire process the native chiefs and villagers had to be bribed and the most obsequious ones proved most effective, securing their positions by assisting their English superiors in such theatrical expeditions. After a successful expedition in which the native people managed to kill a supposed man-eater, the Englishmen made sure it was reported in the local newspapers. Mitra gives an example of how such news was fabricated:

The next morning the *Junglepore Times* had a “special telegram” from “our sporting correspondent”:

“At 4.45 this afternoon Colonel Ironside shot a man-eater, who has been a terror to the poor villagers for some time past. He used a Lee-Mitford, and, at considerable personal risk, shot the tiger within forty feet of him.”

... The tiger was *not* a man-eater, the rifle that *killed* the tiger was not Colonel Ironside’s. There was no personal risk, because, though within forty feet of the tiger, he was forty feet in the air, beyond the reach of any tiger.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 133.

This satirical note on the poor hunting skills and the failure of the Englishmen on Indian hunting grounds was only to reassert the prowess of the Indians which the Englishmen deigned to acknowledge.

In a glance we shall take a look at how William Rice, serving in the British regiments, has an absolutely contrasting perception of the hunting skills of Indians in his memoirs published in 1857. Rice mentions that in some parts of their hunting routes they were not offered co-operation or assistance by the local people as they were afraid of the native chiefs who, he believed, “were very jealous of our coming to hunt over their districts.”¹⁰⁹ Narrating the method adopted by the “insignificant chiefs” in hunting tigers he explains that they followed the age-old custom of building raised platforms from which the chief used to hunt; and the retinue fanned out in files into the forest beating drums in order to smoke out the tiger. This tactic of the “conspicuous”, “hookah-smoking” party “dressed in white or gaudy-coloured clothes” seemed ridiculous to him.¹¹⁰ He says quite mockingly, “occasionally they do indeed manage to kill the tiger, but rarely does he die unrevenged” and that

these native grandees have a great horror of a blank day, so, to insure sport at short distances from their places, the tigers are, in many places, actually preserved, quite as carefully as any game in England, in spite of the havoc they commit on the surrounding country, and no one is allowed to assist in killing them.¹¹¹

It is evident that Rice makes an absolutely contrasting observation with regard to the legend of hunting in India which dates back to the Vedic ages, thereby revealing either his ignorance, misconception, or perhaps his egotistic jealousy of the hunting expertise of native Indians. Such deprecation from the English perhaps instigated Mitra to present a contrasting picture to restore honour to the gallantry of Indians purposely unacknowledged by the Englishmen.

Mitra’s novel *Hindupore* opens with the introduction of English travellers on board *Nur Jahan* (the ship) on their way to India for different purposes. Amongst them Mr. and Mrs. Ochterlony’s intention is to experience a tiger-shoot as Mrs. Ochterlony wants to prove that her hunting skills are better than her husband’s. The

¹⁰⁹ William Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India – Being An Account of Hunting Experiences On Foot In Rajpootana, During The Hot Seasons, From 1850 to 1854* (London: n.p., 1857) 28.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 28.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 29.

three Englishmen and Mrs. Ochterlony join the hunting retinue led by Raja Ram Singh. However, the English lady could probably never have dreamt of such a wild expedition; her much boasted bravado shrinks in front of the tiger and she finally loses consciousness. The tiger is finally killed by Lord Tara, thereby increasing the chance of his acceptance into the royal family, as an Englishman sympathetic to native subjects. Later on we come to know that Princess Kamala was anxious about Lord Tara's performance in the hunting expedition as it played an important role in deciding Tara's eligibility as a suitor to a Rajput princess. It is his exhibition of chivalry and of course his slaying of the tiger finally that wins him a permanent place in the heart of the princess as well as that of the royal family. Thus hunting is not just a trivial sport to engage in, merely for the purpose of selfish entertainment or exhibition of individual skills. By acquiring the skills of the art of hunting one fulfils the qualitative criteria of a particular class required to gain recognition and acceptance by its members. The chivalry of an Englishman is judged by the Rajputs. This is how Mitra counters the common perception amongst westerners of the effete and pusillanimous nature of the Indians.

In *The Prince of Destiny*, Ghosh not only tries to establish the gallantry of Indian princes, he makes a relevant observation on the basic difference of attitude between the Indians and the westerners so far as the "laws of chivalry" are concerned. Koikai, Prince Barath's mother, expects her son to be a great warrior, a warrior not of the contemporary wars but a traditional warrior as in the age of the *Mahabharata*. To Koikai's mother, "the ideal warrior was the ideal man".¹¹² The author then mentions the "laws of chivalry" which apply even to the hunting of wild animals in Indian tradition in contrast with the western notion of chivalry.

the only war to-day like unto the wars of old in which the Princes of India may participate is the war against the wild beasts of the jungle that do harm to peaceful men. Here, even though the foe be a wild beast, the laws of chivalry may prevail. Why? Because, unlike a human foe, the beast, though savage, is incapable of treachery: for you know, or should know, that it is not properly dead till the skin is hanging in your tent. The average English sportsman, after chasing foxes and shooting pigeons, may have the luck to go to India for a

¹¹² Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 65.

winter's tiger-hunting as the guest of a Rajah. Then he learns what true sport is – notwithstanding his supercilious ridicule of the Frenchman in sport.¹¹³

What the author necessarily implies here is that the idea of chivalry in a strictly Indian sense has an ethical dimension which the western concept lacks. Hunting for the sake of entertainment is not considered a chivalrous action. It is only when human beings need to be protected from the attacks of savage beasts and the latter need to be hunted down that the activity is considered chivalrous. Moreover, for the westerners the sport of “chasing foxes” or “shooting pigeons” makes it a frivolous game compared to Indian standards, as hunting tigers in itself is a serious affair. The description of the phases of hunting in this novel, beginning with preparations and continuing until the final action, bears a remarkable resemblance to Blochmann's translation “Of Hunting” from *Ain-i-Akbari*. The final kill which followed from the tiger's clawing at the elephant's head in Ghosh's narrative is identical to one of the tiger hunting incidents of Emperor Akbar in *Ain-i-Akbari*.¹¹⁴ This in a way proves the historical authenticity of Ghosh's description in his novel and refutes William Rice's observations as already discussed.

In the hunting expedition of Barath's father in *The Prince of Destiny*, the king is accompanied by seven Englishmen who are serving the imperial government. After the wounded tiger escapes into the forest, a herd of buffaloes are brought in from the village to track the tiger and kill it. The Englishmen want to witness this part of the game but their ignorance of the subtle tricks arrest their movements and they cannot leave their shelter, being surrounded by enraged buffaloes. Finally a village urchin who has followed the trail in search of his buffaloes comes to their rescue. With this incident the author tries to establish the sport of tiger-hunting as particularly native to India and it dare not be attempted if the hunter is unaware of the intricacies of the techniques which only the indigenous hunter knows. The valour of an Indian man, as opposed to an Englishman, is thus established.

Countering the colonialist representation of Rathayatra and reclaiming its status

¹¹³ Ibid. 66.

¹¹⁴ Abul-Al-Fazal, *Ain-i-Akbari*, (trans.) H. Blochmann (s.l.: G.H. Rouse, 1873) 283.

We have already mentioned Anthony D. Smith's observation that nationalism can be viewed as "the resolution of an 'identity crisis'" that springs from "challenges posed to traditional religion and society by the 'scientific state'."¹¹⁵ In the following sections we will discuss how such challenges are countered by the authors in their novels with the purpose of asserting their nationalness, in this case, Indianness.

The Chariot-Festival of Orissa is the main event around which the plot of *Hindupore* evolves. Siddha Mohana Mitra introduces a pilgrimage to the Jagannath Temple in Orissa. Rathayatra, or the Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath, the history of which goes back six hundred years, has been purposely selected by the author to represent a particular culture of India where religion transcends the boundaries of exclusivism and the venue of the festival becomes the epitome of the social paradigm of India. The description of the temple and the festival in the writings of early British authors perhaps called for a counter-argument by the author. Mitra writes that Ram Singh's objective was to show the representatives of the Church of Rome and the Protestant Church how the missionaries have unjustly libelled the sacred Jagannath for centuries: "They have always told good people in the West that human beings are sacrificed under the wheels of the Car of Jagannath."¹¹⁶ There is historical evidence to prove that this allegation by Ram Singh was not groundless.

William Burton, who visited Puri as early as 1633, described the temple of Lord Jagannath in Orissa as "the house of satan" where the priests offered sacrifices to Lord Jagannath daily and imagined the idol in "the shape of a serpent with seven heads".¹¹⁷ In 1806, Claudius Buchanan, a chaplain from Calcutta, found the giant Jagannath idol to be "the monster holding high carnival".¹¹⁸ Later in *Christian Researches in Asia*, a religious tract published from England, he asserted that "a record of Juggernaut would be a roll written within and without the blood, obscenity and woe."¹¹⁹ These initial misunderstandings and interpretations of the customs of the Jagannath cult was carried on by later missionaries such as James Peggs and W.B. Laurie, and historians such as J.W. Kaye. They castigated Lord Jagannath as the seat of the Empire of Moloch, and vigorously advocated severance of any relation between the British rulers with the Jagannath cult. Thus, Mitra felt the

¹¹⁵ Smith, *National Identity*, 96.

¹¹⁶ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 94-5.

¹¹⁷ P.T. Nair (ed.), *Burton's Visit to Lord Jagannatha 350 Years Ago* (Calcutta: n.p., 1985) 68.

¹¹⁸ J.W. Kaye, *Christianity in India: An Historical Narrative* (London: n.p., 1859) 37.

¹¹⁹ N.G. Cassels, *Religion and Pilgrim Tax under the Company Raj* (New Delhi: n.p., 1987) ix.

necessity to reclaim the glory of the cult by endowing it with a prominent status in the religious/cultural paradigm of India. The Christian missionaries, as we have observed, did not possess any comprehensive knowledge whatsoever of this cult, and deprecated it as sheer idolatry and forced the British government to withdraw every connection with the temple and its administration. The eventual re-establishment of the god-king nexus in the province of Orissa and the political hold of the British over the state added to the political significance of the religious festival.

The introduction of the Rathayatra into the narrative has also been devised by the author to focus upon the receptiveness of the Hindu religion and the accommodating quality of the Indians. The temple stands for the integration of all castes and classes throughout the country by assimilation. The teeth of Buddha, which are said to have been brought to Puri, remain preserved in the temple. With the idea of Buddha being one of the incarnations of Vishnu and Puri being selected as a special abode, the temple symbolized the centre for socio-cultural unity of the country. This gained a greater dimension when Buddhism was spread beyond India and Jagannath came to stand for the unifying figure of the entire human race. Another interesting custom was that the king of Puri was made to sweep the road and clear the path for the chariot, thereby implying the dignity of all kinds of labour and the equalization of status. Subhakanta Behera writes:

The Ratha-yatra is a typical example of a festival ritual which, by way of endowing people with a sense of personal identity, forges a collective consciousness of commitment and belongingness. It allows everybody to approach Lord Jagannath in his own way as there is no structured mode of worship nor any priestly control over the humanity-divinity communion.¹²⁰

I have already mentioned in the introduction that the novels with which the thesis is concerned with, and especially the ones authored by Ghosh and Mitra, represent the idea of Hindu nationalism, which called for an appreciation of the ancient traditions of India that were essentially Hindu. The Chariot-Festival of Orissa was therefore a wise choice by Mitra to use as a traditional icon of Indianness in order to indicate a strategic pan-Asiatic internationalism and also a possible threat of insurrection.

¹²⁰ Subhakanta Behera, *Construction of an Identity Discourse: Oriya Literature and the Jagannath Cult* (New Delhi: n.p., 2002) 147.

People not only from all over India but from various parts of Asia gathered together during the festival as the Jagannath cult has been liberal to sectarian beliefs amongst Hindus.

In *Hindupore*, this festival has the central position in the plot. It is referred to from the very first chapter where Celitia Scott is said to have been appointed as the Zenana doctor for the women pilgrims who walk all the way to Puri from various corners of India. It is against the backdrop of this festival that the original identity of the Anglo-Indian policeman Charles Hunt is revealed, after which he commits suicide. It is in here that Princess Kamala's dream is fulfilled and she gets married to Lord Tara. Ram Singh explains the importance of this festival as the only site in India where no discriminations are made on the grounds of one's caste and race. Hence he decides to marry his niece at Puri as it is a marriage between a Hindu and a Christian and hence has a strong risk of being vehemently opposed by the orthodox priests and Brahmin scholars. This festival is the vortex which draws towards it people from all castes and all kinds of economic status who are eventually stripped back to their single identity of being Hindus. The custom of sweeping the roads by the king gets mentioned in the sequence of the "Raja of Jagannath's" visit to welcome his English guest personally.

He told how a former Raja, an ancestor of his, named Purushottama Deva, had been refused the hand of the Princess of Conjevaram on the ground of the Orissa dynasty holding the hereditary office of sweeper to the Lord Jagannath. Purushottam indignantly sent his Prime Minister with an army into the southern country to avenge the insult, and the Princess was brought forth at the ensuing great Festival of Jagannath, and presented to the King while he was publicly performing his lowly office before the god.

The marriage immediately followed.¹²¹

Thus the narrative deploys the festival of Puri as a technique in the cohesive representation of Indian society. The king and the poor, the high and the low, the native and the alien, are all brought together and everyone plays his individual role in the scheme of events. The Chariot-Festival, with its uniqueness, is manipulated as

¹²¹ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 245.

emblematic of the social paradigm of India – a land which celebrates its ancient tradition and culture; a space which accommodates everyone irrespective of race, culture or religion; a neutral society which offers equal treatment to one and all.

Criticism of colonial governance and Kipling's representation of India

Both Ghosh and Mitra's purpose was to prove through their novels that Indian kings, if educated enough to keep abreast of the scientific and technological advancements of the west, would prove to be perfect rulers. Barathpur and Hindupore therefore served as fictional spaces which they projected an India as it could be if governed by able rulers like Barath or Ram Singh.

In order to point out the flaws of the British governance, Ghosh does not broach the issues of exploitation of the colonial subjects; instead, quite diplomatically, he draws the attention of the readers to the victims of the irreconcilable inequality at the heart of the British empire. He takes an opportunity to expose the drawbacks of English administration by critiquing its negligence of the lower stratum of society. Barath meets a woman who asks for some money in exchange for a bunch of violets on one of the busy streets of London. Though Barath is warned against indiscriminate almsgiving, he becomes curious about the woman. Knowing of her distressed condition, Barath is keen to verify whatever she says about herself and decides to accompany her. To his amazement, not very far from Kensington Palace, he discovers what he could never before have conceived of – a London slum. His curiosity gaining momentum all the more, he explores all the back streets and alleys that house the impoverished population of the city. He finds out the indescribably wretched condition in which people spent their days. And all these settlements are in close proximity to the wealthy areas of the city where the exhibition of opulence was the norm. Ghosh provides a long description of the London slums. His purpose has probably been to show that even in the heart of the greatest empire that history has ever seen, and within the splendour and glory of opulence, poverty exists. Ghosh is therefore successful in pointing out the failure of the richest and the most powerful of all nations to provide the basic requirements of its own people, and that the administration of the British government was not beyond criticism.

So far, we have been discussing the various elements that both Ghosh and Mitra use in their narratives in order to establish certain important aspects of Indian

culture. We have seen how the epics and a religious festival have been used as important tropes in the construction of Indianness; how the physical prowess of Indians has been established through hunting episodes; and also, how the legacy of the Indian kings has been deployed through myth and history to establish the ability of the Indian rulers to rule. We have also discussed how the social reforms, which became essential parts of the nationalist agenda, have been dealt with in the narratives. Apart from these, an extremely prominent nationalist attitude, which finds expression in both Ghosh and Mitra's novels, is the vehement criticism of Kipling's representation of India. Through the criticism of Kipling's representation of India, which the authors could not accept as true, they were trying to revive their lost dignity as representatives of India. This was a new parameter of national consciousness identified by the authors.

We have already seen in the preface to *The Prince of Destiny*, and we will also observe in the foreword to *My Brother's Face* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji, which we shall be discussing in the next chapter, that these authors emphasized their Indian origin. Representation of India by Indians, as opposed to that by westerners or Anglo-Indians, was what they considered to be unique about their literary works. "The discomforts of India [were] relentlessly detailed in Anglo-Indian writings ... [and] [s]elf-pity was amongst the principal ingredients of Anglo-Indian memoirs."¹²² Benita Parry is not sure whether other Anglo-Indian writers imitated Kipling or Kipling imitated the prevailing self-representations. Whatever the case might have been, the Indian authors considered it necessary to counter the representation of India by Anglo-Indian authors, among whom Kipling was the most prominent representative.

In one of the letters written by Ghosh to King Edward VII, the former claims his greater capability in writing Indian fiction compared to Kipling, owing to his Indian origin: "The press in England is generous in any case being good enough to point out that, unlike Kipling, I am an Indian writer of Indian fiction."¹²³ According to Bart Moore-Gilbert, the greatest antipathy towards Kipling held amongst the authors of nationalist sympathy was indeed that of Ghosh as expressed in *The Prince of Destiny*. He quotes the following section from the novel and believes that this is

¹²² Benita Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries: India in the British Imagination, 1880-1930* (London: Verso, 1998) 54.

¹²³ Unpublished letters of Sarath Kumar Ghosh. Check IOR/ L/PJ/6/610, File 1670A at the British Library.

the earliest example of its kind. Though Moore-Gilbert notices Ghosh's restraint in not mentioning the name of Kipling explicitly anywhere in the novel, he is certain that in the following lines quoted from *The Prince of Destiny*, it is none other than Kipling who is the "recurrent object of [Ghosh's] biting authorial commentary."¹²⁴

The evil would have been less had it been confined strictly to politics. But an English writer arose, a mere youth, who wrote stories in the English papers in India heaping contempt upon the people of Bengal generally, as being the prime movers in the political agitation ... Still the evil was not irreparable: the Indian writers and speakers kept their eyes on the press of England for hope and support. But just then the youth came out of India like a meteor, and burst upon the English horizon. He became the prophet of England, aye, of Europe ... In the press of England the condemnation of Bengal was severe indeed.¹²⁵

Moore-Gilbert is of opinion that the above lines are evocative of Barath's denunciation of Kipling as

"the banjo poet' ... the flag-waver ... the music-hall buffoon ... the chest-thumping imperialist" and supports his friend Naren's complaint: "For twenty years ['the banjo-poet'] and his hundred imitators who write of India by his inspiration, have abused us and insulted us most deeply."¹²⁶

Thus, from Ghosh's letter and Moore-Gilbert's argument there remains no doubt that Sarath Kumar Ghosh was extremely critical of Rudyard Kipling's works and considered himself to be in a stronger position than Kipling with regard to the ability of presenting Indian life through literature.

Though we find Ghosh emphasizing his Indian origin in order to convince the western people of his better grasp of Indian life and culture as compared to Kipling,

¹²⁴ Bart Moore-Gilbert, "I am going to rewrite Kipling's Kim": Kipling and Postcolonialism', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 2002, 37:39, 40.

¹²⁵ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 139-40.

¹²⁶ Moore-Gilbert, "I am going to rewrite Kipling's Kim": Kipling and Postcolonialism', pg. 40. His considering Kipling as the representative of the bigoted imperialists is quite justified as the latter describes himself in "The Song of the Banjo-Poet" as 'I – the war-drum of the White Man round the world!' See Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny* 168-9, 223 and 560 for the sections quoted by Moore-Gilbert.

he also shows that one's nativity is always not essential for having a sympathetic attitude towards a different race and culture. The portrayal of the Victorian poet Francis Thompson (1859-1907) in *The Prince of Destiny* is therefore intended to present a contrast with Kipling. Though there are quite a few autobiographical elements in *The Prince of Destiny*, and there is substantial evidence which testify their acquaintance, it is hard to determine whether the conversations between Ghosh and Thompson (as narrated in the novel) are a fact or a figment of the imagination of the former.¹²⁷

Francis Thompson led a pathetic life. With a frail constitution he grew even weaker due to his opium-addiction. Bereft of monetary support, disowned by his family and abandoned by his friends, Thompson struggled only to surrender to his fate in the end. Without the acknowledgement and appreciation of his poetry by some enthusiasts like Coventry Patmore, George Meredith and Thompson's publisher, Thompson's poetic genius, perhaps, would have been buried forever.¹²⁸

This is exactly how Thompson is portrayed in two of the chapters ("Francis Thompson" and "Thompson's 'Parsifal'") in *The Prince of Destiny*. Through the narrative Ghosh gives a very brief and precise account of the life of Thompson. It is also evident that Ghosh was ardently passionate not only about Thompson the poet, but also Thompson the man. Alex Tickell refers to the introduction of Francis Thompson in the narrative as "Ghosh's anachronistically postmodern technique".¹²⁹

¹²⁷ In *The Letters of Francis Thompson* (1969) edited by John Evangelist Walsh, we find that Ghosh is mentioned in one of the letters by the poet to Wilfrid Meynell. In a note by Walsh following Thompson's letter written in January 1901, we get to know that Ghosh was Thompson's "fellow-lodger at 28 Elgin Avenue, as well as an acquaintance of the Meynells." In drawing a contrast with his wretched situation he mentions Ghosh: "For the reverse of the medal, you have Ghosh who has just been promised £220 odd for a series of tales..." John Evangelist Walsh, *The Letters of Francis Thompson* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1969) 220-1.

¹²⁸ Wilfrid Meynell was the editor of *Merry England*, a periodical which first published Thompson's essay. We get to know from the letters published in *The Life of Francis Thompson* (1913) by Everard Meynell and *The Letters of Francis Thompson* (1969) by John Evangelist Walsh that Sarath Kumar Ghosh also visited the Meynells. In *The Life of Francis Thompson* (1913), Everard Meynell mentions Sarath Kumar Ghosh in a footnote with reference to a critical analysis of Thompson's poem "Orient Ode". Everard writes: "F.T. had a theory of the solar existence that did not stop short, with Science, at the measurement of gases and their density. 'It has,' Mr. Ghosh tells me he said, 'a life of its own, analogous to the life of the heart, periodic in its manifestations and --,' but here Francis stopped. 'To Western ears it will sound ridiculous,' he said, and was silent. In vain Mr. Sarath Kumar Ghosh asserted his own Eastern aptitude for such speculation. Francis grimly repeated his excommunication, and Mr. Ghosh, conscious of a frock-coat and a great command of the English idiom, was half-convinced of its justness." Everard Meynell, *The Life of Francis Thompson* (London: Burns and Oats Ltd., 1913) 211-12.

¹²⁹ Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature*, 177.

Francis Thompson features in *The Prince of Destiny* as a stranger who Barath meets on a train. As soon as the latter sets his eyes upon him, he feels a magnetic attraction: “the lustre of those eyes, intensified by the contrast of the sunken cheeks and emaciated face, he had never seen in England before.”¹³⁰ The narrator describes his appearance which betrayed his state of poise. Barath likens this composure to that of the young Italian priest Father Zapponi, who he met on the ship on his way to England and to that of a Hindu visionary. Thus, through the delineation of the appearance and character of Francis, the author again constructs an ideal – a visionary with a spirit which cannot be reduced to religious or cultural or national denominations. He writes: “For one thing, it showed that East and West do meet – when the contact happens to be on the highest intellectual plane, not the lowest.”¹³¹ It is beyond doubt that here Ghosh is implicitly critiquing Kipling’s views. The above line was a direct retort to Kipling’s famous line “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” from his poem “The Ballad of East and West”. It is evident that Ghosh here misreads Kipling in a way and his judgment of Kipling’s works is highly influenced by his ego as an Indian writing on Indian subjects as opposed to a non-Indian whose works on India were more celebrated than his.

Ghosh painted an extremely palpable sketch of Francis Thompson in the narrative, but there are very few words ascribed to Thompson in the conversation between Barath and the poet. We have seen above that Ghosh and Thompson were closely acquainted with each other and thus the probability of a conversation between them, as we shall be discussing below, cannot be totally ruled out. It is here that Ghosh adopted the technique of creative non-fiction. It occurs to Barath that “an accurate yet truly poetic translation” of Kalidasa’s famous Sanskrit drama *Sakuntala* containing “essence of domestic ideals in India” is bound to appeal to British readers.¹³² Thus he begs the poet to accept his proposition of translating the work so that “the British public read it, and thus understand our most cherished ideals. That will serve to remove a mountain of misconception between Great Britain and India.”¹³³

¹³⁰ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 181.

¹³¹ Ibid. 182.

¹³² Ibid. 295.

¹³³ Ibid. 296.

The portrayal of Thompson's dispositions and the narrator's impression of Thompson disturb the clear-cut categorization of the particularities of the East and West.

though he was wholly an Englishman in the body, he was partly an Eastern in imagination. ... Thompson indeed learnt that Barath was not wholly Eastern in mind, but in part Western, and in that found the tie to be closer than ever, for the mind of each was thus mutually supplementary.¹³⁴

The author constructs the otherness of the west and its people through the narration. Although "the distinction of centre and periphery" was effectively operational in the socio-cultural matrix, "cultural divisions began to grow a little blurred."¹³⁵ Alex Tickell rightly observes that this inclusion of "a real literary figure [as Francis Thompson] in [his] fictional narrative asserts [Ghosh's] cultural credentials here, as well as refiguring a colonial-colonized alliance through the motif of literary partnership."¹³⁶ Moreover, this friendship with Thompson, and Ghosh's proposal that he translate a classical piece from Sanskrit literature, was mainly inspired by Thompson's ascetical composure. The impression, that "he was partly an Eastern in imagination" played a vital role. In these descriptions of the poet is an implicit comparison with Kipling. Kipling's supercilious attitude and his objectionable portrayals of India were critiqued by Ghosh on the basis of his non-nativity. By considering Thompson fit to translate Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* Ghosh probably wanted to show that it is not a person's nativity but his mental disposition which makes him a greater poet or an artist.

Conclusion

The major characters in *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* personify certain ideas or ideals. Western-educated, yet Indian-at-heart, kings and princes governing their provinces flawlessly; British officers respectful towards Indian cultures and sympathetic to Indian causes; western-educated young men promoting social reforms; orthodox members of the Indian society critiquing everything western and

¹³⁴ Ibid. 190.

¹³⁵ Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 102.

¹³⁶ Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian –English Literature*, 177.

resisting the abolition of repressive norms of the society; such are the stock characters which are deployed by the authors in order to convey their message in form of the novels. Thus, to English readers and also for the English-educated Indian readers these novels could not appeal by the virtue of literary excellence as judged by the standards of European novels written during the Victorian era when “the novel reached the meridian of its power in the hands of a brilliant group of writers ... [when] in the bringing about of reform the novel took a prominent place.”¹³⁷ This might answer the question as to why these authors, who were exposed to English literature and English life and culture to such an extent, and with such an unquestionable command over the English language, writing in English on a theme not so common at that particular time, failed to produce novels which would not be consumed by oblivion.

We can use Meenakshi Mukherjee’s interesting observation as an answer. She believes that unlike the Englishmen, the nineteenth century English-educated Indians were exposed to the entire bulk of English literature in a timeless continuum. They read the classical European texts produced through several centuries as part of their academic curriculum, along with “canonical literature from Britain, and ‘colonial editions’ of popular fiction of the time ... [which] became available to [them] outside the classroom.”¹³⁸ This is the reason, Mukherjee observes quite correctly, behind the random references to Latin texts, Greek epics and to the writings of Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge and Benjamin Disraeli. As evident from the exhibition of their knowledge of European and English literature throughout their narratives, we can assume that the authors aimed at making an impression on English readers of their awareness and understanding of the timeless literary classics produced by the west. Through their preoccupation with the exhibition of their knowledge of western literature, coupled with their objective of constructing an India and an Indian identity, the very form of the novel was remade.

Meenakshi Mukherjee mentions that although these novels have been forgotten, they cannot be ignored when considered collectively as a body of texts. She admits that “there are occasional gems among them crying out to be re-read from

¹³⁷ Norman Bentwich, “The Novel as a Political Force”, *The Nineteenth Century and After: A Monthly Review*, Vol. LX, Issue CCCLVII, November, 1906.

¹³⁸ Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) 5.

our end-century point of view.”¹³⁹ I believe that *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* contain such elements of serious academic significance which have not been explored by scholars, except a few, and a part of which I have tried to bring unto light through this thesis. Today, when they are distanced by over a century, we are able to identify and appreciate the “occasional gems” contained within them. To borrow Mukherjee’s words, “[t]he reality represented in the novel[s] is not an unmediated reflection of what actually existed, but an ideological reconstruction moulded by an implicit political agenda.”¹⁴⁰ This is exactly what we have been analysing in this chapter – the ideological construction of India and of an Indian identity.

The novels that we are discussing through this thesis bear the footprints of the developing imagination of India as a nation during the first decade of twentieth century. Ghosh and Mitra gradually contribute to the construction of India with the help of innumerable references to myths, legends, epics and history. They construct an India as imagined by themselves. After this detailed discussion of the novels and a study of the various tropes which the authors used in their construction of Indianness, it is clear that these fictions offer much more than just a narrativized fictional representation of east-west relation. However, with regard to the representation of the east-west relationship, K.S. Ramamurti’s observation is worth noticing. In *Rise of the Indian Novel in English* (1987) Ramamurti compares the fictional representation of colonial encounters in the novels of Ghosh and Mitra with novels by English authors such as Meadows Taylor, Flora Annie Steel, E.M. Forster and Rudyard Kipling whose subject was “India or material borrowed from Indian life”.¹⁴¹ He observes that the novels of Ghosh and Mitra

show a deeper understanding of and greater sympathy for English men and women than the novels by British writers could show for India and Indians. Whereas the average British attitude to Indians as reflected in the Anglo-Indian novels is one of snobbery and condescension with a strong tinge of racial pride and prejudice, the Indian attitude as reflected in these novels is one of genuine

¹³⁹ Ibid. 7.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 9.

¹⁴¹ K.S. Ramamurti, *Rise of the Indian Novel in English* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987) 196.

understanding of the British, marked by a readiness to accept and love them as fellow-human beings.¹⁴²

Whereas the writings of most of the authors conformed to Kipling's belief in the impossibility of east-west reconciliation, Ghosh and Mitra believed that the barriers separating east and west could be negotiated. This is a significant difference in attitude of the Indian and the English authors to "the other". Ramamurti appreciates Ghosh's *The Prince of Destiny* as "a novel with a purpose, the first of its kind to make an intellectual approach to the subject of East-West encounter."¹⁴³

However, Meenakshi Mukherjee, though not very enthusiastic about the earliest Indian English novels, seems to be confused regarding the eventual obscuration of *The Prince of Destiny*. She considers the offhand labelling of the novel as a narrative of "East-West encounter" too glib and simplistic.¹⁴⁴ According to Mukherjee, "a novel by an Indian writer demands direct involvement in values and experiences which are valid in Indian context."¹⁴⁵ Though she observes a lack of such direct involvement in the literature attempted by the early generations, she confirms that *The Prince of Destiny* is "an 'Indian' novel, in the way *The Serpent and the Rope* or *Midnight's Children* are Indian, because they are all concerned with defining, constructing or interrogating the idea of India."¹⁴⁶ She also mentions that the novel is "set on a global stage where not only England, but Italy and Japan play a part."¹⁴⁷ But here she fails to see the larger political agenda that Ghosh had in mind, the agenda that we shall be discussing in the concluding chapter. Mukherjee is left confused with the ending of the novel. She is perplexed as to why Barath severs his relationship with Nora and marries Suvona only to renounce his family and kingdom and set out in the search of true knowledge. I have already shown in this chapter how this ending fits into the spiritual ideology of India which has been presented as one of the major tropes in the construction of Indianness.

The majority of the previous researchers have failed to do justice to the works of Ghosh and Mitra by excluding them from list of important Indian English novels of the early twentieth century. We only find the names of the authors and the titles

¹⁴² Ibid. 197.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 204.

¹⁴⁴ Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire*, 62.

¹⁴⁵ Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction*, 19.

¹⁴⁶ Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire*, 63.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 63.

mentioned in the historiography of Indian English writings, if mentioned at all. In many cases they have remained totally unacknowledged. We can cite the example of a major scholarly work on the history of Indian English writings by M.K Naik in which neither the name of Siddha Mohana Mitra, nor the title of his novel has even been mentioned. Even Mukherjee is of opinion that Ghosh and Mitra only found their material in the contemporary social and cultural situation and they just “threw over their novels a certain colouring of romance by introducing kings, princes and courtly life.”¹⁴⁸ What she missed out was what Alex Tickell identifies as the informativity of the romance, which constructed India and Indian identity. She also missed out the authors’ analytical study of the causalities of the politically charged situation of the Swadeshi Movement. As a result she overlooked the contribution of the novels in the discourse of Indian nationalism. The failure to identify the image of India and Indian nationalism that was gradually taking shape through these narratives has left a gap in the historiography of Indian English literature, which I have tried to address in this chapter.

The idea of nationalism, if we agree with Benedict Anderson, begins with the imagination of an inherently limited and sovereign political community.¹⁴⁹ Imagination is itself mutable. It is an abstract subjectivity and therefore naturally creates a zone for contestation. Therefore, a gradually evolving idea of nationalism leaves impressions of a developing imagination of a nation. Through time the impressions change, thereby reshaping the imagination.

The preoccupation with princely states projected as ideally governed utopia and meant to represent a microcosm of India was reflective of an elitist idea of nationalism subsumed by the nationalist ideas realized and promoted by the Indian National Congress. This can also be explained by Ashis Nandy’s observation in *The Intimate Enemy*. Nandy claims that according to many nineteenth century reform movements in India, Kshatriyahood¹⁵⁰ was considered the ‘true’ interface between the ruler and the ruled as a new and “nearly exclusive indicator of authentic Indianness”. According to him

... the search for martial Indianness underwrote one of the most powerful collaborationist strands within the Indian society,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 20.

¹⁴⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983) 6.

¹⁵⁰ The state of belonging to royalty.

represented by a majority of the feudal princelings in India and some of the most important forms of protest against colonialism (such as immensely courageous but ineffective terrorism of Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab led by semi-westernized, middle-class, urban youth).¹⁵¹

This preoccupation with royalty and princely states is supplanted by a sense of wider national territoriality in the later novels as a result of the emergence of Gandhi and his inclusivist political ideology. This is what we shall analyse in the following chapter; that is, how the imagination and construction of India changed after two decades, or whether it changed at all.

¹⁵¹ Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 7.

Chapter 2

Mass Nationalism and the Gandhi-Novels in the 1920s

Introduction

After having discussed the novels published against the backdrop of the Swadeshi Movement in the previous chapter, we will now focus our attention on two important fictions published in the 1920s. Through the analysis of the novels of Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra I have shown how the authors imagined and constructed India and how they presented their idea of an ideal state, perfectly governed by an ideal ruler. The characters in their novels belonged primarily to the elite, or at least to the privileged and educated section of the society. While Ghosh went to the epics in search of the ideal hero for India, Mitra portrayed a Rajput king as an ideal ruler. However, in the fictions of the 1920s, we find that the authors made less use of myths and legends in their construction of India. It was during this time that the first hero of the Indian nationalist movement, and of India, emerged. According to Rajat Kanta Ray, he neither wielded power, nor upheld the honour of lineage; but through the path of asceticism and self-denial, this hero sacrificed himself for a higher cause.¹ He was, of course, the one who is considered as the “Father of the Nation” by Indians today – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Gandhi appeared as the most prominent figure in the nationalist movement and also as the central figure around whom the narratives of Indian nationalism of the 1920s and onwards developed. Apart from Gandhi’s emergence as the first political hero of India, the 1920s witnessed the emergence of new forces in the national movement leading it to become a mass movement, as the idea of nationalism permeated through society. Nationalist ideas reached non-elites and the non-educated, and inspired the peasants, industrial labourers, and also the people belonging to the lowest stratum of the society. It was also during this time and through the influence of Gandhi that Muslims were brought into the mainstream of the nationalist movement. This spirit of mass nationalism and the overwhelming presence of Gandhi in the day-to-day lives of people belonging to every section of the society made a deep impression on the literary narratives of the 1920s.

¹ Rajat Kanta Ray, *Exploring Emotional History: Gender, Mentality and Literature in the Indian Awakening* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001) 175.

It is not surprising that the quest for a national hero, which ultimately came to an end with the mass-acceptance of Gandhi as the new leader of the nation, would also have a prominent place in the literary productions of the age. Harish Trivedi, in his “Literary and Visual Portrayals of Gandhi”, has given an account of the fictions published in the Gandhian period and after, by Indians as well as Westerners, which portray Gandhi as a character.² He says, “As far as Indian fiction in English is concerned, a Gandhi novel was written by each one of its three founding fathers.”³ Among the “founding fathers” Trivedi names Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), R.K. Narayan (1906–2001) and Raja Rao (1908–2006). Therefore the novels which Trivedi analyses are all post-1930 publications. As a result the historiography of Gandhi’s impression upon the literary productions of colonial India is left incomplete. Trivedi’s work, though a piece of scholarly research, deprives the readers of the entire trajectory of the appearance of Gandhi in Indian English fictions as he does not take into account the fictions published in the 1920s. This reasserts the claim that I had made in the introduction -- that by assigning a particular time-frame (which is 1930s in this case) to the emergence of Indian English novels, a substantial corpus of Indian English fictions which were written and published since the late nineteenth century have been unfairly disregarded. The neglect of previous scholars of these works has left certain areas in the study of Indian writings in English unexplored. One such black hole is the absence of an analytical study of Indian English fictions published before 1930s from the perspective of the evolving national consciousness of the people of India. Thus we have failed so far to attempt a reading of those works in the light of the modern theories of nationalism which are immensely relevant to the novels like Jatindra Nath Mitra’s *Towards the Dawn: A Contemporary Political Novel* (1922) and Dhan Gopal Mukerji’s *My Brother’s Face* (1924), which we shall discuss in this chapter.

In this chapter I will discuss how the on-going movements had a direct impact on the Indian English fictions, with particular focus on the influence of Gandhi on the nationalist movement and subsequently on the literary narratives. I will argue that contrary to the general observation which sees Gandhi appearing as a character in Indian English fictions from the 1930s, he appears in the novels of Dhan

² Harish Trivedi, “Literary and Visual Portrayals of Gandhi” in Judith M. Brown and Anthony Parel, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 204-5.

³ Ibid. 204.

Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra, which were published in the 1920s. Though Gandhi is not directly present in Dhan Gopal's *My Brother's Face*, his passive yet predominating presence throughout the narrative is no less prominent than the characters in the novel. Jatindranath's *Towards the Dawn* is a roman-à-clef in which one of the major characters is modelled on Gandhi. Thus Gandhi's life and activities occupy a major section of the narrative space despite the fact that Gandhi himself is not directly present in the plot. I shall also point out how the authors of the 1920s were imagining and constructing India and what were the basic tropes they employed for this purpose. This will lead to a discussion of how their construction of India and its narrativization differed from the earlier authors discussed in the previous chapter; and how the concept of nationalism changed with the passage of time. For an overall understanding of mass nationalism of the 1920s I will need to have a brief discussion of the major aspects of the nationalist movement in the 1920s, and point out the factors which contributed to the construction of the pan-Indian image of Gandhi as the national hero. I will concentrate on the basic factors, the understanding of which is particularly necessary for the appreciation of the Gandhian metanarrative in each novel. But before delving into the narratives, we need to understand Dhan Gopal and his brothers' political orientation with respect to Gandhi's political ideals, as that is what *My Brother's Face* is all about. Thus, it is in the interest of the discussion we shall have in this chapter that we need to make a survey of the author's political ideals and revolutionary activities before analysing his work.

Background of My Brother's Face

My Brother's Face (1924) opens with the return of the author-narrator from America. Returning home after a considerable length of time, he finds a new India; and it is this new India that he sets out to explore. Gordon H. Chang writes that Mukerji and his wife did actually travel to India in the summer of 1921.⁴ This visit by the author was twelve long years after he had left home. In the narrative the author does not however mention his wife or even the fact that he was married. Naturally there remains a probability that certain events or situations are just figments of the author's imagination which have been incorporated by him for the essential purpose of

⁴ Gordon H. Chang's introduction to Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *Caste and Outcast* (California: Stanford University Press, 2002) 14. Chang also mentions that during this visit Mukerji personally met Rabindranath Tagore and tried to raise funds for Tagore's educational projects in India.

conveying his ideas. Nevertheless, this novel is a curious combination of a number of narratives interspersed with the central narrative of the author-narrator's visit to India and his exploration of certain cities and towns accompanied by his brother. The protagonist is the author's own brother, and the mode of narration is autobiographical. The majority of the events and situations which have been incorporated into the narrative are taken from the author's real life and experiences which makes a study of the author's life and activities indispensably necessary. Without a background knowledge of his family and acquaintances, who played active roles in the nationalist movement in India, it will not be possible for us to understand and appreciate his construction of India and Indian identity and his selection of certain tropes for the purpose.

Like the famous nationalist brothers of Bengal such as Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda) – Bhupendranath (Dutta) and Aurobindo – Barindra (Ghosh), the Gopal-brothers, namely, Jadu Gopal, Kshirode Gopal and Dhan Gopal have also left their individual impressions on the history of Indian nationalism. Jadu Gopal was a member of the Jugantar group led by Bhupendranath Dutta and Barindra Ghosh.⁵ He was one of those nationalists who initially believed in extremist nationalism, but gradually developed complete faith in Gandhi's leadership and believed that his policies would finally be effective in achieving the long-desired freedom from British rule. Thus he is one of the glaring examples of the success of Gandhi's propaganda of non-violent resistance. Naturally the character of the brother in Dhan Gopal's narrative is illustrative of the unresolvable dilemma which the nationalist movement of India suffered from, that is, the quandary related to the justifiability of violent form of resistance as opposed to the non-violent form. However, though the author tries to create an ambiguity with regard to the identity of the brother in the last chapter of the novel, it becomes clear with the unfolding of the narrative that it is Jadu Gopal whose life and activities have been portrayed in *My Brother's Face*.

Though Gordon H. Chang's attempt at giving a proper structure to the life-history of Mukerji deserves appreciation, he himself admits that there are many holes in the available records. According to Chang a number of the sources on which his

⁵ Jugantar was a secret order of the revolutionaries operating from Bengal. For details see Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Moderates, Extremists, and Revolutionaries: Bengal, 1900-1908' in Richard Sisson and Stanley Wolpert (eds.), *Congress and Indian Nationalism: The Pre-Independence Phase* (London: University of California Press, 1988).

essay on the author is based, are apocryphal.⁶ However, Chang does not refer to the sources I have ferreted out for the purpose of this research. The main sources from which I have gathered the bulk of information about the author are Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay's (1886–1976) *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* (1982)⁷ – Jadu Gopal being the elder brother of Dhan Gopal – and the latter's epistolary correspondences with Jawaharlal Nehru which appeared in *Desh*, a Bangla magazine published from Calcutta, India. It is important to note that among all the authors discussed in this thesis, Dhan Gopal is the only one who was an active revolutionary himself.

Therefore, his active involvement in the nationalist movement of India needs to be studied for its relevance to the discussion of *My Brother's Face*, which is based on the nationalist beliefs and activities of Dhan Gopal and his brothers.

I would like to refer to one of the incidents narrated in *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* which is immensely significant in understanding Dhan Gopal's ardent patriotism, his active involvement in anti-British resistance and a probable reason for his expatriation. His involvement in the nationalist movement began with the Swadeshi Movement. Through 1906-7, while Indian nationalists were trying to motivate people to buy more and more goods of everyday use which were produced in India and to abandon foreign goods, Dhan Gopal sold hosiery produced in India at strategic sites. He selected those venues where the public gathered to listen to political speeches by leaders such as Bipin Chandra Pal and other prominent nationalists. Just as their provocative speeches aroused the sentiment of nationalism in the crowd, he would cry out: "Buy indigenous goods to strengthen our motherland, to save the honour of our leaders." Sometimes he would draw customers by saying, "Prove that you want to remain slaves no more."⁸ These litanies proved effective. However, Dhan Gopal made no profit; his main objective was to spread the message of Swadeshi.⁹

Jadu Gopal writes that through 1907, while the Swadeshi Movement was in full swing, the political situation worsened throughout Bengal. The divide-and-rule policy was successfully producing hostility between Hindus and Muslims and also between the rich and the poor.¹⁰ This resulted in riots and pillage through various

⁶ Chang's introduction to Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *Caste and Outcast*, 5.

⁷ The title of Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay's *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* literally means "Memoirs of a Revolutionist".

⁸ Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1982) 312. My translation of the source.

⁹ *Ibid.* 312.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 312. For historical details refer to Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1983) 20.

parts of Bengal. According to Jadu Gopal the police remained as blind observers in certain situations or took up arms and victimized the common people. The “Vande Mataram”¹¹ slogan became the war cry of the revolutionaries during this movement and the police were always ready to shoot indiscriminately whenever this cry reached their ears. Jadu Gopal writes that it was during this phase that Dhan Gopal, unable to endure such rampant persecutions, approached a sergeant and cried out the slogan. He was definitely not spared, and returned home seriously wounded.¹² Soon after this incident he migrated to America. Thus his expatriation was probably not a choice but the only way to escape arrest. This also makes his case different from that of Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra who migrated to England for the purpose of higher studies and better opportunities in life. Naturally, compared to Ghosh and Mitra, Dhan Gopal’s involvement with the nationalist movement has been more direct and more intensely passionate.

However, Jadu Gopal explains Dhan Gopal’s expatriation differently. The three brothers, Kshirode Gopal, Jadu Gopal and Dhan Gopal, believed that America could not have gained independence without the co-operation of France, nor could Italy have become independent without financial assistance from foreign nations during the war with Napoleon. Military and financial support from external sources, that is, other nations, was indispensable. Therefore, they decided to utilize resources from America, Japan, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Java and Burma in their mission. According to Jadu Gopal, Dhan Gopal’s migration to America was one of their revolutionary strategies. Jadu Gopal himself decided to remain in India, Kshirode Gopal migrated to Burma and Dhan Gopal sailed for America, and the three brothers agreed that their correspondence would be encrypted.¹³ Dhan Gopal

¹¹ This phrase was first used by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in his novel *Anandamath* (1882). The phrase literally means “Hail Motherland”.

¹² Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 216. My translation.

¹³ Kshirode Gopal was the elder brother. He was known for his ambidextrous skill in shooting. While in Burma, he met the famous Bangla novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay (1876–1938). It was then that the novelist started paying serious attention to the revolutionaries of Bengal. It is said that Kshirode Gopal was the inspiration for Chattopadhyay’s creation of his enormously popular hero Sabyasachi (which literally means ‘ambidextrous’) in the novel *Pather Dabi* (1926) – a highly instigative political novel which was banned by the British government. Kshirode Gopal risked his life by getting involved with the Afghans for procuring armaments and was forced to remain in hiding. Later he became an ascetic. For more details on Kshirode Gopal see Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 264. Further details can be found in the essays by Shilendu Mukhopadhyay, “Swadhinata Sangrami Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay” (Freedom Fighter Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay) and Kamal Nandi, “Sahityik and Deshpremik Dhan Gopal Mukhopadhyay” (Littérateur and Patriot Dhan Gopal Mukhopadhyay) in Swami Purnatmananda, *Dhanya Bagbazar* (Kolkata: Rabindranath Basu Memorial Trust and United Bank of India Employees Association Trust, 1998) 500 and 504.

and Kshirode Gopal actually had to abscond as they did not want to risk their plan of expatriation by the possibility of other family members trying to stop them. No one other than Jadu Gopal had any idea of the whereabouts of the other two.¹⁴

Dhan Gopal left India in 1908 and reached America via Japan in 1909. In 1914 he graduated from Stanford University. Initially he became involved with anarchists in the United States and it took a lot of effort from Jadu Gopal to convince him that he was being motivated in wrong direction. Finally Dhan Gopal did cut himself off from their influence, but by that time he required another outlet for his nationalist fervour. Thus, he began writing and lecturing on India with the aim of familiarizing the people of the west with Indian life and culture. Eventually he married Ethel Ray Dugan (or Patty, as she was referred to by Mukerji), an American of Irish origin. From the article by Prithwindranath Mukhopadhyay published in *Desh*, we come to know that according to the contemporary law of the United States of America, Ethel R. Dugan's American citizenship was forfeited because of her marriage to an Asian.¹⁵

Thus we gather that there was no time in his life when he was sequestered from anti-colonial schemes. Although there is no record to testify to the personal acquaintance of Mukerji with the radical Sikh leaders Har Dayal and Taraknath Das, it is likely that they were in touch as the latter lived in Berkeley and Stanford at the same time as Mukerji, and shared the same anti-British sentiment.¹⁶ His close friendship with Jawaharlal Nehru and the letters exchanged between them testify to

¹⁴ Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 238.

¹⁵ Prithwindranath Mukhopadhyay, "Dhan Gopal Mukhopadhyay O Jawaharlal Nehru Patrabali" (Letters of Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jawaharlal Nehru) in *Desh*, (Kolkata: Anandabazar Patrika, January 1989) 28.

¹⁶ Lala Har Dayal, a somewhat "mercurial intellectual" according to Sumit Sarkar, was one of the prominent leaders of the Ghadr movement which began in San Francisco in 1913 under the leadership of Sohan Singh Bhakna. He served as secretary of the San Francisco branch of the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World – he also wrote perhaps the earliest Indian article on Karl Marx in the *Modern Review* (Calcutta) of March 1912. He was one of the prominent members of the Indian Independence Committee set up in 1915, to help the revolutionaries from abroad, in collaboration with the German foreign office under the so-called "Zimmerman Plan". Sarkar, *Modern India*, 145-6 and 149. Har Dayal was arrested by the American government on 16th March 1914 for his seditious political speech and was branded as an anarchist. His bail was arranged by someone belonging to the Sikh community, following which he finally escaped to Switzerland. Har Dayal's connection with Dhan Gopal reconfirms Jadu Gopal's involvement in the Indo-German pact, which the latter does not mention clearly in his memoir. Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 24. Taraknath Das was another nationalist who was involved in the Ghadr movement and took active role in the Indo-German pact. He was also branded as an anarchist and was arrested in 1917 by the American government. He published a nationalist magazine called *Free Hindusthan*. For details see Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 22, 25, 226, 230, 250, 516 and 527. George H. Chang's Introduction to Mukerji, *Caste and Outcast*, 8.

his life-long association with anti-colonial activists of India.¹⁷ It is more than strange that Gobinda Prasad Sarma in *Nationalism in Anglo-Indian Fiction* does not discuss the contribution of Dhan Gopal to the Indian English writings which constitute a large section of the narratives of Indian nationalism. He clarifies that he did not include Dhan Gopal and his novels of jungle life in his study.¹⁸ We might infer from this statement that Sarma was probably unaware of other works by Dhan Gopal which are extremely crucial to the study of nationalism in Indian writings in English.

Overview of Dhan Gopal's works

Gordon H. Chang justifiably claims that in spite of being an exceptionally prolific writer, Dhan Gopal Mukerji has not been studied with serious attention in the sixty-six years since he committed suicide in 1936. According to Chang, Mukerji was the first Indian author to write about Indian life for American readers. Fewer Indians settled in America during early twentieth century than in England. Hence the shroud of ignorance and the romantic mystery was lifted mainly by the writings of Rudyard Kipling (which could be fallacious and alarming at times) and those of missionaries or travellers who returned from trips to the subcontinent.¹⁹ Dhan Gopal seems to have been one of the most popular authors of pre-independence India before Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan.

In his memoir *Jadu Gopal* writes that he met Josephine MacLeod, one of the closest friends of Swami Vivekananda, who commented, "After Swamiji, Dhan is the proper person to interpret India to the West. His works are very popular."²⁰ Dhan Gopal published a series of books of Indian folklore in English for children – *Kari the Elephant* (1922), *Jungle Beasts and Men* (1923), *Hari, the Jungle Lad* (1924) and *Gay-neck: The Story of a Pigeon* (1944) are the popular titles. It was *Gay-neck: The Story of a Pigeon* which made him the first Indian to receive the Newbury Medal in 1928; a medal which is awarded annually for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.²¹ The inventing and re-inventing of traditions and

¹⁷ Ibid. 19. Chang writes that while Mukerji was settled in Geneva, he was visited by Jawaharlal Nehru. The latter, accompanied by his daughter Indira, had taken his wife Kamala Nehru for treatment to Switzerland as she was suffering from tuberculosis.

¹⁸ Gobinda Prasad Sarma, *Nationalism in Anglo-Indian Fiction* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1978) xvi.

¹⁹ Gordon H. Chang's introduction to Mukerji, *Caste and Outcast*, 6-7.

²⁰ Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 22 and 460.

²¹ <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/aboutnewbery/aboutnewbery> (Accessed on 25th June, 2013.)

the recourse to epics, mythologies and folklore are definite signs of asserting a national identity, and Dhan Gopal's translations of the above-mentioned works into English were inspired by like purposes. He was the first writer to write a biography of the nineteenth-century Bangalee spiritualist Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-1886) in English, titled *The Face of Silence* (1926).²² Jadu Gopal writes that bemused by *The Face of Silence*, Romain Rolland wrote to Dhan Gopal, "Mr. Mukherjee, what can I do to make you immortal in Europe?" Dhan Gopal answered, "Nothing for me. Please make Ramakrishna and Vivekananda well-known in Europe." According to Jadu Gopal it was this particular work by Dhan Gopal that inspired Romain Rolland to delve into the life of Ramakrishna.²³ And it is only by this work that the Bangalee intelligentsia remembers Dhan Gopal today, if they remember him at all.

Among Dhan Gopal's works which directly address the political spirit of the 1920s, *My Brother's Face* (1924) is of great import. In the foreword he explains his intention in writing this book: "This book deals with the India of to-day from an Indian's standpoint ... I have written what my brother Indians had to say, hoping that the views of Englishmen in India would be set down by English writers."²⁴ Here Mukerji aptly captures the contemporary state of the nationalist movement with Gandhi projected as the mascot of this movement against the British. We should note at this point that Chang makes a very important observation regarding Dhan Gopal's contribution to the narratives of Indian nationalism with reference to *The Face of Silence*. According to Chang, *The Face of Silence* and *My Brother's Face* can be read as twins.²⁵ Each of these works is centred on a protagonist who represents a separate sphere, the conflation of which has endowed Indian nationalism its unique nature – spirituality and politics.

While *The Face of Silence* presents the life and philosophy of the nineteenth-century Bangalee saint and spiritualist Ramakrishna Paramhansa, *My Brother's Face*

²² Ramakrishna Paramhansa, a spiritualist and a mystic of nineteenth century Bengal, played a significant role in the Bangalee Renaissance as well as the Hindu Renaissance of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His disciple Swami Vivekananda became famous internationally towards the end of nineteenth century following his remarkable speech in the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. It was he who popularized the name of Ramakrishna Paramhansa in the West and also founded the Ramakrishna Mission which has a base in various countries throughout the world today. For details on Ramakrishna please see Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *The Face of Silence* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1926); Romain Rolland, *The Life of Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1965) or Swami Vivekananda, trans., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (New York: Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, 1980).

²³ Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 22 and 450.

²⁴ Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *My Brother's Face* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2003) 7.

²⁵ Gordon H. Chang's Introduction to Mukerji, *Caste and Outcast*, 21.

is a depiction of one of the elder brothers of Dhan Gopal, who was a famous revolutionary, fighting for India's independence against the British:

... both present their messages through dialogue, legend, and storytelling, with simple, engaging language. Each book reflected different abiding, and in some ways competing, passions of the author: one for the spiritual world, the other principally for the more temporal world of intercultural understanding and international relations. Mukerji appeared to be able to handle both spheres well at this time and believed the two were completely compatible. He and other Indian intellectuals argued that winning the country's freedom was necessary to release the messages from India's spiritual civilization to the rest of the world; at the same time, India's unique religiosity shaped its politics, best exemplified by the moral courage of Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent revolution.²⁶

What Chang does not mention in his comparison between *My Brother's Face* and *The Face of Silence* is that both protagonists, the brother and Ramakrishna Paramhansa, were successful in communicating with a cross-section of society. The nationalist culture of India was then dominated by the Indian National Congress and the religious culture of India by the Arya Samaj (and Brahma Samaj specifically in Bengal), all constituted by the educated elites of the society. While Ramakrishna offered a simplified version of the lofty ideas contained in the Vedic texts and explained them to the ordinary people in layman's terms, the brother accompanies the author across the country to show how Gandhi's political ideas had permeated through the cross-section of society. Spirituality and religion played a vital role in Indian nationalism even before Gandhi emerged as a national leader. We have already seen in the previous chapter that Hindu rituals, customs and festivals were used in the assertion of Indianness. During the Swadeshi Movement the extremists were inspired by the *Bhagavadgita*, the holy text of the Hindus. The *Bhagavadgita* was a source of inspiration as the basic theme of the text is a justification of war for the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness. As we proceed we shall discuss how the tropes of religion and spirituality were used in the nationalist movement

²⁶ Ibid. 21-2.

during 1920s to counter the materialist culture which was developing as a result of industrialization, and also how Mukerji appropriates the tropes in his construction of India.

Background of Towards the Dawn

Towards the Dawn: A Contemporary Political Novel (1922) by Jatindranath Mitra has never before been mentioned in the study of Indian English novels except by Suresht Renjen Bald in his *Novelists and Political Consciousness* (1982).²⁷ We do not have much information about the author or any other fictional work authored by him. From Bald's discussion of the novel we only come to know that Mitra was not a native of Bengal, like the other authors we have been discussing, but of Maharashtra.²⁸

The most striking feature in this narrative is that some of the characters are based on the prominent nationalist leaders of India – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and his wife Kasturba Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghosh, Sarojini Naidu and Sister Nivedita. It is important to note that while Dhan Gopal's novel offers a portrayal of the Gandhi-frenzy which had already spread through India when the narrative opens, Mitra's novel is essentially a narrative of the becoming of Gandhi. It traces the entire journey of Karmi, whose character and actions are modelled exactly on Gandhi. Karmi is an ordinary patriot with a nationalist consciousness when the narrative begins, but gradually through the course of the narrative he becomes a national leader. Thus, *Towards the Dawn* is primarily a literal narrativization of Gandhi's preparatory stage.

While during the first decade of the twentieth century Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra were reviewing the Swadeshi Movement from London, Dhan Gopal Mukerji was risking his life participating in the movement in Bengal, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was experimenting with *Satyagraha* for the first time as a protest against the new law of the Transvaal government which made the registration of every Indian in South Africa compulsory.²⁹ Though Gandhi's direct

²⁷ *Towards the Dawn* was printed by K.C. Banerjee at the Anglo-Oriental Press, Lucknow.

²⁸ Suresht Renjen Bald, *Novelists and Political Consciousness* (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1982) 35.

²⁹ In August 1906 the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance became law in the Transvaal. It stated that any Indian who did not register by a certain date would no longer be allowed to stay in the Transvaal. This law stated that every Indian man, woman or child older than 8 years must register with a government official called the registrar of Asiatics. This registrar would also take the fingerprints of

involvement in the nationalist movement of India is traced from 1915, that is when he returned to India permanently, the foundation of his political career was laid in South Africa. His early career in South Africa as a barrister educated in Britain automatically placed him in the position of a leader among the South African Indians who were struggling day in and day out with increasing racial discrimination. South Africa was just a microcosm of the heterogeneous Indian society in which Gandhi successfully led the Indian population of mixed classes, castes, religions and communities. In South Africa was laid the groundwork of his experiments with his original techniques of struggle – the “Gandhian” techniques – and before introducing them to India, Gandhi was well aware of the pros and cons of his *modus operandi*. Thus, before appearing for the final show, Gandhi was much better prepared in comparison to other political leaders of his time. This is exactly how Jatindranath constructs the character and the actions of his protagonist Karmi, in *Towards the Dawn*. Though the characters of the novel bear different names, the reader does not find any difficulty in recognizing the real-life characters portrayed in the novel as they present true historical situations and their role in it. Apart from the names and dialogues, there is hardly anything in the narrative which can be ascribed to the author’s imagination. Thus the real-life characters and the real incidents narrativized in this novel make it a perfect example of roman-à-clef.

Before proceeding with the discussion of the novel, we shall need to gloss the connotation of the term “roman-à-clef” as precisely as possible. This will help us to understand Mitra’s purpose behind using this particular narrative technique -- was it only an amateurish experimentation or did he want to reveal a hidden truth which, if stated blatantly, could be embarrassing or dangerous for the actual people hinted at in the narrative? This technique was first used by the seventeenth century writer Madeleine de Scudery (1607-1701). Melissa Boyde in her essay “The Modernist *roman à clef* and Cultural Secrets, or I Know that You Know That I Know that You Know” offers an appropriate explanation of the term. According to Boyde, the roman-à-clef, which she explains as the “novel with a key”, does not merely imply a fictional work with real people or events appearing with different names; the novelist

the people he registered and issue them with registration certificates, which they had to show to any policeman who asked to see them. An Indian who could not produce a certificate could be fined and sent to prison. Refer to <http://www.sahistory.org.za/satyagraha-campaign-1906#> (accessed on 29th May, 2012). For further details please refer to Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul* (Noida: Harper Collins, 2011) 54-5.

needs to make sure that the actual people or events can be “identified by a knowing reader”.³⁰ It is important to keep in mind that unlike the three novels which were published from London and New York, Mitra’s novel was published in India (in Lucknow). The target readers for Mitra were therefore different from those of other novelists, who wrote their novels essentially for western readers. Mitra wrote primarily for Indians and was thus addressing a “knowing reader” in Boyde’s term.

The Construction of India and Indian Identity

Before we proceed with the discussion of the construction of India and Indian identity by Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra, we need to keep in mind that more than a decade had passed since the publication of the novels by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. More importantly, the biggest historical event which intervened was the First World War. The war affected the economic conditions hugely and a “major economic development during the First World War was the growth of industries,” according to Shekhar Bandyopadhyay;³¹ and the necessity of industrialization in India, allied with the need of disseminating scientific and technological knowledge, became the central point of contention in the 1920s.

We did observe in the previous chapter how both Sarath Kumar and Siddha Mohana believed in the indispensability of scientific and technological knowledge for the advancement of India. Though their sense of national pride was rooted primarily in the ancient wisdom and spiritual culture of India, they could not deny the fact that the contemporary Indians were not well equipped with the knowledge of modern technology, which they could and should learn from the westerners. However, in Dhan Gopal’s narrative we find a different approach to technological progress and industrialization. Industrialization, which is often equated with modernization and westernization, was one of the primary issues against which Gandhi’s political ideology was framed. Thus, in tune with Gandhi, Dhan Gopal’s narrative offers a detailed account of the menaces of industrialization, westernization and modernization – terms which can sometimes be used interchangeably in the

³⁰ M.J. Boyde, “The Modernist roman a clef and Cultural Secrets, or, I Know that You Know That I Know That You Know”, *Australian Literary Studies*, 24(3-4), 2009, 156.

<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1226&context=artspapers> (Accessed on 3rd May, 2013.)

³¹ Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009) 287.

context of the narratives we are discussing. Pre- industrialized, westernized and modernized society was therefore projected as true India.

To counter the western/modern culture which is the consequence of industrialization, the need for Indianization of education was considered necessary. This would not only draw the attention of the young generation to the intellectual wealth of India but also teach them the significance of austerities and renunciation advocated by Indian philosophers. Similar to the earlier narratives, these novels of the 1920s also discuss the Indian idea of courage and power as opposed to that of the west. The narratives also focus on the inclusivity of Indian society and offer a panoptic view of Indian society which accommodates every class and religion, from the peasants to the elites. Interestingly enough, in his construction of India, Jatindranath renders a graphic image to the abstract imagination of the motherland and composes a hymn on her.

However, the most important development which shaped the nationalist movement of India in the 1920s was the emergence of Gandhi as the first national leader. The authors did not have to take recourse to ancient literature and the epics in their search for the ideal Indian hero. Gandhi was the new Indian hero. Thus the construction of India and Indian identity was heavily influenced by Gandhi and his political ideology which primarily advocated peaceful resistance, popularly known as *ahimsa* or non-violence.

Pre - western/industrial/modern society

Our master spoke very little about nationalism. He wanted us to work for the welfare of humanity ... we will go over the world preaching the glorious religion of the Vedanta, and revealing the soul of India to the world. The heartless materialism of the West is spreading misery all over the world. On account of this extreme love of money of the aristocrats and the capitalists, the common people are growing poorer and poorer.³²

At the very outset, this is how Jogesh, the Sanyasi in *Towards the Dawn*, substantiates the primary objective of the nationalists; that is, by drawing attention to

³² Jatindranath Mitra, *Towards the Dawn: A Contemporary Political Novel* (Lucknow: n.p., 1922) 7.

the ill-effects of materialism on the society as a whole, and by preaching the Hindu philosophy which is supposed to be the only path to deliverance. Thus, one of the most important issues which the narratives of both Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath deal with is that of westernization/modernization/industrialization. For the authors, the basic implications of these words are interchangeable and their effects can be reduced to one single consequence which is alarming – that is, materialism. However, another concern which bothers them is actually a corollary to industrialization, that is, the repression and replacement of indigenous culture by the dominant western culture. Industrialization is the main target of attack, as it affects indigenous culture, the moral values and the traditional life of pre-industrial India.

Dhan Gopal left India in 1908 and we know that the narrative of *My Brother's Face* is set in 1921. The first few pages of the novel relate his sense of dismay on meeting an unfamiliar India. He describes, “modern progress, new ideas, and political upheaval [which] ... had swept away in a decade many of the old beliefs and customs ... [so much so that] India is a new country.”³³ The overpowering necessity of urbanization had replaced the apparently unnecessary extravagance which had been hallmarks of the pre-colonial civilization of India. The elaborate and arabesque architecture of the previous centuries were demolished to make way for the all-consuming needs of western civilization – “the seventeenth century columns and porticoes pulled down in order to widen the streets that two automobiles might go abreast.”³⁴ What his brother presents as “modern progress slashing its way through the beauty and squalor of the Renaissance” was the real predicament of contemporary India according to the author.³⁵

If the description of the replacement of old architecture with the new represents the modernization/westernization of India, the description of the city-theatre which the author visits with his brother represents the contradictions of this socio-cultural paradigm. The author is appalled to see the city-theatre bursting with Hawaiian music and dance which is being applauded loudly by “Europeanized Indians.”³⁶ His detailed narration of an evening party during his visit to Darjeeling offers us a clearer picture of the thorough permeation of western culture into the upper class society. He is amazed to see men and women dancing to syncopated

³³ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 16.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 23.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 23.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 26.

music and flirting with each other in a country like India which is known to the world for its conservatism. He portrays a lady called Miss Bondo who is an Oxford graduate. She is extremely proficient in Greek but does not have the slightest smattering of Sanskrit. Though she wears Indian dress, it is only because it gives her a great distinction and not because she cares for the art and culture of India – “she was Europeanized in every essential save her complexion.”³⁷

For the author, who has returned home after having spent more than a decade in the West, it is a shock to find India already consumed by the western culture during his absence. However, in contrast with the city-theatre, the theatre of the mill hands at Dhulia does not show any sign of such gross cultural degeneracy, though the author finds a curious combination of western elements in the theatrical shows on essentially Indian dramatic themes. The author describes a stage-production based on the mythological story of “Savitri and Satyaban”, from the Mahabharata, which was being performed. Though the dialect used by the characters in the play was very close to ancient Sanskrit, the author observes a peculiar anomaly in stagecraft and props used in the production. The scene, he calls “atrociously Western”, and the plush chair in which the God of Death is seated might have been imported from England. The author also describes the staging of a scene from the *Ramayana* in a small village west of Calcutta, across the river. The ground of the village temple was cleared for the local artists who staged the play. The performance makes the author realize that if the art and culture of India were to be preserved, it would have to be through people such as those villagers, who were “yet untainted by gramophones, brass bands, and cinemas.”³⁸ Referring to the street performers who present a play through old-time folk dance and folk tunes played on the violin and drums, Dhan Gopal points out, “This is India. These are the true sons and daughters of my country.”³⁹

This can be read as a definitive indication of the confounded state of the socio-cultural paradigm – the western hegemony had penetrated every sphere and every stratum of society. The city-based elites had given in almost entirely to western culture. People belonging to the lower strata were however less exposed to western influence. Though unable to barricade their cultural space from the overwhelming

³⁷ Ibid. 230.

³⁸ Ibid. 223.

³⁹ Ibid. 215.

deluge of western influence, they somehow succeeded in conserving the core spirit of their indigenous culture. But the damage of yielding to the modernizing project designed by western rulers had been having far reaching effects on the socio-cultural identity of India. The western lifestyle that was attracting the educated class -- motor cars, telephones and cinema shows -- was gradually rending their connections with tradition. Thus industrialization, modernization and westernization were posing a threat to Indian culture and Indian ways of life. Like the author, this was the greatest concern for Gandhi who emphasized holding to one's own roots strongly.

Industrialization was associated with westernization and therefore creating an awareness of the menaces of industrialization to Indian society was part of the nationalist agenda. In *My Brother's Face* we find that after reaching Bombay, the author and his brother take a journey through various parts of the city. The time and space explored through this narrative are important with respect to two concurrent historical factors – the visit of the Prince of Wales to Bombay in 1921 and the developing tension between industrial labourers and their employers, which was again linked to the nationalist movement in India. This phase was particularly important to the history of Indian nationalism as well as to the history of the development of anti-industrial and anti-capitalist agitation in Bombay.⁴⁰ The author lands up in Bombay during the industrial strike called by the mill-workers.⁴¹ A conversation between the author and a barber presents the justification of the labourers in defence of the strike and the depiction of the wretched quality of the lives of the workers and their families. It draws our attention to the contemporary socio-economic structure of Bombay. It is also worth noticing that unlike the previous novels by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra, this novel throws light upon the exploitation of the proletariat.

My Brother's Face is a literary treatise that validates Gandhi's stand on the causalities of civilization and industrialization, and capitalism and colonialism.

⁴⁰ The cotton-textile industry formed the mainstay of Bombay's economy from the late nineteenth century and the economic status of the city as well as the surrounding localities depended mainly on the prosperity of this particular industry. See Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 76.

⁴¹ According to Chandavarkar, there was a series of interconnected factors which led to the industrial action and strikes during 1920-22, that the novel deals with. He argues that as the Bombay industries began to diversify into higher counts of yarn, they had to face competitions with goods produced by the Ahmedabad mills and also those produced by the Japanese industries. The more they diversified, the greater the challenge they had to face. Moreover, the Bombay industry had also lost the initial advantage of cheap labour. Ibid. 76.

Gandhi believed that modern civilization and not colonialism was the actual root of all problems as he perceived colonialism as a mere product of modern civilization. By modern civilization, which he equated with western civilization, he meant the attitude which evolved as a corollary to the Enlightenment and subsequently to the Industrial Revolution. Even for Gandhi the Industrial Revolution, which most commentators see as a new age, was much more than the mere change of production. He believed that it heralded a new age – a change of attitude towards life and all its aspects. It created new definitions of morality, ethics, religion, science, technology and economics and defined new parameters for the appreciation of knowledge, art and culture. Anthony Parel glosses Gandhi's attitude:

The Industrial Revolution altered the concept of labour, now accepted mainly for its ability to produce profit, power and capital. Manual labour was looked upon as fit only for the unlettered and the backward. With the technological revolution that followed the industrial revolution, machines, hitherto allies of humans, seemed to assert their autonomy.⁴²

Industrialization leading to the dehumanization of man and the conflict with the age-old ideas of morality and ethics, which were identified by Gandhi as disconcerting changes, were the main factors which were alienating Indians from their age-old traditions and beliefs.

Dhan Gopal addresses this issue at the very beginning through the character of the Arabian pearl merchant who boards the ship at Port Said. This merchant works as much as is required to sustain his living and the rest of his time is spent in listening to and gathering songs throughout India, Persia and Arabia.⁴³ Later in the narrative the brother mentions the Kaowals who were patronised by the Mughal rulers.⁴⁴ It was thus possible for them to devote their life to maintaining and developing age-old traditional music without having to think about earning their living by engaging in some other vocation only for the sake of earning their bread. While identifying particular indigenous traditions and culture, Dhan Gopal constantly refers to the weavers, the rug-makers, the Kaowals, who, he believed,

⁴² See Anthony Parel's introduction to Mahatma Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) xix.

⁴³ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 18-19.

⁴⁴ Kaowals were mainly Sufi singers.

represented the core matrices of Indian culture. It is a statement in support of domestic art and industry as opposed to capitalist industrialization. He refers to the weaver of Rampur who makes shawls and mentions how these shawls were still in demand despite the availability of “Manchester goods and their ghastly cheapness.”⁴⁵ The weaver says that one who sings along with his weaving produces better texture. He appreciates the skill of the gem-cutters who still prefer to do their work by hand instead of machines. According to them their work is not for the “market” but for the “Rajahs, who can afford to wait” – it is therefore meant for the connoisseurs who can appreciate their artistic talents. Thus the manufacturing of a product, which is a sheer mechanical process in western conceptions, is basically an artistic endeavour for Indians. The extraordinary skills of these shawl weavers, rug makers, Kaowals and gem-cutters that developed through the ages and which gradually became enmeshed into the cultural fabric of India were highly appreciated and rewarded in the pre-industrial era. And it is this art that is being threatened due to the invasion of industrialization and by a capitalist economy.

After the advent of industrialization in India, production multiplied massively with the help of machines, artisans gradually lost their vocations as people compromised their artistic excellence and bought machine-made products at much lower costs. That heralded doom not only for the exquisitely skilled artisans but also the tradition of folk art and culture. In words of Dhan Gopal:

India is the peasantry: eighty percent of our people live on the soil; it is they who have the Indian soul. The peasant, the true son of our Mother, needs no industrialism; what he needs is more and freer irrigation, fewer steam engines and railroads, and more electric power brought to his door.⁴⁶

Thus, the author believed that for majority of the Indian population industrialization would serve no purpose. It would only deprive them of their rootedness to the soil as they are still believed to have an unadulterated Indian soul, not in the least corrupted by westernization. This clearly echoes Gandhi’s ideas which were not so much against mechanization as they were supportive of the development of technology only to the extent to which it would help the peasants by easing their labour and

⁴⁵ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 181.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 272.

maintaining their vocation. Rabindranath Tagore, although critiqued some of Gandhi's political ideals and strategies, especially when the latter departed from logical reasoning and explained matters in supernatural terms to facilitate the understand of the illiterate mass, or his prescription of abstinence as a method of birth control, shared his idea of utilizing science and technology for the benefit of the peasants; he "could perceive and put into practice agrarian co-operation and modern methods of tilling, sowing, and reaping."⁴⁷

Other than being a statement against industrialization, this is also an assertion of the traditional socio-economic disposition of Indians in general. This assertion falls in with Tagore's preference for the socially regulated professionalism of ancient India as opposed to the contemporary idea of professionalism at the cost of one's faith in ideals. In his essay "The Nation", Tagore writes:

In ancient India professions were kept within limits by social regulation. They were considered primarily as social necessities, and in the second place as the means of livelihood for individuals. Thus, man being free from the constant urging unbounded competition, could have leisure to cultivate his nature in its completeness.⁴⁸

The cultivation of one's nature and the expression of one's personality in the form of artistic creation help to enrich one's culture. Artistic creations in the form of literature, art, social symbols and ceremonials endow a distinctive identity on a community. According to Dhan Gopal and Tagore, this distinctive identity prevalent in the pre-industrial era was gradually being dissolved into a common hegemonic identity after the advent of industrialization. For Tagore, the ill-effects of industrialization, in this case, were the same as those of nationalism. While for Dhan Gopal the preservation of the professions of the shawl-makers or rug-makers and Kaowals were necessary for the assertion of a national identity, for Tagore, promotion of these professions were essential as they constituted a definitive social identity. Although the perspectives were in conflict, it is clear that both of them considered artistic creativity the nucleus of indigenous culture and a distinctive identity. Tagore never subscribed to the general idea of nationalism (as we shall discuss in detail in the following chapter), which he considered exclusive and selfish

⁴⁷ Ibid. 259.

⁴⁸ Rabindranath Tagore, *Rabindranath Tagore Selected Essays* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004) 66.

in nature, whereas Dhan Gopal was a staunch nationalist. In spite of their conflicting approaches towards the idea of nationalism, both of them appreciated indigenous art and culture as integral components of a unique identity. Their concerns regarding the preservation and promotion of indigenous art reveal their apprehension of losing something which they related to as part of their own identity.

A comparative description of India, as the author had left her a decade before with the India that he is observing on his return, offers an analysis of the change in the basic traits of Indianness. The author reminisces about pre-industrial India and how these characteristic traits were being corrupted with the advent of industrialization, modernization, and/westernization – terms which can be used interchangeably according to context. A sense of loss is communicated through the narrative, a loss that has entailed from the compromising attitude on part of the Indians. The material profit that such compromise had produced had been beneficial only to a section of the Indian population, that is, the middle class. At this point we need to refer to Sanjay Joshi's definitive statement in his introduction to *The Middle Class in Colonial India* (2010): "The middle class was very much a product of British colonialism."⁴⁹ Joshi selected an article titled "A Cheap Shoddy Import" from Aurobindo Ghosh's "New Lamps for Old – 3", published in *Indu Prakash* on 28th August 1893 in order to establish the charges of "cultural inauthenticity" brought against the middle class. In this article Ghosh identifies a large section of people as middle class – "journalists, barristers, doctors, officials, graduates, and traders – who have grown up and are increasing with prurient rapidity under the aegis of the British rule."⁵⁰ This categorization on the basis of professions has been accurately theorized by B.B. Misra in *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times* (1978). He precisely categorized this group into four broad sections: the commercial middle class, industrial middle class, landed middle class and educated middle class.⁵¹ *My Brother's Face* presents the ideological conflict between the industrial and the educated middle class in the Gandhian era through the comparison between two characters, namely, Nilu and Ordhendu.

Nilu, who the author describes as the "round-eyed sweet child of Fortune," is a friend of the latter and a budding industrialist of Calcutta. He began his career as a

⁴⁹ Sanjay Joshi, ed., *The Middle Class in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010) xxiv.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 26.

⁵¹ B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978).

college professor but gradually gave in to the growing capitalist culture. By the time he was thirty-six he had already become the owner of three factories which employed seventeen hundred labourers. His socio-economic orientation was directly influenced by industrialization. When he appears in Dhan Gopal's narrative he has already become a successful businessman. His newfound affiliation to an industrialized society makes him question the traditional values of India: "What has ancient piety done for India? It has kept the country absolutely self-hypnotized."⁵² He presents the arguments of Indian industrialists who did not accept Gandhi's attitude to industrialization.⁵³ For him Gandhi's social and political ideas were archaic: "Gandhi is all right as the last grand gesture of India's Middle Ages, but he has nothing to do with her future."⁵⁴ Echoing the authors of the earlier novels discussed in the previous chapter, Nilu considers the application of modern sciences essential to the overall progress of the society. He believes in surpassing the Europeans in their efficiency related to industrial enterprises which will eventually be effective in driving the British out of India. Thus it brings to the foreground the problematical relationship between the colonial capitalists and the indigenous capitalists where the latter were in a position to justify their cause owing to their Indian origin. They claimed to be more beneficial to the country and the people by not being as exploitative as the British – "the Indian captains of finance, [would] make them rich."⁵⁵

However, Nilu's newfound affiliation with the capitalist culture has already infected him with what Gandhi considers as the disease of materialism. This is best illustrated by what he says to the author: "If you do not own a car you are no gentleman. That is one of the rules of our set."⁵⁶ He himself talks about his alienation from whatever he was used to in his life previously – his mother tongue, his family and friends and his old habits. He speaks English all day, he spends his days all alone and works all day cooped up in his private office. Even though he sighs, "My soul

⁵² Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 271.

⁵³ According to Claude Markovits, the growth of an entrepreneurial group was further accelerated after 1920, as fiscal autonomy was granted to India and a limited policy of discriminative production adopted. This reserved a share for the local entrepreneurs of the domestic market in steel, cotton, textiles, sugar, and other basic industrial commodities. Markovits observes that before Independence, the mercantile world of India remained separated from the world of the English-educated middle classes which were more conspicuous and influential, politically and culturally. Claude Markovits, 'What about the Merchants?: A Mercantile Perspective on the Middle Class of Colonial India' in Joshi, ed., *The Middle Class in Colonial India*, 124.

⁵⁴ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 272.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 272.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 204.

has no time. My heart knows no serenity,”⁵⁷ it is clear that he has compromised with the changes and has adjusted himself to the new life of luxury and comfort.

Ordhendu Gangooly is, however, another character mentioned by the author in comparison with Nilu. He belongs to the educated middle class and has been able to retain his Indianness unlike the latter. Attorney at the Calcutta High Court by profession, Ordhendu is the master of English laws and highly successful in his career. But his social position and material wealth could not corrupt his Indian soul. He, according to the author, is one of the finest connoisseurs and collectors of Indian art. Every nook and corner of his house is decorated in Oriental style, with art work not only by earlier artists but also by contemporary artists who he appointed for the purpose. Dhan Gopal remarks, “To enter this house is to go to the India of a hundred years ago.”⁵⁸ Ordhendu never compromises with the rigorous austerities of his life with western comfort, though he has every means to afford it; and, never does he appear in public in European outfits except inside the court. Thus, this man with a profound love for Indian art, utmost sincerity to preserve Indian culture and ideological eschewal of western materialistic culture, is portrayed by the author probably to claim that it is possible to defy the influence of western culture in every sphere of life if one had a strong affiliation to one’s indigenous culture and a sense of respect to his roots. However, the author believes that it requires great strength of character to defy luxuries and comforts of life when they are affordable. He speaks of his own experience of getting used to an automobile: “It does not take long to corrupt an immature person; the test of luxury is something I cannot stand; though I have survived that of poverty, so far.”⁵⁹ Thus, it is easier for that particular section of society to escape the snares of material comfort which is not exposed to it, or does not have the means to afford it.

New India, as observed by the author, was on her way to progress supported by modern industrialism, to which the western rulers could definitely claim their contribution.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid. 206.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 233.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 235.

⁶⁰ By 1921 Indian capitalism had emerged as an independent force and consequently the growth of indigenous as well as foreign capitalist interests in the country led to a considerable increase in the industrial population. Refer to Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes*, 396.

The mischief has been wrought by Gandhism, motor-cars, and the telephone. Gandhism has taken away from us our last bit of faith in the virtue of the European, as well as our cherished belief in the permanence of our social institutions.

Today there are two powerful forces in India: rich men and Gandhism, modern industrialism and the spirituality of mediæval India. The two have come to grips. No one can foretell the outcome. The most perplexing thing in the struggle is that mediævalism is now matter of resiliency and speed; it may outspeed industrialism.⁶¹

The revival of the spirituality of medieval India was undoubtedly an integral part of Gandhi's nationalist agenda. But the last sentence in the above quotation is worth noticing. It hints at medievalism overpowering industrialism. After analysing the entire narrative, there will remain no scope for doubt that the authors were appreciative of the age-old spiritual culture of India throughout. But whether the recourse to medieval spirituality and an outright denial of modern civilization could be a profitable solution to the contemporary problems was a question that left them profoundly puzzled. However, the role of a national education to resist and counter the westernization of Indian society has been emphasized by Jatindranath in his novel.

Promotion of national education

The necessity of English education has been harped upon by all the authors we have been discussing. We have also observed the obvious influence of English education on the authors in their literary works and also in their nationalist ideas which acknowledged the positive aspects of the colonial rule in India. However, in *Towards the Dawn* Jatindranath raises an extremely important issue regarding the education system in India which was run by the British. He points out that education is the most important factor in the process of nation-making and therefore it needs to be the "right sort of Education."⁶² Though English education and exposure to western philosophy, politics, technology and science has opened the eyes of Indians and helped them in the appreciation of their age-old wisdom in contrast with western

⁶¹ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 218.

⁶² Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 55.

knowledge, there is no denying the fact that it does not qualify as “national education.”⁶³

Why is it not being considered the “right sort of education,” and what is actually implied by the term “national education”? To find answers to these questions, we will need to make a quick reference to Thomas Babington Macaulay’s “Minute on Indian Education” of February 1835, which is the most appropriate documentation of how colonial rulers perceived India’s traditional education and how they intended to reform it in order to suit the requirements of the British administration. Through this controversial charter, Macaulay initiated English education in India, thereby discarding education in Sanskrit and Arabic as useless and “positively noxious”.⁶⁴ According to him, discouraging Arabic and Sanskrit education would be as reasonable a decision as diminishing rewards for killing tigers in Mysore. For the “intellectual improvement of the people”⁶⁵ Indians required to be taught not in any of their vernacular dialects, but in English as “it is the language spoken by the ruling class ... and higher class of natives at the seats of Government.”⁶⁶ The main purpose is then clearly stated by Macaulay when he clarifies his intention:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, -- a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and intellect.⁶⁷

This is the system of education which was introduced by the British government in India; and it is this system which Jatindranath believes to have “manufactu[red] more clerks than patriots.”⁶⁸ Generations were trained in such a system of education as this, which was designed to obviate the treasures of classical Sanskrit or Arabic literature which contained the crux of Indian culture. However, we must remember at this point that all the authors we are dealing with have been emphasizing and exhibiting

⁶³ Ibid. 56.

⁶⁴ http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html, 8. (Accessed on 24th July, 2013.)

⁶⁵ Ibid. 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 7.

⁶⁸ Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 56.

the significance and the influence of Sanskrit literature, in their constructions of India and Indianness.⁶⁹

Jatindranath Mitra, too, echoed the same ideas as Sarath Kumar Ghosh, Siddha Mohana Mitra and Dhan Gopal Mukerji. They all agreed that the adoption of western education did not necessarily imply an absolute jettisoning of Indian philosophy and history. What Jatindranath proposed was that instead of ridiculing Indian wisdom as ridiculously useless and obnoxiously bizarre, a system of education should be introduced which would inspire students to love their country and at the same time teach them to identify and detest its social evils, superstitions and prejudices. He proposed that along with vocational training and technical education, which form an undeniably indispensable, practical and useful knowledge, the study of history and “patriotic literature” should be made compulsory for every student.⁷⁰ The books should be “such as will fill the hearts of our boys with love of country”; it should be a “holy, liberal and illuminating education” which will enable them “to think kindly of and do justice to all the communities.”⁷¹ The following line is of utmost significance:

Let our universities produce sincere, patriotic, God-fearing men of liberal views, robust physically, mentally and morally, who can heroically fight the battles of life, and the bloodless battles of their country.⁷²

This portrayal of an ideal Indian shares all the virtues with those portrayed by the authors. The idea of national education producing god-fearing liberal men is similar to what Bankim professed in his *Theory of Religion* referred to by Partha Chatterjee in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*. In opposition to western culture, Bankim professed the idea of *anusilan* or practice which was more complete and more perfect than the western concept of culture. While the western concept was totally agnostic, the idea of *anusilan* was based on *bhakti* that implied the unity of knowledge and duty. Drawing from the teachings of the *Bhagavadgita*, duty, in this

⁶⁹ See Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (New York: Oxford, 2001) 22.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 56.

⁷¹ Ibid. 56-7.

⁷² Ibid. 57.

case, meant performance of acts without the expectation of rewards.⁷³ Liberal mindedness, physical and spiritual strength alike, the courage to face crude realities of life, and most importantly, the spirit of nationalism in which there is no room for violence – these are the virtues which have been celebrated by the authors of both generations.

Thus, Jatindranath Mitra calls attention to the role of institutional education in inspiring nationalist sentiment. The colonizers' politics embedded within Macaulay's Minutes made its way through the fundamental constituent of a society, that is, institutional education. This politics was aimed at creating a clerical cohort out of a civilized society, through sheer disavowal of its age-old wisdom, by labelling its members as barbarians. The political design was to convince the Indians of the fact that it was the colonial rulers who brought with them the light of civilization for India; to make them forget the glory of its history and the rich treasures of its ancient literature; that is, to divest India of its past so that the nation-builders would have nothing to claim as their own. This makes clear why Jatindranath was so insistent on introducing Indian history and patriotic literature in the academic curriculum. It was to inspire the students with the sense of their glorious past and with their national treasures in form of history, literature and philosophy which would ultimately prepare them to build resistance against the dominance of western culture.

Renunciation

“India has to teach the world Renunciation. One cannot find God on the road to Mammon”⁷⁴ – this is what the brother in *My Brother's Face* declares to the author during their discussion on the ill-effects of industrialization on Indian society. The brother believes that “[t]he materialist is bent on destroying beauty and holiness”⁷⁵; and it is because of this that Gandhi's anti-industrialization campaign has stirred the nation and its people who have begun to consider him “not only as an Indian prophet, but as the ‘trumpet of a new prophecy’ for all Asia.”⁷⁶

⁷³ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World in The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) 66.

⁷⁴ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 201.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 200.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 201.

Therefore, before we move on to the discussion of religion, spirituality and the ideal of renunciation being used as a fundamental trope in the nationalist agenda of Gandhi and also in the construction of Indianness by Mukerji and Mitra in their narratives, we need to refer to Ramachandra Guha's observation in *India After Gandhi* (2008):

An even more vast literature grew – and it too is still growing – on the forms, functions, causes and consequences of the opposition to colonial rule. Leading that opposition was the social reformer, spiritualist, prophet and political agitator Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.⁷⁷

Like the title of the book itself, Guha's succinct simplification of the whole conundrum of India's anti-colonial struggle into one single name, that of Gandhi, ratifies the legitimacy of a major section of the present chapter. Moreover, the order in which Guha arranges the epithets qualifying the role of Gandhi in the anti-colonial movement is quite thought-provoking. Gandhi's political entity comes last while he is primarily presented as a social reformer, a spiritualist and a prophet. A political activist's zeal for social reforms is understandable as political and social preoccupations work at tandem. But a political activist playing the primary roles of a spiritualist and prophet is actually indicative of the mass-psychology and traditional culture of the society concerned. This conforms to Jatindranath Mitra's precise explanation of the objective of the nationalist leaders he has portrayed in *Towards the Dawn* – "They worked for the formation of an Indian Nation on the firm basis of India's spiritual civilization."⁷⁸

Gandhi's image as a "spiritualist" and a "prophet", as summarized by Ramachandra Guha, took final shape with his asceticism, which became the "central part of his image, [with which] he was able to present himself as a figure of unique political authority."⁷⁹ This particular disposition of Gandhi began with his reactions to the Bambatha Rebellion in Natal in 1906.⁸⁰ The one-sided massacre carried out by the colonial troops horrified Gandhi which made him respond in a peculiar way,

⁷⁷ Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi* (Noida: Picador, 2008) xxiii.

⁷⁸ Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 182.

⁷⁹ Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (London: Yale University Press, 1989) 43.

⁸⁰ For details please see Jeff Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion: The Zulu Uprising of 1906* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006).

leading to his decision to renounce sex for life.⁸¹ Jonathan Hyslop's view on Gandhi's proclamation of celibacy is worth noting here. He writes:

Gandhi seems to have had a guilt and fear-ridden attitude to sexuality; in this respect, he was perhaps more a Victorian than a Hindu traditionalist. Gandhi seems to have seen sex as an inherently violent act and thus to have made a connection between the abandonment of war and chastity.⁸²

Thus, if we agree with Hyslop, we find Gandhi's reason for adopting *brahmacharya* quite different from that of the earlier nationalists who had disseminated and encouraged the ideal long before he had emerged as the leader of Indian nationalism.

It is with reference to Ayurveda, the ancient text on Indian medicine, and the *Bhagavadgita*, the holy text of the Hindus, that *brahmacharya* has always been promoted as a means to attain absolute strength of mind and body. In the eleventh verse of the seventh chapter in the *Bhagavadgita* Lord Krishna, the Supreme Being says:

Balam balavataamasmi kaamaraagabivarjitam
*Dharmaaviruddho bhuteshu kaamo'smi bharatarshabha*⁸³

When translated, this verse means, "I am the strength, ability and virility of the strong – that strength which is devoid of passions, sexual desires, attachments to material things and fondness for loved ones. I sanction those bodily desires which are necessary only for the maintenance of the body and for procreation."⁸⁴ Thus, absolute or supreme strength, as described in the *Bhagavadgita*, requires one to abstain from physical desires and a hankering for material things. Moreover, in Ayurveda the *veerya* (semen) is considered the source of life-force which is the essence of thought, intelligence and consciousness. Hence preservation of the semen is considered necessary for preserving vitality. This is exactly why the concept of *brahmacharya* has been promoted by the nationalist leaders and recurs throughout the discourse of Indian nationalism.

⁸¹ M.K. Gandhi, "Satyagraha in South Africa" in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 29 (New Delhi: Publications Division of the Government of India, Navajivan, 1958-94) 466-73.

⁸² Jonathan Hyslop, "Gandhi 1869-1915: The Transnational emergence of a public figure" in Judith M. Brown and Anthony Parel, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 43.

⁸³ Swami Gambhirananda (tr.), *Bhagavadgita* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1984) 323.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 323.

However, it should be borne in mind that apart from controlling one's passions and sexual desires, the dictum directs detachments from the material world and one's family and friends. Therefore, celibacy is often wrongly used as a synonym to the Sanskrit word *brahmacharya*.⁸⁵ *Brahmacharya* is a long-established practice in Hinduism. It is a state of mind in which one can keep himself detached from all kinds of worldly attachments and physical desires. The practice of *brahmacharya* helps one to attain absolute control over his senses. It is observed by *sanyasis* (ascetics) and holy men. In our present discussion the use of the term *brahmacharya* will be more apt than the word "celibacy". Joseph S. Alter argues that this concept of *brahmacharya* developed "as a strategic concept opposed to Westernization."⁸⁶ But *brahmacharya* is one of the essential practices which Indian spirituality advocates. We have been observing since the previous chapter that spirituality has been deployed as one of the basic matrices of Indianness. Thus *brahmacharya* being part of Indian spiritual culture has naturally been asserted to oppose westernization.

In the previous chapter I have already discussed how renunciation and *brahmacharya* have been represented as an essential practice. We have seen that Sarath Kumar Ghosh made his protagonist Prince Barath renounce his family and his kingdom and set forth in the search of true knowledge. Though Ghosh did not emphasize the basic idea of *brahmacharya* in as many words, the implication was very clear as the concept of *brahmacharya* had already been disseminated and encouraged by prominent nationalists in India like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose before Ghosh's novel was published. Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose advocated *brahmacharya* long before Gandhi.

What Hyslop interprets as "contrast" – renunciation of the worldly life on one hand and active participation in the political struggles of the nation on the other – is actually the conflation of a binomial working in tandem – renunciation of the personal and committing oneself entirely to the service of others.⁸⁷ A detached participation in the battle to establish righteousness is the fundamental message of the *Bhagavadgita*, and this was what "stimulated a cult of martyrdom for its own

⁸⁵ *Brahmacharya* is a Sanskrit word meaning the state that man attains when he reaches the *Brahman*, i.e., the absolute entity.

⁸⁶ Joseph S. Alter, "Celibacy, Sexuality and Nationalism in North India" in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (eds.), *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (London: Duke University Press, 2005) 313.

⁸⁷ Hyslop, 'Gandhi 1869-1915: The Transnational emergence of a public figure', 43.

sake in place of effective programmes,” according to Sumit Sarkar.⁸⁸ Rajat Kanta Ray observes that the *Bhagavadgita* was the most important reason for the conversion of the young nationalists to revolutionary terrorism. He explains that the text was reinterpreted in the changing socio-political conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Modern interpretations of the *Bhagavadgita* inspired the western-educated intellectuals and nationalists. For Gandhi *brahmacharya* was an essential practice for self-control; and for the extremists it was necessary for the preservation of vitality.

However, it is quite interesting that renunciation or *brahmacharya* was considered an essential practice for both the nationalist factions – those who believed in the idea of non-violence and also those who believed in armed revolution, that is, both Gandhian and non-Gandhian nationalists. In *My Brother's Face*, the brother, who had been an extremist, is portrayed by the author almost as a meditative ascetic:

... his face glowed with serenity, the long black lashes of his eyes quivered, his mouth ever so austere, now relaxed its corners and smiled ... with an intimation of joyous mystery that his soul was just then entering ... his eye's large, delicately wrought like Buddha's, I studied while he meditated.⁸⁹

This representation of brother, who is a bachelor, who has been able to detach himself from the worldly ties by sequestering himself from his family, and who has dedicated his life to his motherland, is evocative of the idea of an ideal hero of India. The idealization of renunciation, which we find to be a recurrent trope in the construction of an Indian hero, can also be found in Jatindranath's novel.

It is, however, interesting that Jatindranath problematizes the idea of renunciation in *Towards the Dawn*. He does appreciate the idea of renunciation and its importance to the nationalists, but at the same time he also draws attention to the essential practicalities of life, the necessary duties and responsibilities of the common man which he cannot afford to deny. The parallel representation of heterosexual relations in and out of marital bond has a definite purpose in his novel. Jatindranath recognizes the importance and solemnity of conjugal relationships. In contrast with the characters Jogesh and Pratap, who are nationalist leaders and are

⁸⁸ Sarkar, *Modern India*, 124.

⁸⁹ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 25.

found to be leading almost ascetic lives, Karmi is a family man who has left his wife and parents to dedicate his life to the service of his motherland. The author shows how love for and sense of duty towards the nation gradually evolve within the complexities of personal relationships and romantic affairs. But he also portrays how Karmi and Asrumoti's conjugal life suffers due to Karmi's prioritising of his social and political duties over his personal responsibilities. He leaves for South Africa while his wife remains in India with her in-laws. Deprived of a normal family life, Asrumoti dedicates her life to the service of the country in her own way. She begins with the task of imparting basic education to women and then gradually cultivates a sense of patriotism in them. The author does not sanction this rift between the married couple and unites them at the end of the narrative. There are moments of tension which both Karmi and Asrumoti are made to suffer through only to realize their importance in each other's life.

The dedication of their lives to the service of the country does not however make these characters emotionally invulnerable. They suffer from common human weaknesses. Josephine, a young English widow, develops a fondness for Pratap and this does not escape Sukhalata's feminine intuition as she was in love with Pratap before her marriage. It is during this phase that Pratap writes a criticism of Sukhalata's poems in "New Life", a journal edited and published by Jogesh. Pratap profoundly eulogises her poetic genius. This overwhelming appreciation from Pratap after his mysterious silence about Sukhalata's activities and achievements rouses curious feelings in her heart and has a soothing effect on her perturbed mind. While travelling on a boat one day, Pratap and Sukhalata are caught in a terrible storm. Having no other option, Pratap has to carry Sukhalata and swim across the river, ultimately saving their lives. Though their repressed emotions for each other get triggered on the spur of the moment, Pratap reminds Sukhalata of her moral obligation towards her husband who is suffering from tuberculosis. As in the case of Karmi and Asrumoti, here too, the author stresses on the realization of conjugal responsibilities. The execution of one's social or political duty does not necessarily imply exemption from one's conjugal responsibilities.

On the other hand, Josephine, while expressing her feelings for Pratap mentions that their "love is pure and heavenly. ... We must not forget the

Motherland!”⁹⁰ It is quite clear that Josephine implies platonic love by describing their love with the epithets “pure” and “heavenly”. Similarly, Pratap replies: “you have alighted on my heart as the goddess of the happy Dawn. And in the near future, a glorious dawn will come to crown our Motherland.”⁹¹ The novel ends with Sukhalata’s realization of the mutual emotions that Pratap and Josephine feel for each other, but by now her love for Pratap has turned into reverence as she says that she would worship him throughout her life. What we gather from this is that the love of an English widow or a married Indian woman for a young man, neither of which has any possibility of social acceptance, is elevated to the emotion of regard and reverence. On ethical questions the author does not take any risks and conforms to the archetypal parameters of ethicality where the institution of marriage is deemed sacrosanct and any other form of heterosexual romantic emotion is presented as platonic and spiritual.

From the above discussion with reference to the novel and its characters and their emotional interplays, a very significant question surfaces up – why do we always relate the idea of renunciation with men? In this novel Asrumoti gradually develops a sense of detachment from Karmi after the latter’s parents die and dedicates her life to the service of the nation. One might argue that her circumstances compelled her to alienate herself from her family, but that does not nullify her observance of *brahmacharya* which is in no way less significant than that of her husband. Sukhalata is compelled to marry according to her father’s choice who does not approve of her love affair with Pratap. Though circumstances bring them together once again, she cannot unwind the events which have already taken place. She has to perform her conjugal responsibilities till her husband dies of tuberculosis. Widowed and without any other responsibilities to shoulder, her leading a cloistered life would have been natural as per the norms of the contemporary society. But she detaches herself from her family and friends and commits herself to the nationalist movement. Josephine’s renunciation is also self-imposed. She leaves her family and her own country to fight for the rights of the people of a foreign land. She has nothing to expect in return. Even the possibility of a personal relationship with Pratap is nipped at the bud by the latter. Still she devotes her life to the service of a country which is not even her motherland. What could be better instances of renunciation than these?

⁹⁰ Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 248.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 249.

It will not be wrong to say that Jatindranath deploys this idea of detachment to project Josephine as someone whose Indianness overpowers her foreign origin.

Jatindranath has thus problematized the idea of renunciation in two ways – firstly, by focussing on the importance of family and other practicalities of life and secondly, by drawing our attention to the fact that the idea of renunciation involves not only the person concerned but also his family and friends. The appreciation of renunciation requires the sanction of the negligence of one's duty towards his family for a greater cause. Again, when we sanction the indifference to filial and conjugal responsibilities, we fail to acknowledge the sacrifice of one's family for the same cause. Jatindranath therefore shows that renunciation involves not one, but more than one person and that the impact of renunciation is more profound and pervasive than we instantly think of. However, through the description of the Ashram⁹² towards the end of the novel (the significance of which we shall discuss later on) Jatindranath asserts the significance of the idea of renunciation in the Indian context. It is in such an Ashram that Jatindranath makes his characters worship Mother India. What could be a better way of explaining the inseparability of the ideas of Indianness and renunciation?

Indian idea of strength and courage

In the previous chapter I have discussed how the idea of hunting was deployed by the authors in order to project the image of the strong, courageous and chivalrous Indian. I have also mentioned that the purpose was mainly to counter popular assumptions of the westerners that Indians were physically weak and pusillanimous. But after Gandhi defined a new form of resistance and resilience through his doctrine of non-violence, perceptions of power and courage changed forever in the discourse of Indian nationalism. However, Gandhi's idea of non-violence was not convincing enough to motivate all the political factions; but a section of the extremist nationalists who believed in armed rebellion began to re-justify their methods of resistance.

Thus, one of the major debates that *My Brother's Face* deals with is the justifiability of the non-violent Non Co-operation Movement as opposed to revolutionary terrorism. However, before we proceed with our discussion on this

⁹² An Ashram is a monastery which houses saints who renounce their worldly lives in dedication to the contemplation of the absolute knowledge.

topic, we need to clarify the use of the terms such as terrorism and anarchism, which were used with reference to the nationalists who believed in the armed struggle. Michael Silvestri, in his essay “Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience” mentions that the definition of the activities of such nationalists against the oppression of the colonial rule is a contested issue.⁹³ He mentions that the colonial officials referred to these revolutionaries as anarchists whereas “[p]erceptive British intelligence officers” identified the problematic of such labelling.⁹⁴ Silvestri argues that the term “terrorist” was used by the British observers with respect to the nationalists more accurately, though it left ambiguity in determining the violent or non-violent methods of revolution unresolved. He refers to the historian Charles Townshend who is absolutely certain about using the word “terrorism”, specifically with regard to the revolutionaries of Bengal as their anti-colonial actions “included robberies, arms smuggling, acts of violence against British and Indian servants of the colonial state, and by the 1930s, attacks on Europeans in general.”⁹⁵ The brother in *My Brother’s Face* is portrayed as a nationalist who had once been a terrorist, but has withdrawn himself from the terrorist activities when the narrative opens. He represents that section of the extremist nationalist group which began to question the justifiability of armed rebellion but was too sceptical to approve of Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence.

We must keep in mind that Dhan Gopal never mentions the name of the protagonist and refers to him as “my brother” throughout the narrative. The book was first published in 1924, and it was probably because he did not want to risk the life of his brother that he remained discreet about his name. A revelation and a written documentation of the acts of sedition that his brother (Jadu Gopal) was actively involved in would definitely have jeopardized his safety. However, through the narrative Dhan Gopal tries to portray the uniqueness of India and the Indian sensibility which houses both violent and non-violent dispositions, and expresses both of them according to immediate situations. It is interesting to note how Dhan Gopal relates his first interaction with his brother as soon as he lands in Bombay. He writes that as he gazed into his eyes he saw “not a man, but a continent. India, India,

⁹³ Michael Silvestri, ‘Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience’ in David C. Rapoport and Alex P. Schmid (eds.), *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 21, Number: 1, January-March 2009 (Essex: Taylor and Francis, 2009) 1-27.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 2.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 3.

India – I took the dust from his feet.”⁹⁶ Thus he considered his brother an embodiment of India. He has used the word “continent” probably to imply the vast stretch of the Indian sub-continent as a whole.

Dhan Gopal goes on describing his first close observation of his brother:

It astonished me to see how quickly he had entered into silence. ... Yet this man had been the head of the militant nationalists of India, living as a political rebel and fugitive from justice for six years ... His face glowed with serenity, the long black lashes of his eyes quivered, his mouth ever so austere, now relaxed its corners and smiled, as if to me, with an intimation of the joyous mystery that his soul was just then entering ... I studied while he meditated. Every now and then I said to myself, “And this is the man who was alleged to be the head of the terrorist party, a subverter of law and order, a monstrous anarchist!”⁹⁷

This description of the brother is illustrative of the unique identity of Indians and the dual nature of Indian sensibility. It is the combination of aggressiveness and gentleness, of ruthlessness and compassionateness, and of combativeness and meditateness that the author describes as the uniqueness of the spirit of India and Indians. Therefore it is an indication of India’s potential strength and power which remains hidden under the veil of her peaceable and amicable dispositions, and is mistaken as her incapacity and powerlessness. It will not be wrong to claim that Gandhi was the metonym for this veil or the “sheath” as commented by the Arab merchant who the author meets on his way back to India in the opening chapter of the novel. The merchant believes that just as a poignard needs to be kept safely within a sheath, Gandhi serves as the “sheath for all Asiatic souls.”⁹⁸ This explains the brother’s decision to refrain from armed revolution and try the non-violent form of resistance advocated by Gandhi. It was Gandhi’s idea of non-violence which only abated the armed revolution partially. It could not destroy the courage and fortitude of the nationalists.

⁹⁶ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 22.

⁹⁷ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 25.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 16.

The author offers a detailed narration of the revolutionary activities of the brother and his associates, which is an assertion of the strength and power of Indians which the westerners failed to perceive. According to the brother's version within the narrative, he was wanted by the Secret Service as he was suspected of belonging to one of the secret societies or the group of revolutionaries who were involved in the Indo-German conspiracy during the First World War. Secret societies came into existence from 1904 with the foundation of Abhinav Bharat by V.D. Savarkar which was basically a secret society of revolutionaries. During the following years a few more such secret societies were established which encouraged revolutionary terrorism. The most famous and the longest lasting among these societies were Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar, both based in Bengal. Their activities were mainly assassinating the oppressive officials, informers and traitors, and robbing in order to raise funds for purchasing arms and ammunition. These secret society revolutionaries were often referred to as "Swadeshi Dacoits".⁹⁹ Bipan Chandra says that this group of revolutionary nationalists/"terrorists" (as referred to by the government) gradually dissolved lacking a mass base and were deemed powerless in the face of the strong colonial power which did not spare any means to curb their spirit.¹⁰⁰ But he particularly mentions the substantial influence they had created on the overall growth of nationalism in India. Bipan Chandra quotes another historian, Hirendranath Mukherjee, who wrote in the appreciation of these revolutionaries: "they gave us back the pride of our manhood."¹⁰¹ The brother of *My Brother's Face* was one such "Swadeshi Dacoit".

However, the resilience of these nationalists was too strong to be curbed by the British so easily. It is believed that the revolutionaries finally established a secret nexus with the German power during the First World War.¹⁰² A pact was believed to have been made in which the Germans ensured the revolutionaries a steady supply of

⁹⁹ One of the most famous cases was the unsuccessful attempt of assassinating Kingsford, the unpopular judge at Muzaffarpur in Bengal in 1908. Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose bombed a carriage expecting it to be carrying Kingsford whereas the carriage had two ladies in it who were killed in the bombing. Prafulla Chaki shot himself and Khudiram Bose was hanged. There were attempts on Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, which was again unsuccessful and on Curzon-Wylie in London which was a successful attempt by Madan Lal Dhingra. Curzon-Wylie was assassinated in the attempt at London. According to official records 186 revolutionaries were killed or convicted between the years 1908-1918. For more details see Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989) 142-5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 145.

¹⁰¹ Hirendranath Mukherjee, *India Struggles for Freedom* (Bombay: n.p., 1948) 96.

¹⁰² For details on Indo-German conspiracy see Ashoke Mukhopadhyay (ed.), *Terrorism', A Colonial Construct* (Kolkata: Sahitya Samsad, 2009) 222-65.

arms and ammunition that would be required for their armed struggle against the British government. We get to know from *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* that in 1917, after America had joined the Allies during the First World War, the British police were on the lookout for Germans and also Indian conspirators who were suspected to be involved in the Indo-German pact. Unable to find Jadu Gopal in India, they supposed him to have fled to America and searched Dhan Gopal's residence in the hope of finding him there.

In his attempt to establish the valour of Indians, the author refers to the arrest and killing of Jatin Mukherjee in the narrative and claims that the latter was their cousin.¹⁰³ In this context we might mention here briefly that Jatin Mukherjee is still revered as a great hero and his encounter with a leopard has become a popular anecdote that every Bangalee child loves to listen to even today. In the narrative the brother describes how Jatin Mukherjee “killed a leopard with a dagger, putting his left elbow in the leopard's mouth and with his right hand thrusting the knife through the brute's eye deep into its brain.”¹⁰⁴ It is on this basis that Jatin Mukherjee is better known as “Baghajatin” in Bengal. However this incident is not the only instance of a man fighting a wild animal in the narrative. The author dedicates an entire chapter to Ghond, the hunter.

Returning home from the west, the author pays a visit to Ghond, the famous hunter, who he calls “the hero of [his] childhood”.¹⁰⁵ He is shocked to find a leopard in Ghond's cottage which the latter has been able to domesticate. Ghond narrates how, a few years back, he and his fellow villagers were attacked by a leopard while returning from a wedding through the forest. While the fellow villagers climbed up the trees to save themselves from the beast, Ghond waited for it to face him, as he knew that it would not spare them if left on its own. Suddenly it leapt above his head through a forked branch of a tree. But in a while he realized that the beast had miscalculated its leap and had fatally wounded itself. Just then, the mewling of the cub of the leopard drew his attention. Considering himself the cause of its mother's death, Ghond brought it home. He domesticated the leopard to such an extent that it never tasted flesh. According to Ghond “she has been brought up like a high-caste

¹⁰³ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 167.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 167.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 247.

lady – a strict vegetarian.”¹⁰⁶ Here too, the author conveys the same message as we observed in the earlier novels; that though Indian men are courageous enough to face even the deadliest beasts, hunting and killing is not considered a mere game of entertainment. Ghond had not killed the cheetah himself, it died of accident; still his sense of guilt made him take the responsibility of the cub. It was only for the purpose of self-defence and protecting the fellow villagers that he had to provoke the tiger out of its hide out. Even in the face of danger Ghond did not fail to notice the beauty of the beast: “Had she not insisted on eating me, I should have loved the creature, she looked so beautiful.”¹⁰⁷ Thus, through the portrayals of both Ghond and Jatin Mukherjee Dhan Gopal echoes the same ideas regarding the proper and justified use of courage and prowess as conveyed through the earlier novels.

According to Jadu Gopal, after the assassination of Jatin Mukherjee, the leadership of the secret society was entrusted upon him in 1915. This version of Jadu Gopal is not at all apocryphal and it can be verified from ‘*Terrorism*’, *A Colonial Construct* (2009) which is basically a selection of British Home Department Intelligence Reports on Indian Nationalist Revolutionary Activities from 1907-1936. According to the reports Jadu Gopal did actually join the Calcutta branch of Anushilan Samiti. It says: “He gradually became an important revolutionary leader, and in March 1915, information was obtained that Jatin Mukherji, then in concealment near Balasore, had ordered members of his party to take instructions from Jadu Gopal Mukherji. He took a prominent part in the German plot to import arms into India. At this time he was a 6th year student of the Medical College, and was about to take his M.B. examination later in the year.”¹⁰⁸

It seems that the author takes advantage of this narrative to explain his and his revolutionary brother’s stance so far as their involvement with Germany was concerned. He repudiates the popular apprehension that the secret nexus between the revolutionaries and the Germans was established on condition that the latter would gain absolute power over India if they aided the nationalists with arms. He clarifies that the activities of the nationalists aided by the Germans would in the end be of no good to India, rather it would replace British authority with German. He particularly mentions that it was not on their agenda to replace the existing foreign rule with

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 253.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 251.

¹⁰⁸ Mukhopadhyay (ed.), ‘*Terrorism*’, *A Colonial Construct*, 359-60.

another one: “We in India are not rebelling against Great Britain, but against the gluttony of the whole Western civilization.”¹⁰⁹ The author addresses his brother’s involvement in the Indo-German conspiracy quite diplomatically. His handling of this issue appears to have been contrived if we trust the reports that are published in *‘Terrorism’, A Colonial Construct* because in the novel he makes the brother refuse any practical basis to his involvement in the Indo-German conspiracy. To him German interest in India is in no way different than that of Britain:

We had been fomenting and creating a rebellious spirit in India since 1857 – forty years after the Mutiny – then suddenly came the Germans in 1914 to exploit it for their own benefit. They knew nothing about us; we did not wish external help; we were convinced that India, if she were to rise, must do so by her own inner resources.¹¹⁰

Though Mukerji denies his brother’s involvement in the Indo-German plot, the fact that this faction of revolutionary nationalists had little or no faith on the non-violent strategies of Gandhi is explicitly mentioned in the narrative. Being asked by the author whether the brother believed in Non Co-operation, the latter clearly expresses his alienation from the ideal. Their failure in the Indo-German plot left them with no other hope to fall back upon but to observe the Gandhian strategies at work, which was diametrically opposite to their modes of action and naturally which they could not affiliate themselves with.

If the masses, who are the majority of the sons of India, believe it ... who are we to criticize them? We the old militants must step aside and let them work out what they feel to be their own programme. ... Without actually taking leadership in non-co-operation we can serve our country in many ways.¹¹¹

This shows that though the brother was sceptical about the Gandhian principles of nationalist struggle, he did not reject it outright. He withdrew himself from the

¹⁰⁹ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 200.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 169.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 197.

extremist activities and tried to understand the viability of Gandhian methods as a non-judgmental observer.

However, it is interesting to note that the source of this strength and courage for the revolutionaries lied in the religious texts, mainly the *Bhagavadgita*. Just as we observed in the earlier novels that the sport of hunting was sanctioned not as an entertaining game but as a necessity, anti-colonial revolutionary activities which involved violent methods were also supported by the religious texts. Rajat K. Ray writes that in a sudden search of the Dhaka Anushilan Samiti library in November 1908, the police found that there were no less than thirteen copies of the *Bhagavadgita* and the issue register showed that this was the book mostly read by the revolutionaries. Two other books mentionable were *Bartaman Rananiti* (Contemporary Ethics of War) and *Mukti Kon Pathe* (What is the path of revolution) which harnessed the doctrines of the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Chandi* for the purposes of actual revolution by violent means.¹¹² This can be reconfirmed by H.L. Salkhead, as well as Silvestri who quotes the former: “the revolutionary societies in India have worked largely with the help of religion and are followed with that enthusiasm which is only associated with a religion.”¹¹³ Thus, Dhan Gopal succeeds in proving to the western world that there was no dearth of bravery and resilience in Indian men, and also that their assertions of strength and power was always supported by ethical codes.

Peasants' India

Although Gandhi is appreciated for acknowledging that the non-elite population of India constitutes the real India, there is no denying the fact that some nationalists such as the Gopal brothers realized it much before Gandhi arrived onto the Indian political scene. They had already realized the fact that India actually belonged to the peasants who comprised the majority and not the rich elites. And it was this section of the population which still retained their Indianness in form of the traditional knowledge in their professions as well as in their philosophy of life. Therefore, safeguarding their professions and their ways of life from the advent of westernization was the primary aim that Gandhi recognized. And this was the idea on which the brother, otherwise a non-Gandhian nationalist, agreed with Gandhi; and

¹¹² Ray, ‘Moderates, Extremists, and Revolutionaries’, 84.

¹¹³ Michael Silvestri, ‘Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience’, 11.

which forms a basic theme of *My Brother's Face*. It is important to note at this point that one of the most significant features which makes Mukerji's narrative remarkably different from the earlier narratives of Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra is the presence of the common people in the narrative space. The Indian national movement which was represented by the elitist Indian National Congress witnessed significant participation of the common people after the emergence of Gandhi.

In contrast with the earlier novels in which the central characters belonged to the royalty, or at least to the educated class, characters which populate the narrative space of Dhan Gopal's novel are mostly peasants. It should be remembered in this context that the term "peasant" as used here does not imply the class of cultivators exclusively. Peasant society is situated somewhat between the landed gentry and the untouchables. Rajat Kanta Ray explains:

[Peasant society] would include the artisans, the clean status serving castes (for instance, the barbers), and rural literate persons from peasant households who act as village pedagogues, peasant doctors, and rustic clergy. The peasant society thus incorporates a wide spectrum of people. It is held together by a common culture and by the fact that in terms of caste origin it is constituted by families and lineages belonging to the "peasant castes" i.e. those castes whose traditional avocation is cultivation, besides the artisan and service castes of clean or semi-clean status cited above. The term cultivation is here used to denote agriculture as well as pastoral farming.¹¹⁴

In *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, Jadu Gopal observed that the matrix of revolution involves the following elementary constituents – young students, farmers, artisans, labourers and soldiers (who can all be bracketed as "peasants" according to Ray). Restitution of power from the English to the peasants and labourers was the idea of independence that Jadu Gopal and his brothers believed in.¹¹⁵

It is extremely interesting to note at this point that Dhan Gopal raised his concerns regarding the representation of the peasantry in the national movement and

¹¹⁴ Ray, *Exploring Emotional History*, 190. Ray briefly differentiates between the gentry culture and the peasant culture as hereditary cultural effect of freedom from manual labour for the former as opposed to participation in manual labour for the latter group.

¹¹⁵ Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 176 and 235.

the contribution of the non-elites within the paradigm of Indian culture which remained neglected by the dominant historiographies of India. This is addressed by the author's brother where he says:

We are working now to preserve India's culture ... We believe that the peasants who number eighty percent of the total population of India are the real Indians. All our folk-songs, folk-music, folk dances, and religious poetry have been preserved and kept intact by the peasantry. They alone are unsullied by foreign influence.¹¹⁶

Thus, the process of bringing the section of population situated on the fringes of society into the central position in historical/political/social discourse was initiated by the Gandhian nationalists in the 1920s and also by the Gopal-brothers. Naturally we find a barber, a silk-vendor, a rug-maker, a Kaowal (folk singer) and a hunter along with young university students, a budding industrialist, a musician and a *sanyasi* in the narrative space of *My Brother's Face*. In this unique representation of India the author gives equal importance to all. Therefore, while the brother narrates his clandestine political activities and the experiences that he gathered from his extensive travels crisscrossing the subcontinent and meeting various people from different walks of life, he admits "that every peasant believed the English must go."¹¹⁷ The views of the peasants is thus given due importance throughout the narrative.

The brother's travelling across India and his observations were similar to that of Gandhi. Gandhi, after returning from South Africa in 1915, had undertaken a journey through various parts of India in order to know more about his own country and its people, who he would be fighting for. Thus the Gopal-brothers shared the same view as Gandhi that one has to visit rural India to find out what real India is all about, as city-life was sullied by the influence of the western culture and reflected the situation of only a negligible percentage of the entire population. The result of Gandhi's visit to the farthest corners of India was two-fold. Gandhi came to know

¹¹⁶ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 197-8.

¹¹⁷ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 164.

We might here refer to Ranajit Guha who argues that "the bourgeois-nationalist historiography has to wait until the rise of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress Party to explain the peasant movements of the colonial period so that all the major events of this genre up to the end of the First World War may then be treated as the pre-history of the 'Freedom Movement'. See Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983) 4.

real India closely on one hand; and on the other hand the peasants developed a strong reaction against the British rule in India as an effect of the indelible impression that Gandhi and his political ideas had cast upon their minds. The anti-British disposition of the peasants which the brother mentions and which I have quoted in the above paragraph was based on their conviction that the British had abandoned righteousness and therefore their doom was imminent. The naiveté of their optimism that the Avatar would descend to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness gained solid ground with the arrival of Gandhi.

It is worthwhile to note the peasants' perspective on Gandhi as observed by Gyanendra Pandey in his essay "Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism, 1919-1922": "The peasants' Gandhi was not a remote, western-educated lawyer-politician: he was a Mahatma, a Pandit, a Brahman, even a merchant 'who lives at Allahabad'."¹¹⁸ Gandhi had skills that proved rewarding in the socio-political state of affairs. He could appeal to a wide mass of people, could mediate between conflicting groups, and create viable political strategies. In the earlier novels the heroes were naturally meant to rule as they were born in royal families. But in *My Brother's Face* the author shows how a hero is made out of a common man by the masses. In the entire narrative Dhan Gopal purposely does not comment on Gandhi, but reports various remarks and comments made by the peasants about Gandhi. In his errands through the market the author narrator meets a barber. Unlike the frenzied mass who is swayed by their perception of Gandhi as superhuman, the barber proves his rationality of judgment as he describes Gandhi as an ordinary human being, with a "monkey-like countenance without beauty," but still marvels at his power of speech. The silk vendor too informs the narrator of his pledge to Gandhi of selling goods only of domestic manufacture.¹¹⁹ To quote Judith Brown, "he offered his compatriots such different things as a new way of relating to their rulers and to other Indians, new opportunities for public careers, as well as (for a few) a convincing ideal and

¹¹⁸ The word 'Mahatma' means 'Great Soul'. Maha (great) + Atma (soul) = Mahatma. A 'Pandit' is a scholar. A 'Brahman' is someone who belongs to the highest caste according to Hinduism. Gyanendra Pandey, "Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism, 1919-1922" in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 256. For details on the history of the Peasant Revolt and Gandhi's role in it, please see this particular essay -- pgs. 233 – 287 in the mentioned text.

¹¹⁹ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 31.

ideology.”¹²⁰ Thus, it is the peasants who made the greatest political hero of India out of Gandhi.

Gandhi as the ideal Indian hero

When the narrative begins with the author’s journey back to India, the most distinctive observation that Dhan Gopal makes is of the Gandhi-frenzy, by which the entire population of India is caught up. In the opening chapter, as the author narrates the reactions of his co-passengers as the vessel approaches the Western Ghats of India, he describes how the name of Gandhi had penetrated deep into the Indian psyche:

As the boat was moored and made fast the crowds ashore shouted,
“*Gandhiki Jai!*”

“What does that mean?” I asked Arabi.

“They are giving thanks for the safe arrival of the boat at this shore,” he answered.

“But they shouted, ‘Victory to Gandhi!’” I said still puzzled. I had returned to India in the very midst of the Gandhi ferment and during my first week, I found that the sound of his name rang like a refrain to everything I did.¹²¹

Gandhi has taken the place of God as the being to whom travellers express their gratitude after a safe return from a long journey. The author is explicit about the acceptance of Gandhi even amongst Muslims as he says categorically that an Arabian pearl-merchant “[t]hough a Mohammedan, he was an ardent follower of Gandhi.”¹²² Later in the narrative too, a Muslim tonga-driver,¹²³ despite having his own justifications for not supporting each and every idea of Gandhi, expresses his reverence for the leader: “He is as one in whose eyes shines the peace of Allah. He speaketh as no Mollah can. He gladdens the heart and maketh the soul sweet with happiness at his words.”¹²⁴ The opening chapters of *My Brother’s Face* capture the

¹²⁰ Brown, *Gandhi – Prisoner of Hope*, 152.

¹²¹ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 21.

¹²² *Ibid.* 16.

¹²³ A tonga or tanga is a horse-drawn carriage used for transportation in the Indian sub-continent. Though they are gradually getting out of use, there are some towns in India and Pakistan where the tanga is still used as a means of transportation.

¹²⁴ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 33.

emotional fervour and what Shahid Amin calls the “mythopoeic imagination” of the common people of India associated with the name of Gandhi.¹²⁵ Shahid Amin’s analysis of this mass-frenzy about Gandhi, based on the various reports published in contemporary newspapers and periodicals, helps us to appreciate Dhan Gopal’s portrayal of Gandhi in a better way. Amin has shown in his essay how the common people fabricated various incidents in order to establish the superhuman powers of Gandhi. The circulation of these stories through newspapers led to newer stories as more people claimed to have experienced some miracle performed by Gandhi. Thus Gandhi’s status for the common people of India was more of a prophet, an agent of God, than a political leader.

The following excerpt from Shahid Amin’s essay “Gandhi as Mahatma” offers a similar description of the Gandhi-fever to Dhan Gopal’s initial chapters of *My Brother’s Face*. Amin has quoted this passage from Gandhi’s personal secretary Mahadev Desai’s diary which was published under the title *Day-to-day with Gandhi*.

Our train on the B.N.W. Railway lines stopped at all stations and there was not a single station which was not crowded with hundreds of people at that time. Even women, who never stir out of their homes, did not fail to present themselves so that they could see and hear him. A huge concourse of students would everywhere smother Gandhiji with their enthusiasm. If at some place a sister would take off her coral necklace and tell him, “I give this specially for you to wear”, at some other, *sanyasis* would come and leave their rosaries on his lap. If beautiful sheets of handspun and hand-woven cloth, many yards long, would be presented at one place, at some other place would turn up a loving villager from the woods, boastful of his trophy, saying, “Maharaj (an address of reverence) this is my feat of strength. The tiger was a terror to our people; I am giving the skin to you”. At some places, guns normally used as fog-signals were fired in his honour. At some others, we came across railway officers who would not give the

¹²⁵ Shahid Amin, ‘Gandhi as Mahatma’ in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988) 291.

green flag, when our train came within their jurisdiction, in order to have and let others have Gandhiji's *darshan*.¹²⁶

This mass-frenzy about Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – “Mahatmaji”, “Gandhiji”, “Bapu” or “Gandhi Bawa” as were the various names by which he was known amongst the cross-section of the society all across India – was the zeitgeist which Dhan Gopal Mukerji captures in *My Brother's Face*. The most phenomenal change that he observes in his travel through India in 1920s is that the nation's long quest for a national hero has finally come to an end. Gandhi has emerged as the first national hero of India with a pan-Indian appeal. He writes: “I found that the sound of his name rang like a refrain to everything I did.”¹²⁷

Gandhi's selfless image – all virtue and no vice – was compared by religious preachers with legendary characters from the Indian mythology. Towards the end of the narrative Dhan Gopal describes his visit to a temple in Calcutta where a minstrel is found reading out excerpts from the Mahabharata to a congregation gathered in the temple. The minstrel, while reciting the episode of the Gods' battle with the Titans to retrieve their rightful home, makes reference to the contemporary situation of the country. He recites the section where the Gods required a thunderbolt made out of the ribs of an absolutely selfless creature as a weapon to destroy the Titans. Even the Gods had to scan every nook and corner to find such a creature till at last they got hold of Dadhichi. Dadhichi is a prominent figure in Bhagavat Purana, which says that Dadhichi's bones were used by the Gods to make the thunderbolt which was used as a weapon to kill the Titans. While reciting this episode the minstrel refers to Gandhi repeatedly, whose selflessness could be compared only with Dadhichi's. Thus he is portrayed as the saviour of Indians in their battle with the British. Indians, like the Gods expelled from their rightful home, are bound in chains in their homeland – the British, like the Titans, have denied the Indians their rights to their own homeland – and Gandhi, just like Dadhichi, is the selfless soul who emerged as the leader of the nation to expel the British from the country and to restore the rights of the Indians to their own homeland and thereby establish justice.

... even among men, a selfless man, such as our Gandhi, is rare ...
they discovered this man [Dadhichi] they knew he was selfless – like

¹²⁶ Ibid. 290.

¹²⁷ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 21.

unto Mahatma Gandhi ... “Take what you need, gentlemen,” he said (as Gandhi does here and now, O my listeners!). ... Man is greater than Gods and Titans: from his selflessness springs the victorious Truth. Now that we have Gandhi, one selfless man in all Hindustan, Truth is assured of triumph!¹²⁸

It is through such portrayals that the author tries to explain how Gandhi and his professed ideals became a part of the religious discourses which were sure to be internalized by the majority of Indians who were basically religious minded.

Therefore, this leader who was a proclaimed celibate, clad in a dhoti with frugal food habits and an overall spartan way of life, was bound to acquire the confidence of the masses who could identify him with the *sanyasis* and *fakirs* (Muslim religious mendicants) whom they revered and in many occasions apotheosized.¹²⁹ Unlike the political leaders who either showed signs of their elite upbringing or their intellectual accomplishments, or both, who were seen as mere human beings only belonging to a different class of fortune’s favourites, who were in no way in a position to empathize with the real plight of the common mass, Gandhi was an intellectually accomplished common man accessible to all. According to Ashis Nandy, “there was in Gandhi not only a sophisticated ethical sensitivity but also political and psychological shrewdness.¹³⁰ With his saint-like figure and all-embracing affability, he gained easy access to people belonging to the margins; with his educational and professional background and his previous political accomplishments he gained the confidence of the educated and the elite section of the population, so much so that the ordinary people began to refer to him as “Bapu”, i.e. father – finally being called the “Father of the Nation” by Subhas Chandra Bose.¹³¹ This was the ideal Indian, the idea of which did not need to be constructed. He emerged just as he was and defined the ideal Indian hero.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 276-7. In Jadu Gopal’s memoirs, we find him comparing Gandhi with Viswamitra, one of the legendary sages of ancient India. According to him Gandhi was forced to launch the Quit India Movement as a result of the incorrigibility of the English, just as Viswamitra had to depose King Harishchandra from his throne and kingdom in order to rectify his wrongs. Refer to Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 477.

¹²⁹ A ‘dhoti’ is a single piece of cloth to cover one’s body.

¹³⁰ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009) 49.

¹³¹ The socio-historical state of affairs which led to the selective development of political consciousness is discussed in Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi’s Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 16-40. This book also deals in detail with the subsequent movements like the Satyagraha (1917-18) in Champaran, Kaira and Ahmedabad; the Rowlatt Satyagraha, the Khilafat and the Non Co-operation of 1920 in which Gandhi played a crucial role

It is necessary to note that this idea of an ideal Indian hero is very different from the idea which was professed in the earlier novels we have discussed in the previous chapter. With the emergence of Gandhi the conception of an ideal Indian and also that of an ideal Indian hero changed forever. Though Gandhi's education is in every way comparable with the fictional princes in Ghosh and Mitra's novels, unlike the latter Gandhi is a common man. Despite his educational background and professional skills he dedicated his life to the service of the nation. Unlike Barathpur and Hindupore, which are fictional spaces deployed in the narrative, Dhan Gopal's narrative is set in an actual space, in various cities of India. Thus the sense of fictionality of the narrative is challenged at every point by the references to real geographical locations, real historical incidents, real life characters (for readers who are aware of Dhan Gopal's family and acquaintances portrayed in this novel) and most importantly a real hero.

Inclusivity of Indian society

In contrast with the earlier novels (discussed in previous chapters) where Hindu-Muslim tensions had been hardly addressed, these issues gain prominence in the novels of Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath. The discussion of Hindu-Muslim issues and an uninterrupted emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity is due to the changing attitude of the Muslim League towards the Indian National Congress. Thus we find that religion is used as an obvious instrument in the assertion of Indianness. However, compared to earlier novels, this inclusive nature of Hinduism has been emphasised in the novels which are definitely not uninspired by politics. This assertion of the inclusivity of Indian society was of immediate import because of the ambiguity of the roles played by the nationalists.

Michael Silvestri in his essay "Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience" raises an important question on this ambiguity inherent in the

which finally contributed to his larger than life image. It would not be irrelevant here to refer to Ranajit Guha who argues that the force of the ruling ideologies, especially that of religion, "imbued the peasant with [the] negative consciousness and pandered to it by extolling the virtues of loyalty and devotion, so that he could be induced to look upon his subservience not only as tolerable but almost covetable. There were ancient cults which fostered *bhakti* – 'the basic need in feudal ideology', according to Kosambi – to make total dedication to one's superiors, divine as well as human, a matter of spiritual commitment." See Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 18-19. Even in Calcutta, which was the cradle of Western-style politics, Gandhi's supporters won seats in every provincial block, specially fighting on the issue of Non Co-operation. See JuBrown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*, 153.

nationalist ideas of the leaders, as to whether they were patriots or bigots. This discussion follows the issue of religious texts inspiring patriotism and revolutionary spirit in the nationalists of the age. The political appropriation of religious scriptures entailed Hindu philosophy which was being put into practice and therefore it had a suggestion of the castigation of non-Hindus – open or discreet. Initiated by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in *Anandamath*, the idea of dedicating one's life to the service of the goddess Kali, symbolizing mother India, was professed by later nationalists like Aurobindo Ghose. Silvestri's observation regarding the secular attitude of the revolutionaries is extremely relevant in the context of the present discussion. He says: "the revolutionary organizations adopted a more secular tone following the First World War."¹³²

The secular tone which Silvestri observes is conspicuously visible in Gandhi's idea of inclusive nationalism which was another major breakthrough. What has a direct impact on the novels is his attempt in the reconciliation between the Hindus and the Muslims and bringing the latter into the mainstream of Indian nationalism. Before discussing how Dhan Gopal addresses the Hindu-Muslim issue in *My Brother's Face* we need to make a brief account of the historical and political events which Gandhi used for his reconciliatory scheme. The two particular incidents which gained Gandhi the confidence of Muslims and Hindus alike were the Khilafat Movement and the Rowlatt Satyagraha. The claims of the Khilafat Movement was that the defeated Sultan of Turkey should retain his power of defending his faith, should remain the guardian of Islam's major holy places and that the geographical centre of Islam should remain under Muslim control. Indian Muslims referred to the promise made in the Royal Proclamation of 1858 which ensured the protection of religious faiths. Though Gandhi's position as the "Mahatma" and a nationalist might appear incongruous with his association with fierce believers in a pan-Islamic community, Judith M. Brown is of opinion that "his stance was essentially a natural progression from the status he had prized in South Africa as a spokesman for Muslim grievances."¹³³ She believes that his nexus with the "Ali brothers" (Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali) was another important factor that secured him the confidence of the Muslim population. On the other hand Gandhi's active participation in the Khilafat Movement provoked severe criticism among Hindus. He countered it by stating that

¹³² Michael Silvestri, 'Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience', 13.

¹³³ Brown, *Gandhi – Prisoner of Hope*, 140.

it was his moral responsibility to fight for justice, just as he had done in Champaran and Kaira and against the Rowlatt legislation.¹³⁴ The other grossly pernicious event which aroused the dissension of the Hindu community particularly was the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on 13th April 1919.

Also known as Amritsar Massacre, this took place in a public garden at Amritsar, Punjab. Brigadier-General Reginald E.H. Dyer had banned all public meetings right before that on the basis of information about an imminent insurgency. Hearing about the public meeting at the particular spot, he marched to the venue with fifty riflemen and ordered to shoot indiscriminately. 15,000 to 20,000 people had assembled at the meeting, including women and children. According to the Indian National Congress, the casualty number estimated was more than 1,500 and more than 1,000 killed. As a symbolic act of protest against this particular massacre Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood.¹³⁵ Serious condemnation of this incident became central to Gandhi's public work. Judith Brown observes:

The timing of the outburst of Indian political feeling on the questions generated by events in the Punjab played fortuitously into Gandhi's hands, coinciding with the deepening of Muslim agitation on the Khilafat issue. It gave him the cause which boosted his standing among Hindu politicians who were now even more doubtful of the value of the 1919 reforms.¹³⁶

Gandhi's response to these two particular events had direct bearing upon his image of an impartial political leader unbiased by communal affiliations.

The relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims of India had had its phases of crest and trough through the previous decades. The conviction of the British that the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was mainly engineered by Muslims had induced them to impose certain restrictions on the community. The study of Arabic, Persian and religious scriptures were banned. This created a negative impact on Muslims, who were disinclined to study English and pursue modern education. Sir

¹³⁴ The socio-historical state of affairs which led to the selective development of political consciousness is discussed in detail in Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power* 16-40. This book also deals in detail with the subsequent movements like the Satyagraha (1917-18) in Champaran, Kaira and Ahmedabad; the Rowlatt Satyagraha, the Khilafat and the Non Co-operation of 1920 in which Gandhi played a crucial role and which finally contributed to his larger than life image.

¹³⁵ For details on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre see Chandra, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, 182-3.

¹³⁶ Brown, *Gandhi – Prisoner of Hope*, 144.

Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–1898), realising the perils of such lack of interest among the Muslims towards modern education, launched the Aligarh Movement. He was pro-British and believed that the Indian National Congress was an essentially Hindu organisation and would never support Muslim issues.¹³⁷ The Muslim League, founded in 1906 in the wake of the Partition of Bengal in 1905, was on the other hand an anti-British and also an anti-Aligarh organisation. The members of the League ruled out the possibility of any clash of interest between the premises of Muslim self-affirmation and Indian nationalism. And this facilitated their ultimate alliance with the Indian National Congress. The Khilafat Movement finally catalysed a pan-Indian unity of the Muslim community and Gandhi's active participation in this movement acted as an inspiration for a Hindu-Muslim understanding. Thus, it proved mutually beneficial to the League and the Congress and Gandhi took advantage of the anti-British stance of the Khilafat Movement to bring the Muslims into the mainstream of Indian nationalism.¹³⁸

This politicized inclusion of the Muslims into the nationalist movement by the Indian National Congress with the special effort taken by Gandhi had an immediate impact amongst the Muslims of India. This was indeed a great political achievement and Dhan Gopal's reference to the acceptance of Gandhi by the Muslim community in the very first chapter of the novel is indicative of the materialization of this impossibility. The narrative of *My Brother's Face* opens with the author narrator's journey back to India. On the ship he meets an Arabian merchant who, the author writes, "[t]hrough a Mohammedan, he was an ardent follower of Gandhi";¹³⁹ and who believed that "for each one of us there is a nestling place in him."¹⁴⁰ Then he continues to say, "Can one resist the thunderbolt of truth?"¹⁴¹ This is illustrative of the confidence that Gandhi had created among the Muslims. The first chapter of the novel ends on the note of the similarity of culture and perceptions of life between Hindus and Muslims as opposed to that of the westerners: "Men's religions may

¹³⁷ For details on Sir Syed Ahmed Khan please see Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, 270-2.

¹³⁸ The Khilafat was considered to be a symbol that could unite the Indian Muslim community divided on the basis of regions, languages, class and sects. According to Gail Minault, a pan-Islamic symbol opened the way to pan-Indian Islamic political mobilization. See Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, 299 and Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982) 11.

¹³⁹ Mukerji, *My Brother's Face*, 16.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 17

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 17.

differ, but a Bedouin from the Arabian desert and a man from the bank of the Gunga sing alike; the heart is the same though the words and even passions are different.”¹⁴²

Beginning with a Muslim’s perspective on the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity, the author then gradually narrates how his father, though a Brahmin, was not prejudiced against other religions, and tried to inculcate the same openness in his children. The brother mentions that his father taught him to love Moradali, his music teacher, who was a Muslim by religion.¹⁴³ Moradali narrated to him the story of Hassan and Hussain and the battle of Karbala. Later the brother was admitted to a missionary school. This shows that from the early years of his life he was made to interact with people belonging to various religious backgrounds. The influence of Gandhi’s inclusivist nationalism on the common people is very well presented in the narrative through the description of the theatre. The theatrical performance at Dhulia, which the author visited with his brother, was concluded by an oracle stating the oneness of Hindus and Muslims – “*Rama, Rahim Ek Hai! – Allah Bhagaban Ek Hai!*” (Rama and Rahim is one and the same, and the God of the Muslims and that of the Hindus is also the same).¹⁴⁴ And then, there was heard a “deafening shout” – “*Gandhi Maharajki Jai!*” (Victory to Gandhi!).¹⁴⁵

The glory of Gandhi sung at the end of a dramatic performance in a public theatre is thus interpreted by the narrator’s brother:

Mother India is moving to a dimension higher than we see with our blind outer eyes. Gandhi is one of the many pilgrims from the interior tiger-guarded place. Gandhi is not a cure as the foreigners think; he is the sign of our convalescence.¹⁴⁶

Thus Gandhi represented the inner spirit of real India which still retained the elements of the ancient civilization and culture unscathed by European culture. The protagonist of this narrative believes that Gandhi was not actually the solution to the problems that India was facing during that particular period. He was just a

¹⁴² Ibid. 19.

¹⁴³ Moradali Khan was a renowned musician who happened to be the music teacher of the father of the Gopal brothers. Jadu Gopal narrates that their domestic help refused to wash Moradali’s dishes as he was a Muslim. Their mother intervened in this situation. She used to serve him food and wash his dishes. This inspired her children who learnt the lesson of religious indiscriminability from her. See Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 79.

¹⁴⁴ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. 27.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 27 and 28.

manifestation of the arousal of their dormant spirit out of profound disgust and desperation that had been gnawing on their inner psyche – Gandhi is a metonym for revival and rejuvenation of patriotic fervour. Thus the brother believes that the repeated emphasis on the integration of Hindus and Muslims and Gandhi's name being used as a common modality of integration is symptomatic not really of the reconciliation between the two communities but of the crisis and the building tensions between the two religious communities. Gandhi's neutral stand was only to pacify this tension.

In *Towards the Dawn* we find Jatindranath harping on the same idea of inclusivity which was necessary in the creation of a strong base for the nationalist movement. He takes one step further than Dhan Gopal and includes the Christians as well as the Anglo-Indians in his scheme of nationalism.

Thirty million souls, Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Anglo-Indians will feel that they are brothers and sisters, the children of a great country, will pray together with folded hands and work for the happiness and welfare of the Motherland. In all their thoughts and deeds the love of country will predominate.¹⁴⁷

Jatindranath, echoing Siddha Mohana Mitra, attempts to include the Anglo-Indian community into the social structure of India.. However, Jatindranath not only acknowledges them as a part of Indian society, but also includes them in the mainstream of nationalist movement. It is interesting to note at this point that the author also involves an Englishwoman in the nationalist movement in his novel. Josephine's interest in Indian history and culture is given due acknowledgment by other characters and they accept her as their colleague and involves her in their movement. Josephine attends the Anglo-Indian Conference at Calcutta and propounds strongly that "it would be ungrateful and ungraceful [on part of the Anglo-Indians] to disown and disparage India."¹⁴⁸

More importantly, though we are not dealing with the situation or representation of women in the entire construction of Indian and Indianness, as it is a large and complex area to cover, I would like to mention that among the four novels, it is only in *Towards the Dawn* that we find the direct participations of women in the

¹⁴⁷ Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 183.

nationalist movement of India. The power of women to “mould the mind of the children on the firm basis of patriotism and fellow-feeling” has been acknowledged and pointed out by Jatindranath.¹⁴⁹ Thus, apart from the inclusion of the non-Hindu population, the introduction of women in the essentially elitist and masculinist movement is a significant aspect of *Towards the Dawn*. This shows that the consciousness had dawned on the nationalist thinkers that the involvement of women in the nationalist movement was absolutely necessary for creating a stronger base for the movement.

Shekhar Bandyopadhyay believes that though Gandhi talked about Swaraj, he never defined it.¹⁵⁰ And this want of a strict definition of the word left it open for interpretation – it did not risk the possibilities of irresolvable convolutions which are the general outcomes of such definitional statements. This helped him to muster the confidence of people from all religious and regional communities. He did not specify anybody and consequently he impressed everybody. This is how Bandyopadhyay explains the development of Gandhi’s “inclusivism” or his “umbrella type leadership”, as he prefers to call it.¹⁵¹ It is this idea of inclusivism that finds expression in the novels of Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath.

A graphic image of ‘Bharat-Mata’ and a hymn

Through our discussions so far, we have been dealing with the various tropes which were used by the authors in their construction of India. Finally, in *Towards the Dawn* we come across a graphic image of Mother India and a hymn composed on her; thus the abstract imagination of India is rendered concrete with a graphic portrayal in the novel. In keeping with the spiritual tradition of India which has been one of the major focal points in the construction of Indian nationalism, Jatindranath makes the nationalists in his narrative settle in an Ashram (a hermitage) which is said to have been set up for the “Society of India’s Servants”. Engulfed within a forest far away from the madding crowd of the city, this Ashram contains within its premises individual cottages for the members of the society; and at the centre is “an ancient temple believed to have been built in Samudra Gupta’s time ... in this temple an

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 7.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Swaraj’ is a Sanskrit word literally meaning ‘self-rule’.

¹⁵¹ Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, 288.

image of Bharat-Mata (Mother India) majestically beautiful, of snow-white colour, was set up.”¹⁵² The ancient temple is iconic of the rich historical past of India which is preserved and revered. Thus a space which is iconographical of India is created within the narrative space of *Towards the Dawn*. The image of Bharat-Mata, situated at the navel of the temple in the centre of the Ashram, is the focal point of the life of the nationalists which is dedicated to the service of their motherland.

The portrayal of India as Bharat Mata by the nationalists is a significant aspect which we have not had the opportunity of discussing so far. The idealization of the nation as the mother “was the literary and cultural patent of the Bengali political generation of 1905” according to Sugata Bose.¹⁵³ Again Lise Mckean traces “Bharat Mata’s apotheosis in her present form” to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s novel *Anandamath*.¹⁵⁴ However, there is no contradiction between the two observations as we can clearly deduce that this idealization of the nation as mother, which was first deployed by Bankim Chandra in his novel, was later on manipulated by the nationalists during the Swadeshi Movement. Bose uses the expression “mother complex”¹⁵⁵ to explain this phenomenon of conceptualizing the nation as mother, while Mckean prefers to call the nationalists with this complex “matriots”.¹⁵⁶ Strangely enough, this idea has not been propagated in the novels we have been discussing so far, despite the fact that this was rooted essentially in the literary and cultural paradigm of Bengal, where the authors we are discussing have their origins.

The image of Bharat Mata, as described by Jatindranath, is somewhat similar to the first of the three forms of Bharat Mata, consecutively portrayed by Bankim Chandra in *Anandamath*, which is “gigantic, imposing, [and] resplendent”.¹⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that Jatindranath describes the image as white, as opposed to the saffron clad, ascetic woman representing Bharat Mata painted by Abanindranath Tagore during the Swadeshi Movement. It might not be too preposterous to claim that Jatindranath’s visualizing of Bharat Mata was backed by a definite purpose. He

¹⁵² Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 178-9.

¹⁵³ Sugata Bose, “Nation as Mother: Representations and Contestations of ‘India’ in Bengali Literature and Culture” in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (eds.), *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 50.

¹⁵⁴ Lise Mckean, “Bharat Mata: Mother India and Her Militant Matriots” in John S. Hawley and Donna M. Wulff (eds.), *Devi: Goddess of India* (London: University of California Press, 1996) 253.

¹⁵⁵ Bose, “Nation as Mother”, 54. Bose clarifies that he has used the term ‘complex’ to refer to an engaging socio-psychological phenomenon and not as a disorder or neurosis.

¹⁵⁶ Mckean, “Bharat Mata”, 253.

¹⁵⁷ Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Anandamath*, trans. B.K. Roy (New Delhi: Vision Books, 1992) 43.

consciously refrained from using any particular colour, lest it might be considered to bear a particular political or religious implication. Saffron is associated with renunciation in Hinduism; therefore the use of this colour in the graphic image of Bharat Mata bears a strong implication which cannot be disavowed. So far as *Towards the Dawn* is concerned, this visualization of Bharat Mata in white is in conformity with the inclusive nationalism that Jatindranath seeks to profess through his novel.

We have seen how the conflation of the sense of nationalism and spirituality has been a unique aspect of Indian nationalism. In *Towards the Dawn* this conflation finds true expression through the description of the Ashram, the temple with the image of the Bharat-Mata and the hymn composed on the motherland which is sung with Vedic profundity. The hymn which is the prayer song of the inhabitants of the Ashram is a lyrical description of India:

Motherland! We bow to thee;
Land of murmuring rivers, waving cornfields,
Leafy-fruit-laden trees,
Of snow-clad mountains, home of snow,
Majestic Ganges' mighty flow;
Of moon-lit nights and silver clouds
Of Malaya breeze from Vindhya's heights,
Motherland! We bow to thee;
Of Bela, Henna, Champak-flowers
And Bulbul, Papiya's music showers
But tattered clothes now, dishevelled hair
Our nurse, our miserable Mother,
Motherland, we bow to thee!
Mother of Buddha, Asoka Great, Mother of heroes – who can hate?
Weep not mother banish all fears,
Men are we, we'll wipe your tears;
Heaven of heavens! Our lustrous Mother,
We'll live and die for thee,

Motherland! We bow to thee.¹⁵⁸

No attempt at a geographical mapping of India can be observed in this song as we find in “Jana gana mana”, the Indian national anthem which was composed by Rabindranath Tagore. Similar to “Vande Mataram” by Bankim Chandra or other patriotic songs by Dwijendralal Roy and Mukundadas, and also the beginning lines of the first piece of Indian English writing by Sake Dean Mahomet (quoted in the Introduction), here we find the deployment of selected imageries which pertain to India.

Just as Bankim Chandra has portrayed Bharat Mata in three different forms, Jatindranath has delineated the first two forms – one through the image and another through the hymn. Contrary to the image in which Bharat Mata is described as beautiful in snow-white colour, the hymn portrays her in rags, resembling Bankim Chandra’s description of the second form. Natural wealth, pristine landscape, indigenous flora and fauna are depicted in contrast with the “tattered clothes and dishevelled hair”, symbolic of the contemporary political situation of India which is in absolute disorder. Here we might refer to Bipin Chandra Pal who states that this Mother who is visualized in conflation with Motherland by the nationalists is not just an idea or fancy, “but a distinct personality.” He observes that “[t]he woman who bore them and nursed them, and brought them up with her own life and substance” was as real a personality to these nationalists as “the land which bore and reared, and gave food and shelter to all their race”; and this idea has its origin in Hindu philosophy.¹⁵⁹ However, the note of optimism is derived from the past which was glorified by a spiritual hero such as Buddha and a political hero as Asoka, both champions of non-violence. Inspiration is drawn from history; the image of the motherland and that of a mother coalesce with each other and the dedicated sons of the soil pledge to eradicate every evil that the motherland is fraught with.

Purpose of My Brother’s Face and Towards the Dawn

The purpose of writing this novel, for Dhan Gopal, is stated explicitly in the foreword: “You are welcome to an Occidental’s write-up of the Orient, but I as an

¹⁵⁸ Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 183-4.

¹⁵⁹ Bipin Chandra Pal, *Soul of India: A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals* (Calcutta: Yugayatri Prakashak, 1958) 102-5.

Oriental, abide by the write-up of my civilization by my own people.”¹⁶⁰ The author’s primary intention to present India from an Indian perspective gives way to a seminal issue that we are discussing through the course of this entire thesis – the reconstruction and re-presentation of India and Indian history and culture by Indians themselves, as opposed to the orientalist or colonialist historiography that had been produced by the west. Though we find a preoccupation with the spiritual, mystical, non-materialist and otherworldly aspects of Indian culture among the authors which echo orientalist representations of India in certain ways, we need to bear in mind that one of the primary objectives of these authors was to criticise negative portrayals of India and Indian culture by the celebrated authors and counter their claims. We have already mentioned that Dhan Gopal was probably the first Indian author who wrote for the American readers, unlike Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra who published most of their works from London. However, Dhan Gopal, echoing Ghosh and Mitra, deployed a strong criticism of Rudyard Kipling in his narrative to prove the inauthenticity of the latter’s portrayals of India and Indian life. Therefore their common purpose was also to show how Kipling was wrong. He thus warned the Englishmen who read Kipling: “if they go to India now they will find no longer the country that he wrote about thirty years ago.”¹⁶¹ We have seen how Ghosh and Mitra posed their strong objection to Kipling’s conviction of the irreconcilability of the east and the west. Dhan Gopal does not differ from them: “Kipling’s India has passed; the Orientals and Occidentals are mixing more than they did in the time of Chandra Gupta and Alexander the Great.”¹⁶² The similarity in their purpose of writing the discussed novels is the reason why we observe similar tropes in their works, as each of them was constructing India and Indianness in his own way.

It is interesting to note that there is a very close resemblance between the opening chapters of Dhan Gopal Mukerji’s *My Brother’s Face* and Siddha Mohana Mitra’s *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest*. The narrative begins with the author’s sailing home in a small ship. During this journey he meets people from various races, religions and nationalities. It is worth noticing that the author does not describe the characters on board by their names; instead, he refers to them by their professions and casts them in very predictable moulds, each representing archetypal

¹⁶⁰ Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 15.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 218.

¹⁶² Ibid. 229.

dispositions. There is the Tradesman, “the dominating figure of the West” as the author calls him, who turns out to be the most supercilious character amongst all, with his condescending remarks about the Orient, “the country of slaves” as he describes it.¹⁶³ Soon there is a wrangle between the Tradesman and the Missionary representing the fundamental contradiction between the west’s mercantile ventures and civilizing missions in the colonies. Here too, veritably reflecting the actual scenario, the Tradesman exerts the superiority of his position –

Your missionaries are undermining our supremacy in the East. Pretty soon the Orientals will be asking equality with us; that is Christian all right; but where will the white man be then? We Nordic races are the masters of the earth, and we intend to remain so!

... if I had my way, I’d pass a law forbidding traffic in religion, and equality of races.¹⁶⁴

Amidst such arrogant and conceited statements of the Tradesman and incapacitated silence of the Missionary, the Scholar is successful in maintaining his profound composure. He refers to history only to assure the contemptuous Tradesman of the ephemerality of their right to rule other races. He mentions that it is only the lack of knowledge of history and archaeology that supports such misapprehensions as those expressed by the Tradesman. Gradually, through the dialogue between the Scholar and the narrator, deep and discreet designs of the nationalist discourse begin to emerge.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji is amazed, not very pleasantly, to see the culturally westernised and technologically advanced modern India. He therefore attempts to justify his disapproval of these changes by weaving into the narrative various mythological accounts from the Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and by trying to establish the richness of Indian culture. He constructs a range of characters – from a hunter in a forest to a merchant in a city, from a barber in the locality of industrial workers to an industrialist who drives a Rolls-Royce, from a saint in a monastery in Benares to a political activist in Pune – within the space of his narrative. It is through the portrayal of these characters from various walks of life,

¹⁶³ Ibid. 12.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 13.

their appreciation of the social milieu and the political state of India, their conditions of life as perceived by the author himself, that he presents India as he “imagined” – her progress and her drawbacks – the promising signs and the alarming ones. There is no denying the fact that the autobiographical structure renders more believability to the narrative thereby convincing the reader that Dhan Gopal’s imagination of India was not different from the reality of India.

Both Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath have been successful in inspiring the spirit of India in their novels through their imageries, their portrayal of Indian life and culture. Though the authors have been constructing India through their works, in *Towards the Dawn* Jatindranath does not leave it to the reader to identify and appreciate the Indianness in the writings by Indians in English. As his novel was published from India, he probably considered it necessary to point out to the Indian readers how to appreciate the originality of Indian writings in English. Therefore in the novel he makes an explicit comment on the need for Indianization of the literature that was being produced by the Indians in English.

In *Towards the Dawn* Sukhalata requests her husband to take her to England. As a poet writing English verses, she longs to see the nature that inspired Wordsworth. When she meets Josephine, the latter is already acquainted with her poems which were then being published. She offers some suggestions to her. If we compare this excerpt from Gosse’s introduction to Naidu’s collection of poems with Josephine’s suggestions quoted above, we find that the author had put Gosse’s words in the mouth of Josephine:

Up to this time the spirit of your poems has been entirely English. You have described the English sceneries, and you are trying to reveal the soul of England. That is not your task as a patriotic Indian. The poets of England have done that. To reveal that serene and majestic soul of India, to interpret her to England should be your noble and sacred task ... It does not suit you to be a machine-made imitator of the English classics, to write about robins and sky-larks, and the village-bells calling the parishioners to the Church. How beautiful and genuine will be your descriptions of the Indian rivers and mountains, of the Indian villages, the temples and the forests, and the sweet songs of the birds of the country. I imagine how beautiful will be our picture

of the Indian farmer and the village girl. It is for you to sing the love of your country and her aspirations.¹⁶⁵

This echoes Benedict Anderson's observation that "national imagination" can find expression through a *tour d'horizon*. Through the sociological landscape which an author or a poet creates in which the world inside the narrative or a poem is fused with the world outside, the author or the poet can acquaint the reader with his/her native land: "[The] picaresque *tour d'horizon* – hospitals, prisons, remote villages, monasteries, Indians, Negroes – is nonetheless not a *tour du monde*. The horizon is clearly bounded."¹⁶⁶ Though Anderson observes this with reference to *Noli*, a novel by Jose Rizal, this holds true for every author or poet, whether or not conscious of it. Naturally, a narrative space provides the opportunity to a *littérateur* to infuse the essence of his/her nativity in his/her literary creation. This also becomes a mark of individuality and uniqueness in his/her works. This is exactly how Edmund Gosse critiqued the collection of poems by Sarojini Naidu; which has been echoed by Josephine with reference to Sukhalata's poetry.

Here it is important to refer to the introduction by Edmund Gosse to Sarojini Naidu's collection of poems *The Bird of Time* (1912). According to Gosse, Naidu's poems lacked individuality. He advised her to write about India, to offer an "analysis of the native passion" and "the principles of antique religion" which had "stirred the soul of the east long before the West had begun to dream that it had a soul". Then he writes:

I had entreated Sarojini to write no more about robins and skylarks, in a landscape of our Midland countries, with the village bells somewhere in the distance calling the parishioners to church, but to describe flowers, the fruits, the trees, to set her poems firmly among the mountains, the gardens, the temples, to introduce to us vivid populations of her own voluptuous and unfamiliar province; in other words, to be a genuine Indian poet of the Deccan, not a clever machine-made imitator of the English classics.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, 147-8.

¹⁶⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006) 30.

¹⁶⁷ Sarojini Naidu, *The Bird of Time* (London: William Heinemann, 1912) 5.

He has copied the exact words and phrases from Gosse. There remains no doubt that the character of Sukhalata in the novel is based on the Indian English poet Sarojini Naidu. We gradually get to know through the course of the narrative that Sukhalata accepted the suggestions and henceforth her poems reflected the “serene and sublime soul of India” and that she came to be known as the “Nightingale from India” in England – the title given to Sarojini Naidu.

Conclusion

I have thus shown through this chapter that the time-frame assigned to the initial phase of literary and visual portrayals of Gandhi is fallacious. Harish Trivedi’s limiting of Indian English novelists of the 1930s by overlooking the tradition already set by authors such as Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath makes the historiography of portrayals of Gandhi in Indian English literature flawed. Without appearing as a character, Gandhi occupies a major portion of the narrative space in *My Brother’s Face*. The name of Gandhi is in the air. Gandhi appears as the common point of reference in every social or political issue. Ranging from the blind followers of Gandhi to those who are impartially critical of his policies, he is accepted as the national leader, if not the national hero. In Jatindranath’s *Towards the Dawn*, the character of Karmi is actually Gandhi with a different name.

There is no denying the fact that all the novels discussed so far, including those in the first chapter, are prominent records of the evolution and development of Indian nationalism through its various phases in the first three decades of twentieth century. Subsequently, we also cannot deny that “[t]he Indo-Anglian novel made a different appearance in the nineteen twenties.”¹⁶⁸ The novels of Ghosh and Mitra, published in 1909, dealt with princely states of India. The main characters belonged to the royalty and the central plots developed around the lives, perspectives, judgments and actions of those characters. The common men and their lives, the subjects of the sub-plots mainly remained on the fringes of the narrative space and had little or no connection with the central characters and actions in most cases. Nationalism, as an idea, engaged the minds of the rich and the elites. Cross-cultural interface left an impression only upon the elites as they were more exposed to western culture than was the common men. In contrast with this, the fictions by

¹⁶⁸ Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction* (New Delhi: Heinemann, 1971) 19.

Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra create a remarkably different narrative space. Their characters are mostly ordinary people from different walks of life. The idea of nationalism has seeped in through various levels of society and it is no more a concern only for the elites. The middle class and the peasants realize their position in society and are aware of what they can contribute to the on-going movement.

We also observe a remarkable difference in the tropes that have been employed to construct Indianness. India – the land of princes and of tigers and elephants, romanticised by the westerners who travel all the way to hunt tigers, explore an exotic land and be enchanted by oriental beauty – takes on a different appearance a decade later. A more socially comprehensive vision of India is revealed in the later fictions – India with her riches and the poor. There is no denying the fact that Gandhi deserves the credit for the assimilation of the rich and the poor, the high and the low into one single community, and for recognizing that people belonging to the margins are equal claimants of the gradually developing nation of India. Gandhi's recognition of the majority of the Indian population who were peasants finds a true reflection in these fictions. Here we can safely agree with Timothy Brennan that “[t]he novel brought together the ‘high’ and the ‘low’ within a national framework – not fortuitously, but for specific national reasons.”¹⁶⁹ As a statement against industrialization, Indianness is constructed through constant references to folk cultures and folk art. While trying to promote the real/inclusive Hinduism, tolerance and respect towards people belonging to every caste, every religion and every sect is promoted. Most importantly, the fictions of the 1920s that we have discussed in this chapter have dealt with characters, real or imaginary, who were active nationalists. The theme of nationalism forms the central theme on and around which other contemporary issues have been hinted at. The central figure around whom the idea of nationalism is propounded is Gandhi. The new hero of the age is not a prince or a royal figure, but a political leader, a “half-naked fakir” (as called by his greatest political enemy Winston Churchill), preaching *brahmacharya* and non-violence and defining the new ideal of manhood for the immediate generation and also for generations to come.

¹⁶⁹ Timothy Brennan, “The national longing for form” in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990) 52.

Chapter 3

Indian Nationalist Fictions in a Global Context

Introduction

Based on what we observed in the novels discussed in the previous chapters, I will discuss, in this concluding chapter of the thesis, one of the most important aspects of Indian nationalism which the authors believed in and tried to convey through their works. In the narratives discussed so far, what emerges as the strikingly common perspective in the nationalistic orientations of the authors is their predilection for a mutual understanding and camaraderie between India and England, and also between India and other nations. I will thus argue that a spirit of internationalism was an essential aspect of the idea of nationalism which was disseminated through the novels discussed in the previous chapters. I have occasionally mentioned the non-nationalistic views of Rabindranath Tagore with reference to the approaches of the authors towards Indian nationalism. But in this chapter I will need to elucidate Tagore's views on the idea of nationalism in greater detail in order to prove that his ideas corresponded to the concept of nationalism as evaluated in the novels that we have discussed so far. His views challenge the readings of the authors as straightforwardly, pro-imperialistic, or naïve. The intellectual reciprocity between Tagore and these authors on the questions of nationalism has remained unacknowledged in the previous studies on Indian English writings.

In *My Brother's Face* the author-narrator has offered an account of his interaction with Rabindranath Tagore during the former's visit to India in 1921. While discussing about the contemporary political situation, the nationalist movement and Gandhi's stance on it, Tagore expresses his idea of countering the western influence on India's social and political culture: "Not with weapon against weapon – Indian soul-force *versus* British sword-force – but Indian humility and internationalism against the soulless arrogance of Western nationalism."¹ I am not going to discuss the practicality of this idea as it is outside the scope of this thesis; but what I am going to show is how this idea was fostered and disseminated by the authors I am discussing.

¹ Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *My Brother's Face* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2003) 244.

At this point it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that though India was under the subjugation of the colonial power and was not yet in a position to be politically defined as a nation, the British were reckoned as “others” and in no way different from any other western country. Here it might be useful to refer to Tagore. In a letter to C.F. Andrews, Rabindranath Tagore wrote: “the complete man must never be sacrificed to patriotic man ... for me patriotism is the same as humanity. ... My patriotism is not exclusive. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India.”² Tagore’s words make it clear that in spite of the greater Indo-English interface which was the obvious result of colonial governance of India by the English, Indian thinkers had always been aware of the socio-cultural separateness of the two entities, despite their political consolidation. They appropriated England to the western paradigm on the basis of two antagonistic domains – the east and the west. Thus, their perception of the western nations was unbiased as we shall see through the course of this discussion. Therefore, India’s scheme of internationalism remained unaffected by its political relation with England. The idea of internationalism is not an idea disjointed from the nationalist scheme, but it is embedded within the idea of Indian nationalism; and therefore, the relative position of England to India remains the same in the latter’s nationalist and internationalist perceptions. Promotion of international relations, as advocated by the authors in their novels, implied the encouragement of political, social and cultural exchange with every powerful nation of the world, as with England.

The proposal for international exchange of knowledge and culture, and co-operation amongst the nations in economic and industrial sectors, has appeared as a common refrain in the novels of the early twentieth century which have been discussed in the previous chapters. It is noteworthy that the Indian nationalist thinkers whose ideas had an internationalist orientation were contemporary to the authors that we have been mainly discussing in the thesis. As we have already seen in the first chapter, Swami Vivekananda’s nationalist lectures and writings which spanned the last decade of the nineteenth century (he died in 1902), inspired and influenced the social and political views of these authors, especially of Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. The internationalist ideas of M.K. Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore were presented to the public long after the publication of the

² Krishna Kripalani, *Rabindranath Tagore – A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) 259.

novels by Ghosh and Mitra. Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra's works did however clearly reflect the influence of Gandhi and Tagore. One becomes curious therefore about the reason for the internationalist (or pro-western to some extent) disposition of these authors.

During early twentieth century the word "internationalism" was considered to be of a comparatively recent origin. It was first used by Jeremy Bentham in 1780 and then used in a novel by M.M. Grant in 1877.³ "[I]nternationalism," according to Clark Foreman, "is a system of political, economic and cultural cooperation by the nations of the world" in which "universality is an essential part" in the modern perception.⁴ As we proceed with our discussion, we will find that for the authors concerned, there was not much perceptible difference between their conceptualization of the ideas of internationalism and universalism. Thus, these two terms can actually be used interchangeably in the discussion of the idea of internationalism in Indian nationalism as conceived by the authors.

What inspired cosmopolitanism/internationalism?

Rabindranath Tagore's idea of nationalism will form the basis with respect to which I shall attempt an analytical study of the aspects of internationalism in the concept of nationalism as conceived by the authors I am dealing with; and therefore, Tagore's disapproval of the concept of "cosmopolitanism" is also a major reason for my avoidance of the term. He writes, "Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation worship is the goal of human history."⁵ Discarding the idea of cosmopolitanism on grounds of its vagueness, Tagore expresses his scepticism towards the idea of nationalism as he perceived it to be an entirely political idea. His perception of Indian life operating within a social rather than a political system made him believe that the promotion of nationalism would be detrimental to the natural spontaneity of self-expression of Indians as social beings.

Tagore's disapproval of the idea of cosmopolitanism was probably due to the general implication of the word during his time. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the connotation of the term "cosmopolitanism" was slightly different from

³ Clark Foreman, *The New Internationalism* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934) 18.

⁴ Ibid. 18.

⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1917) 15.

today. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, in the eighteenth century the word “cosmopolitan” was defined as “having the characteristics which arise from, or are suited to, a range over many different countries; free from national limitations or attachments,” and “cosmopolitanism” as “adherence to cosmopolitan principles.”⁶ Bruce Robbins, in his essay “Actually existing cosmopolitanism”, refers to Martha Nussbaum who defines the “old ideal of the cosmopolitan” as “the person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings”.⁷ Thus, there could be only one cosmopolitanism as there is only one “worldwide community of human beings”. Subsequently, referring to Immanuel Kant’s essay “*Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf*” (Toward perpetual peace: A philosophical project) (1796), Robbins claims that Kant’s view of cosmopolitanism leading to perpetual peace was only a “defiant reassertion of Greek or Enlightenment values, of (European) philosophical universalism”.⁸ Kant’s idea of cosmopolitanism therefore offers a clear-cut contrast to the idea of nationalism. However, Robbins mentions the growing consensus through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries regarding cosmopolitanism working in tandem with nationalism in certain cases. Thus, according to Robbins, “It is ... less clear what cosmopolitanism *is* opposed to, or what its value is supposed to be”.⁹

In *Cosmopolitics* Pheng Chea’s essay “The cosmopolitical today” offers a fundamentally important observation which might explain Tagore’s reservation about the term cosmopolitanism. Chea points out that nationalism was not even an issue so far as the eighteenth-century ideal of cosmopolitanism, as we have discussed in the previous paragraph, was concerned; this is because in Europe (where the term cosmopolitanism originated) “the popular national state did not exist, [n]or, indeed had the doctrine of nationalism been fully articulated”.¹⁰ Thus, in the history of ideas cosmopolitanism precedes the idea of nationalism. Referring to Kant’s essay once

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, 1989; online version 2012.

www.oed.com/view/Entry/42259#eid0 (Accessed on 11th September, 2013).

⁷ Quoted in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (eds.), *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) 2, from Martha C Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism” in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon, 1996) 4.

⁸ Cheah and Robbins, *Cosmopolitics*, 2.

⁹ *Ibid.* 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 22.

again Cheah mentions that according to Kant's idea, "cosmopolitanism is not identical to 'internationalism' and that its antonym is not *nationalism* but *statism*." ¹¹

Almost a century after the publication of Kant's above-mentioned essay Karl Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) was published; and by this time the idea of nationalism and the sense of national belonging had developed significantly. According to Cheah "the notorious tensions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism" and specifically "the derisive connotations associated with the latter become more apparent from Marx onward". ¹² For Marx, Cheah states, "cosmopolitanism is no longer just a normative horizon or a matter of right growing out of international commerce. It is an existing and necessary condition resulting from the development of forces of production on a global scale." ¹³ Again, Timothy Brennan in *At Home in the World* reminds us that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "cosmopolitanism" was a code word in eastern Europe for the Jews, "where rootlessness was a condemnation and a proof of nonbelonging precisely *there*". ¹⁴ Referring to Paul Rabinow's essay "Representations are Social Facts", Brennan draws attention to the derogatory implications of the term "cosmopolitans" which was used with reference to "Christians, aristocrats, merchants, Jews, homosexuals and intellectuals". ¹⁵ We need to keep in mind that Tagore proposed his idea of 'Greater India' in the beginning of the twentieth century when, as we have observed, the definition of cosmopolitanism had already become complex and problematical. Though Tagore nowhere explains his own understanding of the term "cosmopolitanism", it is possible that he had reservations about its usage on the basis of the growing tensions between its original etymological sense and the recent Marxist interpretation of the particular word. .

In our discussion of the word cosmopolitanism three centuries after the publication of Kant's essay, two centuries after the publication of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and a century after Tagore's purposeful bypassing of the term, it is imperative to discuss recent definitions and perceptions associated with the word in order to explain why I have refrained from using the term "cosmopolitanism" (as did

¹¹ Ibid. 22.

¹² Ibid. 26.

¹³ Ibid. 26.

¹⁴ Timothy Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997) 21.

¹⁵ Ibid. 20. Brennan refers to Paul Rabinow's essay "Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology," in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 258.

Tagore) in the title of the thesis and have used the word “internationalism” instead. In order to understand the contemporary usage of the term, we need to refer to Kwame Anthony Appiah’s *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. According to Appiah, “[c]osmopolitanism dates at least to the Cynics of the fourth century BC, who first coined the expression cosmopolitan, meaning ‘citizen of the cosmos’,” where “cosmos” implies not the earth but the universe.¹⁶ He further elaborates on this to argue that such a notion of cosmopolitanism is paradoxical and it problematizes our conception of the term all the more. This particular connotation entails a sense of homogeneity of culture as opposed to individual recognition and appreciation of discrete local cultures. Appiah observes that the coinage of this term “reflected the general Cynic scepticism toward custom and tradition ... [and therefore] [t]alk of cosmopolitanism originally signalled ... a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities.”¹⁷ However, in the contemporary discourse, the idea of cosmopolitanism does not necessarily entail the dissolution of national boundaries; it primarily implies a mutual sympathy between the ethnic groups based on a shared morality.

The essence of the term “cosmopolitanism”, that has been extracted to render it a positive dimension, lies in the acceptance of the myriads of human possibilities without desiring or expecting every society to acquiesce and adopt a common/universal culture. And this is the logic which Appiah applies to make his statement which says, “Cosmopolitanism is an adventure and an ideal: but you can’t have any respect for human diversity and expect everyone to become cosmopolitan.”¹⁸ Tagore did not subscribe to the concept of cosmopolitanism probably because he sensed the possibility of a cultural homogenization that is inherent in the idea of cosmopolitanism, which Appiah points out. Appiah himself offers a solution later in the book claiming that cosmopolitanism in its true sense entails a “connection not *through* identity but *despite* difference.”¹⁹ Thus, a distinctive cosmopolitan commitment is, according to Appiah, to *pluralism*. Cosmopolitans believe that there are more than values to live by, and as it is not

¹⁶ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (London: Penguin Books, 2007) xii.

The word ‘cosmopolitan’ has been derived from Greek ‘kosmopolites’ – kosmos (universe) + polites (citizen) = citizen of the universe.

¹⁷ Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, xii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* xvii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 135.

possible to live by all the values one should accept the fact that different people and different societies will embody different values. For cosmopolitans the understanding of toleration implies “interacting on terms of respect with those who see the world differently”, and the open-mindedness to learn something even from those one disagrees with.²⁰ At this point Appiah refers to the idea of *fallibilism*, that is, “the sense that our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence”.²¹

As one of the major implications of cosmopolitanism is cross-cultural communication, Appiah emphasizes conversations across boundaries of identity with and cosmopolitan curiosity about strangers. He states that conversations across national, religious or other boundaries “begin with the sort of imaginative engagement” with characters in a novel or a movie, or a work of art “that speaks from some place other than your own”.²² In this case cross-cultural communication might seem difficult when one is trying to imagine the stranger in the abstract. Again, if the stranger is no longer imaginary but is real and present, “you may like or dislike him, you may agree or disagree; but if it is what you both want, you can make sense of each other in the end”.²³ However, if we take into account the observation of Homi K. Bhabha in his essay “The Vernacular Cosmopolitan”, we will find that this closeness or proximity of cultural difference when the stranger is real and present within close quarters is “the most critical and crisis-laden area of communication”.²⁴

The ideas of pluralism, fallibilism and cross-cultural-connection-despite-difference are definitely concordant not only with the ideas professed by Tagore in *Greater India* but also with the idea of nationalism espoused by the authors in the novels we are dealing with. However, in his *Ethics of Identity*, Appiah states that there is a lot in common between the idea of nationalism and its “putative antithesis” cosmopolitanism. He observes that both exhort a loftily abstract level of allegiance; each of them is “a vast encompassing project that extends far beyond ourselves and our families”.²⁵ It is probably due to this ambiguity that Tagore has carefully avoided the term in *Greater India*.

²⁰ Ibid. 145.

²¹ Ibid. 144.

²² Ibid. 85.

²³ Ibid. 99.

²⁴ Ferdinand Dennis and Naseem Khan (eds.), *Voices of the Crossing: The Impact of Britain on Writers from Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2000) 138.

²⁵ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005) 239.

In his introduction to *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Appiah refers to the final message that his father left for him and his sisters where he wrote: “Remember, you are citizens of the world”;²⁶ this also echoes Diogenes Laertius’ claim, “I am a citizen of the world”.²⁷ This is the very idea that Tagore professed through his writings. Appiah mentions that his father, who was one of the prominent leaders of the National Liberation Movement Party of Ghana, could not detect the possible conflicts between “local partialities and a universal morality” that were inherent in the idea of cosmopolitanism or of citizenship-of-the-world.²⁸ It is here that the exactitude of Tagorean ideas comes into play with the selection of the “difficult middle path”.²⁹ Isaiah Berlin is appreciative of Tagore’s self-restraint in not yielding to the temptation of exaggeration and rendering an extremist character to his doctrine. Tagore’s attempt “to find the truth in the face of scorn and threats from both sides – left and right, westernisers and traditionalists” is considered “the rarest form of heroism” by Berlin.³⁰ Tagore, who was opposed to the idea of an exclusive nationalism all his life, also acknowledged the differences in cultures amongst various nationalities and ethnic groups around the world. The basic idea that he wanted to disseminate through his writings on nationalism was that consciousness of nationalism or taking pride in one’s nation does not imply an antagonism towards other nations or cultures. In order to understand the necessity for Tagore of situating oneself in the middle path and the complexity involved in it, it will be useful for us to make a note of the most common manifestations of nationalism which, according to Isaiah Berlin, take either of the “two aggressive forms”.³¹

According to Berlin, the first of the two forms develops from a sense of inferiority to the “superior” culture. It is basically the realization of “shortcomings, a conviction of backwardness or inadequacy, and an anxiety to learn from the superior culture or nation.”³² Consequently there is a tendency to “emulate” the superior culture driven by the aspiration to become equal with them. This in turn is encouraged by the ultimate expectation of obtaining recognition from the superiors;

²⁶ Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, xvi.

²⁷ Timothy Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997) 25.

²⁸ The party was formed in 1954 and eventually dissolved in 1957 with the political independence of Ghana.

²⁹ Isaiah Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and their History* (London: Pimlico, 1996) 260.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 260

³¹ *Ibid.* 256.

³² *Ibid.* 256.

if this recognition does not come by peaceful means, the only option that remains is extortion of it by violent means. This is what Berlin believes to be:

the ambition of new men and new States, to catch up with, and overtake, to acquire whatever the modern age requires – industrial might, political unification, technological and cultural knowledge until “they” can no longer afford to look down their long noses at “us”.³³

The second form that Berlin identifies is that of “resentful isolation”.³⁴ In contrast with the previous form, this isolation from and apathy towards the other culture develops from a sense of superiority which Berlin correctly diagnoses as “wounded pride”:

Our own past, our own heritage contain far finer and richer things than the gimcrack goods of the foreigner – to run after the foreigner is in any case undignified, and treason to our own past; we can recover our spiritual and material health only by returning to the ancient springs which once upon a time, perhaps in some dim, scarcely discernible past, had made us powerful, admired and envied.³⁵

Tagore, according to Berlin, situates himself in between these two polarities of pro- and anti-hegemonic-culture syndrome. His sense of superiority based on India’s glorious history, spiritual tradition and idealization of non-belligerent disposition is balanced with his realization of a lack of strength, the strength that India has to acquire in order to shun her dependence on the foreign power. This is exactly where we find a remarkable similarity between Tagore’s idea of east-west reconciliation and that of the authors we are dealing with.

Tagore considers this strength a desideratum not only for achieving independence but also for setting up international relations with other nations. Explaining Tagore’s view on the importance of strength, Berlin clarifies, “[i]nternationalism is a noble ideal, but it can be achieved only when each link in the

³³ Ibid. 256.

³⁴ Ibid. 256.

³⁵ Ibid. 256.

chain, that is, every nation, is strong enough to bear the required tension.”³⁶ Similar to Appiah’s explanation of the paradox inherent in the term “cosmopolitanism”, Berlin warns of the “powerful and attractive fallacies” involved with the idea of internationalism.³⁷ He identifies a two-fold risk involved in the process of becoming international. On one hand the stronger party might be inclined to assert its hegemonic egocentrism by forcing the weaker one to relinquish its “small-power chauvinism” in the guise of proclaiming internationalism.³⁸ On the other hand the weaker party might be willing to yield to the stronger one with the expectation of achieving equal status with it by disowning its own identity. In the words of Berlin, “Tagore stood fast on the narrow causeway. . . . He said in effect that India must get rid of the English but must cling to the truths by which the English have lived.”³⁹ This precariousness inherent in the ideas of nationalism and internationalism is what Tagore repeatedly emphasized through his works.

It is probably the realization of this particular equivocality in the idea of internationalism, based on which Ashis Nandy states that Tagore’s fear of nationalism “was not an expression of the easy internationalism that became popular among the Indian middle classes in the inter-war years.”⁴⁰ The best explanation to this extremely ambiguous idea was perhaps offered by Aurobindo Ghose. He says that a nation “should preserve itself in cosmopolitanism somewhat as the individual preserves itself in the family, the family in the class, the class in the nation, not destroying itself needlessly but recognizing a larger interest.”⁴¹ This reminds us of Anthony D. Smith’s reference to the nation as a “fictive ‘super-family’”. A nation can trace its roots to a common ancestry and therefore their members are brothers and sisters or at least cousins.⁴² This was how the idea of nationalism and internationalism was perceived and narrativized by the authors in their fictions.

The “narrow causeway” or the “middle path”, in Berlin’s terms, has also appeared as the solution to the colonial/national dichotomy offered by the authors such as Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. Unlike the west, where nationalism is essentially a political concept, the cultural matrix of Indian

³⁶ Ibid. 264.

³⁷ Ibid. 264.

³⁸ Ibid. 265.

³⁹ Ibid. 265.

⁴⁰ Ashis Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 3.

⁴¹ K. R. Srinivas Ayengar, *Sri Aurobindo, a Biography and a History* (Pondicherry: Aurobindo International Centre of Education, 1985) 336.

⁴² Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991) 12.

nationalism was equally important...⁴³ Through the elucidation of the various tropes employed in the construction of Indianness in their novels, I have already established the cultural parameters of Indian nationalism in the previous chapters. I have also discussed how the authors tried to portray the positive elements in English culture which they wanted the Indians to imbibe. While the positive aspects of the west was always discussed in the light of its advancement in science and technology, a close investigation of the cultural parameters of India has revealed how spirituality has functioned as an integral denominator in the idea of Indianness. And it is this essence of spirituality that bears the seed of non-nationalism/internationalism in each of the novels. But before delving into the novels, it is necessary to gloss over the principal arguments that have been proposed against the idea of nationalism in its strictest sense.

Non-belligerence and consciousness of the universal

Indian nationalism, as conceptualized by the authors dealt with in the thesis, is encapsulated in Rabindranath Tagore's *Nationalism*. In the chapter "Nationalism in the West", Tagore spells out the fundamental difference between the history of the west and that of India. He observes that in the west, where wars fought between kingdoms with the objective of achieving political supremacy had formed the crux of history and had been glorified through ages, in India these battles had been despised and forgotten. This is because they do not represent the true history of India: "Our history is that of our social life and attainment of spiritual ideals."⁴⁴ We find the same note in Tagore's contemporary, the historian and Indologist Kalidas Nag. Nag draws attention to India's distaste for war and its glorification. In *Greater India* (1926) Nag hypothesizes that:

the Hindus somehow felt history, with its interminable details of wars and treaties, of triumphs and dissolutions, as a poor portraiture of the real national life and a very unsatisfactory and imperfect reflection of its creative activities. They boldly challenged the validity of the *world*

⁴³ See John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994) 48-51.

⁴⁴ Tagore, *Nationalism*, 16.

of phenomena and tried to discover the *world of permanence* immutable beyond all phenomena.⁴⁵

The memory of glorious victories in historical wars, which forms one of the basic elements in inducing a national consciousness and national pride in the people, had thus been consciously avoided by the ancient scholars who were only occupied with spiritual achievements. In the ancient discourse therefore the study of equity and jurisprudence was given more importance than the study of economics; similarly the science of ethics was prioritized over the study of politics. This open and secular approach to knowledge resulted in the preoccupation with what is eternal. A sense of eternity in every aspect of the temporal life released the modalities of knowledge from the constraints of an exclusivist awareness of self/nation, thereby making way for a consciousness of the universal.

Attempting to prove the international connections in Indian history, Kalidas Nag structures his argument on the basis of the discovery in 1907, by the German archaeologist Hugo Winckler, of the inscription of Boghaz Keui. Winckler claimed that in Cappadocia (presently Anatolia in Turkey) belligerent tribes of Hittites and Mitannis invoked the Hindu gods Varuna, Mitra and Indra while concluding a treaty. Nag infers from this that the first ever concrete document, which proves India's ex-centric connection existing as early as the fourteenth century B.C., validates the role of the Hindu gods as the "peace-makers and harmonisers of conflicting interests".⁴⁶ The Boghaz Keui inscription is thus considered by him as the symbol of India's role in the development of internationalism through "peace and spiritual unity" which have been appreciated and disseminated by the authors as well. He also elaborates how Indian internationalism was in direct contrast with other forms of internationalism – "*economic internationalism* of exploitation (e.g. Phoenician) or *imperialistic exploitation* of compulsion (e.g. Assyrian and Roman)" – which threatened the peace and security of the weaker nations during that particular historical era.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Kalidas Nag, *Greater India: A Study in Indian Internationalism* (Greater India Society Bulletin No. 1, 1926) 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 5. Nag explains India's contribution to peaceful internationalism by drawing reference from the lessons of war as disseminated through the *Mahabharata*, the Aryan/Non-Aryan compromise, the contribution of King Asoka and finally the philosophy of *ahimsa*.

This idea of peace and spiritual unity which was fostered by ancient philosophers of India is also referred to by Siddha Mohana Mitra in *Hindupore*: “We pray for peace – not for ourselves alone, but for the whole world. ‘Dyoshanti, prithivo shanti’ (Give peace to the world).”⁴⁸ This mention of the “Shanti Mantra” (hymn on peace) by Mitra bears the core spirit of Hinduism and also the political ideals of the liberal nationalists for whom the philosophy of nationalism was something more than selfish exclusivism. In a way, this offers a small glimpse of the universalist ideas as propounded in the Rig Veda. Universalism embraces not only all of the human kind, but also each and every living creature, whether it belongs to the animal or the plant kingdom.⁴⁹ Thus the issue of crossing the boundaries of nations or countries, or caste, sect or religion is reduced to insubstantiality.

The mutual necessity of mutual understanding

Before entering the discussion of how the message of internationalism was woven into the idea of Indian nationalism in the narratives we are dealing with, a brief discussion on the mutual necessity of maintaining an amicable relationship between India and England is required. So far we have observed how Tagore and Nag pointed out the universalistic philosophy which Hinduism professed, and which inspired the general disposition of Indians. However, there were practical reasons for this too, which the authors were aware of. This had been precisely stated in the opening lines from *Indian Problems*, a book Mitra published in 1908, just one year before the publication of *Hindupore*:

What would England be without India? India means the greatest customer of England; India means the greatest employer of the best of English intellect and manhood; India means the noblest achievement of England. Again, what would India be without England? Who would protect her from the central Asian freebooters? Who would guarantee the internal peace? Who would bring her deserts and jungles under cultivation? Who would give her the benefits of modern

⁴⁸ Siddha Mohana Mitra, *Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest* (London: Luzac and Co., 1909) 275.

⁴⁹ R.N. Vyas, *The Universalistic Thought of India* (Bombay: Lalvani Publishing House, 1970) 5.

science and modern civilization? The unity of England with India is therefore a Divine dispensation for the good of both the countries.⁵⁰

Mutual benefit – economic and political – was the primary consideration which motivated these authors to celebrate east-west union. The fact that India was still on the way to development in terms of infrastructure was a great concern for them and was the reason they did not encourage the idea of home-rule or independence which was gradually gaining support in India by that time. What they aspired to was a balanced combination of the Indian and the English in matters of administration – a perfect marriage of Indian wisdom and western technological knowhow.

Within the British government, there was one influential person, who, the authors believed, realized the mutual importance of England and India to each other. It is for this reason that Lord Beaconsfield is referred to by Ghosh and Mitra in their novels. On 16th September 1902, Ghosh expressed the purpose of his wanting to write a “popular book” on the Proclamation of King Edward VII as the Emperor of India after the death of Queen Victoria. Addressing the letter to the Assistant Secretary, Judicial and Public Department of India Office he wrote:

I might be able to express India’s hidden sentiments with regard to Lord Beaconsfield’s great scheme of an Eastern Empire – his unrealised scheme.⁵¹

When Ghosh fulfilled his dream by writing the “popular” book *The Prince of Destiny* in lieu of the official chronicle, he elaborated on the “unrealised scheme” of Lord Beaconsfield.⁵² Ghosh believed that Beaconsfield’s “scheme” behind making Queen Victoria Empress of India in 1877 was to bury the last memories of the Mutiny. He felt that it would bind the two nations – England and India – not only with the ties of loyalty but also with affection and patriotism: “for India would be made to feel that she had a stake in the British Empire, and was to share alike in its perils and its

⁵⁰ S.M. Mitra, *Indian Problems* (London: John Murray, 1908) vii.

⁵¹ Unpublished letters of Sarath Kumar Ghosh preserved at India Office Library in British Library, London (Shelfmark: IOR/L/PJ/6/610, File 1670A). Emphasis in original.

⁵² The First Earl of Beaconsfield or Lord Beaconsfield as he is better known, was Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), the Prime Minister of Britain (1874 -1880). It was he who introduced the Royal Titles Act (1876) which made Queen Victoria the Empress of India. He was also a political novelist, as Norman Bentwich mentions in his article “The Novel as a Political Force” (1906) in the periodical *The Nineteenth Century and After*. (For specific publication details regarding this article please refer to the bibliography). For further details on Disraeli please refer to Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1966).

triumphs.”⁵³ Even Mitra did not miss idealizing Lord Beaconsfield in *Hindupore*. He considered the latter to be the wisest statesman because he realized that “consideration and respect for the feelings and religious convictions” of Britain’s Indian subjects were essential for keeping the Indian Empire intact.⁵⁴

In Ghosh’s opinion Beaconsfield’s “scheme” aroused enthusiasm in India as he projected India to Britain not as the latter’s liability but an asset. With the importing of Indian soldiers into Britain he tried to prove that India had the resources to contribute to British power. The accuracy of Beaconsfield’s stand on the potential of Indian soldiers has been proved by Christopher Bayly in his introduction to *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (1988):

Seizure of the cash land revenues of India between 1757 and 1818 made it possible for Britain to build up one of the largest European-style standing armies in the world, thus critically augmenting British land forces which were small and logistically backward except for a few years during the final struggle with Napoleon. This Indian army was used in large measure to hold down the subcontinent itself, but after 1790 it was increasingly employed to forward British interests in southern and eastern Asia and the Middle East. More symbolically, the Indian army opened up a second front, as it were, against the other great Eurasian land powers, Russia, the Ottomans, France and Austria. This reinforced the significance of the dominance of the Royal Navy at sea. From its Indian base Britain had already begun to construct informal empires of influence and trade in the Middle East, on the China coast and in East Africa during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵

Ghosh pointed out in his novel that the disavowal of Beaconsfield’s scheme by the British government after his death was responsible for the cracks that began to appear in the Indo-British relationship. Agitation surged up in Bengal and elsewhere for the restoration of the terms, which were proclaimed by the Queen in 1877, but had not been implemented.

⁵³ Sarath Kumar Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (London: Rebman, 1909) 138.

⁵⁴ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 223.

⁵⁵ C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 1.

We have already observed in the previous chapters that the primary idea which inspired the authors to write their novels was quite similar. Western readers were mainly targeted and the novels attempted to raise awareness amongst the imperial rulers of their flaws in understanding the intricate details of India's social and religious culture which led to lapses in their administration and had created an ever-increasing distance between the ruler and the ruled. This ever-increasing distance between India and England was making difficult a mutually sympathetic relationship between the two nations, and this was a great concern for Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. Even in Jatindranath Mitra's fiction *Towards the Dawn*, we find the same objective specified at the very beginning by the author himself:

The following pages have been written with the wish that England and India may understand, and feel for, each other, may work together in an accommodating and self-denying spirit, and be happy in a deep and abiding love for each other – the only hope of a darkening and distracted world in the midst of failure and gathering disaster.⁵⁶

Dhan Gopal Mukerji also authored *My Brother's Face* in order to create awareness about Indian life and culture in the west, mainly in America. It is interesting to note at this point that all these authors, in their attempts to construct India and consolidate an Indian identity through their fictional narratives, revived the tradition of the native informants who played significant roles in the construction of the historiography of pre-colonial India by the Orientalists and colonial historians. In his essay "Orientalists, informants and critics in Benares, 1790-1860" Christopher Bayly makes a vital statement that is substantially relevant to the authors we are dealing with in the present discussion.⁵⁷ Bayly observes that the British had created a "hybrid intellectual elite" through the western system of education with the hope that they would serve as channels conveying western knowledge thereby leading India to Christianity in the guise of enlightenment.⁵⁸ Unfortunately for the British, Bayly says:

⁵⁶ Jatindranath Mitra, *Towards the Dawn: A Contemporary Political Novel* (Lucknow: n.p., 1922) Preface.

⁵⁷ Christopher Bayly, "Orientalists, informants and critics in Benares, 1790-1860" in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History 1760-1860* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 123.

the newly subordinated representatives of oriental knowledge were in a position to subvert and challenge western arguments from inside a system they now knew well. ... Forty years on, men from Pandit families trained in Indian and western modes of reasoning were in a position to challenge the metaphysical lacunae in the West's religion and appropriate its secular learning.⁵⁹

Ghosh, Mitra and Mukerji resemble these “hybrid intellectual elite[s]” that Bayly mentions more than simple native informants. Ghosh and Mitra belonged to that particular section of the literati about whom Bayly talks about in the above quotation. They were all “trained in Indian and western modes of reasoning” and a wide exposure to western culture for these authors while they were in the west made them aware of its “metaphysical lacunae”.

We label those people as native informants who are considered experts on the life and culture of a particular race or place, only through originally belonging to that particular race or place. It is probably the same idea that Siddha Mohana Mitra had in mind when he suggested the appointment of “special interpreters between the people and ourselves, to explain our ideas to them and theirs to us.”⁶⁰ Thus, in *Indian Problems*, Mitra expected the “special interpreters” to execute the functions we expect the native informants to execute today. In *Hindupore*, Mitra observed that in earlier days there were no P. and O. Company's ocean greyhounds to transport the homesick Englishmen from Bombay to London in a fortnight, and hence they were bound to spend their holidays in India and amongst Indians. As English education was not that widespread in those days the Englishmen had to learn the local languages out of compulsion in order to communicate with the natives. Thus, there was less room for misunderstanding. Neither home-rule nor independence, but the appointment of hybrid intellectual elites as special interpreters and a handy knowledge by Englishmen of native languages could offer viable solutions to the problems originating from miscommunication or misinterpretation.

One of the examples that Mitra used, in order to establish his argument regarding the mutual misunderstanding between Indians and the British government is the general response to the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon (discussed in the

⁵⁹ Ibid.124.

⁶⁰ Mitra, *Indian Problems*, 49.

introduction and the first chapter). The partition of Bengal, which was decried throughout the country, was not considered unjust by Mitra – his opinion was that the timing was wrong. Lord Curzon declared it during the Durga Puja, the greatest festival of the Bangalees, which led to the outburst. The Durbar, which was organized during the Ramzan (Ramadan) months, when Muslims have to fast for the entire day, became an ordeal for them. They had to spend all day rehearsing the elephant processions in the heat and dust without being able to drink a drop of water due to religious restrictions. Thus, the authors aspired for a system of governance which would respect and appreciate each other's religion and culture – the national sentiment would be understood, guarded and preserved by the colonial rulers.⁶¹ Thus a mutual understanding and cooperation was necessary between Indians and the British. British governance in India was necessary, according to the authors, for the overall progress of India and Indians could in turn offer spiritual guidance to the British had they shared mutual sympathy.

Relation between India and England

Thus, having discussed the basic reasons that inspired and necessitated internationalism, we shall analyse how the idea of internationalism has been disseminated through the narratives. In his recently published book *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature: 1830-1947* (2012), Alex Tickell read the literary presentation of Anglo-Indian friendship/partnership in *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* using Leela Gandhi's division of colonial friendship into two categories – “a conformist Aristotelian *philia*” and “a dissident Epicurean *philoxenia*”.⁶² According to Gandhi, the gap between the two texts by Aristotle – *Nicomachean Ethics* (“which pays close attention to the ethical obligations of *philia*”) and *Politics* (“which pays close attention to the political obligations of citizenship”) – can be bridged by the Aristotelian concept of a *homophilic* bond to fellow

⁶¹ Though Mitra does not mention this, the south and south-western parts of India were suffering from the Great Famine through 1876-78. According to Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay, there was another famine in India in 1903, the year in which another Durbar was organized by Lord Curzon to felicitate the enthronement of Edward VII. Therefore a lavish expense for a grand durbar during such a calamity was a valid cause for discomfiture amongst Indians. For details see Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1982) 19.

⁶² Alex Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012) 174-5. “*Philia*” is one of the four ancient Greek words for “love”. According to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* “*philia*” implies “friendship”. “*Xenos*” is a Greek term for “strangers” or “aliens”. Thus “*philoxenia*” means love for or friendship with aliens or strangers.

citizens.⁶³ Before arriving at any definite conclusion regarding which notion of *philia* best applies to the Indo-British relationship as proposed in the novels, I would like to discuss, as precisely as possible, the two most relevant concepts of friendship categorised by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* – “friendship based on utility” and “friendship between unequals”. It is in the category of “friendship based on utility” that Aristotle views the friendship with foreigners as an exemplary case.

Utility, as we have noticed, was undeniably a major factor in the circumstances that are narrativized in the discussed novels, but not the sole one. True love and intense emotional attachment between Indians and the English, and also mutual love and respect for each other’s culture, was the fundamental idea that the novels wanted to communicate. This refutes Aristotle’s claim that the involved subjects do not feel the need of an association unless it proves mutually useful, as in most cases “they do not even like one another”.⁶⁴ In the category of “friendship between unequals”, Aristotle brings into discussion different cases of unequal relationships where either of the involved subject is superior or inferior to the other – as in father-son or husband-wife relationships. He also observes that with the widening of gaps between the status of the involved subjects, the possibility of a friendly relation gradually ceases. Thus, the involved subjects should be unequal but only to a reconcilable degree and also “the affection must be proportionate”.⁶⁵ By this he means that the superior subject must be loved more by the inferior one. However, in the context of the novels, the disparity of status between the Indian and the English was on the ground of the ruler-ruled/colonizer-colonized relationship between them. The equation was balanced in the earlier novels as the characters in direct relationship were rulers – Indian royalty and English administrators. Moreover, none of the four Indian authors ever projected an overall inferior position of India to the west. They repeatedly emphasized the fact that if the west was superior in technological advancement, India had her spiritual wisdom to offer to the west. With cultural inequality as the basis, the Indo-British friendship, as propounded by the authors, was aimed at an exchange of knowledge from which both would profit.

In his discussion, which is mainly on the representation of terrorism and insurgency in Indian-English literature, Alex Tickell has observed that,

⁶³ Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006) 28.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, J.A.K. Thomson (trans.) (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976) 262.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 270.

the essential gesture that defines the political developments ... is not 'radical' friendship *per se*, but the decisive moment at which the colonized *refuses* the claims of colonial *philia* ... it is impossible to formulate ... a programme of non-violent resistance without passing through this profound moment of *disaffiliation*.⁶⁶

Tickell makes his arguments based on the perspective of terrorist actions of anti-colonial insurgency. What we gather from the fundamental debates over the necessity or justifiability of anti-colonial terrorist actions, which I have discussed in chapters 1 and 2, is that Tickell's observation regarding the resistances issuing from the "moment of disaffiliation" is undeniable. What Tickell calls the "moment of disaffiliation" is in many ways similar to the intrinsic idea of Partha Chatterjee's "moment of departure". According to Chatterjee, "[t]he *moment of departure* lies in the encounter of a nationalist consciousness with the framework of knowledge created by post-Enlightenment rationalist thought."⁶⁷ It is accompanied by the realization of the essential cultural difference between the east and the west. Nationalist thought at this stage asserts that the "superiority of the West lies in the materiality of its culture, exemplified by its science, technology and love of progress. But the East is superior in the spiritual aspect of culture."⁶⁸ Hence the best way to overcome the weakness inherent in the traditional culture of the east is by adopting the superior material qualities from the west and combining it with the spiritual greatness of the east. As a matter of fact Tickell has also deduced his argument from Partha Chatterjee's observation by accepting the fact that the novels of Ghosh and Mitra "enshrine[d] a national 'moment of departure'" and promoted the ideal which actually encouraged a mutual exchange of knowledge – taking lessons on science and technology from the west and offering them spiritual knowledge in return.⁶⁹

Friendship and marriage/affiliation and filiation

In the narratives of Ghosh and Mitra, the appropriation of the ideas of *philia* and *philoxenia* is problematized. Firstly, in the Aristotelian or Epicurean concepts, the terms *philia* or *philoxenia* are applied exclusively to men. A sense of fraternity

⁶⁶ Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature*, 175.

⁶⁷ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed Books, 1986) 50.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 51.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 174.

between two male citizens or a friendship between two male strangers belonging to different national/cultural/ethnic backgrounds feed the basic notions of *philia* and *philoxenia*. In both *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore*, Anglo-Indian marriage forms a basic strategy used by the authors to establish mutual understanding and stronger alliance between Indians and the English. This is probably because the idea of marriage implies not only the union of two persons, but that of two families; in political alliances marriages set up a permanent bond between two kingdoms; and in this case, the Anglo-Indian marriage meant the union of two nations and two races. Here, it will be worthwhile to refer to Patrick Parrinder's observation regarding the mutual convertibility of "filiation" and "affiliation", words originating from the root word *philia*. While filiation is the sentiment that one is expected to feel towards his family or nation as a natural bond, affiliation is a conscious choice of bearing allegiance to an individual or a nation.⁷⁰ Parrinder's opinion that "[t]he process of intergenerational continuity in families transforms affiliation into filiation and incomer into natives,"⁷¹ is relevant to our discussion of Anglo-Indian marriages being deployed by both Ghosh and Mitra in their narratives. The authors definitely believed that, if marriages were socially sanctioned and encouraged between Indians and the English, affiliation would naturally be transformed into filiation through natural course, which could be the best way to reconcile the differences.

Ghosh and Mitra's proposition of Anglo-Indian marriages was neither unjustifiable nor groundless as transnational or inter-racial marriages were not uncommon in Indian history. In *Greater India*, Kalidas Nag drew attention to instances of transnational marriages in Indian history.⁷² Chandragupta Maurya's defeating the Greek invader Seleukos Nikator followed by the establishment of a treaty along with a matrimonial alliance is a glaring example of transnational/international marriage. According to Nag, a Hindu emperor marrying a Hellenic wife in spite of the caste rigidities reflects India's way of absorbing foreign nationals into its social fabric.⁷³ One might argue that by marrying a Greek princess and including her in the structure of a royal dynasty the Indian king had only proved his superiority amongst his contemporary superpowers. To present a contrasting

⁷⁰ For details on the concepts of filiation and affiliation please refer to Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (London: Faber, 1984) 16-22.

⁷¹ Patrick Parrinder, *Nation and Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 20.

⁷² Nag, *Greater India*, 16.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 16.

picture we might refer to *Hindupore* where a Rajput princess agrees to marry an Irish youth and accompanies him to England. This marriage is primarily the consummation of a romantic relationship and it is not an inter-dynastic re-orientation of power. However, the difference between the heterosexual relationships dominated by, and without, power is shown by the contrast of Dukhiya's exploitation of an English subaltern officer and the romantic marriage between Tara and Kamala. If we consider the marriage between two foreigners the ultimate form of *philoxenia*, then the probable consequences of this ultimate form of *philoxenia* through socially sanctioned Anglo-Indian marriages remained beyond the scope of both the narratives. This is because *Hindupore* ends with the marriage of Tara and Kamala and in *The Prince of Destiny* Barath's love for Nora does not end with marriage. Barath's marriage to the Indian princess Suvona, according to Alex Tickell, "re-establishes the boundaries of colonial difference."⁷⁴

It is worthwhile to draw reference from Katie Trumpener's *Bardic Nationalism* in the discussion of the trope of marriage being deployed as a form of reconciliation. Citing the examples of some nineteenth-century Irish novels,⁷⁵ Trumpener claims that "[a]s the national tale moves toward and past the historical novel, its key generic features change in emphasis". The distinctive features of the genre, according to Trumpener, are "the journey", "the marriage" and "the national character".⁷⁶ She observes in the novels a shift in the political orientation from a "celebratory nationalism" which believes in cultural distinctiveness and the possibility of transcultural union "toward a more separatist position". She argues that "continuing meditation on a history of cultural oppression makes rapprochement and reconciliation increasingly inconceivable".⁷⁷ She focuses on Sydney Owenson's *Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811) in support of her argument in which the marriage between Hilarion, a Roman apostolic nuncio, and Luxima, a princess of Kashmir, forms the main plot. Although the novel was published in 1811, the narrative is set in seventeenth-century India. Hilarion's attempts to convert Luxima to Christianity results in her banishment and Hilarion's defrocking and trial by the Inquisition. Trumpener infers that, "[d]eeply irreconcilable, the two cultures of India and Rome

⁷⁴ Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature*, 173.

⁷⁵ Florence MacCarthy, *The Absentee, Ormond, The Milesian Chief, The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, and *The Anglo-Irish of the Nineteenth Century*.

⁷⁶ Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997) 142.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 146.

can meet only when the analogous despotism of their respective superstitions becomes visible”,⁷⁸ that is, when Luxima attempts to become a *sati* sharing the same stake on which Hilarion was condemned to be burned.

While Trumpener observes a shift in the political orientation from a celebratory, integrating and inclusivist nationalist stance to a separatist, disintegrating and exclusivist approach in the “national tales” she investigates, representation of the trope of marriage in the novels we are dealing with is somewhat different. In *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* we find that the idea of Anglo-Indian marriage, whether or not it materializes successfully in the narratives, is glorified by both the authors. In the two novels we come across three situations – an Anglo-Indian romance which does not materialize into marriage in *The Prince of Destiny*; and in *Hindupore* an Anglo-Indian romance which does not materialize into marriage but produces an ill-fated illegitimate child, and an Anglo-Indian romance which does materialize into marriage and promises a happy-ending. Apart from these earlier novels, in the novels of the 1920s also we notice Anglo-Indian romance being used as a trope of reconciliation, although these novels do not deal with Anglo-Indian marriage per se. However, this might lead to an erroneous conjecture that the avoidance of the trope of Anglo-Indian marriage in the later novels validates Trumpener’s argument. We need to remember that unlike the earlier novels which were essentially romances, *My Brother’s Face* and *Towards the Dawn* deployed the ideology of renunciation as the central idea under analysis; however, in spite of that, Josephine’s involvement in the nationalist movement and her blending in with the spiritual culture in India is enough to refute Trumpener’s claim.

As the subtitle “An Anglo-Indian Romance” suggests, *Hindupore* is primarily an account of the romance between two young people belonging to opposite cultural backgrounds. This Anglo-Indian romance should not be considered as just a figment of imagination or a strategic trope for a literary plot as there is no reason to consider this romance an unusual affair. Durba Ghosh in *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (2006) has argued with reliable evidence that the cohabitation of European men with Indian women was a common practice during the eighteenth century. In fact, her accounts of the interactions between East India Company employees and native women show that in the eighteenth century “racial hierarchies and boundaries were

⁷⁸ Ibid. 146.

unimportant” and white men were absorbed into the social fabric of India by smoking hookahs and learning local languages.⁷⁹ She gives a detailed analysis of the causes which robbed this relationship of its simplicity, and made the boundaries more pronounced and more visible. As more and more Englishwomen arrived in India to accompany their men over the years, sexual jealousies were evoked and the equations began to change. Here too, the 1857 mutiny was a watershed which made the boundaries almost non-porous and according to Durba Ghosh “an age of many kinds of partnership between Britons and those they ruled on the Indian subcontinent came to an abrupt end.”⁸⁰ Establishing an Indo-English romantic affair as the pivotal theme of the novel was an attempt to re-establish the century-old social communion between the Indians and the British that was interrupted by socio-political causalities. Again, the need to know and understand the subjects on the part of the rulers is crucial in maintaining an unprejudiced relationship between the ruler and the ruled. As I have mentioned, Durba Ghosh’s study of Indo-British interaction makes it clear that the extension of social exchange reached as far as the domestic space of Indian and English lives during the eighteenth century.

Mitra juxtaposes the romantic love between Tara and Kamala with the sexual exploitation of Dukhiya, a young Indian housemaid, by an English subaltern officer which symbolizes the sexual exploitation of the east by the west. Mitra has aristocrat sympathies and while intermarriage can be allowed for the aristocracy, the situation seems inherently bleak for the lower social orders, whether British or Indian. With the rhetorical help of the contrasting love-affairs – one romantic and the other exploitative – the author suggests that the foundation of a compassionate relationship between the east and the west in the hearts of their rulers, through mutual love, respect and understanding, followed by its institutional validation is the best and the happiest option for both the orient and the occident. Tara and Kamala’s marriage is thus performed according to both Hindu and Christian rituals – first in a temple presided over by a priest followed by church proceedings. Hailing their marriage, one of the characters mentions it as the continuation of the tradition which Mr. Fitzpatrick initiated by marrying a princess of the Deccan in the previous century. Based upon previous incidents it is agreed unanimously that the marriage would

⁷⁹ Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 1.

undoubtedly have positive implications so far as relation between the ruler and the rule is concerned:

General Pemberton, too, married a frontier chieftain's daughter at Peshawar. Captain Pemberton, the son of this inter-marriage, handled for years the frontier tribes without the curb being felt. He understood his mother's people.⁸¹

As we can see from Durba Ghosh's study of Anglo-Indian relationships in the social domain, there are innumerable records of marriages between the Englishmen and Indian women from various strata of society – royalty, elite as well as the commoners. Though social recognition and acceptance of such relationships varied with the different classes of women concerned, “native women were key figures of early colonial society.”⁸² Through the reference to Captain Pemberton in the above quotation, as a product of an inter-marriage, Mitra “embrac[es] hybridity [thereby] inform[ing] ... cosmopolitanism because it signalled tolerance and even appreciation of various types of heterogeneity.”⁸³

An ideal marriage between parties of different cultural backgrounds, in which racial hierarchies and boundaries pose no hindrance, forms the most appropriate metaphor through which Ghosh and Mitra could express an idea of union or negotiation between India and England. In *Hindupore* the model perhaps most closely resembles William Dalrymple's *White Mughals* (2002) and its account of the freer eighteenth century relations between East Indian company officials and native women when women of the royal families had a voice in matters of politics and also in selection of life-partners. Commenting on William Dalrymple's *White Mughals* (2002), Durba Ghosh (2006) in her book *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* is of the opinion that “Women are cast either as slaves or as romantic figures, with less attention to understanding their strategies for survival and their ways of locating and fashioning their selves.”⁸⁴ Ghosh criticizes Dalrymple for taking away the agency of the women. This is not exactly the case with *Hindupore*. Although Princess Kamala happens to be the impersonation of the romantic dream chased by Lord Tara all his life, the decision to marry was not essentially one-sided. It was only after Kamala's

⁸¹ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 294.

⁸² Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*, 4.

⁸³ Ibid. 14.

⁸⁴ Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*, 24.

careful meditation and acceptance of Tara's proposal that the marriage took place, as it was a love-match and not an arrangement after conquest. Hence mutual acceptance of the involved parties is a prerequisite that is exhorted in both the narratives. Sarath Ghosh spells it out directly in *The Prince of Destiny*:

Father, something bids me labour my uttermost to bring England and India together, and unite them in ties of affection stronger far than triple steel – aye, almost as man and woman.⁸⁵

Thus the two Indian novels attempted a reconciliation of the colonial-national dichotomy.

Turning our attention to the later novels by Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra, we do not find the issue of Anglo-Indian romance or marriage as explicit as in the earlier novels. First of all, with the development of the nationalist movement, the distance between the English and the Indians widened. Moreover, the particular section of the Indian society with which a social, political or cultural exchange with the colonial rulers was quite common, that is the royalty, was not addressed in the later narratives. The middle class and the lower class, who inhabit the narrative space in Dhan Gopal and Jatindranath's novels, had very little opportunities in their lives to come in direct contact with the English. However, even though never mentioned in *My Brother's Face*, we have discussed that Dhan Gopal had himself married an American woman with Irish origins whose citizenship was forfeited for marrying an Asian, suggesting that Indian nationalists attempted reconciliation with the west not only in their political beliefs but also in their personal lives.

In *Towards the Dawn* the intimacy that develops between Pratap and Josephine is another example of how cross-cultural relations were being encouraged. There is no doubt that Jatindranath was inspired by Sister Nivedita and her contribution to Indian nationalism when he conceptualized the character of Josephine. The attraction of Indian spirituality which drew western thinkers towards India was embodied by Swami Vivekananda and his saintly charisma which mesmerized Sister Nivedita to dedicate her life to the service of India and Indian nationalism. Similarly, Pratap, the bright young bachelor, who renounced his personal desires for the sake of

⁸⁵ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 367.

his motherland, impressed the widowed Josephine so much that she settled in India for life and became a member of Karmi's ashram. Thus, it becomes an example of the highest form of affiliation where it is Josephine's conscious choice not only to bear allegiance to India but to dedicate her life to the nationalist movement, forsaking her dreams and desires.

The Friend/Stranger dichotomy

In a letter to Edward VII, Sarath Ghosh stated the reason for his wanting to write a chronicle of Edward VII's probable visit to India. He wanted to:

reveal the deepest veneration of the people of India for Your Majesty, and depict their joy at the Proclamation of their first English ruler by the right of succession in the ancient heritage of Akbar and Prithviraj and Vikrama. ... I felt I had a mission ... to reveal the true and hidden India to the people of England, so that with true knowledge there might arise a bond of union between the two countries.⁸⁶

In our discussions in the previous chapters we have seen that neither the King's visit nor Ghosh's chronicle materialized. But what this extract from his letter suggests is that Ghosh was happy to include the British colonizers in the Indian historical frame of reference – not as the unfamiliar “other” to Indians, but as the most suitable successor to the mighty rulers of Indian history. In a sense he was trying to establish a *homophilic* bond with the British rulers, as they were believed to have the ability to maintain the legacy that the emperors such as Akbar (1542-1605), Prithviraj (1149-1192) and Vikrama (102 BCE-15 CE) had already created: the two countries of Britain and India united, seems the objective.⁸⁷

The friend-stranger dichotomy creates another problematic for Ghosh and Mitra. Englishness was so profoundly internalized by English-educated Indians such

⁸⁶ From unpublished letters preserved in the India Office Records of British Library, London. The shelfmark is IOR/L/PJ/6/610, File no. 1670A dated 12th August 1902 to 2nd July 1903.

⁸⁷ Akbar was the third Mughal emperor and the most successful as an administrator amongst the Mughal lineage of kings. For further details refer to R.C. Majumdar, *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. 7. (s.l.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974). Refer to (R. Majumdar, *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. 6: The Delhi Sultanate 1967) for details on Prithviraj. By Vikrama, Ghosh implies the legendary king Vikramaditya. However, the exact identity of King Vikramaditya is still an unresolved enigma in Indian history. Both Samudragupta (d. 375 CE) and Chandragupta II (d. 413 CE), the two most prominent kings of the Gupta Empire, assumed the title “Vikramaditya”. According to scholars there is no evidence of a real or legendary king before Chandragupta II. For further details refer to R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964) 236.

as them that their Indian and Anglophilic entities were enmeshed with each other inseparably. In *The Prince of Destiny*, being one with the stranger/other (the English in this case) never had to be a conscious process in the life of Barath. In *The Prince of Destiny* the narrator describes how English men and women were invited by the King as witnesses to the naming ceremony of the new-born prince, something which was unprecedented in history. In *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* there is an added description of an English sage among the five Englishmen –

he that had come to India to seek Enlightenment – took me also in his arms, and told the assembly of certain prophecies in his own country, prophecies that were yet to be fulfilled. He spoke of the pursuit of perishable things by the people of the West, and the cry that had arisen in a few stricken hearts for the things that men do not see with the eye of the body, but with the eye of the soul.⁸⁸

Thus, at the very beginning of the narrative the boundary between “self” and “the other” becomes blurred. Firstly, naming a child, which is supposed to be an essentially religious ritual, especially in a royal family, involves foreign guests. This is an attempt to involve “the other” into a traditionally indigenous and more specifically a family event. Secondly, the introduction of an English sage coming to India seeking enlightenment, and feeling threatened by the devastating effect of the materialistic culture of the west, is a narrativized expression of that particular aspiration, the fulfilment of which was the fundamental goal of the nationalists. This, in a way, prefigures the ultimate achievement aspired by the Indian nationalists of bringing the people of the west into the fold of Indian spirituality. The contest between Indian spirituality and western materialism was the fundamental basis of the nationalist consciousness as we have seen through our detailed discussions in the previous chapters. Naturally, an Englishman realizing the doom of materialistic culture and seeking refuge in Indian spirituality was a symbol of a significant achievement of the nationalistic ambition. Thus the idea of *philoxenia* would therefore not hold good so far as such characters as Prince Barath or the English sage or the late Victorian poet Francis Thomson (discussed in chapter 1) are concerned. It

⁸⁸ Sarath Kumar Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* (London: Grant Richards, 1902) 28-9.

is because their cultural orientation is not at all polarized and each one of them has a natural or acquired capability to empathize with the alien culture he is exposed to.

In both *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* the situations are created in which foreigners are hosted with a positive intention of cultural exchange; and at this point it becomes worthwhile to refer to Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of the idea of hospitality. In his lecture on hospitality, Derrida problematizes the idea of stranger and the other. Hospitality, he believes, is owed to the other as a stranger. But as soon as the other is considered a stranger, one begins to introduce "the circles of conditionality that are family, nation, state and citizenship".⁸⁹ Again, there is the other who is even more foreign "than the one whose foreignness cannot be restricted to foreignness in relation to language, family or citizenship".⁹⁰ By this Derrida brings forth the "dimension of not-knowing that is essential in hospitality".⁹¹ This in a way echoes Kwame Anthony Appiah's idea of the possibility of a conversation with the imaginary abstract as discussed earlier in this chapter.

However, Derrida claims that "there can be no unconditional welcome, no unconditional passage through the door" for the guest.⁹² It is undoubtedly a right of "the foreign other as a friend" but on the condition that the master/host "remains the *patron* [and] maintains his own authority *in his home*, ... affirms the law of hospitality as the ... law of the household, the law of the place (house, ... family, ... nation, ... language etc.)".⁹³ The idea of hospitality is therefore self-contradictory. As soon as the guest/foreigner/stranger/other encroaches on the host's *ipseity*, on his power of hospitality or his sovereignty as host, the former is regarded as "an undesirable foreigner".⁹⁴ The host becomes visually xenophobic under such circumstances in order to protect his hospitality. In both *The Prince of Destiny* and *Hindupore* the hosts and the guests maintain the inviolability expected of their respective positions according to Derrida's idea. Both Barath and Lord Tara accommodate themselves in the alien environment by adapting to the life and manners of their hosts and never encroaching on the *ipseity* of their hosts. Similarly Colonel Wingate and Ram Singh play perfect hosts by being ideal patrons and

⁸⁹ Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", trans. Barry Stocker and Forbes Morlock. *Angelaki: Journal for the Theoretical Humanities* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Routledge, December 2000) 8.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 8.

⁹¹ Ibid. 8.

⁹² Ibid. 4.

⁹³ Ibid. 4.

⁹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) 53.

affirming the law and culture of their households and also their societies. However, the arrival of Nora in Barathpur threatened Vashistha who was scared of the possibility of marriage between Barath and Nora which, according to him, would result in foreign intrusion into the royal family; and thus, considering Nora “an undesirable foreigner” in this case, every measure was taken to protect the royal family from foreign intrusion and thus preserve its *ipseity*.

This idea is coherent with Emmanuel Levinas’s claim that “[a]nother comes to the fore *as other* if and only if his or her ‘appearance’ breaks, pierces, destroys the horizon of my egocentric monism”.⁹⁵ On the other hand the other poses no threat in spite of his/her otherness if the encounter with the other is accompanied by the discovery of a similarity or a fundamental equality between the self and the other. However, this similarity is the fruit of “reflective comparison” which follows the “revelation of a more original *asymmetry*”; and this original asymmetry cannot and should not be overshadowed by “the secondary truth of our equality”.⁹⁶ Barath’s attraction towards Francis Thompson can be cited as a good example of such a situation. The fundamental equality in their intellectual and spiritual dispositions becomes more prominent due to the original asymmetry of their social and cultural orientation.

Ellen’s playing the role of Barath’s mother in England is of paramount significance. The relationship between Barath and Ellen can be accommodated neither within the filiation/affiliation project, nor within the friend/stranger dichotomy, nor even within the Aristotelian “homo-fraternal and phallogocentric schema”, to use Derrida’s terms.⁹⁷ It is suggestive of Barath’s hybridity where the “private and public ... the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy,” in the words of Bhabha.⁹⁸ It is here that Barath’s social experience questions the binary divisions and provides the narrative with a double edge. The way in which Ghosh constructs the transnationality of Barath and his social, political, cultural and religious orientation is important and it would not be unjustified if we project Barath as a native informant-cum-hybrid-internationalist. As we have discussed in the first chapter, in the photographs printed in the first edition of his novels, Sarath Kumar

⁹⁵ Adriaan Peperzak, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1993) 19.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 28.

⁹⁷ Jacques Derrida, “Politics of Friendship”, *American Imago* Vol. 50, No. 3 (Fall, 1993) 388.

⁹⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004) 19.

Ghosh is clothed in typical Indian princely attire with an elaborate head-dress and a choker of pearls adorning his neck. In *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* we do get an explanation of his strange costume:

I was robed in cloth of gold, and had pearls around my neck and diamonds upon my brow; but the garments next my heart were of English make ... Could I say more than that? ... Verily was I a strange contradiction.⁹⁹

His photograph in an exclusively oriental costume followed by the English novel authored by him formed a visual representation of his hybridity or the “strange contradiction” as he himself prefers to call it. With his Indian apparel combined with impeccable knowledge of English Ghosh had constructed for himself a third identity – an identity in which the characteristic traits of both Indians and the English overlap. Thus I argue that he sees himself as a hybrid between the east and the west, rather than an Indian wearing a white European mask; and the portrayal of Barath is definitely inspired by this perception of Ghosh.

Educational and cultural exchange

Other than the tropes of friendships and marriages, which have been used in the dissemination of the idea of internationalism, the necessity of a balanced education through both eastern and western systems of training has been a vital point raised by the authors. It is, however, interesting to note that Barath in *The Prince of Destiny* as well as Ram Singh in *Hindupore*, who are both meant to be flawless rulers with perfect administrative skills and sympathetic understanding of the needs of their subjects, have had their trainings in the west. Both of them have had the experience of closely interacting with English people, have acquired knowledge enough to assess and question the rationality behind some of the customs practised by Indians and the English and have had the opportunity to appreciate and adopt the best of both the cultures. Thus, it can be inferred that these authors considered it a prerequisite for modern Indian leaders to be educated in England and to adopt the best of both cultures in order to establish the best governance possible. Ghosh’s ideal of negotiation is substantiated by the juxtaposition of Barath and Vasishta. Vasishta is

⁹⁹ Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, 138.

the ascetic who represents the Hindu militant nationalists who demanded immediate independence from British rule and the establishment of self-government in India. In the plot Ghosh makes the organised rebellion of Vasishta a failure in order to establish his political stance. Barath formed a coterie in which all members belonging to his generation had received their professional training in the west and shared amongst themselves a motivation to serve their motherland by discarding the vicious, amending the effete, and inspiring the modern.¹⁰⁰

Ghosh portrays Barath as an Indian who travelled to England for the purpose of higher education. This was a common affair in those days. Rozina Visram says it was common for young students from well-to-do families to come to England for higher studies and the majority of famous Indian leaders did actually attain higher education in England. In her seminal study on the first generation of Asian immigrants to England, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes* (1986), Visram writes:

to many people in Britain, India was the land of the maharajahs. But it was the students who formed the largest group. They came to Britain to obtain vital qualifications without which they could never hope to enter most professions and the civil service.¹⁰¹

But sailing to England for higher education was common only amongst the royal families and the elites who could afford the expenses. In the January 1907 issue of *The Nineteenth Century and After*, the Rajah (king) of Kapurthala, Jagatjit Singh, wrote an article titled “The Education of Indian Princes”. In the article he said, “The different ways of educating these boys are: At home, under private tutors; at Chiefs’ Colleges, established in different parts of India; or, lastly, by sending them to Europe.”¹⁰² He argued that education in England was necessary for the princes in order to strengthen their character and keep their minds free of narrow prejudices fostered by indigenous tutors.¹⁰³ As we have seen in the novel Barath is received by Ellen, his foster mother during his stay in England. This combines the political needs of British-educated Indian ruler with the more personal structure of the family. Thus

¹⁰⁰ See footnote 59 in chapter 1 for details.

¹⁰¹ Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, lascars and princes: Indians in Britain 1700-1947* (London: Pluto, 1986) 169.

¹⁰² Jagatjit Singh, “The Education of Indian Princes” in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, Vol. LXI. Issue CCCLIX, (London: Spottiswoode and Co. Ltd. Printers, January 1907) 52.

¹⁰³ See also Antoinette Burton, *At the heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (London: California University Press, 1998) which examines how Indians interacted with the British Empire in Britain and British culture.

the author shows how both the east and the west offer him parental care and pedagogical guidance towards successful political ends.

In the chapter titled “The Awakening of the East” Ghosh attributes the credit of waking the east up from its slumber to the west. However, he does not miss the opportunity of drawing the attention of the readers to the offensive manner of doing so which in turn instigated rancour in the east.

The East would have continued to slumber, had it not been rudely awakened by the West; to live and let live, had it not been aroused to active resentment by the continued aggression of the West.¹⁰⁴

The necessity of manipulating the achievements of the west for improving the situation of India that Ghosh repeatedly insisted upon was also emphasized by Tagore in his writings on the Swadeshi Movement during 1905-10 which were later published in *Greater India*. Preoccupation with the achievements of Indian scholars of the past combined with a total disregard of the modern achievements was criticized by Tagore in one of his papers written during 1909-10. In *Greater India*, which was a translated collection of Tagore’s various lectures and essays, we get a clear idea of his critical appreciation of the mass psyche of the contemporary nationalists who denied the contributions of the west outright.

That our forefathers, three thousand years ago, had finished extracting all that was of value from the universe, is not a worthy thought. We are not so unfortunate, nor the universe so poor. Had it been true that all that is to be done has been done in the past, once for all, then our continued existence would not be possible.¹⁰⁵

Though Tagore believed that Britain’s occupying a permanent place in the history of India was an “accidental intrusion”, he realized that if India did not have any encounter with the west, she would not have had the essential elements required for the attainment of perfection. He observed that since Europe had her lamp ablaze, the Indians needed to light their torches at its wick “and make a fresh start on the highway of time.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 148-9.

¹⁰⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, *Greater India* (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1921) 85.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*: 84-5.

Not only the Indians who had travelled to the west for higher studies, but also Indian students who had been exposed to western education in India, understood the indispensability of knowledge of western history, philosophy and science. As we have already seen, the exposure to western history and philosophy was of paramount importance to the authors in various ways. . It is not only the “metaphysical lacunae” that they identified in the western philosophy; they could also appreciate the positive attributes in the mass character of the people of the west.

The History of England has shown you the tremendous power of union and organisation which is leading the English people to success and glory. From the History of your own country you have known that the sad want of union has been the cause of her misery and ruin. For this fault of her children, the Motherland to-day lies prostrate at the feet of the nations who look down upon her.¹⁰⁷

The knowledge of English history helped Indian nationalists to identify their disadvantages and disabilities in contrast with westerners. Indian nationalists learnt the importance of the consolidation of national interests and the necessity of mustering power from the west, apart from the idea of nationalism itself.

While it could be said that writers such as Ghosh and Mitra portray to some extent an Orientalist view of India, it cannot be denied that they also do much to undermine the opposition of India and Britain and suggest parallels between the two. We find in *The Prince of Destiny* that the British representatives who had already been appointed by the British Government to invigilate the political administration of Barathpur are now being included into the cultural performances on the initiative of Barath:

Barath now ordered tamashas¹⁰⁸ and entertainments ... the entertainments would be in English variations. That would be an emblem of the union of East and West. Verily he sought to unite East and West in his own person and in Barathpur ... he would be the first to turn the conflict into concord. He would begin the union of East

¹⁰⁷ J.N. Mitra, *Towards the Dawn*, (Lucknow: n.p., 1922) 20.

¹⁰⁸ Persian in origin, the word ‘Tamasha’ is used in Hindi as well as Bengali. But in Maharashtra (a Western Indian state) Tamasha is a form of folk performance which includes song, dance and sometimes theatres. It is widely performed by local or travelling theatre.

and West upon his very throne. What nobler mission could he have than that?¹⁰⁹

Thus Barath, a bright young man with a profound knowledge of the Vedas and Indian philosophy, is equally well-trained in English and western philosophy, mathematics and science. While in England he adopts English manners and culture, not to forsake his Indianness but to compare the similarities and reconcile the differences.

In India we love our deep conservatism; in England they cherish their national institutions. In that we are like brothers. ... There is no gulf between England and India that cannot be bridged with a little understanding, a little truthfulness, a little forgiveness – on both sides.¹¹⁰

Besides writing about India for British readers, creating a successful mutual understanding between India and England is the seminal idea the author has returned to again and again in his novel.

While the idea of nationalism was gradually gaining concrete shape and the anti-British agitation a definite justification based on the issue of the Partition of Bengal, both Ghosh and Mitra shared the “Moderate” orientation of a nationalism which prioritized social reform over political independence. They believed that India was not prepared for independence and that she needed to acquire the knowledge of science and technology from the west, and for the west it was essential to cultivate and develop spiritual acumen from India. This is how the authors play the role of “intermediaries”, rather than ordinary collaborating informants. In this context too, it is useful to refer to Bankim’s essay on the theory of religion titled “Dharmattatva” written in form of a conversation between a teacher and a student, where Bankim writes: “The day the European industries and sciences are united with Indian *dharma*, man will be good.”¹¹¹

In fact, Partha Chatterjee draws our attention to Jawaharlal Nehru’s *Discovery of India* where he too subscribes to the same idea. Chatterjee quotes the

¹⁰⁹ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 517-8.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 366.

¹¹¹ Jogesh Chandra Bagal (ed.), *Bankim Rachanabali* (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1965) 633. Translation by Partha Chatterjee in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, 66.

following lines from *Discovery of India* to prove that Nehru too was echoing Bankim's voice so far as the exchange of knowledge between the east and west was concerned.

India, as well as China, must learn from the West, for the modern West has much to teach, and the spirit of the age is represented by the West. But the West is also obviously in need of learning much, and its advances in technology will bring it little comfort if it does not learn some of the deeper lessons of life, which have absorbed the minds of thinkers in all ages and in all countries.¹¹²

Indian thinkers believed that they and other Indians had a social stake in British India even if that view now seems to have been elided by the growth of Indian Gandhian nationalism. Thus, the authors believed that an exchange of knowledge would prove beneficial for both the parties involved. This naturally implied that each of the parties had something to offer to the other which validated the superiority of Indian history and culture over the west.

Amongst the English-educated Indian population in the late nineteenth century a slightly Anglophilic temperament was quite common and naturally understandable. An exposure to the English classics, western science and philosophy, art and culture opened a floodgate of experience which, to the Indian mind, was absolutely fresh and new-fangled. English culture as a whole was thus associated with modernity, the ignorance of which naturally suggested intellectual inadequacy. The novels describe Indian culture, discuss Indian history, draw references from the mythologies and thereby construct a national identity for India. At the same time they express their reverence for the English system of education, appreciate English life and manners, and agree upon the potential of the British rulers to offer the best governance to India. In *The Prince of Destiny* Barath explains the need to be grateful to the imperial government in a speech that he delivers to Lord Melnor (the representative of the British government in the state of Barathpur) and the royal priest Vashista:

¹¹² Partha Chatterjee quotes the lines in his *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, 138, from Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (New York: John Day, 1946) 517-8.

what Britain has done for India ... She has given us internal peace ... she has given us the possibility of adopting what is best in Western institutions. Japan has indeed done that for herself, but Japan was an independent country. We were not; at least we were independent of each other, but fighting each other ... during the last fifty years the spirit of nationalism has first been begotten in India. That is due directly to the British by the work of consolidation; indirectly also – for even in their errors, when we saw injustices, we were aroused to a fellow-feeling with those who had suffered. That was an element in nationalism. Let us give even that credit to the British as being in that an instrument of fate. Are not these blessings great enough – peace, the possibility of material progress, and the spirit of nationalism?¹¹³

It is worth noticing in the above quotation that Barath admits that nationalism is an idea of Western origin. He believes that British power, with its uses and abuses, has been positively instrumental in sowing the seeds of nationalism in Indian soil. Contemporary political consciousness, within which was embedded the idea of national consciousness, the need for social reform, and realization of the socio-economic-political drawbacks that India suffered from, together formed the corollary to western education. It was therefore almost impossible to conceptualize an overall reformed and modernized India while denying the obvious influence of the west. Weighed against the potential losses, the aspirations of probable benefits that could be reaped out of an amicable association with England, predominated the convictions of these authors.

Nationalism sans hatred

Ghosh and Mitra proposed an amicable idea of Indian nationalism – helpfulness towards all within and outwith the group and distrust of none. It is not only a message to Indian nationalists, but also an assurance to the British that Indian nationalism need not be threatening. This is possibly because the greatest probability that the authors could imagine was home rule as in Ireland, Canada or Australia. And this is the basic moral which they attempted to disseminate through their works – the sentiment of hatred was never encouraged as a social or political force to be used

¹¹³ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 594.

against the foreign rulers. Their perception of the political condition of contemporary India and their ideas on nationalism were in no way different from contemporary thinkers like Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. Like them, Ghosh and Mitra also advocated international fraternity. They realized the importance of east-west partnership and of technological and cultural exchange which were crucial for the progress of India. They believed, in concurrence with the ideas of Swami Vivekananda that “an intellectual synthesis ... was required in order to conceptualize and keep pace with the new technological unification of the world.”¹¹⁴ Thus they decried the feeling of animosity which consumed Indian subjects in the early twentieth century, leading to the Swadeshi Movement. On the other hand, through their novels they attempted to inform the British administrators of the rich cultural heritage of India, of which they seemed to be unaware. This ignorance on their part was considered the main reason for misunderstanding between the ruler and the ruled, thereby drawing them apart. Ghosh and Mitra addressed “colonialist disavowal” so that “other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the ... discourse.”¹¹⁵ They played the role of the mediator who respected each of the opposites and tried to reconcile their polarities.

If we agree with Tickell’s argument that non-violent resistance is only possible after political developments have passed through the “moment of disaffiliation”, or after having transgressed the “moment of departure” in the words of Partha Chatterjee. According to Chatterjee, the “*moment of departure*” is marked by the “encounter of a nationalist consciousness with the framework of knowledge created by post-Enlightenment rationalist thought”.¹¹⁶ It produces the awareness and acceptance of the fundamental difference in culture between East and West which lies in the particular attribute in European culture which equips it for power and progress, and which is lacking in the traditional cultures of the East. The nationalists claim, as Chatterjee argues, that this particular attitudinal ineptitude is not historically immutable and can be transformed by adopting the modern attributes of European culture. To the question of whether this cultural adoption would obliterate the essential cultural difference distinctive of the East, Chatterjee argues with

¹¹⁴ Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial 1890-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 51. Boehmer refers to Santwana Dasgupta in A.K. Mazumdar, *Nivedita Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta: Vivekananda Janmotsava Samiti, 1968) 106.

¹¹⁵ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 162.

¹¹⁶ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World in The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) 50.

reference to the nationalist thought which we have discussed many times in this thesis – the materiality of western culture as opposed to the spiritual orientation of the east: “True modernity for the non-European nations would lie in combining the superior material qualities of western cultures with the spiritual greatness of the East.”¹¹⁷ Chatterjee also points out, to verify my claims regarding the earlier novels, that this ideal implies an “elitist programme” as “the act of cultural synthesis can only be performed by the supremely refined intellect”.¹¹⁸ However, for the transformation of popular consciousness one needs to wait for what Chatterjee calls *the moment of manoeuvre* which he elucidates through his discussion of Gandhi. Thus, there is no denying the fact that the narratives we have discussed have passed through the “moments”. It is extremely important to note that not in any of the narratives have we observed any instance of unmitigated hatred against the colonizers being encouraged by the authors. Though we have observed different approaches towards the basic conception of nationalism between the novels published in 1909 and in the 1920s, the common disposition that they share is a sense of amity and amicability. The retired High Court judge in *The Prince of Destiny*, who has been living the life of an ascetic in Barathpur, is said to be preaching to the young men exactly what Gandhi would be preaching decades later. Viswamitra teaches that:

There is no room for rage, but for love. Conquer all the things by love. Conquer even England by love. Believe me, you will obtain more from England this very day by love than by rage. Be gentle.¹¹⁹

The message of non-violence that breathes of the philosophy of *ahimsa* so popularized by Gandhi is repeated as a refrain throughout the narrative.

The practicality of such internationalist and humane nationalism is an extremely debatable issue. Gandhi offered the solution of non-violence which was successful only partially and hence the flaws in his ideas were identified and criticized by Tagore. In *My Brother's Face* Dhan Gopal Mukerji expresses his disheartenment with the attitude of young students which reeked of arrogant nationalism. Here we find an example of Isaiah Berlin's concept of “resentful

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 51.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 51.

¹¹⁹ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 627.

isolation” as discussed earlier in this chapter. A continuous struggle by the nationalists over the decades to infuse an awareness of a sense of Indianness and consciousness of India’s glorious history had resulted in inordinate pride and self-conceit. The arrogance originated in the basic assumption that “[t]he West has nothing to teach us.”¹²⁰ The particular achievements, for which the west had been considered superior to India, were nullified by the young students. In the earlier narratives we have seen that a mutual exchange of knowledge had been the aspiration of the authors, when the west would learn about Indian spirituality by teaching India science and technology. But the general assumption that science and technology was the westerner’s forte was totally repudiated by young Indians. Mukerji addresses this issue quite deftly in the narrative of *My Brother’s Face* where he relates his interaction with a group of young students who had no faith in Gandhian ideas of non-violent revolution:

India has her own geometry, her own mathematics, her own art, science, and philology. Should we bow to the Western savage simply because he has the lung power to shout that he is superior? He has invented poison gas, liquid fire, and peace proclamations, then he comes to us, Bible in one hand and hand-grenades in the other. Who is savage – he or we? They from the West send us whisky with machine guns and we offer them Gandhism. Who is more spiritual, who more civilized, they or we? ... Our generation in Asia will brush the Western fly out of existence.¹²¹

The above quotation is reflective of the aggressive nationalism which proved too stubborn to be curbed even by the philosophy of *ahimsa* popularised by Gandhi. This blind nationalism is what Mukerji finds crude and vulgar – “arrogant West fighting the new arrogant East”;¹²² and this is what stripped the idea of nationalism of its humane element, according to Tagore.

However, though the authors advocate amicability between the nations, they had been discreet enough to draw the attention of the readers to a vital point. They made it clear that it would be absolutely wrong to judge this fraternal disposition of

¹²⁰ Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2003) 101.

¹²¹ Ibid. 102 & 104.

¹²² Mukerji, *My Brother’s Face*, 104.

Indians as a sign of the latter's cowardice or impuissance. In *The Prince of Destiny*, the narrator directly addresses English readers and cautions them against their underestimation of the physical strength of Indians. He warns them that physical strength would not be decisive if India mustered her spiritual strength.

Do not believe those who tell you that you must rely on physical force. They presume on the gentleness of the Hindu who tell you that: they forget that there may be some truth in the prophecy that the meek shall possess the earth. Even now things are happening that will make mere physical force a broken reed – for the coast-line of India is very large. ... Believe me, and try to turn the coming conflict of East and West into concord.¹²³

The prophecy regarding the possibility of the meek ruling the world, as mentioned in the above quotation, reminds us of the observation of Swami Vivekananda. He said: “India sets the example of real strength, that is meekness. Dash, pluck, fight, all these things are weakness.”¹²⁴ It is interesting to note that in *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, narrator particularly mentions of being impressed by Spain's “present meekness”.¹²⁵

The basic non-belligerent attitude of Indians which westerners mistook to be a sign of “meekness” has been harped upon by the authors repeatedly. We have seen how Ghosh differentiates the basic attitude towards the idea of hunting between Indians and westerners. He tries to establish that hunting, which was a mere frivolous sport for the westerners, was a serious affair for the Indians. The latter indulged in it only for the sake of protection against wild animals when required, and for self-defence. Killing without reason never had ethical sanction. Mitra also presents in his narrative how Indians proved to be more chivalrous than the westerners, as opposed to the general conception. Mukerji's narrative also establishes the same argument with the portrayals of the fortitudinous brother and his terrorist/revolutionist accomplices, and Ghond, the hunter. Thus, the authors have proved the general idea amongst westerners about the Indians being weaklings, effeminate and

¹²³ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 625.

¹²⁴ Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 5, 190.

¹²⁵ Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, 188.

pusillanimous as absolutely baseless. War and killing have always been considered as the last options for self-defence and not for unreasonable offence.

As opposed to an overtly arrogant attitude to westerners, exemplified through the young students in Mukerji's narrative, we find that the character of Barath in *The Prince of Destiny* represents the ideal temperament which the authors consider to be the template for an ideal Indian. When Barath reaches England and has to stay at Colonel Wingate's house before moving to Cambridge, he has to accommodate himself to English manners and customs:

Barath found some little difficulty at first in adapting himself to the ways of an English household. But with his own innate docility, combined with Ellen's exquisite tenderness and Wingate's old-world courtesy, he learnt in a few days the rudimentary lessons needed of him. ...

Yet misgivings arose: could the customs of his own country and of England be both right, though totally divergent? Then his mental humility came to the rescue: that things he could not understand might yet be right.¹²⁶

Use of the phrases like "innate docility" and "mental humility" in the quotation above reconfirms the non-belligerent disposition of Indians in general, as discussed in the previous paragraphs. The author probably used the word "docility" to imply an openness of mind and flexibility of ideas. "Mental humility" is also another trait which prevents an individual from being arrogant and egoistic and therefore helps him to appreciate and accept whatever he finds inspiring in other cultures. Naturally these traits are essential for cultural hybridity. The importance of humility has also been emphasized by Tagore, as quoted by Dhan Gopal Mukerji in *My Brother's Face* and already discussed in the beginning of the chapter.¹²⁷

In the concluding chapter of *The Prince of Destiny*, the narrator looks back at the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 in order to draw a comparison between the political stance of Barathpur and that of the state of Gwalior.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 159 and 161.

¹²⁷ Refer to page 161.

¹²⁸ For further details on the Sepoy Mutiny please see Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989) 32.

At the Mutiny of 1857 the troops of Gwalior implored their ruler to lead them out to join forces with the heroic Queen of Jhansi: and her cause might have aroused active sympathy elsewhere in India. But the ruler of Gwalior sided with the East India Company. ... In the like manner the revolution at Barathpur, deprived of Barath's sanction, was deprived of its cause of existence. It failed because of Barath's love for England.¹²⁹

Though I have mentioned Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *Shunkur: A Tale of Indian Mutiny* in the introduction, I have not analysed it in the chapters as one of the case-studies. It is because the idea of nationalism, which we saw evolving in the novels published in 1909 and then taking final shape in those published in the 1920s, was at the germinal stage when Shoshee Chunder's *Shunkur* was published. It is a balanced narrativization of the atrocities committed by the Indians and the English alike. Therefore, we can infer that the novelists we are dealing with, portrayed Indian nationalism as a political idea free from any bias and any blatant hatred against England or any other nation of the world, which is nevertheless a practical impossibility. .

Relation between India and other nations

So far, we have been discussing the promotion of amicable relation between India and England. But there are other nations which are referred to in the narratives in the context of international relations with India. We find that Ireland has been an important referral point in *Hindupore*. Though Ireland was part of the United Kingdom when the novel was published, the history of Ireland shows that it has been constantly in a state of conflict with England, and has tried to maintain itself as a separate unit in terms of political, social and cultural identity. Siddha Mohana deliberately makes Lord Tara a parliamentarian and his Irish descent is functional in adding another dimension to his perception of Indian movements against the British. Deploying an Irish hero in this Anglo-Indian romance was strategic on the part of this Bangalee author. Rukmini Bhaya Nair writes:

¹²⁹ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 621.

The “Irish Question” was a matter of concern among the Bengali intelligentsia as early as the 1820s. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, founder of the Brahmo Samaj, of which Tagore’s father, Debendranath Tagore, was a stalwart member, strongly opposed the British occupation of Ireland.¹³⁰

Within a year of the publication of *Hindupore* in 1909, the widely celebrated novel of Rabindranath Tagore *Gora* (1910) was published. It was about an Irish protagonist orphaned by his parents during the mutiny of 1857 and subsequently brought up in a Bangalee Hindu family. Tagore’s idea of deploying an Irish hero particularly was definitely not a whim. Michael Holmes quotes from Sir Patrick Cadell’s “Irish Soldiers in India” (1953) in his essay “The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism” that “at the time of the Indian Mutiny considerably more than half the Company’s white soldiers were Irish.”¹³¹ Naturally, judging from the historical perspective, the case of *Gora* could have been highly probable. *Gora* becomes an advocate of orthodox Hinduism against Hindu modernizers and reformers, before discovering that he was not in fact born an Indian, let alone a Brahmin.

Holmes’ essay explains the wide presence of the Irish in colonial India and also the mutually sympathetic relationship between the Indians and the Irish. According to him, the Irish wanted to escape the conditions in Ireland and seek a career particularly in the British military service. Attractive and adventurous, as the military career was believed to be, it also opened up a scope for upward mobility in the society. However, Irish officers were not as acceptable as the English. But the fact that service in Indian regiments particularly were not sought after made it easier for the Irish to acquire commissions, so much so that “from 1885 to 1914, the Irish came close to monopolising the post of Commander in Chief in India.”¹³² Apart from the large presence of Irish population in India, the colonial experience of the Irish and the Indians under the British rule were in many ways similar. One of the

¹³⁰ Rukmini Bhaya Nair, “The Pedigree of the White Stallion” in Marshall Brown (ed.), *The Uses of Literary History* (London: Duke University Press, 1995) 162.

¹³¹ Quoted by Michael Holmes, “The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism” in Andy Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000) 236. Holmes has quoted from Sir Patrick Cadell, “Irish Soldiers in India” in *The Irish Sword: The Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Dublin: The Society, 1953) 79.

¹³² Quoted by Holmes, “The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism”, 236 from Thomas Bartlett, “The Irish Soldier in India, 1750 – 1947” in Michael Holmes and Denis Holmes (eds.) *Ireland and India: Connections, Comparisons, Contrasts* (Dublin: Folens, 1997) 21.

common crises which proved to be a trying situation for both Ireland and India was the occurrence of famines. Holmes argues that in both countries, “the experience of famine contributed to a strengthening of the desire for independence” and “[t]here are also parallels in the way that the nationalist movements in both countries were developed in mass movements.”¹³³ In his *Third World Protest* Rahul Roy says, “Irish nationalists had been impressed by the Indian revolt of 1857 and they perceived in the Bengal famine of 1874 an echo of their own imperial history of the 1840s.”¹³⁴ Thus, Ireland and India, both under colonial rule by the British and both struggling for independence, shared a common ground of mutual compassion and fellow-feeling for each other. Naturally, the choice of an Irish hero for the novel was essentially premeditated by Mitra; and there is no denying the fact that it added an important dimension to the idea of internationalism as professed through the narrative.

The author’s choice of the name for Lord Tara is also significant. He probably intended to show hybridity between the Irish Hill of Tara, meaning the Hill of Kings,¹³⁵ and “Tara” from Sanskrit and other Indian languages meaning “star”. This is how Mitra places Tara between the English and the Indian and perhaps reworks the great figure Kim in Kipling’s *Kim*, who is also Irish. Tara is one who can appreciate the motivating rationale of the British – being a parliamentarian himself – and also of the Indian by virtue of his belonging to the early British-Irish aristocracy. Lord Tara mentions in a dialogue with the Rajput king that his title is actually Norman (hence not originally British):

There are very few of the Irish nobility whose titles are older than the seventeenth or eighteenth century, when Ireland was resettled by William of Orange. We went over with Henry the Second in the time of the third Earl. My grandfather refused a dukedom when he came home from India in the early days of Queen Victoria. He preferred to

¹³³ Holmes, “The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism”, 243.

¹³⁴ Rahul Roy, *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 118.

¹³⁵ The Hill of Tara (Irish *Cnoc na Teamhrach*) or *Temair na Ri* (Hill of the Kings), which lies near the river Boyne, is an archeological complex and was regarded traditionally, as the seat of the High King of Ireland (Irish *Ard Ri na Heireann*). The archaeological evidence does not really suggest this royal function.

keep the old title that had been in the family for so many generations.¹³⁶

We might elicit from the given information that Lord Tara's predecessors were Normans who had settled in Ireland during the reign of Henry the Second (1133-1189). We also need to keep in mind that a section of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, which was primarily the landed gentry from seventeenth century till Irish independence in the twentieth century, happened to be the immigrant French Huguenots. The stance of a section of this Anglo-Irish aristocracy in the Irish independence movement was absolutely polarized. They were vehemently opposed to the idea of any kind of political union with Britain. Thus opposition to the authoritarian government of England brought the Indians and the Irish to the same position. Therefore Lord Tara and his equally Indophile friend Harvey, who invited the former to visit India, are sympathetic to "Vandemataram" which they find not more seditious than the Irish patriotic songs.

Both Mitra and Ghosh, belonging to the conservative and privileged groups, occupied a liminal space between the ruler and the ruled. Their position was as ambivalent as the Irish people serving the British Government. In Julia M. Wright's words:

nineteenth century Ireland also teeters on the crux of the binary oppositions which form the foundation of contemporary British imperialist rhetoric: it was depicted as European but exotic, Christian but Catholic, literate but culturally impoverished, enfranchised but colonized, and white but feminized.¹³⁷

Perhaps Tara, with this ambiguity owing to his Irish identity, is a fitting symbol of how these authors might have seen themselves and represents a more widely felt ambivalence in the Irish subject of Empire than is memorialized in Kipling's decision to make Kim an Irish child.

The necessity for mutual relationship with other nations of the east as well as of the west is advocated in the narratives we have discussed. Sarath Ghosh's conviction of humanitarian cosmopolitanism or internationalism finds expression

¹³⁶ Mitra, *Hindupore*, 72.

¹³⁷ Julia M. Wright, *Ireland, India, and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 7.

through the particular event in the plot of *The Prince of Destiny* where Barath observes thirteen thousand Italian troops sailing to Massowah (or Massawa, as it is spelt now). It so happened that the ship on which Barath was sailing to England met with an accident and consequently was sunk into the sand on one side of the Suez Canal. While waiting for the next strong tide, a ship sailed past them carrying Italian soldiers deputed to fight in the First Italo-Ethiopian War, popularly known as the Battle of Adwa. Barath's superhuman hearing comes into play and inspires him to shout and cheer for Italy. He cries out "Evviva l'Italia! Evviva l'Italia!" and this patriotic cheer of enthusiasm is reciprocated by each and every ship passing by him and he is mistaken for a colonial Italian tanned by the tropical sun. Barath, who thus gets identified with the Italians, finds himself at war with his emotions: "Barath might well have rejoiced at the defeat of the West by the East; instead his dominant feeling was one of compassion, not of triumph."¹³⁸ Barath's compassion for Italy is provoked by her contribution to the world in the fields of art and music. Italy was the birthplace of the Gregorian chant and Palestrina which for him was the noblest attribute of Europe "and the one thing in which it was really superior to Asia."¹³⁹

Though Barath, as the prince of destiny, was destined to become the apostle of peace for the world, his cheering for the long life of Italy enthused the troop of soldiers to fight for their motherland. This contradictory disposition is explained by the intertextual reference to the *Mahabharata* where Krishna indoctrinated Arjuna and his fellow warriors with the belief that a warrior can have a glorious death only on the battlefield. Thus, by cheering in the name of Italy, Barath had actually inspired them on the path of glorious immortality. The eventual defeat of Italy at the Battle of Adwa, which added impetus to the Eastern powers, is however not addressed by Ghosh. On the contrary, this might be a hint to the growing admiration of Indian nationalists of the early twentieth century for Italian political thinkers. The establishment of the Italian nation inspired Indian nationalists, especially V.D. Savarkar, whose idea of the political unification of India was drawn from the Italian example. Savarkar was so encouraged by the political struggle of Italy that he translated the autobiography of Mazzini with an introduction summarising his political ideas to inspire Indians to the political cause.¹⁴⁰ A humanitarian impartiality

¹³⁸ Ghosh, *The Prince of Destiny*, 134.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 134.

¹⁴⁰ Verinder Grover (ed.), *V.D. Savarkar* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1993) 262.

towards nations, a compassionate sentiment for artistic as well as intellectual gifts and a keen discernment of moral obligations for people irrespective of race, ethnicity or religion – this is how we can define Barath’s self-orientation. Based on the discussion in the first chapter where I elaborated on the author’s projection of Barath as the Indian prototype, it is beyond doubt that it is the above-mentioned attributes that Ghosh expected the Indians to cultivate.

Ghosh’s love and respect for the west gains best expression through the following passage in *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*:

Afterwards, indeed, when I met the men and women of other nations – of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, America – did I realise that the Elect of all nations were alike. I judged impartially, as perchance a Martian might. I chose rather to pick out the shining places in each nation than ferret out the dark corners. Even as I honoured England for her true republicanism and loved her because of some vague, mysterious impulse, so did I love France for her Arts and for her heart’s blood that she had poured out so plenteously for the cause of Man. So did I love Germany for her erudition, for her appreciation of my country’s literature, and for her history –so strangely like my own country’s.... And so did I love America even for the sake of one single man in her history – even him that hesitated not to pour out his country’s blood to break the bondman’s chains. And Russia; what shall I say of Russia? Even Russia I loved. And why not Russia more than all “Christian” nations? Russia that, alone among all “Christian” nations, had once shed her own blood for the sake of a “Christian” people, gaining not in return one square foot of “heathen” territory?¹⁴¹

True patriotism germinates from such international sympathy. Admiration for the uniqueness of each of these nations explains Ghosh’s opposition to the idea of exclusivist nationalism.

Apart from promoting a mutual understanding between England and India and other European nations, a sense of fellow feeling towards eastern nations such as China and Japan gains equal prominence in the profession of internationalism by the

¹⁴¹ Ghosh, *The Romance of an Eastern Prince*, 188.

authors. Japan's performance in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) had been strongly indicative of Japan's potential strength and technological advancement. What we are focusing upon now is how Ghosh and Mitra were trying to establish a close bond between India and these eastern powers. The scribe in *The Prince of Destiny* announces that Barath has halted in Japan on his way home from England to learn about their progress. He has also engaged a band of Japanese instructors to teach new enterprises in India and who were to be regarded as friends. Through the technical knowhow about the iron industries Barathpur could also set up an industry and build its own bridges and machines. Chandrasena, the commander of the army of Barathpur, has taken lessons of war from England, Germany and lastly from Japan. He plans to train his soldiers in jiu-jitsu and has therefore imported Japanese trainers who had originally trained the Japanese army. The technological and military expertise of Japan, which Ghosh sets as exemplary throughout the plot of his novel, is not however the main focus in Siddha Mitra's *Hindupore*. Mitra, on the contrary, has emphasized the cultural and religious similarities between India and Japan. His is a non-belligerent tone compared to Ghosh's. Instead of acquiring military expertise from Japan, Mitra's inclusion of Japan in the anti-colonial scheme is distinguished by the sense of amity that he expects to pervade all across the globe.

China is another addition in Mitra's scheme and thus he refers to the metaphor which he correctly believes to represent the national mind than any foreign opinion. According to the metaphor China is the paper, India the radiating sticks and Japan the handle – all three nations together make a fan that “will cool the aggressive ardour of the West.”¹⁴² Mitra introduces a Japanese pilgrim (who comes to visit the shrine of Jagannath in Orissa) into the plot to establish Japan's sentiments towards India. Naturally India's religious seniority is emphasized, as the birthplace of Buddhism. The pilgrim tries to establish the resemblances between the two religions as Buddhism, according to him, is only a modified version of Hinduism. His admiration of India and his faith in the potential of Japan and China inspire an inordinate level of confidence, so much so that he proclaims, “India, China, and Japan in one empire would be beyond the dreams of any Western Power. ... The moral civilization of India and the material progress of Japan will lead the way in the future.”¹⁴³

¹⁴² Mitra, *Hindupore*, 289.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 291-2.

Conclusion

The ideas of nationalism and internationalism are mutually contradictory; the promotion of one automatically negates the other. Indian nationalism, however, has its unique trait by which it establishes internationalism as the ulterior objective of inspiring a national consciousness. “There is only one history – the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one.”¹⁴⁴ This ideology of oneness with human kind is derived from the perceptions of Vedantic metaphysics which recognises the ultimate reality as the Absolute or the Brahman.¹⁴⁵ According to this philosophy every living entity is a part of the Absolute, from which it originates and into which it finally dissolves. This entails universalism which does not recognise any difference or any boundary that cannot be reconciled. The ulterior motive of man is therefore the realization of the Absolute in each and every being on earth. Swami Vivekananda, whose influence can be traced in the novels (discussed in chapters 1 and 2), followed by Tagore and Gandhi, drew their philosophical perceptions from their faith in this particular doctrine. In *Greater India* Tagore writes:

If we do not come into touch with what is true, what is best, in the Englishman; if we find in him merely a merchant, or a military man, or a bureaucrat; if he will not come down to the plane in which man may commune with man and take him into confidence; -- if, in fine, the Indian and the Englishman needs must remain apart, then will they be to each other a perennial source of unhappiness.¹⁴⁶

In the chapter titled “East and West in Greater India” (the original paper was supposed to have been written during 1909-10) we find Tagore mentioning the socio-political views of Swami Vivekananda whom he refers to as “the *mahatma* who passed away from us only the other day.”¹⁴⁷ According to Tagore, Swami Vivekananda always emphasized the necessity of assimilation, harmony and creation for making way for the “thought-treasure” to pass from the east to west and west to east. Tagore reminds the reader explicitly that the ultimate commonality in all the

¹⁴⁴ Tagore, *Nationalism*, 119.

¹⁴⁵ The Absolute or the Brahman can be equated with matter, time, energy, space of the universe and beyond.

¹⁴⁶ Tagore, *Greater India*, 95. This is actually an authorised translation of papers read by the author in connection with the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, *circa* 1905 – 1910.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 95.

“epoch-makers of modern India” was in their “breadth of understanding in which the differences of East and West do not hurt, or conflict with, one another, but where both find their ultimate harmony.”¹⁴⁸

In the previous chapters I have discussed how the four Bangalee authors framed their idea of Indian nationalism through their fictions which I mainly focussed on. They constructed India on the basis of how they imagined India to be. What we noticed throughout our discussion is that the sense of nationalism, which these authors disseminated through their writings, was essentially inclusive in nature. Re-assertion of India’s glorious history and reference to the epics, myths, legends were combined with an acknowledgement of and a respect towards alien cultures. The authors have always realized the necessity of educational and cultural exchange and have always decried the disavowal of other cultures. Adopting the appreciable attributes from other nations and cultures and offering to others the best of Indian culture – that has been the fundamental spirit of Indian nationalism in the discussed narratives. I had already mentioned in the first chapter that some of the Gandhian ideals were professed long before the emergence of Gandhi in Indian political scene. Other than the ideas of renunciation and celibacy which are mainly ascribed to Gandhi, the ideal of non-violence too was prominently emphasized by Sarath Kumar Ghosh and Siddha Mohana Mitra. This gained impetus in the narratives of Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra as their publications were contemporaneous with the emergence of Gandhi in 1920s. We have also discussed in this chapter how the basic non-belligerent disposition of the Indians is one of the primary reasons behind the discouragement of unnecessary violence at every step. On top of that, spirituality being the fundamental guiding force, Indian nationalism as conceived by the authors was essentially universalistic in approach, advocating humane internationalism. Thus, in spite of the basic differences in the perception of Indian nationalism between the earlier and the later narratives (that we have already discussed), the requirement of a transnational economic, political and cultural exchange, beyond the run-of-the mill idea of a self-contained nationalism, was a common message which they shared. What they aspired to was not just an independent nation ruled by indigenous people, but something more than that. They

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 90.

envisioned a larger picture in which India and all other nations will stand in fraternity with each other in what Kalidas Nag calls the “world of permanence”.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Nag, *Greater India*, 2.

Conclusion

Reaching the final note of the thesis, let us recall what I aimed to establish through the thesis. In the introduction I stated that my argument would be two-fold – that Indian English fictions published before 1930 bear prominent impressions of Indian nationalism and of the imagination of India as a nation which was developing coterminously with the publication of the fictions; and that the fictions profess a unique aspect of Indian nationalism which is internationalistic in spirit. In order to support my argument I have brought four novels into discussions, two of them published in 1909 and two in the 1920s. Through the discussion of the selected novels by Sarath Kumar Ghosh, Siddha Mohana Mitra, Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Jatindranath Mitra, I have shown that they are all nationalist fictions. Also, they are true reflections of the uniqueness of Indian nationalism as conceptualized by these authors. However, I have limited my analysis only to a very confined focus, though the thesis has opened up numerous possibilities for further investigations on this area.

The achievements of the thesis

Not only have we been able to analyse a common idea that all the authors share, with respect to the idea of Indian nationalism, we have also been able to offer some new information through this thesis. The narratives which we have studied, though not absolutely unknown, are definitely rare and obscure. However, the narrative by Jatindranath Mitra is definitely unknown, as is its author himself. Moreover, we have come across new information regarding the authors. This not only helped us to appreciate the works all the more, but has also proved that as Indians, they had made considerable contributions in the literary and cultural circles in the west.

It is not without reason that I selected these particular novels in support of my argument. As I have already discussed in the introduction and the subsequent chapters, the two most significant movements in the history of Indian nationalism before 1930 were the Swadeshi Movement from 1903 through 1908 and the Non Co-operation Movement of the 1920s led by Mahatma Gandhi. I selected the novels on the basis of their times of publication which coincided with these two nationalist movements in order to show how the varying importance of different contemporary issues influenced the nationalist movements; how the imagination of India as a

nation evolved with time; how the construction of the Indian identity changed, and most importantly, how the tropes in the construction of Indianness were appropriated to the spirit of the movement and of the social, political and economic situations.

If we make a note of the forewords and prefaces to the novels, which I have mentioned in the first two chapters, we find that the purpose of writing the novels for Sarath Kumar Ghosh, Siddha Mohana Mitra and Dhan Gopal Mukerji was almost the same, that is, to present India, Indian history and culture to the western readers – English readers in case of Ghosh and Mitra and American readers in case of Mukerji. Though Jatindranath Mitra wrote his preface on a reconciliatory note, the novel is essentially about the becoming of some of the great nationalist leaders, and the growing popularity of Gandhian nationalism in India. In doing so, the narrative threw light on myriad aspects of the social, cultural and political situations of contemporary India, and thus, like rest of the three novels, it also became a treatise on early twentieth century India.

In the introduction I offered a brief overview of the development of Indian nationalism as a context to the novels. I have shown how the nature of the movement changed since the first decade of the twentieth century and the years following the First World War. We have seen from the discussions in the first two chapters how the idea of India as a nation changed over the decades. There have been certain common tropes which the authors of both generations have deployed in their narratives in their construction of India. We gather from the entire discussion that India's spiritual culture played a vital role in the construction and assertion of Indianness. The nationalists took recourse to spirituality in order to inspire the spirit of nationalism into potential nationalists. It is even more interesting to note that this spiritual orientation which inspired the spirit of nationalism also encouraged the idea of humanistic universalism or internationalism which we have discussed in the last chapter.

Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay in *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* said, “We need political sanyasis.”¹ This conforms to Rajat Kanta Ray's observation which I mentioned in the first chapter that a new ideal of manhood was being defined – a man who sacrifices himself for a higher cause. Associated with this idea of sacrifice is the idea of renunciation. We have seen that the narratives abound with such characters who

¹ Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1982) 237. My translation.

uphold the ideal of *brahmacharya* and renunciation as a requirement for achieving political goals. While *brahmacharya* was advocated for the consolidation of physical and mental strength, it also trained the mind to detach itself from the material world and devote one's life to the service of humanity at large. Gandhi's idea of non-violence thus becomes quite relevant since it espouses the assertion of one's rights with courage and fortitude and without any feeling of spite towards the opponent. Tagore's idea of "greater nationalism" is the uniqueness of Indian nationalism. Revival of historical memories, respect for India's glorious past, celebration of classical and folk art, intimations of the natural wealth of the country, criticism of colonial governance, and of course, assertion of the spiritual wisdom of India were all functional in the arousal of the spirit of nationalism and construction of a national identity for the Indians. But this assertion of national identity was to be brought into effect without any compromise with the non-belligerent and peaceable disposition which has been the hallmark of Indian civilization since time immemorial.

Spirituality was being considered the unique philosophy which India could exchange with western knowledge of science and technology. Not only was spirituality being considered as a token of exchange, it was believed that spirituality could heal the maladies of the modern world.

Industrialization/colonization/westernization/modernization – these ideas, as perceived by the early twentieth century Indian thinkers, were used interchangeably, and were identified as the root of all problems in the modern society; and spirituality was believed to be the greatest antidote to fight these menaces. However, it is interesting to note how the difference in perceptions of the need for industrialization was recorded in the novels published before and after the First World War. What the earlier authors considered indispensable for the progress of a civilization was considered the root of all problems in the modern world by the later generation of writers. But the common solution to both predicaments was spirituality – the earlier authors advocated the exchange of spiritual wisdom with the knowledge of science and the later authors believed that it could alleviate the sufferings of the materialistic world which was the fruit of industrialization. Thus, the role of religion and spirituality in the construction of a national identity for India and their viability in the anti-colonial agenda has been of paramount importance in the imagination of India and in the assertion of Indianness as presented in the discussed narratives.

This study has not only offered an idea of the tropes which were used in the construction of India and Indianness, it has also explained how the pre-1930 novels bear the footprints of the developing Indian nationalism through the early decades of the twentieth century. Thus it offers a new stock-taking of the early Indian English novels which need to be appraised as interesting documentation of the developing stages of Indian nationalism. Like most post-colonial nations, Indian nationalism too is an extremely complex phenomenon. It will be wrong to simplify the Indian nationalist movement as an anti-colonial movement with the ultimate objective of gaining political independence. We have seen through our discussions that political independence does not always feature among the essential concerns of the nationalists. In the earlier novels the issue of political independence, even if broached, was projected as a nonviable improbability. The authors did not consider Indians prepared enough to govern an independent nation. However, it will be wrong to assume that they rejected the possibility altogether. The kind of preparedness which they expected of Indian leaders finds expression in their novels. English-educated elite Indians were their favourite choice. This is a true reflection of the nature of the contemporary nationalist movement in India in which the movement was led by the elites where the equal participation of the common people across the strata was not deemed necessary.

The situation changed after the First World War. Mahatma Gandhi's entry into India's political arena and his emergence as the first national leader brought the common people into the visible zone of the nationalist movement. Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay's idea that "independence is about driving the British away and restoration of authority to the hands of the common people and the peasants"² gained prominence. Thus, instead of the kings and princes, rulers and administrators, who dominated the main plot of the earlier novels, the characters dominating the narratives in the later novels belong to the middle class or peasantry. While in the earlier novels the wealth and grandeur of the royal palaces and historical monuments played a vital role in the nationalist agenda by the intimations of natural wealth and remembrance of past glory, the destruction of such monumental architectures for infrastructural purposes is condemned in the later novels as a protest against westernization/industrialization of India which again was a serious issue in the

² Mukhopadhyay, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, 176. My translation.

nationalist agenda of the 1920s. The advocacy of technology was replaced by the promotion of hand-made products, the artistry and finesse of folk art was celebrated with same enthusiasm as the grand achievements of the historical past, and most importantly, representation of the assertion of courage and fortitude of Indian men changed – participation in the sport of hunting was replaced by the involvement in terrorist nationalism.

However, it is not that the issue of terrorist nationalism was only typical to the novels published in the 1920s. In the narrative of *The Prince of Destiny* such a situation was created by the author where a group of trained nationalists indulged in an armed rebellion against British interference into the matters of the native state. But such an action was treated with contempt. Keeping in mind all the four novels we have discussed in this thesis, the common message that is finally filtered through the mesh of events and actions is that of non-violence. The need for a peaceable and amicable approach to the foreign nations, especially towards the England despite its colonial subjugation of India, is professed as strongly as the assertion of Indianness and an Indian identity. Securing the interests of India as a nation is never compromised with its tolerant and non-belligerent disposition so far as her international relations are concerned – be it before or after the emergence of Gandhi as the champion of non-violence. There is no denying the fact that this idea of a non-vindictive and non-belligerent nationalist movement as professed by these novels is debatable. It is a utopian idea which even if theoretically conceivable is undoubtedly not practically viable. There is enough evidence for this amongst which the broadest categorization of the nationalist leaders on the basis of extremist and moderate factions happens to be the primary one. It has not been the objective of this thesis to support or to counter the practicality of idea of internationalistic nationalism which has been professed through the novels. The purpose was to establish the influence of the idea of greater nationalism and its manifestations in the narratives, which has been served. Thus, whatever might have been the reasons for their slipping into oblivion, there is no denying the fact that the message that these novels convey are still pertinent to the present world.

Possibilities for further research

Apart from the overview of what has been achieved by the thesis and what arguments established, it is also important to make a note of the possibilities which

this study has opened up for further investigation in the field of Indian English literature.

Firstly, one must keep in mind that whenever we refer to the prominence of the role of religion in the construction of India and Indianness, we are mainly referring to Hinduism. In the introduction I have shown why and how Hinduism and Indian nationalism has been inseparably associated with one another. As a result, when we discussed the inclusive nature of Indian nationalism in the narratives, which gained prominence after the emergence of Gandhi, we observed that the representation of other religious communities in the narratives has always been compromised. And also, within the Hindu community, characters belonging to the upper castes predominate the narrative space. Though the idea of Hindu nationalism has drawn serious attention from scholars, the appropriation of the discourse of Hindu nationalism in the earlier Indian English narratives is to be considered seriously. When we talk about Hindu nationalism, we directly or indirectly imply the politicization of Hinduism for nationalistic purposes. But the spiritual aspect of Hinduism and its influence on the conceptualization of Indian nationalism, and specifically on the universalistic approach towards the idea of nationalism in general, is a largely unexplored area. It is not that these issues have been absolutely overlooked in the thesis. I have referred to the ideas of Hindu nationalism and spiritualism as and when required for establishing my arguments. But it is so profound an idea that it needs to be dealt with in greater detail especially with reference to pre-independence Indian English literature.

Secondly, I have claimed the uniqueness of Indian nationalism in its universalistic approach. I have offered an analysis of four different narratives by four Bangalee authors. This analysis opens up the possibility of subsequent research in which we can study other narratives published by Indians (from all over India) during that time. However, I have observed through my research that Indians from specific provinces had been writing in English during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the earliest phase of the twentieth century. It probably depended on the educational infrastructure of the different provinces. Universities had been founded in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai) and Bombay (now Mumbai) as early as 1857. These were the oldest universities founded in colonial India. English education was encouraged in the universities, and naturally, the educated people from these provinces were more exposed to English language and literature than

people in rest of India. It is probably the biggest reason why the earliest Indian writings in English were authored mainly by people belonging to these three provinces. Thus, a comparison of Indian English narratives authored by people from other provinces of India would probably have helped us to arrive at a more significant conclusion. Had these traits been discovered in other writings, we could have inferred a unique aspect in the idea of Indian nationalism as a whole.

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Appendix

Outlines of the Novels

The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna (1909)

Sarath Kumar Ghosh

Barath is born to Barath, the Maharajah of Barathpur and his queen Koikai five months before the 1877 Imperial Durbar at which Queen Victoria is proclaimed the Empress of India. From his early days of childhood Barath begins to show signs of extraordinary, and in certain cases superhuman power. He is not only a child prodigy who has exceptional talent in acquiring various fields of knowledge with absolute ease and perfection, but he is also gifted with the superhuman quality of hearing voices, unheard to others, which offer him intimations of the unseen and the unknown.

As a prince, he has the most qualified teachers appointed for him by the king. Vashista, the royal priest, is in charge of teaching Barath Sanskrit, ancient Indian philosophy, history and literature. Viswa-mitra, who has renounced his position of the judge at the High Court and also his worldly life to become a *sanyasi*, takes upon himself the task of teaching Barath English, science and mathematics. Even Barath's sister Delini has a great power over her little brother. She imparts to him knowledge of the customs and traditions of the family and also certain things which he is about to learn from the scholars and pundits later in life. Delini teaches her stories of the past, stories from history of India, from mythology, from ancient epics, and dramas. After completing his basic education, Barath gets admitted to a college which was meant essentially for the education and necessary trainings for princes and young boys from rich and elite families. However, within a few days he is sent to England for higher education.

Colonel Wingate, an old friend of Barath's father, receives Barath in England. He not only accommodates him in his house but also makes every arrangement to groom and accustom him to English life and manners. Wingate's sister Ellen takes upon herself the task of preparing Barath to socialize with the elites and aristocrats of the English society. Coincidentally this was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and Barath had the responsibility to represent his kingdom as the prince of Barathpur. His charming personality and personable dispositions attract the attention

of the most prominent members of the royalty and the nobility. However, one particular person who is charmed by Barath's gracious presence, and eventually changes his life, is Ellen's niece Nora. Barath and Nora fall in love with each other.

Apart from Wingate, Ellen and Nora, other mentionable people who Barath comes across while in England, are Francis Thompson, a struggling Victorian poet and Lord Melnor, Ellen's cousin. Barath meets Francis on the train and later gets to know him closely when the latter is invited by Wingate. He is touched by Francis' calm and tranquil state of mind. Barath finds in him the qualities which he would have expected in the ascetics and hermits of the east. He spends hours talking to Francis about poetry, religion and philosophy. In spite of the momentariness of the interaction between Barath and Francis, it creates an indelible impression on the former's mind.

Time passes by – Barath perfectly adapts to English life, he performs exceptionally well in his examinations at Cambridge, and his love for Nora grows deeper and deeper. Suddenly events take an unexpected turn – Barath's father dies and Barath has to return to his kingdom and shoulder the royal responsibilities as the only heir to the throne. In a few days Lord Melnor arrives in Barathpur, appointed by the British government as the Resident in the state of Barathpur. Soon after Melnor's arrival her niece Nora reaches Barathpur, thereby rekindling the love that was lying dormant in Barath's heart. Vashista, who was in charge of the administration of Barathpur while Barath was away and was already displeased with Barath's reformative plans which he considered a direct result of western influence on the latter, is exasperated by the interference of a foreigner in the administrative matters of Barathpur. But the revelation of Barath's affair with Nora and the possibility that the queen of Barathpur could be a foreigner, threatens Vashista's orthodoxy and parochial conservatism regarding Indo-English relationships.

He prepares his group of militants that he had trained during Barath's absence for an open rebellion against British interference in the state, and devises various means to prevent the marriage between Barath and Nora. Eventually Vashista's rebellion fails, but his contrivances against the possible marriage of Barath succeed. According to Vashista's plans Barath marries Suvona, the sister of his childhood friend and prince of the neighbouring province. However, the marriage does not consummate as Barath renounces his family and kingdom soon after the marriage and sets forth in search of true knowledge.

Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest (1909)*Siddha Mohana Mitra*

Hindupore is a Rajput province ruled by a powerful king Ram Singh. On his journey back to India from Italy, Ram Singh meets Lord Tara, a parliamentarian, on his way to India. He is also introduced to Celitia Scott and Mr Long. Celitia Scott is a doctor and has been appointed on a zenana mission to treat the women on the way to their pilgrimage in Orissa during the chariot-festival. Mr. Long is a Christian missionary who has been in India for twenty years and is also on his way to Orissa to meet the pilgrims. Soon they become friends and Ram Singh invites Lord Tara to accompany him. Lord Tara accepts his invitation and finally reaches the royal palace of Hindupore.

The grandeur of the palace bewilders Lord Tara, the royal reception overwhelms him, and finally, the beauty of Princess Kamala, Ram Singh's niece, mesmerizes him. Kamala is an orphan and has been brought up by her uncle, Ram Singh. She is seventeen, but still unmarried. In spite of the insistence of the priests, Ram Singh has not got her married as he respects Kamala's own will. She visited the Kumbh Mela the previous year and saw a vision while she was immersed neck-deep in the Ganges. In the vision she saw her mother who directed her to go to Orissa where she would find her husband and also an influential friend for Bharat (India). Since then Kamala has been waiting to go to the chariot-festival in Orissa in search of her husband. On the other hand, Lord Tara has been chasing the ideal beauty all his life – he was inspired by Chateaubriand's "Atala" on one of his visits to Louvre in Paris when he was twelve years old; and since then he has been searching for such a beauty in real life, which he finally finds in Princess Kamala.

Lord Tara accompanies Ram Singh to various places – to the residence of the Nawab, to the tiger-hunt and finally to the chariot-festival in Orissa. Lord Tara is thus exposed to various facets of Indian life and is gradually prepared as a deserving suitor to Princess Kamala. The royal family travels to Orissa to attend the chariot-festival and to fulfil Kamala's wishes. It is here that Kamala's dream materializes and Lord Tara's lifelong search reaches its denouement. Princess Kamala and Lord Tara get married and finally leave for England when the narrative ends.

While the main plot is about the romance of Lord Tara and Princess Kamala, the sub-plot of the novel is about the consequence of an intimate relation between an

English subaltern officer and an Indian maid-servant Dukhiya. It is a story of exploitation and desertion of a helpless poor woman who is made pregnant by an Englishman and eventually denied his responsibility of fatherhood. Charles Hunt, or Charlies as he is called, was born out of this illicit relation, and was abandoned by his mother Dukhiya. Charlie is a classic case of the estrangement and alienation of Anglo-Indians by both Indian as well as English society in India.

Charlie is a police officer. He spies on Ram Singh hearing that the latter has fallen under official displeasure. He is curious about Lord Tara accompanying Ram Singh everywhere. Finally he follows them to Orissa, and is finally brought face to face with the truth of his birth. Learning about his illegitimacy and his mother's identity, he is consumed by the miasma of shame and commits suicide.

Towards the Dawn: A Contemporary Political Novel (1922)

Jatindranath Mitra

Karmi is a young barrister who has been married to Asrumoti by his parents, against his wishes. Though he is a qualified professional, he realizes that his service to the motherland is more important than pursuing a career and leading a normal family life like others. Thus, he leaves his young uneducated wife under the guardianship of his parents and leaves the country to prepare a strong base for the nationalist movement. His parents carry out their responsibility towards Asrumoti to the best of their ability. They educate her, groom her and finally help her to establish a school for young girls where she could teach them and inspire in them the spirit of nationalism. With a feeling of abandonment, Asrumoti stops hoping for a normal family life and commits herself to the service of the nation.

Pratap is a young and bright university student whose financial stringency compels him to tutor Sukhalata, the daughter of a rich and respectable man in the city. They fall in love with each other but their affair ends with dejection and disillusionment. Sukhalata's father does not approve of his daughter's relationship with a needy unemployed man, and thus he gets Sukhalata married to a budding industrialist with a respectable family background. Having lost his love, Pratap frantically searches for a job, but to no avail. Finally he walks into Jogesh's office one day.

Jogesh is Karmi's friend who edits and publishes a journal. Pratap impresses Jogesh as soon as they meet and the latter offers him the job of an assistant editor for his journal. This is how Pratap gets actively initiated into the political movement. Through various twists and turns of events Sukhalata along with her husband, Jogesh, Pratap and Karmi, all come to England.

One day, while Pratap is addressing a crowd at Hyde Park, Sukhalata notices him. At this meeting she also gets introduced to Josephine, an Englishwoman, who is impressed by Pratap's oratory skill and is listening to him intently. Josephine has been interested in Indian history and culture all her life and is already inspired by Karmi when Sukhalata meets her. Josephine has also read Sukhalata's poems which the latter had published in England. Sukhalata's love for Pratap which was lying dormant so long is stirred up once again. His political beliefs too begin to inspire her. Thus, they all begin to work together on the same mission and dedicate their lives to the service of their motherland.

Eventually they all return to India. Karmi sets up an Ashram in a forest, far away from the city. In an old temple in the middle of the forest they begin to worship the image of Mother-India. Josephine also leaves England forever and accompanies them to India. After a series of resentment and misunderstanding Asrumoti and Karmi begin their life together in the Ashram. Even Sukhalata joins the Ashram after the death of her husband. Thus, they all renounce their family lives for the sake of their motherland. The Ashram becomes the centre for their activities from where they begin the final phase of their nationalist struggle.

My Brother's Face (1924)

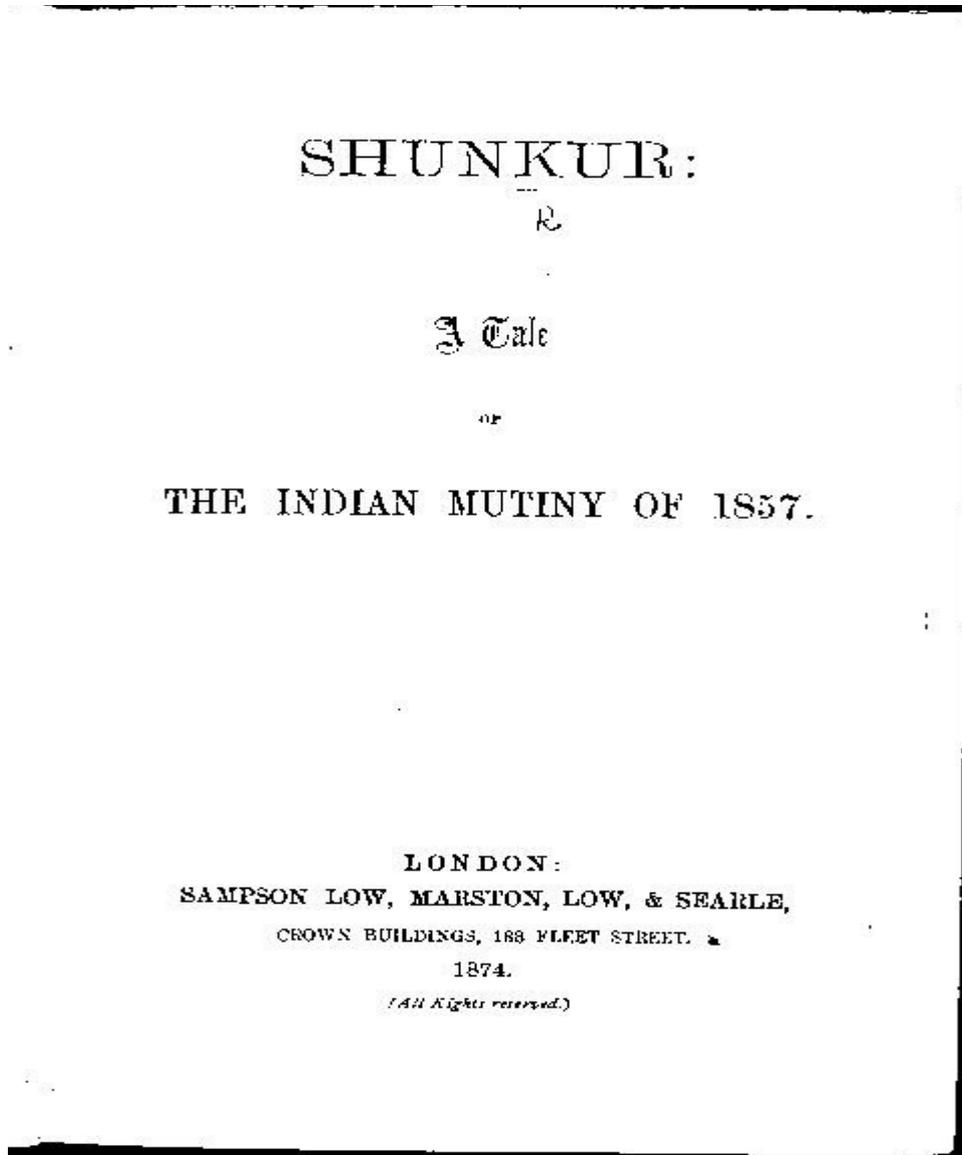
Dhan Gopal Mukerji

The author-narrator returns to India in 1921, after having spent almost a decade in America. He is deeply shocked to find the changes in every sphere of Indian life and culture brought about by industrialization and modernization following the First World War. Old architectures demolished to make space for motor cars, city-theatres bursting with western music and dance, cinema shows advertised throughout the city and the city-dwellers giving in to materialistic comfort and luxuries. He feels as if he

has reached a new country; and in this overwhelmingly new environment he observes a mass-frenzy for Gandhi – the first political hero of India.

Accompanied by his brother, the author-narrator journeys through Bombay, Pune, Allahabad, Varanasi and Calcutta. He meets people from diverse backgrounds, different professions, various classes and castes and finally realizes that the real India, or India as he had known, her culture and traditions, have been preserved by the peasants who has had less exposure to western influence.

The author-narrator is not only amazed by a different India, but also notices a remarkable change in his brother's dispositions to his surprise. He is surprised to notice the calm and tranquil state of his brother who had been an active revolutionary and had believed in armed rebellion all his life. It is not that the brother has begun to have complete faith in Gandhian ideas of non-violence but it is definitely indicative of the fact that Gandhi has succeeded in making a section of the revolutionaries sceptical about the justifiability of armed rebellion. This was the reason for the change in the attitude of the brother towards the nationalist movement. In the sections where the brother takes over the narration, he narrates events from his childhood, his experiences as a revolutionist, his observation on the effect of rapid industrialization and westernization on Indian society and culture and shares his ideas on how to address it.



Title page of the first anonymous publication of Shoshee Chunder Dutt's novel.

Sarath Kumar Ghosh (1869-1925)

In the January 1902 issue of *Pearson's Magazine* (U.S. edition) a new series of stories began to appear under the title *Indian Nights' Entertainment*, the author of which was thus introduced to the readers by the editor:¹

... Ghosh is the only Hindu writer of English fiction. He holds the advantage over all the others who have written Indian stories in English, for he is Indian to the core, was brought up in India, and can write of Indian life as he has lived it. Others write of Indian life as they have studied it. In his unique position – with his gift of writing, with his marvellous knowledge of the east and of the west – he should do great things in the literary world.

Kumar Ghosh keenly appreciates the genius of Rudyard Kipling. That he does not lack confidence in his own skill (though the most modest of men) is clear from his ambition to rival Kipling in the field of Indian stories; and that he has succeeded in catching the full spirit of Indian life in a way that no English-born author could attempt, these stories bear forcible witness. ...

Kumar Ghosh speaks English so well, that, when studying for the Bar, the late Lord Chief Justice earnestly advised him to practise in London. Literature, however, has claimed him for her own. He has had a varied career. Trained by his father, he developed a love of the mathematical sciences at an early age. As a boy he assisted him in writing scholastic books which are now largely used in Indian Universities. In 1890 he was sent to Europe to study mathematics, science, economics, and Law.

Notwithstanding his youth, four years later he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and was immediately appointed Professor of mathematics and economics in the Calcutta University. At this time he wrote several mathematical and economical treatises; regarding the latter, Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) paid him the

¹ *Pearson's Magazine* was founded in Britain in 1896 by C. Arthur Pearson; the US version of *Pearson's* appeared in 1899. The title of the series *Indian Nights' Entertainment* was probably inspired by the publications of Robert Louis Stevenson's publication of *Island Nights' Entertainments* in 1892 and *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* by W.E. Henley in 1893.

high compliment of singling him out as a rival authority in his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Indian Currency.

... [The readers of] *Indian Nights' Entertainment* will agree that the name Sarath Kumar Ghosh, is likely to become far-famed.

These stories are purely Indian. No Westerns figure in them. They pry deeply into Oriental life, and are concerned chiefly with the occult sciences of India.²

This introductory piece on Sarath Kumar Ghosh did not bear any title; instead, it bore the author's signature in Hindi on top of the article, where the title should have been. Right in the centre of the page was printed his photograph, with his signature in English printed below it. In the photograph he is dressed elaborately in a princely attire with a turban covering his head. We find this particular photograph of Ghosh printed in the first editions of his novels *The Romance of an Eastern Prince* (1902) and *The Prince of Destiny* (1909). Such a complete and precise account of Sarath Ghosh's background is not to be found anywhere else.

As mentioned by the editor of *Pearson's Magazine*, Sarath Kumar's Indian origin combined with his command over the English language was what made his works unique. The most popular author writing about Indian life and culture at that time was Rudyard Kipling, and therefore his comparison with Kipling was quite obvious. Hence Sarath Kumar's publishers and also the author himself emphasized his Indian origin. They believed that his presentation of India and Indian life would be more true to the actual spirit of India, in comparison with Kipling. We find Sarath Kumar referring to Kipling quite frequently in his letters to King Edward VII (which we shall discuss through the course of the chapter) and also in his novels. We need to bear in mind that none of Sarath Kumar's novels had been published when he was introduced by the editor of *Pearson's Magazine* as the author of the series on Indian stories. Thus his observation that his stories published in the magazines did not portray any western figure, was true. However, we find that Ghosh's novels which were published subsequently, dealt with some major characters who were westerners.

The fact that he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, as claimed in the above quotation, could be verified, and a scanned copy of the certificate issued to him by the society has been presented in the appendix of the

² *Pearson's Magazine*, Volume XIII, Number 73 (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., January 1902) 26.

thesis. We can also be sure of his background in science from two of his articles published in *The Strand* and *Pearson's Magazine*. In the July 1903 issue of *Pearson's Magazine* Ghosh published his article titled 'Life in Metals'. This article was basically a report on the eminent scientist Jagadis Chunder Bose's published work *Response in the Living and the Non-Living* (1902).³ In November of the same year *The Strand* published an article on astronomical science by Ghosh titled 'The Making of Stars'. Though we get to know from the quotation above that he was appointed Professor of mathematics and economics in the Calcutta University, we can infer from his activities in the West that he did not accept the offer and also, probably, did not return to India.

³ Jagadis Chunder Bose (1858-1937) was a physicist, biologist, botanist and archaeologist from Bengal. He was also one of the earliest authors of science fiction in Bangla.

शरत् कुमार घोष

The signature in Hindi characters of Sarath Kumar Ghosh, the Author of "Indian Nights' Entertainment."

This is to introduce to the readers of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE the author of "Indian Nights' Entertainment"—Sarath Kumar Ghosh, a high-caste Indian gentleman of ancient lineage, who occupies a unique position in the literary world.

Kumar Ghosh is the only Hindu writer of English fiction. He holds the advantage over all the others who have written Indian stories in English, for he is Indian to the core, was brought up in India, and can write of Indian life as he has lived it. Others write of Indian life as they have studied it. In his unique position—with his gift of writing, with his marvellous knowledge of the east and of the west—he should do great things in the literary world.

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Sarath Kumar Ghosh, who is still unmarried, is not yet thirty—of medium height, pleasant looking, immensely strong physically, with a noble tenor voice, heard to fine effect in Italian love songs and Scotch ballads.

He is a fine figure of a man in his Indian costume—a magnificent robe of King's cloth, or cloth of gold. In this robe, with a finely-worked shawl around his shoulders, Kumar Ghosh is to be presented to the King of England this year, in accordance with Queen Victoria's rule that all Indians who come to the English court shall appear in native costume.

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and economics in the Calcutta University. At this time he wrote several mathematical and economical treatises; regarding the latter, Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) paid him the high compliment of singling him out as a rival authority in his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Indian Currency.

It was by a mere accident that he came to give up Law for Literature. Soon after he had been called to the Bar a literary friend happened to discover, in a waste-paper basket, the manuscript of a story that Kumar Ghosh had written for amusement and cast away. This literary friend was struck by the power of the story, and urged Kumar Ghosh to give up everything for the sake of a literary career. This he wisely did, and all who read "Indian Nights' Entertainment" will agree

that the name, Sarath Kumar Ghosh, is likely to become far-famed.

These stories are purely Indian. No Westerns figure in them. They pry deeply into Oriental life, and are concerned chiefly with the occult sciences of India. Whether they will ever number 1001, like "The Arabian Nights," their author is doubtful. At his present rate of work, he would require 106 years to turn out this number. But he is confident that he has material for 2002 stories.



Sarath Kumar Ghosh

Sarath Kumar Ghosh introduced by the editor of the *Pearson's Magazine* in the January 1902 issue as the author of a new series of stories that would appear under the title *Indian Nights' Entertainment*.

J.P. 1670A 28 Elgin Avenue, W.

12th Aug. 1902.

To His Majesty the King

The King's Most Excellent Majesty.

Sir,

An Indian subject most humbly lays
this prayer at Your Majesty's feet.

On the Proclamation of Your Gracious Majesty
as our Emperor, which is to take place
at Delhi next January, someone will perhaps
be appointed to write its official chronicle.
May it be Your Majesty's most gracious pleasure
to give to a high-caste Indian the privilege
of writing that chronicle! For he alone could
paint that scene of Imperial splendour in
true Eastern colours; he alone could reveal
the deepest veneration of the people of India for

2

Your Gracious Majesty, and depict their joy at the Proclamation of their first English ruler by the right of succession in the ancient heritage of Akbar and Prithviraj and Vikrama.

That Your Majesty may graciously deign to give me the privilege of writing that official book, I humbly venture to lay at Your Majesty's feet a few facts about my past that may perchance plead for me and appeal to Your Majesty's gracious sympathy.

My high-caste ancestors lost their territorial rights under Lord Cornwallis, and most of their proprietary rights after the Mutiny.

I came to England a few years ago because I felt I had a mission to fulfil - to reveal the true and hidden India to the people of England, so that with true knowledge there might arise a bond of union between the

3

two countries. Not without some little success, especially in the popular English magazines, one of which (Pearson's Magazine) has published a serial of mine on a new line, entitled, "Indian Nights' Entertainment."

But meanwhile from my own people in India I remained hidden, lest affection for India proved stronger than duty to England. A while ago a book of mine ("The Romance of an Eastern Prince") was published anonymously because it revealed certain sad episodes in my past life, and because I still desired to remain hidden from my friends - especially those that were coming to England for Your Majesty's Coronation.

But when a great calamity fell upon us all, and the whole Nation was in tears at the foot of the Throne, I was sought out by a London paper and asked to voice India's grief at Your

4

Majesty's illness; the enclosed article contains that cry of grief. Thus it was India's sorrow for Your Majesty that revealed me to my friends again.

• And now it is my deepest yearning and highest aspiration to go forth to India and write the official chronicle on Your Majesty's Proclamation as our Emperor. Or, if no official book be specially commanded to be written, that Your Majesty may graciously deign to accept the dedication of the book I hope to write on that theme.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

with the profoundest veneration
Your Majesty's most dutiful servant
and faithful subject.
Saratth Kumar Ghosh.

SARATH KUMAR GHOSH

(Prince Sarath Ghosh of Ghoshpara)

A native Prince of India who interprets the lives and the ideals of his people from the standpoint of a European education

Author of "1001 Indian Nights," "The New Krishna," "The Prince of Destiny," and other works on India and its people.



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Pamphlet advertising Sarath Kumar Ghosh's lectures ...

Concerning Prince Sarath Ghosh

SARATH KUMAR GHOSH, or Prince Sarath Ghosh of Ghoshpara, is the nephew of the Rajah of Ghoshpara and a nobleman of India by right of birth. With an education finished in England at Oxford and Cambridge, his natural aptitude for study and culture has been cultivated under the most auspicious circumstances, so that he has become known in two hemispheres as the best native lecturer on India, and one of the foremost Indian authors, in the world today. He sees India—and shows it to his audiences—with a perspective made possible by his European education, without in the slightest degree sacrificing the close insight into Indian nature with which, as a native son, he is endowed. He is an Oriental interpreting to Occidentals the ideals of his people.

Prince Ghosh, although but thirty-five years of age, has long been recognized by learned societies in England and by economic experts in this country and elsewhere, as a thoughtful and penetrating authority on economics and social problems. So keen and far-seeing have been his studies, and so earnest the nature which inspires them, that at the time of the Durbar, Prince Ghosh was selected by King George and Queen Mary to cooperate with them and with the Emperor and Empress of India in establishing yet more firmly the basic principles which lay back of the great pageant. This was but one of several important diplomatic missions in which he engaged while still a young man, and the outcome of which fully justified his selection for the work.

It is but natural that a man of such lineage, culture and habit of thought should have a message to bring out of the East, a message from a civilization more than four thousand years old. In his books, of which "1001 Indian Nights" is probably the best known in this country, there are evidenced a sympathy for, and understanding of Indian life and nature that come from the heart, and in his lectures he speaks with the certain knowledge of the man to whom the ways of his country are as an open book.

Prince Ghosh will be available east of Kansas City after November First. Further inquiries as to dates, terms, etc., should be addressed to his managers, the J. B. POND LYCEUM BUREAU, Metropolitan Life Building, New York City.

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J.B. Pond Lyceum Bureau introducing Sarath Kumar Ghosh to the American
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THE MARVELS OF INDIA .—

Unequalled feats of engineering—Vast temples hewn from solid rock—A temple that took seventeen centuries to complete—A palace boudoir with walls and ceilings covered with diamonds, rubies and other precious stones—Works of art—A mausoleum that cost \$250,000,000—Submarine volcanoes and coral islands.

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His slides of India's temples and palaces are among the finest ever seen. And Prince Sarath Ghosh speaks beautiful English, with the unequalled culture of Oxford and Cambridge.—*Daily Palo Alto*.—Stanford University.



I heard the lecture of Prince Sarath Ghosh at Stanford University, and enjoyed it very much. He made an excellent impression, and is doing a most worthy work in making known the life and ideals of India to the people of America.—Pres. David Starr Jordan, of Stanford University.



There is such a wide variety of material in your series that certain lectures could be chosen that would interest any audience. Many of your lantern slides are the most beautiful and gorgeous I have ever seen.—Dean Milnor Roberts, of the University of Washington.



THE ROMANCE
OF
AN EASTERN PRINCE



LONDON
GEANT RICHARDS
48 LEICESTER SQUARE
1902

Title page of the first novel authored by Sarath Kumar Ghosh published anonymously in 1902.