Gazing across the Divide in the Days of the Raj: The Imperial and the Colonized Women's Viewing of the 'Other'

Inauguraldissertation

zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde

der Philosophischen Fakultät der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

Vorgelegt von

Sukla Chatterjee

Erstgutachter: Prof. Dr. Hans Harder

Zweitgutachter: Prof. Dr. Benjamin Zachariah

Heidelberg, 01.04.2016

Abstract

This project investigates the crucial moment of social transformation of the colonized Bengali society in the nineteenth century, when Bengali women and their bodies were being used as the site of interaction for colonial, social, political, and cultural forces, subsequently giving birth to the 'new woman.' What did the 'new woman' think about themselves, their colonial counterparts, and where did they see themselves in the newly reordered Bengali society, are some of the crucial questions this thesis answers. Both colonial and colonized women have been secondary stakeholders of colonialism and due to the power asymmetry, colonial woman have found themselves in a relatively advantageous position to form perspectives and generate voluminous discourse on the colonized women. The research uses that as the point of departure and tries to shed light on the other side of the divide, where Bengali women use the residual freedom and colonial reforms to hone their gaze and form their perspectives on their western counterparts.

Each chapter of the thesis deals with a particular aspect of the colonized women's literary representation of the 'other'. The first chapter on Krishnabhabini Das' travelogue, *A Bengali Woman in England* (1885), makes a comparative ethnographic analysis of Bengal and England, to provide the recipe for a utopian society, which Bengal should strive to become. Toru Dutt's romantic novella *Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden* (1878) and *The Journal of Mademoiselle d'Arvers* (1879), discussed in the second chapter, portrays a young writer's depiction of European society and gender relations in a romantic and idyllic fashion. The third chapter deals with the nineteenth and early twentieth-century journal articles written by Bengali women, reinventing the preexisting ideas of charity and service in Hinduism, by projecting western female philanthropic figures as role models. The final chapter on a missionary novel, *Kardoo the Hindu Girl* (1869) exemplifies the blurring of narrator and focalizer divide, when an American missionary imagines herself as a Hindu woman and writes an autobiography highlighting the paganism and corporeal sufferings of the Hindus, to fit her missionary purpose. All these narratives, in one way or the other, are essentially about cultures and social reforms, as viewed through a counter-image of elsewhere.

Gazing, which is used as a trope in my thesis, is not a homogeneous action, nor is its documentation. The different literary genres brings out the plurality of perspectives, which is manifested in the characters' or narrators' subjective worldview. At a more theoretical level, the research subscribes to and simultaneously refutes Gerard Genette's idea of narrative

focalization, which differentiates between the voice of the author and the protagonists' perspective.

The texts used in my research are considered as transgressive writings disrupting and redirecting the flow of power and textual authority between the colony and the metropole, thereby questioning the canonical colonial discourse. The exclusivity and non-canonical nature of the texts also voice their marginality of perceptions. However, their undeniable importance lies in charting the subtle yet dynamic undercurrents of a transforming society. Finally, my research points out that perception of the other is a far more complex and nuanced psychological and cultural act than just dubbing another as the *other*. It is worth reinforcing that perception of the self either precedes or co-exists with a perception of the 'other.' Hence, the research simultaneously explores both the colonizer and the colonized in a non-Eurocentric light.

Notes on Transliteration

অ	a	ক	ka	ত	ta	স	sa
আ	ā	খ	kha	থ	tha	হ্	ha
ই	i	গ	ga	দ	da	ড়	ṛa
ঈ	ī	ঘ	gha	ধ	dha	ঢ়	ṛha
উ	u	ঙ	ṅa	ন	na	য়	ẏa
ঊ	ū	চ	ca	প	pa	ৎ	t·
ঋ	ṛ	ছ	cha	ফ	pha	ং	ṃ
এ	e	জ	ja	ব	ba	ঃ	ḥ
ঐ	ai	ঝ	jha	ভ	bha	ঁ	˜
ও	o	ঞ	ñ	ম	ma		
ঔ	au	ট	ṭa	য	ya		
		ঠ	ṭha	র	ra		
		ড	ḍa	ল	la		
		ঢ	ḍha	শ	śa		
		ণ	ṇa	ষ	ṣa		

I have followed the standard conventional transliteration of the Bengali into Roman based on script. The vowels and the consonants are represented by their respective equivalents as listed in the table above. However, there are some other points to be noted as follows:

1. If the inherent vowel is omitted in pronunciation, this is marked as '.
   For example, আমরা would be written as *ām'rā.*
2. The hasanta is represented as -dot- in the middle of the line [·]. For example, ছট্ ফট্ should be written as *chaṭ·phaṭ·.*
3. The apostrophe in a word is retained as such. For example, ক'রে is written as *ka're.*
4. When two words sound similar but are written with dissimilar *mātrā*s, the *mātrā*s are denoted differently. For example, বৈ with the *mātrā* is denoted as *bai* whereas with বই, where the vowel does not appear as a *mātrā* is written as *baï.*

Contents

Abstract……i

Notes on transliteration……...iii

Contents iv

Acknowledgements……vi

1. “The colonized woman as the spectator”: gaze, perspective and voice in a transcultural setting 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Social history of the period 2

1.5 Key theories for textual analysis 16

1.6 Discourse, power, and public sphere 18

1.7 Orientalism and representation 23

1.8 Gaze in discourse 26

1.9 Translating gaze into voice 28

1.10 Perception across cultures 30

2. State of the art 34

3. Bilet as a spectacle: Krishnabhabini das’ Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā and observations of the female spectator 52

3.1 Introduction 52

3.2 Travelogue, emergence of travelogue and gazing via travelogues 54

3.3 Travelogues and colonialism 57

3.4 Overview, nuances and themes 63

3.5 Perceptions of English life and society 66

3.6 Freedom and unfreedom: comparative analysis of women at home and women in England 72

3.7 Social and conjugal life 76

3.8 Remarks on alcoholism 78

3.9 Ideas of nation-building as learnt from England 81

3.10 Major points of analysis 83

3.11 ‘Construction’ of the English society by Krishnabhabini 90

3.12 Conclusion 91

4. Fantasizing the ‘other’ in Toru Dutt’s novels 93

4.1 Introduction 93

4.2 Toru Dutt's life and times 94
4.3 General overview of plots and narration 98
4.4 Dominant themes: love, death, illness, alienation 101
4.5 Gothic elements: repression, madness, castle, nature 114
4.6 Faith and religion 116
4.7 Protagonists, alienation and viewing the self through the other 118
4.8 Intertextuality 122
4.9 Interplay of multiple gaze and concluding remarks 124
5. Kardoo the Hindoo Girl and impersonation of the heathen 'other' 128
5.1 Introduction 128
5.2 Situating *Kardoo* 128
5.3 The purpose of *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* 130
5.4 Brittan, mission work, and missionary politics 139
5.5 Treatment of the native body: violence and vigilance on native bodyscape 144
5.6 Treatment of the native deities 154
5.7 The godmen or the 'gooroos' 158
5.8 Authenticity and narration 160
5.9 The genre and its use 162
6. Gazing for philanthropic inspiration: the concept of sebā in nineteenth century Bengali periodicals 167
6.1 Introduction 167
6.2 Surrounding discourses and the birth of the model biography 170
6.3 The philanthropic woman 173
6.4 Periodicals for women: their emergence and importance 175
6.5 Concept of *Sebā* in colonial Bengal 178
6.6 Role models 180
6.7 *Sebā*, god and nationalism 192
6.8 Recreation and representation 194
6.9 Conclusion 196
7. Summing up 198
Bibliography 213

Acknowledgements

This is my doctoral thesis, which I started in the spring of 2011 at the University of Heildeberg, with a joint affiliation to the South Asia Institute and the Cluster of Excellence: Asian and Europe in a Global Context. The Cluster also provided me with a generous funding and a state of the art infrastructure to complete my thesis, inaddition to the the required interactive atmosphere among scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, through their Graduate Programme of Transcultural Studies. My supervisor, Professor Hans Harder has been incredibly generous and supportive to me, and this thesis owes a lot to him. Right from the day he accepted my officially as his doctoral student, until my defense and beyond, he has been by my side. I am also grateful to Prof. Benjamin Zachariah, my second supervisor, for his guidance and friendship.

This project and the chapter of my life in Heidelberg owes a lot to the love, care, and effort of my German parents Manfred and Michaela. They left no stone unturned to make me feel at home and while we are steadily approaching my eighth year in the Rasp family, I am immensely obliged for a corner of warmth, love, and nightly chats with Glennfiddich with them. A special thanks to my friends and colleagues Dr. Andrea Hacker, Elizabeth Corrao, Anna Larsson, Ayesha Asif, Simon Grüning, Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay, Swarali Paranjpe, Johanna Hahn, Aditya Ghosh, and rest of the South Asia Institute doctoral team. Their friendship and support not only made my life in Heidelberg an experience of a lifetime, but also saw me through a few difficult phases. Nilayan and Dhruba da from Calcutta are probably the two strongest forces behind my decision to come to Heidelberg. I will remain indebtred to them forever. I wish Alo Dutt was around, she would have been very happy. Heartfelt thanks to my family and parents for their love and support.

There is no end to revising a project. At this point, I have decided to let this one go. A less messier and shorter version of this thesis is being published by Routledge (2018) as monograph.

I alone bear the responsibility of any lapses and shortcomings in this thesis.

1. "The colonized woman as the spectator": gaze, perspective and voice in a transcultural setting

1.1 Introduction

"A new alliance was forged between words and things, enabling one to see and to say" (Foucault 2003, p. xiii).

To say what one has seen is empowering, as 'looking at' and 'writing about' can give one a sense of authority over the object of gaze. Narrating gaze and the documentation of one's perception and the discourse it generates is influential for its inherent power play. This research analyzes different literary genres taking into account the empowering effect of the nineteenth century Bengali women's gaze and its impact on the discourse they generated on European women, through which, a new and empowering alliance between their observations and words was forged. Nineteenth century brought the colonial and colonized women face to face, generating perceptions of each other backed by social, cultural, political forces at play. The thesis analyzes the poly-lithic structure of such perceptions on the part of the Bengali women to bring out the 'other side' of the gaze, thereby subverting the euro-centric viewer-viewed equation. The study thereby formulates the process of gaze reversal of Bengali women on their European counterparts and examines how the former renegotiated and consolidated their own position in the colonized society as well as in the literary historiography of colonial Bengal. Further, in the process, how the metropole and Europe was interpreted via the colonized female gaze is a major preoccupation of this study. Finally, the thesis exemplifies how nineteenth-century social reform was viewed through the spectrum of the 'other' society.

Gazing is not a homogeneous action, nor is the documentation of gazing. Keeping that in view, different genres of literary narratives[1] are compiled in this study to bring out the *plurality of perspectives*, or simply speaking, difference in point of *views.*[2] I use the term *perspective* in my research in its literal sense but with a deeper theoretical nuance. Following Ansgar Nuenning, the more literal meaning of perspective is meant to address, "[…] a character's or a narrator's subjective worldview. Such character perspectives are

[1] I have followed Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman's definition of narrative: "[N]arratives are *texts* about events structured in time. They are about agents who act in real or fictional worlds, responding to their inner drives as well as external circumstances" (Peer, Chatman 2001, p. 2).

[2] I have mentioned at places 'point of view' to connote perspective; though it should be noted that perspective has more complexities and layers to it than point of view.

conditioned by the individual's knowledge, mental traits, attitudes, and system of values" (Nünning 2001, p. 207-208). At a deeper and more theoretical level, I subscribe to Gerard Genette's (1980) idea of narrative focalization, which is helpful in differentiating between the voice of the author and the protagonist's perspective in the texts analyzed in this study. Hence, the work focuses on multiple voices at play in the literary narratives as it extracts and dissects the major trends of portraying European women to evaluate how they, in turn, influenced their colonized counterpart.

1.2 Social history of the period

The core of the thesis encompasses the diverse perspectives of nineteenth century Hindu Bengali women writers about European women, the scope of this subject is simultaneously daunting and impressive. Hence, to maintain parity, coherence, and keep the diversity and heterogeneity of perspectives intact, I deal with different genres of literary writings by Bengali women of different socioeconomic backgrounds taking into account their factual and fantastical narratives delineating their *gaze*[3] on European women.

Nineteenth century Bengal is a site of scholarship, rife with various discussions and studies on the impact of the British regime. Scholars have concentrated on social, political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism with Calcutta as its epicenter.[4] Women's issues, popularized as the 'women question' and the emergence of 'new women'[5] have also come under major analytical focus. Hence, one might question the relevance of another study on nineteenth-century Bengali women. This research draws on the existing asymmetry of focus on the interaction between European and Bengali women in the nineteenth century. While the existing voluminous amount of literature, portraying the writings of European women on their colonized counterparts in the form of letters, memoirs, travelogues, fictions, and other genres, have garnered scholarly attention, there is a glaring lack of such documentation and analysis from the other side: the main reasons, behind this lack of primary source texts, are social and literary. At a time when female education was just

[3] This is the pivotal term of this research and is dealt with in details in the subsequent sections. The physical act of gazing or looking at is translated into the literary analytic terms of narrative perspective, point of view and focalization.

[4] See for example Tai-Yong Tan's article, "[I]n the 19th century, as European powers jostled for political and economic control of Asia, Calcutta was the jewel of the East India Company and the model port city of Asia. Since its founding by the British in the late 18th century, Calcutta quickly grew from a small riverine market in the Hoogly river, settled by weavers and artisans, into an international port serving the vast economic empire created by the EIC […] [O]nce Bengal came under the full sway of colonialism, Calcutta and its immediate hinterland rapidly emerged as early centres of imperial economic activities in the subcontinent" (Tan 2007, p. 858-859). This economic focus on Calcutta also made it a flourishing center of art, culture, and societal reforms.

[5] See Chatterjee (1989); Sangri& Vaid (1990) and Sinha (1995).

beginning to gain acceptance, and confined mainly to restricted sections of the gradually enlightened Bengali *Bhadralok Samaj,*[6] women were seen to be more preoccupied with addressing their own issues than focusing on their imperial counterparts,[7] the interest on whom mainly remained in the periphery. This study offers a glimpse of such peripherial interactions through a selected anthology of texts spanning different genres, which unveils myriad and diverse views of the Bengali women from the other side of the spectrum, and their assessment of the European women.

Analyses of nineteenth century Bengali women's writings tend to draw on the greater ambience of colonialism and the existing social conditions of that time. The period under examination in this work is the mid-nineteenth to the first decade of the twentieth century, a period fraught with great changes and challenges within both society and the household.

The study begins during a phase of transformation of Bengali society under the colonial regime, where the distinctions between *ghar* and *bahir* (home and the world) become blurred and subsequently redefined. Tanika Sarkar (2001) best captures this in the manner in which it provides a comprehensive idea of the intermixing of the issues of the public and private sectors, including issues related to women and their bodies, conjugality, female sexuality, and female education. Though being intimate household topics, they informed lively discussions and meaningful legislations by Bengali nationalists, reformers, colonial authorities but seldom by women themselves.[8] The home and the conjugality it contained, served as the microcosm of the Hindu society and "[C]onceived as an embryonic nation, this relationship could also define ingrained Hindu dispositions that might mirror or correct or criticize and overturn the values structuring colonialism" (Sarkar 2001, p. 39). The idea of structuring and transformation also formed the backbone of the colonial civilizing mission on a different level. Transformation of Indian society, which was supposedly reeling under the barbaric atrocities committed by the natives on themselves, more often than not, supported and sanctioned by their religion, provided the required impetus and

[6] See Chatterjee, "[T]he *Bhadralok* (Bhadralok)—literally, "gentleman"—emerged with the introduction of the English Education Act of 1835, which was spearheaded by Thomas Macaulay (a British parliamentarian). This class of English-speaking Bengalis is often considered to be a product of colonial education and is additionally credited with having pioneered the so-called 'Bengal Renaissance', an era which witnessed local reform movements and the emergence of Bengali nationalism" (Chatterjee 2014, p. 17). Also see Dasgupta (2010).

[7] In this era, we come across some notable commentaries by Bengali women themselves on their household life and conditions. Notable among those being Rassundari debi's *Āmār jīban* (1868, *My life*), Binodini Dasi's *Āmār katha* [My Story] (1910), Sarala Debi Chaudhurani's *Jībaner jharāpātā* [Life's Fallen Leaves] (1945), Haimabati Sen's *Memoirs* (Forbes & Raychaudhuri eds. 2000).

[8] Cf., Sarkar (2001).

justification to the colonizers to establish and continue the regime.[9] With the birth of the *babu*[10] and the *bhadralok,*[11] with varying access to English education and the newly awakened English educated 'yuba-samāj' or the Bengali youth was agitating to revise and reform the old social system ranging from the topics of household to women. In fact, women became the center of social reform. *Sati* or widow immolation was banned in 1829. Twenty-seven years later, in 1856 saw the legalization of widow remarriage.[12] In 1892, the Age of Consent Bill was passed, which raised the age of consummation of marriage from eight to twelve years and in 1870 female infanticide became prohibited by law.[13] While the British government was more preoccupied in ending the physical onslaught of the alleged barbaric native cultural practices on colonized women's body, Bengali *bhadralok* society was also seeking recipes for what Partha Chatterjee terms the "new woman"[14] after being sufficiently convinced that the order of the day required them to do so.[15] In essence, the "new woman" was the ideal Bengali woman, free from the lazy, novel reading, needle working and card playing vices of English woman as well as the loud, boisterous, uneducated, quarrelsome

[9] See Chatterjee (1989, p. 622-633).

[10] Refers to English speaking Bengali clerks in the nineteenth century Bengal. Also used as title after or before names as a term of respect. However, at times used derisively to signify fun-loving, drinking, shallow-literate, British government sycophants. Harder explains the duality of the term in the literature of nineteenth century and outside it, "[t]he term babu undergoes a semantic split and thereby acquires ambiguity, because the extra-literary […] function of babu persists untainted by such abuse; even today in Bengal, babu can be attached to names as an honorific indicating no negligible amount of status" (Harder 2004, p. 365).

[11] *Bhadralok* is variously defined by different scholars. Since this term is used more than once in the thesis, each time, in the definition, I have resorted to a different scholarly definition to show the range of definitions attributed to this class. Sumanta Banerjee in his article described *bhadralok* as "sons of absentee landlords, East India Company agents and traders who made fortunes in the eighteenth century, various professional and government servants" (Banerjee 1989, p. 128). The female equivalent is *Bhadramahila* [bhadramahilā] lit. gentlewoman.

[12] It should be noted here that these reforms did not come of their own accord. Cf. Dagmer Engels, "[U]ntil the early 1920s, representatives of the Raj did not attempt to implement colonial policies when this meant interfering with Indian middle-class women who were in theory, if not in practice, restricted to the domestic sphere. This became particularly obvious when social legislation for the protection of women, such as the Age of Consent and Sarada Act, was passed after lengthy debates in the Legislative Council and Assembly. The Indian Government warned local Governments and police authorities that implementing these laws might be politically unwise and should, if possible, be avoided" (Engels 1989, p. 426).

[13] Tanika Sarkar writes about these debates as an intermingling of public and private sphere: "[T]he public sphere, at this stage, remained integrally linked to domestic issues. A substantial number of journals and newspapers came into existence to debate issues of *sati*, *kulin* [kulin] marriage, widow remarriage" (Sarkar 2001, p. 25).

[14] Partha Chatterjee's women question comes with an important addendum: "[W]hat we must note is that the so-called women's question in the agenda of Indian social reform in the early 19th century was not so much about the specific condition of women within a determinate set of social relations as it was about the political encounter between the colonial state and the supposed 'tradition' of a conquered people" (Chatterjee 1989, p. 623).

[15] Tanika Sarkar at length talks about the state of denial Hindu nationalists were in regarding conjugal relations and Hindu marriage. She writes, "Hindu nationalists needed to naturalize love as the basis for Hindu marriage, a higher form of love that excelled allegedly utilitarian, materialist and narrowly contractual Western arrangements. They argued that non-consensual Hindu marriages could, indeed, be more loving than the Western pattern of courtship based on class and property qualifications more than on love" (Sarkar 2001, p. 40).

and sexually promiscuous common Bengali woman.[16] The idea of women's emancipation, though primarily based on and derived from the model of female education designed by English missionaries, educationists and administrators[17] was tailor-made to suit the requirements of the traditional Bengali, Hindu society. This hybridity of Bengali women's emancipatory ideals and the distinctive forces at play has been discussed and analyzed by various scholars besides Chatterjee and Sarkar. Judith Walsh (1997) looks at the guide books for women in the nineteenth century to delineate what she terms as "the reformulation of the Bengali Hindu women and their worlds" along with "the rewriting of patriarchy […] a reconfiguration of extant patriarchal customs, rules, and prescriptions that was intended both to fit Bengali women for the changed conditions of life in British-ruled India and to create conditions and structures in the private sphere that would compensate Bengali men for their loss of power[18] and position in public life" (Walsh 1997, p. 642). However, with little emancipation came great responsibility and greater criticism. Sarkar writes "[W]omen were primarily responsible for deciding household purchases. They, therefore, served as the target of both nationalist appeal and blame. A large body of tracts and folk art depicted the modern women as a self-indulgent, spoilt and lazy creature who cared nothing for family or national fortune" (Sarkar 2001, p. 35). Mocking and portraying the Bengali women as blindly imitating the *memsahib* formed a popular subject of parodies and social satires.[19] Thus, the presence of the Western women either in the colony's imagination or in the

[16] See Partha Chatterjee "[T]he new patriarchy was also sharply distinguished from the immediate social and cultural condition in which the majority of the people lived, for the "new" woman was quite the reverse of the "common" woman, who was coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous, subjected to brutal physical oppression by males" (Chatterjee 1989, p. 627).

[17] See Sumanta Banerjee (1989, p. 127-177) & (Sangri & Vaid eds. 1999).

[18] Cf. Sarkar, "[…] Hindu marriage, then, also formed a language for rethinking relations in the political world and allowed Hindus to articulate both worlds simultaneously, even as they appeared to speak of only one or the other. A satirical poem conveyed this double message: *The Bengali male goes out/ And get thrashed everywhere he goes/ The Bengali male appears terrible only within his home*—While its chief intention is to portray the husband's tyranny at home, the poem simultaneously refers to the colonial order which has deprived him of everything except the right to domestic tyranny" [Emphasis added] (Sarkar 2001, p. 40).

[19] Cf. Chatterjee, "[I]t was very much an idea, for it is hard to find historical evidence that even in the most Westernized families of Calcutta in the mid-19th century there were actually any women who even remotely resembled these gross caricatures" (Chatterjee 1989, p. 625). Also see *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays*, (1999) Jogendra Chandra Basu's novel *Maḍel bhaginī* deserves a special mention here. The protagonist Kamalini symbolizes the 'modern', educated, and anglicized Bengali woman whose character reflects the declining moral order of the day. Basu places a special emphasis on lack of sensitivity and love in the protagonist as well as the lack of fidelity and consistency—which were supposedly the most important indicators of modernization. Alternatively, in Hans Harder's analysis of Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay's text *Nababibibilāś* (1987), another aspect of mordernization is brought to the fore. The text portrays the moral corruption of Bengali women which is shown as "only part of a causal chain, not the initial cause […] [H]ere the 'main root' would rather have to be sought in the perpetual absence of the babu husband from his *kulkamini* [kulkāminī] woman of family, wife" (Harder 2004, p. 369). To deal with the boredom of a life without husband, the wife seeks comfort in a lover and eventually ends up being a prostitute in a brothel. Harder further remarks, "[t]hese texts provide much insight into urban realities in the first half of the nineteenth century" (Harder 2004, p. 370).

tangible interaction, proved to be a singular most important point of reference that worked relentlessly in forming, reviewing, and reshaping the identity of middle-class Bengali women. Just as the majority of European women's preoccupation manifested within two extremes of colonized womanhood—the hyper-visible *nautch*girls and or the invisible *purdahnashins,*[20] the colonized women also had their scant exchange with the colonial 'other.'

At this point, it is important to demarcate the domains of visibility and gaze. Visibility, from the sociological perspective, and as understood in this study, is a product of the interaction between perception and the power dynamics inherent in such perception. Andrea Brighenti explains visibility as lying "at the intersection of the two domains of aesthetics (relations of perception) and politics (relations of power)" (Brighenti 2007, p. 324). However, the power play in being visible and invisible can actually be fluid and inconsistent. Thus, one can be visible and vulnerable or invisible and powerful or vice versa given the social, cultural and political status of the subject. Gaze, on the other hand, usually bestows the spectator with the power to look over the object. It endows the spectator with meaning making and consuming powers backed by conception and perception. Authors and philosophers see vision, which is the intrinsic constituent of gaze[21] as "a tool or a weapon of power. Indisputably, vision is a sense of power, or better, a sense, which confers a sense of power. Everything *I see* is, at least potentially, within the reach of the *I can*. What is not seen is not thematized as an object in the domain of action" (Brighenti 2007, p. 328). The empowerment associated with seeing and its manifestation in writing, giving shape to the voice, is what this research explores.

In the nineteenth century, the gradual decline of village economy along with the steady industrialization of India[22] in general, and Calcutta in particular, as the capital of British

[20] Colonial women's interaction with native women and relevant literature is dealt with in details in the following chapter.
[21] See Martin Jay (1993) for details.
[22] Industrialization of India in the colonial times is a contested subject. Divergent and rival opinions existed between British and Indian economists on the subject. Cf., Bipan Chandra, "[W]hile according to the British, India was undergoing the process of rapid economic development, the Indians [Dadabhai Naoroji, M. G. Ranade, G. V. Joshi, G. Subramaniyam Iyer, R. C. Dutt were prominent nationalist intellectuals and economists among others] came to hold that India was economically underdeveloping. They argued that India's economic backwardness was not a carry-over from its precolonial past but a consequence of the colonization of the India economy. […] [I]n the first half of the nineteenth century, Indian intellectuals too started out with an optimistic view of British economic impact on India. Contact with the rule by the most advanced economic nation of the time, they hope, would lead to India becoming an economic replica of Great Britain. But as the inner contradictions of colonialism grew and surfaced and their own consciousness developed with time, their evaluation of current economic reality underwent a drastic reversal. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, they increasingly put forward the view that India was economically

India,[23] promoted a significant influx of residents into the city from the adjoining villages. Swati Chattopadhyay (2000) describes colonial Calcutta's development as a hub of trade center:

> In 1794 the Governor General of Calcutta issued a proclamation fixing the limits of the town between the Hoogly River to the west and the inner side of the Mahratta Ditch to the east, and between Dihee Birjee to the south and the Chitpur Nullah (creek) to the north. Even before such boundaries were drawn, Indian and European investors bought large tracts of land and built on them, anticipating a wide range of uses and renters. They invested in bazaars, warehouses, residential buildings, shops, *bustees* (tenanted land), godowns (large storage spaces), and garden houses. The commercial and administrative activity in the city had attracted approximately 200,000 inhabitants by 1820, by which time landed property had become a lucrative business (Chattopadhyay 2000, p. 155).

These new inhabitants brought along their own culture, which was mainly rural and folk-based.[24] The latter, as Sumanta Banerjee points out, had a great levelling effect with accessibility and appeal across all sections of Bengali women, irrespective of the classes and castes:[25] "The appeal of these popular forms cuts across the economic divisions among Bengali women of the nineteenth century. Folklore, from which street literature derived, was essentially a shared experience. There was no sharp distinction between high and low" (Banerjee 1989, p. 130). However, a rift appeared in the apparent homogeneity of Bengali women's popular culture with the emergence, and reformation of female education. Banerjee writes,

---

regressing, the visible manifestation of this regression being the deep and ever-deepening poverty […] of the Indian people (Chandra 1991, p. 81, 84).

[23] See Chattopadhyay, "[B]y the 1830s the salient features of nineteenth-century Calcutta's morphology had been established. They included: ribbon development along main arteries, with a preponderance of narrow rectangular lots, demonstrating the importance of having streetfront property; the numerous ghats (steps for landing) along the edge of the Hoogly River, indicating the importance of the river for commerceand communication; the network of bazaars; and the administrative center between Esplanade Rowand the Old Fort. The older north-south arteries such as Chitpur Roadand Chowringhee Road were reinforced by new ones such as Strand Roadand Wood-Wellesley-College-Cornwallis Street, intersected by a host of east-west streets that connected the wholesale bazaars and warehouseslocated in convenient proximity to the *ghats* [ghāṭ], with the retail outlets in the city's interior. The three-tiered commercial network of import-export, wholesale bazaars, and retail marketscreated a mutually supportive geography" (Chattopadhyay 2000, p. 155).

[24] See Banerjee, "[T]he Bengali villagers brought with them into Calcutta the songs they inherited from rural folk culture with their own poetic rules, their own musical scales and rhythms. Along with their women, they not only kept alive the old folk culture in the squalor of the growing metropolis of Calcutta, but enriched it with new motifs borrowed from the surrounding urban scenes. The street literature of nineteenth century Calcutta—songs, dances, doggerels, theatrical performances, recitations—became a great melting pot of tradition and topicality" (Banerjee 1989, p. 130).

[25] This folk entertainment in the forms of tales and songs and doggerels were labelled as licentious and obscene and had a contaminating effect on Bengali womanhood—this was the allegation maintained by and large not only by Bengali reformers but also colonialists and missionaries. In a subsequent chapter dealing with the missionary text, I have mentioned this issue, namely the missionaries' anxiety of the contaminating effect of folk culture on indigenous women.

> By the end of the nineteenth century, this system of education had produced a new breed of women in bhadralok homes who, by their writings, cultivated patterns of behavior which displaced women's popular culture of Bengali middle-class society. The old popular culture which had rested on the social ties binding together women from different classes was discarded, and retained only by the women of the lower social strata who did not relinquish their commitment to it as rapidly as others (Banerjee 1989, p. 130).

The periodicals of the nineteenth and early twentieth century give us an idea of the changes in women's social and cultural lives that included the breaking away of middle-class Bengali women from the homogeneous popular culture. Periodicals in vogue at the time like *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, *Dāsī patrikā*, *Antaḥpur patrikā*, *Bhāratī patrikā* etc., written either by women or for them, introduced political, social, and educational topics, along with personal, international (mainly concerning Britain) and domestic themes. The regular columns on Western women in these periodicals also hint that *bhadramahilās* were also beginning to get involved in international women's activities.[26] With the spread of education, considered previously as a vice and the harbinger of bad luck and widowhood for women,[27] an increasing number of women were involved in talking about themselves and their domestic lives fraught with challenges. Statistically, as shown by Sumanta Banerjee, "[I]t is estimated that 190 odd women authors from 1856 to 1910 produced about 400 works, including poems, novels, plays, essays and autobiographies. During the same period, 21 periodicals with which women were associated editorially, and which were primarily devoted to women's issues were in circulation in Bengal" (Banerjee 1989, p. 160).

However, gaining literacy and knowledge was still a difficult domain to tread. Rassundari Debi, who wrote the first Bengali autobiography *Āmār jīban*[28] talks about all the hardships encountered in order to become literate,[29] which included learning the letters in utmost secrecy and isolation for fear of chastisement and in scant time at night. There are also examples like Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain, who received encouragement and education from her husband and went on to pen the first feminist utopian novella in English.[30]

[26] The final chapter of this thesis deals with the women's periodicals, both written and maintained by them or writing about their issues.
[27] See Tanika Sarkar "[L]iteracy, for the upper caste Hindu woman, was considered a forbidden vice, and custom dictated that the educated woman was destined for widowhood" (Sarkar 1999, p. foreword).
[28] Tanika Sarkar has recovered the book from obscurity and provided a detailed commentary on the author and her times. In *Words to Win* (1999) Sarkar talks about women's education in the nineteenth century Bengal in general and Rassundari's trials and tribulations in particular in that backdrop.
[29] See Sarkar (1999, p. 67-112).
[30] Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain (1880-1932) has been one of the leading crusaders of female education in colonial Bengal. She wrote extensively on *purdah* (pardā) practices of Muslim women, education and their freedom. She also authored the first feminist utopias in Bengal, *Sultana's Dream* (1908) and *Padmarag* (1924). The former is originally written in English. For details, see Bagchi (2009; 2005; 2012).

Krishnabhabini Das, who is the subject of a chapter of this thesis, accompanied her husband to England to stay there for 8 years and authored the most vivid and inspiring travelogue that can also be interpreted as a nationalist and feminist tract of the time[31]. Kailashbasini Debi, writes Tanika Sarkar, "learnt her letters secretly at night, after a whole day's domestic labor, behind locked doors and away from the prying, critical eyes of unforgiving in-laws" (Sarkar 1999, p. 2). Thus, an atmosphere of contradiction and tension prevailed in the Bengali women's education scenario. While progress was imminent and apparent and welcomed in some elite circles, opposition was also there citing female education as an undesirable outcome of colonial rule, which would accelerate the loss of tradition and culture:

> The educated woman became a folk-devil in popular representations: immoral, lazy, selfish, a reader of romantic novels and neglectful of basic household duties, she was even depicted as having lost her breast-milk and her reproductive organs. Education was the signifier of sexual difference, the site and the justification of male power. Its appropriation by women would invert social and sexual roles and even the biological organs […]"[32] (Sarkar 2001, p. 560).

Colonialism contributed to the broadening of horizons for a certain class of Bengali middle-class men and women enabling them to have direct contact with and assess the Western culture. With the coming together of the colonial and colonized cultures, the agents of what Mary Louise Pratt calls the *contact zone*, were the ones who translated the 'other' culture back to their respective 'homes.' However much has been altered and adjusted in such translation, keeping in tune with the process of *transculturation.*[33] The process of transculturation is an integral part of contact zone, as Pratt writes,

> Ethnographers have used the term transculturation to describe processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture. […] [W]hile subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for. Transculturation, like autoethnography, is a phenomenon of the contact zone" (Pratt 1991, p. 36).

The texts under analysis in this thesis deal precisely with the translation and interpretation of the respective other culture. However, in the process, the European culture has been kept as a static point of reference. With this in mind, the chapters in this study show the

[31] A chapter of this thesis is dedicated to Krishnabhabini and her travelogue *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā*.
[32] Sarkar echoes similar ideas, "[t]he Westernised, tea-drinking, novel-reading, mother-in-law-baiting wife as a kind of a folk devil on whom are placed all the anxieties and fears generated by a rapidly changing, increasingly alien social-order" (Sarkar 2001, p. 266).
[33] A term coined by Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s.

ideological, social, cultural, political, and at times deeper, emotional interactions between the colonized and the colonizer.

The traveler's gaze has been one of the key components of assessing the 'other' culture and it comes as no surprise that the colonial discourse is heavily dependent on traveler's narratives—i.e. their first assessment of the land, weather, people etc. By encapsulating the very representation of the 'other,' it is appropriate to start with the genre of travelogue. Krishnabhabini Das' travelogue *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* (*Bengali woman in England*) was written in 1885 during her eight years of stay in England with her husband. The travelogue charts not only the territorial details of nineteenth-century London, but also provides a detailed discussion of the pros and cons of English society with special reference to the conditions and characteristics of English women. At times, appearing as an excellent guide to England and English society, in sync with the self-proclaimed intention of the author, the travelogue includes information about the weather, dresses, social, cultural, and economic scenario of England. On a deeper level, the travelogue aspires to become a nationalistic cum feminist piece of writing where the author uses the opportunity of her first-hand experiences to enlighten Bengali men and women on ideal gender relations and social conditions instrumental behind the success, advancement, and the nearly global dominance of Britain. As the first detailed travelogue penned by a Bengali woman at the time,[34] its uniqueness lies in its insights into a *bhadramahila's* idea, expectations and disappointments about the English society and its reflective gaze towards 'conditions back home,' thereby also putting into focus her native society. Krishnabhabini lays special emphasis on the excesses, virtues and vices of women both in Bengal and in Britain to highlight what is fit to be imitated and what should be abandoned. Furthermore, Krishnabhabini, though a staunch proponent of female freedom, is mellow in her demand and tone. She explains, taking British women as her example, the liberating aspect of freedom, nonetheless champions supervised freedom especially in the case of Bengali women who have lived a great length of their lives under strict supervision and patriarchal control.

The travelogue can also be interpreted as a Bengali woman's claim to identity and individualism through writing and especially writing in a genre, which has been predominantly considered a male domain. Here, Krishnabhabini's travelogue can be

[34] Jagatmohini Chaudhury wrote another travelogue called *Iṃlaṇḍe sāt māṣ* [Seven Months in England] in 1902. The travelogue is mainly preoccupied in describing the journey rather than focusing on the manners and customs of foreigners she came across.

equated, in terms of richness and depth of description with the likes of Fanny Parkes, Flora Annie Steele, Marianne Evans[35] etc., who documented their travel experiences in different provinces of India. However, Krishnabhabini's account is unique in its lack of intimacy and a conscious maintenance of a seemingly authoritarian distance from the subject(s) of her travelogue. Her narration is serious, devoid of personal anecdotes or mention of friendships or acquaintance, which she might have developed during her stay in England. This conscious distancing not only lends a certain formality to her narrative, but also makes it a documentation meant for a serious purpose, like an advice manual for Bengalis. After returning from England, the author devoted herself to writing treatises on the freedom of women, with a stricter tone—somewhat anomalous for one who had once been liberated enough to bear separation from her *saṃsār* and maternal duties, for a Europe trip, donning on the gown and European ways of life.

The hard realism of Krishnabhabini's feminist and nationalist thinking as reflected in her travelogue is well complemented by the romantic ideals of Toru Dutt (1856-1877). Toru belonged to a Christian convert Bengali family. She travelled to France when she was thirteen and after a stay in England, came back to Calcutta in 1873 after four years in Europe. Toru's two novels, *Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden* (1878) and *The Journal of Mademoiselle d'Arvers*[36] (1879), the former unfinished, offers a romantic and a fictional perspective of the young anglicized Bengali author on European women and society. Standing in quite a contrast to Krishnabhabini's realistic criticism of English society, Toru offers a romantic fantasizing of the European 'other.' Her protagonists in both novels, French and Spanish woman of gypsy origin, are in feverish and passionate pursuit of love. Through a turn of events, they finally manage to get their love but the novels do not end with a message of eternal happiness. Instead, death turns to be the major force in separating the protagonists from their loved ones. Toru Dutt is the first Bengali woman writer to not only portray the European women in an imaginary setting, making the colonized-colonizer relation and interaction quite romantic and intellective, but also wrote two novels on the central theme of conjugal and pre-marital love in the nineteenth-century colonial setting. *Le Journal* is in the form of diary entries of a fifteen-year-old Marguerite d'Arvers who had just completed education in a convent and had returned home on her fifteenth birthday. The novel takes the readers through an intricately interesting plot of Victorian and gothic

[35] These authors and the main themes of their travelogue are discussed in the next chapter.
[36] This novel is originally written in French.

romance with old haunted castles, unrequited love affairs, murder, madness and final death of the protagonist during child birth. The second novel *Bianca* is about a fierily passionate young Spanish woman and her love for a man of noble birth. She successfully marries this man amidst some intrigues and opposition; however, conjugal happiness is trimmed short by his departure for the Crimean war. The story ends without a conclusion. As Toru died young at the age of twenty-one, her work stood unfinished. Nonetheless, what she left behind is a telling testimony of the uniqueness of perspective of looking at the colonizer. Her selection of European characters gave her the freedom to introduce so-called unconventional and somewhat taboo and radical subjects like dating, romantic pursuit, courtship and pre-marital love, which would have been otherwise controversial and definitely unrealistic with Indian/Bengali protagonists. Toru's choice of genre is equally interesting and invariably draws readers' attention to the popular and prevalent literary scenario of Bengal. Novel, as a genre has an interesting story of emergence in Bengal as well as in India, mainly deriving its roots from colonial educational politics and later transforming and refashioning itself to stand the test of time. Given Toru's penchant for Western literature, one wonders about the source of her inspiration. In contemporary England, the status of the novel as a genre of writing was somewhat dubious:

> Although the novel as we recognize it today had been developing since the early eighteenth century, it did not come to be considered as high literature until later in the nineteenth century[37]. In the first half of the nineteenth century high literature consisted of poetry and non-fiction—areas largely prohibited to women because they lacked a classical education. The novel, typified by the sensationalist three volume 'triple-decker' that sustained the circulating libraries with their largely female readership, was seen as a low form of literature suitable only for women writer's petty literary skills of observation and romance (Lewis 1996, p. 67).

Lewis further notes that novel started gaining popularity and prestige in the 1870s. "Literary critics began to detect and encourage a version of the realist novel that, rather than being simply a realistic description of life, was of a philosophical nature, a superior 'manly' form of fiction that concerned itself with abstract concepts and intellectual issues—qualities usually held to be absent from women's work" (Lewis 1996, p. 67-68). In India, multiple

[37] Ian Watt addresses the confusion regarding the rise of the novel in the light of the works of the first three male novelists Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. Presumably, the novelists themselves did not help much in properly defining the genre of novel and how it stands apart from the romance, another literary genre that preceded it. Watt writes, "[I]t is true that both Richardson and Fielding saw themselves as founders of a new kind of writing, and that both viewed their work as involving a break with the old-fashioned romances; but neither they nor their contemporaries provide us with the kind of characterization of the new genre that we need; indeed they did not even canonize the changed nature of their fiction by a change in nomenclature—our usage of the term 'novel' was not fully established until the end of the eighteenth century" (Watt 2001, p. 9-10).

forces contributed to the emergence and rise of novel as a literary genre, out of which colonial policies contributed the most. Lord Macaulay with his English Education Act of 1835 solidified the central role English language would play in the colony. His extravagant claims about English literatures expedited the influx of the same in colonial market. "[L]iterature of Britain […] to that literature, so rich in precious truth and precious fiction […] which has exercised an influence wider than that of our commerce and mightier than that of our arms […] before the light of which impious and cruel superstitions are fast taking flight on the Bank of the Ganges."[38] As expected, in the years that followed,

> [a]fter 1835, an increasing number of English books (novels, plays, histories, poetry, grammars, biographies) were made available in India in order to expedite Macaulay's educational strategy. Between 1850 and 1864, the import of British books and printed matter in India increased by 120 percent or reach an unprecedented peak of almost 330,000 pounds. […] [T]hese figures dropped drastically between 1868 and 1870, and although British book imports had made a relative increase of 186 percent by 1900, the increase in real terms was small, and book imports held steady at around 210,000 pounds per year (Joshi 1998, p. 200).[39]

English novel soon steadily spread itself outside the educational circuits and came to be consumed for leisure as well as nationalistic purposes. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Ānandamaṭh* (1882) and *Dur'geś'nandinī* (1865) enjoyed enormous popularity and acclaim. However, Toru's novels offer a different theme from the prevalent novel-writing scenario in Bengal, given that they did not occupy themselves with social or political issues and she herself remained aloof from the burgeoning feminist awakening of the *bhadramahila* society.

Kardoo the Hindu Girl published in 1869 in New York is a unique example of cross-cultural gazing by offering a shift in the flow of gaze: compared to the texts where gazing is mainly uni-directional, with the Bengali women in subject position, this missionary text innovates by exploring gazing from two different perspectives. The author of the autobiography, *Kardoo the Hindu Girl*, an English born American missionary imagines herself as the protagonist Kardoo, a young Hindu Bengali girl and narrates her life in a narrative flashback.

---

[38] Speech delivered at the opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, Thomas Babington Macaulay, "The Literature of Britain (November 4, 1846)" in *The Works of Lord Macaulay: Complete* (1875, p. 383-384).

[39] One might harbor the idea that English language hegemonized the colonial education scenario. However, this was not the case, "[T]he educational, legislative, and cultural edicts propagated at the helm by the colonial and administrative powers indeed affected the intellectual contours of the Indian imagination, but English education, and through it English ideas, in fact coexisted alongside Indian education (also funded by the colonial government) and the ferment of native energies. English education was not coerced, nor was education in the languages of India in any way abandoned under the British. Both were taking place simultaneously, if nonsynchronously" (Joshi 1998, p. 201).

As a missionary text, it is dedicated to expose the failures of Hinduism, to emphasize its contribution to a brutal way of life and to posit Christianity as an alternative and a superior way of living. The plot is a continuous drift from one mishap to another in the life of the young Hindu girl with religion and culture playing a major role. The imagination and self-situating of the author as the protagonist from a different religious and cultural background makes the narrative interesting by exposing a split in it. On one level, it is missionary Brittan gazing at a Hindu woman, offering her perspective on the Hindu society, and describing the protagonist's life. Simultaneously, it is also the narrative of a Hindu girl gazing at her own life. The text is an example of viewing the same narrative via multiple perspectives. The thesis attempts an anylsis of this dual-gazing from the *character perspective* and the *narrator perspective*, "[C]haracter-perspective can be defined as a fictional agent's subjective worldview" (Nuenning 2001, p. 210-11) writes Ansgar Nuenning[40]; while the narrator perspective is defined as "the system of preconditions or the subjective worldview of a narrating instance. Just as for each character, the reader can construe an individual perspective of the narrator, by attributing to the voice that utters the discourse psychological idiosyncrasies, attitudes, norms and values, a set of mental properties, and a world-model" (Neunning 2001, p. 212-213).

Brittan uses the genre of autobiography to stress narratorial authenticity, despite the instances of gaping cracks and fissures, which guide the readers to distinguish between the character and narrator perspective. The individualism of the genre of autobiography is subverted to represent (the Hindus) and appeal to the masses (American/European audience) respectively. In this sense, *Kardoo the Hindu girl's* significance lies in the construction of a bi-cultural self by the author whereby the hegemonic attitude of the dominant culture (in this case, American/Western) is quite apparent. Yet the dominant culture in the text, in terms of representation is the Bengali culture, which is shown as inferior compared to the Western culture. Kardoo is thus at the same time, the prototype of the exclusive and the ordinary, an extraordinary tale of *just* another Hindu girl.

The thesis concludes with a chapter that shifts from individual gazing to collective gazing, by addressing some of the Bengali periodicals of late nineteenth to early twentieth century

[40] Neunning further explains, "[A] character-perspective could thus be defined as an individual's fictional system of preconditions or subjective worldview—the sum of all the models he or she has constructed of the world, of others, and of herself. A character-perspective is governed by the totality of an individual's knowledge and belief sets, intentions, psychological traits, attitudes, ideological stance, and system of values and norms that have been internalized. In short, it embraces everything that exists in the mind of a character" (Neunning 2001, p. 211).

where Bengali women have dealt with the concept of charity and philanthropy viewing European women as role models. Charity and philanthropy already existed as high ideals in Hindu/Indian society in the pre-colonial period. In the colonial regime, especially with the awakening of the nationalist sentiment, the concepts of charity and philanthropy gained new momentum and constitution especially with the involvement of native women. The first role models to the Bengali women were the European missionaries. Though primarily unorganized, charitable activities of nineteenth century Bengali women captured in Bengali oeriodicals, contributed to a feeling of communal solidarity. Drawing from the experiences of women in the West in their efforts to care for the poor, sick, and unprivileged, Bengali women sought to contribute to ameliorate the poverty and destitution in the society. However, aside from the strong nationalist base of charity in colonial Bengal, this social engagement also meant greater individual freedom and access to the world outside the house, helping women become real stakeholders in the building of society and nation. The chapter addresses how charity came to be viewed as partly a western concept to be appropriated in Bengal as *sebā* and *dān* and how the Bengali periodicals reconstituted and solidified this indigenous concept through biographies of European women. These biographies, some of them anonymous, were written to exemplify how even with limited or no resources, western women could help and change their respective societies for better and commanded respect for their contribution. These periodicals carried biographies of women from all over Europe, with special focus on British characters. Placed beside these biographies were commentaries on the alleged idle, uninformed, selfish ways of Bengali women's lives who were said to care for nothing besides their immediate family of husband and children. Thus, these columns served as a call for women across classes to indulge in the greater good of humanity. More often, such inspirational stories carried with them warnings of religious kinds, about god's forsaking those who do not care for their ailing brothers and sisters—in an attempt to motivate religious women to noble causes. This chapter evaluates the colonized gaze with its inherent motive—namely to derive philanthropic inspiration and refashion humanitarian activities on the colonial 'model.' Analysis of colonial discourse on charity brings into light that they operate in a comparative framework—West serves as a point of reference and the discourse generated in and about the colony is referred back and forth, and contrasted to metropole societies. At times, the colonial discourse is shaped by the intellectual, political, as well as literary discourses in Europe and the metropole. However, along with this strong interconnection, coexist an equally strong distinction between the two. Discourses generated in the colony and about the colony were built on the central idea of the 'other' against whom

the self was projected and identified. Female literary tradition in Bengal, especially in the colonial regime was both conformist and contradictory. While in certain narratives one can see female writers projecting themselves as "sociological chameleons"[41] imitating ideas, thoughts, and culture of their male counterparts and the dominant culture, in certain other cases we find them carving a distinct individual niche, defining and promoting a subculture within the society. This subculture, based on their unique self-expression, however unified groups of women through their ways of seeing and thinking: "we can view women's group consciousness as a subculture uniquely divided against itself by ties to the dominant culture. While the ties to the dominant culture are the informing and restricting ones, they provoke within the subculture certain strengths as well as weaknesses, enduring values as well as accommodations" (Cott 1972, p. 3-4)—the narratives discussed in the thesis amply substantiate the claim.

1.5 Key theories for textual analysis

The texts used in the thesis can be considered as transgressive writings disrupting and redirecting the flow of power and the resultant narratives from the colony to the metropole, thereby questioning the canonical colonial discourse. Textual analysis in the thesis goes beyond an overview of the historical, social, and cultural forces at play or the respective authors' interaction, perception, and documentation of such forces, to also voice the marginality of such perceptions and interactions on two levels: first, due to their exclusivity and second based on the non-canonical nature of their texts. The authors I have dealt with are exceptions of their time, since nineteenth century Bengal was not particularly replete with texts written by Bengali women that kept European women in vantage positions. Instead, a certain feminist consciousness, an awareness of their selves, and assessment of their positionality in the colonized society is responsible for the emergence of these literary acts of reaching out to the Western women and seeing themselves in comparison to the Western womanhood. In this nascent light of feminist awakening, genres like romantic fiction, travelogues, and periodical articles written by women can be seen as literary experiments. If the concept of canon signifies attention and socio-literary inclusion,[42] the texts discussed here are not only marginalized, but also excluded from the mainstream literary attention, which travelogues, novels, and columns written by Bengali men in the nineteenth century may have enjoyed. However, their departure from being canonical does

[41] The term is used by Elaine Showalter in the description of Victorian women and their literary tradition. For details see Showalter (1977).
[42] See for example John Guillory's (1987) article.

not undermine their importance in a spirit best captured by the intellectual historian Quentin Skinner:

> We are told to concentrate on the canonical texts, and more specifically on just those portions of the canonical texts in which it is clear that they really are addressing our questions in a 'relevant' way. The outcome was as anti-historical as possible. We were explicitly warned that, if we allow ourselves to become sidetracked into examining the social conditions or intellectual contexts of which the classic texts arose, we shall lose sight of their dateless wisdom and thereby lose contact with the whole purpose of studying them (Skinner 2002, p. 38).

Behind literary canons, are societies and institutions inspiring, validating, nurturing, and propagating a text and supporting this process is a "close relation"[43] of such institution or society with the text and its interpretation.[44] Frank Kermode further reiterates the point: "[I]t is obvious that control of interpretation is intimately connected with the valuations set upon texts. The decision as to canonicity depends upon a consensus that a book has the requisite qualities, the determination of which is, in part, a work of interpretation" (Kermode 1979, p. 77). Hence, literary canons can be seen as institutional structures by which a society highlights certain issues and represses others to maintain its own interest. This could explain the oblivion Krishnabhabini's travelogue or Toru Dutt's novels suffered until recent times. One can read them as minority discourses deviating from the Bengali society's greater socio-political agenda, complicated further by the fact that they were written by women. This highlights the general neglect of women's writings, which in turn reflects the pervasive gender discrimination in the society. Once can see that there were no consistent and continuous reprint, patronage, or purchase of these texts. Lillian Robinson calls the literary canon as "an entirely gentlemanly artifact, considering how few works by non-members of the class and sex make it into the informal agglomeration of course syllabi, anthologies, and widely-commented upon 'standard authors' that constitutes the canon as it is generally understood" (Robinson 1983, p. 84). Feminist critics, observes Robinson, have argued, "[T]rue equity can be attained, […] only by opening up the canon to a much larger number of female voices" (Robinson 1983, p.84), thereby striving for a wider representation of female voices in the building up of a discourse. The effect of such pluralism will be a fully representative literature, which will present a well-rounded picture of the culture it

[43] See Kermode (1979).

[44] Jan Gorak provides an interesting facet of argument, "[T]he conviction that the canon survives only by virtue of institutional control and sponsorship has made it difficult to argue for the intrinsic merit and genuine worth of the works included in it. It is traditional to suggest that some works are more linguistically or aesthetically rewarding or more humanly moving than others, and that this explains their status as objects of study. This appeal to emotional or evaluative criteria has fallen dramatically out of favour" (Gorak 1991, p. 3).

represents. Literature, as representative of diverse voices from multiple layers of the society should be shorn off the monolithic, authoritarian, masculine, and prestigious stance that traditional canon tends to fortify and perpetuate. "[I]f there are no longer any central stories that unify society but only stories defining the desires of distinctive segments within society, then our view of the canon should supposedly correspond to social reality, should perhaps parlay this fragmentation into articulate differences" (Altieri 1983, p. 39). Just as there is no monolithic colonial discourse, there is no monolithic indigenous reaction, but the way of analysis is to pick up the various and diverse articulation and voices to bring out the distinctive segments in the colonized society.

1.6 Discourse, power, and public sphere

The depiction and analysis of the cultural and colonial 'other' in discourse, determines and is in turn determined by the power structure. The same power structure then helps to determine the subject and the object both being important players in the production of the discourse. However, at times, the boundary between the subject and the object is not easy to define. In the process of the production of a discourse, the subject itself can turn into the object and vice versa. The role of the 'other' in the production of the discourse is of importance to see the blurring of the subject-object boundaries. The influence of the object can be, at times, equally potent to that of the subject, even though they are not directly contributing their voice to the discourse but are latent players, observed and described. The Bengali authors' direct and indirect interaction with their objects of gaze, namely the European women provided the impetus to document the later in realistic or fictional settings, with nationalistic, entertainment, missionary, and even humanitarian purposes. Thus, constant interactions and negotiations go on between the subject and the object in the production of a discourse. In the process of depicting the object, the subject is depicting herself as well. Hence, discourse becomes as much a representation of the subject as it is of the object. Due to the co-production of discourse through subject-object interactions, the power relation inherent in the same can become intra-group (between different groups of Bengali women and their discourse), inter-group (Between Bengali women writers and European women), as well as external to the groups maintained through public sphere. Discourse generated, especially in this context, was mainly aimed at the larger society and its consumption. The writers had individual yet definite messages for the Bengali society and especially for the women within the society or outside it[45] and their narratives can be

[45] For example, Brittan's missionary text was meant for American/ English readers, especially the missionariy societies.

termed as a part of the social phenomena, hence contributing to the literary public sphere. However, calling these narratives a part of the nineteenth century Bengali public sphere is in fact debatable, given the fact that "a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation" (Calhoun 1992, p. 2). Even if we, in true Habermasian sense, let go of the identities of arguers and stick to the merit of the argument, the educational standards and its aspects of attainability for the majority of Bengali women keeps their discourse away from the acknowledged public sphere discourse. The exclusionary character of early public sphere, be it European or Indian, rarely recognized or encouraged the entrance and participation of the minority groups. Bengali women's discourse on European women was mainly out of interest and rarely their occupation. However, this seemingly private interest took on a public relevance due to the flourishing of female literacy, print culture and other allied areas. Habermas (1991) emphasized the importance of private sphere as:

> The public's understanding of the public use of reason was guided specifically by such private experiences as grew out of the audience-oriented (*publikumsbezogen*) subjectivity of the conjugal family's intimate domain (*Intimsphäre*). […] [I]ncluded in the private realm was the authentic "public sphere", for it was a public sphere constituted by private people" (Habermas 1991, p. 28, 30).

The Bengali women's act of stretching out of the domestic and family-oriented boundaries to inform and involve the public with the particular inclination and motive of their discourses[46] spell out the gradual broadening and intermingling of their private and public spheres. Calhoun further reinstates the two reasons, which institutionalized the public sphere and intertwined it with the private sphere in the early modern era:

> [t]he family was reconstituted as an intimate sphere that grounded both the evaluative affirmation of ordinary life and of economic activity alluded to […] the participation of its patriarchal head in the public sphere. Second, the public sphere was initially reconstituted in the world of letters, which paved the way for that oriented to politics. The two processes were intertwined. For example, early novels helped to circulate a vision of intimate sentimentality, communicating to the members of the literary public sphere just how they should understand the heart of private life (Calhoun 1992. p. 10).

Sentimentality and appeal to the private emotions and sensibilities forms an integral part of the narratives discussed in the thesis. Be it the nationalist cum feminist discourse of Krishnabhabini or the appealing columns of the journal contributors or even missionary

[46] Krishnabhabini Das serves a good example for this phenomenon and well as the columnists of Bengali periodicals.

Brittan's text—the conscious effort to avoid the dryness of a preaching narrative and make their writings more poignant and compassionate to their readers is quite palpable. One can view the narratives as:

> [A]lternative models whereby members of the subordinate strata and others marginalized under the existing social order are able to agitate for the deconstruction of that order and the reconstruction of society on a novel pattern. […] [t]he extent to which—a discourse succeeds in calling forth a following; this ultimately depends on whether a discourse elicits those sentiments out of which new social formations can be constructed. For discourse is not only an instrument of persuasion, operating along rational (or pseudorational) and moral (or pseudomoral) lines, but it is also an instrument of sentiment evocation. Moreover, it is through these paired instrumentalities—ideological persuasion and sentiment evocation—that discourse holds the capacity to shape and reshape society itself (Lincoln 2014, p. 6-7).

With their entry into the public sphere they play their individual role in defining or contradicting but at the same time contributing to the discourse on European women. Representation of the 'other' is the major preoccupation of these narratives. Via representation, we have the unique ways of using language and expressions, which not only depicts the object but also makes the manifestation of the power play between the subject and the object in the discourses apparent. Stuart Hall (1997) defined: "[R]epresentation is a process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning" (Hall 1997, p. 61). Hall further establishes that it is humans within their culture and society who attach meanings to objects, persons and events. Hence there is no fixity attached to these assigned meanings and they are changeable across time, space, and cultures. "So one important idea about representation is the acceptance of a degree of *cultural relativism* between one culture and another, a certain lack of equivalence, and hence the need for *translation* as we move from the mindset or conceptual universe of one culture or to another" (Hall 1997, p. 61). This *constructionist* approach to representation provides the basis of interpretation of the narratives. Nineteenth century colonial Bengal saw the *bhadramahila* going through a process of makeover based on her colonial counterpart: signifying a process of change and overhaul of her own society. This transformation attached new meanings to an old order of things in the colonized society, which in turn shaped the sensibilities of their cultural colonial 'other'. The same is also true for the European women. Through their presence in the colony and encounter with the colonized women, they translated the native culture based on their own cultural understanding. These representations and translations from both sides were not only diverse but also went through construction and reconstruction over time.

The manifestation of power through discourse gains further complexity when it comes to reading power in discourses authored by women, not least because both in the colonial state and in the colonies women enjoyed diverse social status. Furthermore, they had their special power and powerlessness equation in their own societies within the established and/or changing patriarchal structure as well as the broader, intercultural relation with the women in other colonized societies. We find a manifestation of both these complex power relations in their writings, which revolved around certain tropes and stereotypes emphasizing the lopsidedness of such relations. Before delving deeper into this point, it is useful to advance a working definition of discourse.

When talking about discourse and power, it is almost imperative to bring in Foucault's specification of discourse, which is certainly not, a mean feat given the slipperiness and complexity he has attached to the term. However, the crux of his definition lies in the fact that discourse can be viewed as an intricate system of relationships between institutions, individuals, ideas, and texts. Besides having power structures and relations as inherent in discourse, the context of its generation is also a prime determinant[47]. For the use in the thesis, I have borrowed Stuart Hall's simplified approach to the topic: "[D]iscourse is about the production of knowledge through language" (Hall 2006, p. 165). Hayden White further describes the term with "[t]he connotations of circularity, of movement back and forth, that the Indo-European root of this term (*kers*) and its Latinate form (*dis*- "in different directions," + *currere*, "to run") suggest" (White 2009, p. 105). The different aspects of discourse, according to Hall, are the following: first, a variety of individuals and conditions can contribute from their different positions to the formation of a discourse. "Nevertheless, every discourse constructs positions from which alone it makes sense. Anyone deploying a discourse must position themselves *as if* they were the subject of the discourse" (Hall 1992, p. 166). Second, discourses do not exist in isolation and are open and interacting with other discourses. Thus, the discourse on colonial Bengali women draws certain discursive elements on colonialism and the discourse on Bengali society. Third, "the statements within a discursive formation need not all be the same. But the relationships and differences between them must be regular and systematic, not random" (Hall 1992, p. 166). This idea originates in Foucault, who calls it a *system of dispersion.*[48]A discourse is formed at times

[47] See Foucault *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969).

[48] Cf., Foucault, "[o]ne tries to determine according to what schemata (of series, simultaneous groupings, linear or reciprocal modification) the statements can reappear, dissociate, recompose, gain in extension or determination, be taken up into new logical structures, acquire, on the other hand, new semantic contents, and constitute partial organizations mong themselves. These schemata make it possible to describe—not the laws

by contestable knowledge, whereby it is not easy to determine absolute truth or falsity of the produced knowledge—the conflicting ideas in the writings of European women on colonized womanhood in India or the inherent tension in the portrayal of European women in Bengali women's writings are examples of the lack of absolute truth or falsity of the production of knowledge from these discourses. However, the inherent dimension of the knowledge produced through the discourse is the power[49]: "[P]ower produces knowledge. Power and knowledge directly imply one another. There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (Foucault 1987, p. 93). The production of knowledge from the discourse written by Bengali women writers on the colonial 'other' entails a power relation that can be seen as a subversion of the usual colonized-colonizer power equation in the Eurocentric way of looking at the subject—'Europe' placed at the center, studying the 'Orient' which is placed in the margins. Here, through the narratives, 'Orient' studies Europe and returns the gaze. Hence, we can conclude that the Bengali women's employment of the discourse to generate varied knowledge about the European women gave them a certain power over the European women who were subjected to such discourse.[50] "Discursive rules are hence strongly linked to the exercise of power: discourse itself is both constituted by, and ensures the reproduction of, the social system, through forms of selection, exclusion and domination" (Young 1981 cited in Hook 2001, p. 522). A conglomeration of ideas as discussed above, from different scholars brings out the major characteristics of discourse. To sum up—discourse is related to production of knowledge generated by and based on power structures built on complex social interaction. Discourses

---

of the internal construction of concepts, not their progressive and individual genesis in the mind of man—but their anonymous dispersion through texts, books, and *oeuvres*. A dispersion that characterizes a type of discourse, and which defines, between concepts, forms of deduction, derivation, and coherence, but also of incompatibility, intersection, substitution, exclusion, mutual alteration, displacement, etc. Such an analysis, then, cocerns, at a kind of *preconceptual* level, the field in which concepts can coexist and the rules to which this field is subjected" (Foucault 2010, n.p.).

[49] Before talking about power and knowledge and their relation, it is important to delineate what kind of power Foucault talks about. His definition of power "[d]oes not function in the form of a chain—it circulates. It is never monopolized by one centre. It is deployed and exercised through a net-like organization" (Foucault 1980, p. 98). Further, "[T]his suggests that we are all, to some degree, caught up in its circulation—oppressors and oppressed. It does not radiate downwards, either from one source or from one place. Power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life—in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics, the economy and the law. What's more, power is not only negative, repressing what it seeks to control. It is also *productive*. It 'doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but […] it traverses and produces things, it induced pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be thought of as a productive network which runs through the whole social body'" (Foucault 1980, p. 119).

[50] Cf. Hall "[I]t [discourse] produces knowledge that shapes perceptions and practice. It is part of the way in which power operates. Therefore, it has consequences for both those who employ it and those who are "subjected to it" (Hall 2006, p. 173).

do not exist by themselves but are shaped and influenced by the actions inherent in the texts as well as societal forces outside the analyzed texts (contexts). Discourse contains motives and has the power to subvert existing ideas and or other discourses.

1.7 Orientalism and representation

Any discussion on the representation of colonizer-colonized relation through discourse or otherwise remains incomplete without the mention of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), although the term discourse is problematic in Said's usage and has been the basis of the seminal work's critique in recent times. Major tropes of colonial representation of 'other' have been put forth by Said, considering the ideas about the orient as not merely "airy European fantasy about the Orient" but rather a "system of knowledge" (Said 1978, p. 133) which is developed on Foucault's notion of discourse. Hence, the concept of the 'Orient' is essentially discursive. Said mentioned the different tropes European colonizers used to justify the imperial missions as well as for comparative exclusions. Projecting the 'West' as morally, culturally and intellectually superior to the East was one of the prime projections of the colonizers. This 'lagging behind' of the 'Orient' brought upon the 'West', a major burden to civilize the former. However, in this entire project of imperialism, production of knowledge about the orient was a necessary part of the whole. This knowledge helped to shape the polarities between the orient and the occident.[51] However, Aijaz Ahmad, labelled some serious charges against *Orientalism* by citing the confusion between anti-imperialism and anti-Westernism in Said's thoughts. Furthermore, he traced in Said's claims "[t]he accompanying refusal to allow any kind of periodization in the course of historical inquiry, and the will to lump all forms of European thought into the single discourse of 'Orientalism'" (Ahmad 1991, p. 138-139). Ahmad reiterates that this assumed seamlessness of European thoughts lends the 'Orientalist discourse' "[a] cage-like quality, very much in the Foucauldian manner, from which none may escape" (Ahmad 1991, p. 139). Occupying theoretical positions which are mutually contradictory, emphasizing on the canonical texts and subscribing to a very traditional and canonical conception of literature, sweeping and generalized content, and affiliation with Foucault are some of the major points Ahmad highlighted for criticism[52] (Ahmad 1992). In spite of the criticisms labelled against him,

[51] See Lewis, "[F]or Said, therefore, representations of the Orient produced by Orientalism are never simple reflections of a true anterior reality, but composite images which came to define the nature of the Orient and the Oriental as irredeemably different and always inferior to the West" (Lewis 1996, p. 16).

[52] Ahmad traces the source of prestige of Orientalism lies in its "[e]xplicit invocation of Foucault, its declaration that the object of this study, namely, orientalism, was a discourse, and its insistence that this was the constitutive discourse of western civilization as such, both chronologically, in the sense that we find it there already in the oldest European textualities, and also civilizationally, since it is by defining the 'orient' as

Said seems to be interestingly relevant and tempting when reading discourses on colonized womanhood penned by European women. Orientalism, then, indeed becomes a discursive construct, seeped in stereotypes and perpetuating a specific kind of knowledge about the 'orient'. The second chapter of this thesis deals with such knowledge production by giving an overview of the popular as well as famous tropes of Indian womanhood produced by the resident European women. The thesis draws from this tradition and highlights the knowledge production whereby the colonized natives produce, generate, and circulate knowledge of the *memsahibs*. However, behind such subversion and the generation of new knowledge through discourse, readers should consider the representation and the politics therein.

Representation in general and colonial representations in particular stands on two major preconditions: first, the authority to represent and second, the discourse, which solidifies a certain pattern of representation. Based on the colonizer-colonized relation, the rulers not only enjoyed the power to represent the oddities and curiousness of the ruled, but they even found it imperative to build an archive[53] of their knowledge of their subjects. Gail Low in the introduction to her book *White Skins/Black Masks* talks about the major shift in discourse in imperial Europe when,

> Europe was beginning the serious task of discoursing on her nonEuropean 'Others' in imaginative and scientific literature. The communal perception of other worlds, shaped and sustained through mechanisms of textual production, turned on cultural difference (invariably racialized and sexualized). Investigations into European folklore, comparative philology, physical anthropology and the origins of civilization produced the disciplinary rubrics of anthropology and ethnography, which focused on cultural and physical diversity. The period also saw the rise of the novel of adventure and the literature of the Empire. Furthermore, the boundaries between different forms of writings—travel narratives, adventure genres and scientific treatises—were more fluid than perhaps we have been accustomed to thinking (Low 1996, p. 2).

The above-mentioned fluidity of genres is also to be seen in the European perspective, especially in British women's literature produced in the colony. What can be primarily

---

the dangerous, inferiorised civilizational other that Europe has defined itself" (Ahmad 1992, p. 103). Furtheron, Ahmad further states that one is left confused as to what exactly is the relationship of Said's thoughts with Foucault. "Said uses Foucaultian terms as descrete elements of an apparatus but refuses to accept the consequences of Foucault's own mapping of history" (Ahmad 1992, p. 100).

[53] We find a mention of this in Stuart Hall, "Said argues that "In a sense orientalism was a library or archive of information commonly […] held. What bound the archive together was a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective. These ideas explained the behavior of Orientals; they supplied orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics" (Said 1985, p. 41-42).

grouped as travel writings also contained ingredients of adventure stories, detailed interpretations of the social and cultural aspects of the colony as well as moralistic advisory literature[54]. It is also interesting to note a simultaneously fine and crude balance of the pleasurable and the un-pleasurable,[55] in colonial discourse. Just as Low mentions in his reading of Said,

> Orientalism may be described as a form of 'radical realism' which seeks to institute Europe in 'flexible positional superiority' over its 'others'. But even while it inhabits the apparatus of power by seeking to control, incorporate, and domesticate 'manifestly different' and novel worlds, Orientalism must invoke, and inscribe the very pleasure and unpleasure contingent on that difference (Low 1996, p. 2).

The cultural differences between two interacting cultures and the politics associated to such interactions are translated into the emotional and rational response of pleasure and unpleasure. However, what we are dealing with here is not carnivalesque or physical pleasure, but the pleasure or displeasure that visual and imaginative action can trigger in the onlooker, for example the myriad feelings of European women on their encounter with the Indian counterparts. On the other side of the spectrum, we see in Krishnabhabini's travelogue the same sense of pleasurable and unpleasurable when she praises the industriousness of English people along with the flirtatiousness, insensitivity and cosmetic addiction of English women.

It is indeed possible to look at the practical and more physical aspects of cross-cultural interaction, which lies at the root of knowledge production and power play discussed earlier. The thesis is preoccupied with one of the primary ways of communication, which is seeing, viewing, or looking at. *Gazing* is the metaphorical term used in the thesis to denote such visual interaction between subjects and their objects. Gazing as a way of visualizing an object is rampant across disciplines and genres.[56] However, translating gaze in the narration-

[54] In that sense, it is worth mentioning Krishnabahbini's *Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā*. In the subsequent discussions, we will see that what is intended as a travelogue is a detailed discussion of the English ways of life with a clear nationalist and feminist inclination almost bordering on a recipe aimed at the cultural, moral and social upliftment of the Bengalis and Hindus.

[55] For example, the white women's preoccupation with the *nautchgirls* and the *purdahnashins* has been based on their perceived simultaneous lack of charm, discordance, illiteracy, and laziness along with their beauty, exoticism, and inherent femininity.

[56] It is interesting to note that sight or vision, since ages has received more importance than other human senses. Cf., Urry (2002) "[I]n the history of Western societies, sight has long been regarded as the noblest of the senses. It was viewed as the most discriminating and reliable of the sensual mediators between humans and their physical environment (Jay 1986, p. 178). […][T]his ocularcentrism has been particularly marked within French social thought. However, in the 20th century, French thought has come to be fixated on the dark side of the primacy of sight. Foucault particularly demonstrates this concentration on the negative effects of such a primacy. He never endorsed the possibility of a transparent, fully visible and meaningful reality (Jay 1896, p. 180).

-interpreting a purely physical act in the pages of a book has its own challenges. For the sake of simplicity, a subject/spectator's looking at an object and defining or interpreting it in the narrative is viewed akin to offering the subject/spectator's *perspective* of the object. Hence, by gazing, the thesis actually takes into account the translation of the physical act of *looking at* into *point of views* and *perspective* of the narrator and her interpretations of the object. I delve deeper into the subject after reviewing the origin and deeper implications of gazing.

1.8 Gaze in discourse

The distinction between the subject and the object and visual gazing has arguably been one of the ways of exercising subtle forms of power over the object being looked at. Hence, power is inherent in the act itself.[57] Although the study explores the diversity of gaze, the inherent powerplays and its manifestation, yet, it stays away from the Foucaldian legacy of connecting gaze with institutionalized surveillance, at least in its narrow aspect. The individual authors, dealt with here are seen as independent actors, who, in some ways although reflect their societal norms and cultural backgrounds through their gaze, yet, does not subscribe to, nor represent an established institutionalized system of control and surveillance. Harriette Brittan's missionary narrative might be a deviation to the above claim, given the fact that missionary narratives formed a major part and served the purposes of the imperial institution; but the fact that the text was not popular as an individual tract or treatise also brings it down to literary anonymity and solitude. However, in the wider scope, if the society itself is considered as an institution, grooming the gaze of individuals, then the authors do manifest a heteroglossic visual narrative. Gazing, as a way of controlling the object has been amply used in creative literary texts, where traditionally, the act of direct gazing has been defined as masculine, while the object on which the gaze acts is deemed as feminine. Moreover, the wandering eyes signified frivolity and overly active sexuality.[58] Masculine supremacy exists in the field of the visual power relation between the sexes as

[57]Foucault attached great importance to the eye and the power of the eye. See for example *The Birth of the Clinic* (1976) and in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). In *Discipline and Punish* (1979) he talks about the panopticon which housed the power of the gaze in the form of a prison guard who looks at the prisoners without the prisoners being aware of the surveillance gaze or being able to look back. The thesis does not stretch the idea of gazing to surveillance, but confined to the production of knowledge.

[58] Cf., Daryl Ogden, "[T]o possess empowered eyes has traditionally meant to occupy a male subject position, to engender oneself as masculine. Masculine visual power is the defining feature of "My Last Duchess": in putting the portrait of his dead duchess on view to another man –indeed, to any man whom he deems worthy— the duke sadistically controls the viewing of her image, circulating it within an exclusively patriarchal scopic economy […] [W]hen one taken even a cursory look at the gendered representations and discourses of vision that have dominated western culture at least from the early modern period forward, the Duke's representation might be regarded as only an exaggerated version of the pervasive visual power relations between women and men, with men dominating the field" (Ogden 2005, p. 1).

the cultural critic John Berger argued in his book *Ways of Seeing* (1972). This book also televised as a long running BBC series deals with the subject of masculine and feminine vision and gazing. Daryl Ogden, while trying to find answers to the question why male and female has an asymmetrical power relation when it comes to gazing, though their field of vision is the same, remarks:

> As a partial answer to this question, art historian and cultural critic John Berger, drawing from a decidedly patriarchal history of European oil painting, photography, and advertising, argues that there exists a sharply defined gender dichotomy within the field of heterosexual vision: the "masculine" direct visions of men and the "feminine" peripheral perceptions of women. The division of vision into these gendered realms leads Berger to conclude, "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (Ogden 2005, p. 2).

Berger mainly draws his examples from western media, art, etc., where exclusions and seclusions in the form of *purdah* [pardā], *antahpur* [antaḥpur] or *zenan*a [jenānā] were not known or seclusions if any were not as stringent as in the orient[59]. In Bengali literature at least, one comes across such descriptions of certain middle or upper-middle class women while traveling in a closed *palki* [pāl·ki], would definitely part the curtains slightly and drink all the sights and sounds with utmost curiosity and awe. In Rabindranath Tagore's short story *Śāsti* (*The Punishment*), Radha, the lively and playful wife would part her *ghomta* [ghom'ṭā] or head-veil and look at anything and everything on her way to fetch water from the village pond. This practice of stealth in gazing is not uncommon since staring is not considered among good manners in women and if one has to look, it has to be done overtly. What is notable here is the power-play within the very act of gazing, which gives this entire discourse of colonizers looking at the colonized or the other way round, an entirely new dimension. In their own society, European women, presumably played the role of passive receptors of the male gaze[60], which changed after they came to the colonies in view of their social, cultural, and political hierarchy with the native women.

[59] One is reminded, in this context, of the famous Basantak cartoon, which came out in Amritabazar Patrika, called *A Peep Show* (1875). Partha Mitter describes the context of the cartoon as: "[T]he movement for improving Hindu Women's condition gathered force in the nineteenth century. *Sati* was abolished, but there remained other disabilities, such as a low level of education and infant marriage. The first women in Bengal to be emancipated, and many of them were Brahmos, became the butt of the cartoonists's pen, such as *Basantak*. One cartoon that shows a well-dressed woman inside a peep-show box, has this explanation: 'Come along and view at last a Hindu woman whose veil has been lifted.' Two sahibs gaze at her, one of them reaching inside his pocket for money. The implication is clear: a woman who can show her face to a stranger without shame can also sell her body" (Mitter 1994, p. 169-170).

[60] For a detailed study on the subject see Daryl Ogden (2005, p. 117-169).

1.9 Translating gaze into voice

The thesis keeps the focalizing agent in the centre, Bengali women in this case, given her subject position in the analyzed narratives. To start with, the focalizing agent

> […] is a human or human-like story world participant who concentrates or focuses selectively on a portion of the available sensory information. At its core is a mind or a recording device with its capabilities, faculties, structures, and constraints. These would include embodiment, situatedness or space-time position (=vantage point), architecture (=mechanisms, categories, routines) and, for human minds, also norms, values and epistemic attitudes" (Margolin 2009, p. 43).

The major points to glean from this substantial definition of the focalized agent is, her participation in the story world, her selective focus, her sensory perception, which in turn is not without its constraints. In the course of the following chapters, we shall see the recussing occurrence of the topics of perception and its inherent constrains in the works of the authors. Gerard Genette's idea of narrative focalization forms the theoretical spine of the research, however with certain modifications. Genette's idea of focalization, however useful in introducing a distinction between one who speaks and one who perceives, is at times deemed as obscure and reductionist (Meister, Schönert 2009, p. 14-16). For all intents and purposes of this study, I have used the tripartite and interconnected structure of a narrative system based on perception, reflection, and mediation. Originating in the basic premise of the author as mediator, narration is seen as brokered information. This hypothesis is a constituent element of the Dynamic Narrative System, which is explained as:

> "[T]he DNS comprises of both voice and perspective (or narration and point of view), modeled as the integrated result of mental activities across the three (interconnected) dimensions of "perception", "reflection" and "mediation". These dimensions differ as to the specific type of mental activity and the constraints exercised by that activity, whether determined, respectively, by epistemological or sensory input: temporal and spatial proximity to the object domain (perception); mental reaction to the input, i.e. the cognitive, emotive, and evaluative relation to the object domain (reflection); medial materialization of the output, i.e. the semiotic relation to the object domain (mediation)" (Hühn 2009, p. 2).

Furthermore, Uri Margolin describes the five component elements of focalization, which is inherent in an adequate description of focalization. These are,

> (1) the story-world state or event focalized; (2) the focalizing agent and its make-up; (3) the activity of perceiving and processing this object-focalization as nomen actionis; (4) the product of this activity, that is, the resultant take or vision, and (5) the textualization of all the above, which is the only thing directly accessible to the reader and not requiring his imaginative reconstruction." (Margolin 2009, p. 42).

Experiencing an event or a state, starts, almost exclusively through visualization. Visualizing precedes perceptions. Mieke Bal's definition of focalization reinstates the strong visual connection, which is inherent in the concept of focalization. She writes, "[W]henever events are presented, they are always presented from within a certain 'vision.' A point of view is chosen, a certain way of seeing things, a certain angle. […] [Focalization is] the relation between the vision and that which is 'seen', perceived" (Bal 1985, p. 100). Thus, point of view, perception, focalization relies heavily on visuals and as a consequence, visual metaphors form a major part of theorizing these aspects in narratives. Beth Newman in her article talks about how "visual metaphors have so thoroughly pervaded our theoretical vocabulary […] [T]hat they have come to seem natural and inevitable" (Newman 1990, p. 1029) and this is not just for the novel, but also stands true for other forms of literary narratives as well.[61] Hence, Genette, prescribes one of the necessary techniques to determine the workings of a narrative situation and determining the relation between the author and the audience. Newman further claims, "Genette's important reformulation of the Anglo-American concept "point of view," for example, turns on the distinction between a narrator who "speaks" and a "focalizer" who "sees."[62] Such terms implicitly invoke a gaze: a look at the subject(s) whose perceptions organize the story direct at the characters and acts represented" (Newman 1990, p. 1029).

While focalization and vision (which is termed as gaze earlier) constitute perspective, voicing the same in narratives comes with authorial and narratorial mediation. This is the fifth component of Margolin's focalization, namely the textualization of the writer's perspective and voice. While Genette makes a binary division between who sees (focalizer) and who speaks (narrator), and thereby, vision and voice, it is seen more often than not, that voice and vision somethimes can combine inseparably to signify different narrative situations. This idea was first brought into light by Franz Stanzel (1979).

> [t]he Stanzelian model suggests that the voice and vision aspects of narratorial mediation cluster together in different ways to comprise the different narrative situations. Furthermore, for Stanzel, these aspects are matters of degree rather than binarized features. As the gradable contrast between the authorial and figural narrative situations suggests, the agent responsible for the narration can in some instances, and to a greater or lesser degree, fuse with the agent responsible for

[61] Genres of writing from travelogues to fiction take resort to 'seeing' and 'visualizing' the subjects and objects of narration which traces the inseparability of visual and narrative aspects of literature.
[62] Genette also distinguishes between *internal focalization* and *external focalization*. In *internal focalization*, "the narrative is focused *through* the consciousness of a character, whereas *external focalization* is something altogether different: the narrative is focused on a character, not through him" (Culler foreward to Genette, 1980, p. 10-11).

> perceptions—yeilding not an absolute gap but a variable, manipulable distance between the roles of teller and reflector, vocalizer and visualizer. (Herman 2009, p. 126).

The degree of fusion of voice and vision can manipulate the roles of the narrator and the visualizer. An example of such fusion is Brittan's *Kardoo the Hindu Girl* and Toru's *Le Journal* and *Bianca*. In all these three texts the distinction and often blurring between the narrator/author and the protagonists or the focalizer gives an interesting and complex dimension to the formation of the perspective or the point of view. Especially in Brittan's text, the shuttling back and forth between the focalizer and the narrator is instrumental in imposing and extrapolating inflated views of a missionary about Hindu religious, social, and cultural life on the life of a Hindu girl.

1.10 Perception across cultures

Gaze and perspective invariably change across cultures and at the same time they can be used as tools of representation by the dominant culture. Literary texts are used both to situate and counter different ways of gazing, perceiving, and finally producing knowledge about the different cultures and its inherent strategies, customs, and practices. While the next chapter on the state of the art of nineteenth century colonial writings gives a broad overview of such perception and the voicing of the Bengali/Indian culture in the narratives penned by British/European women, the rest of the thesis gives a counter-perspective of the cultural 'other' namely the Bengali women. "One look at the colonial period in Indian history undoubtedly reveals that literature was *involved* in creating authoritative images of the 'other' culture, images consumed by British and Indian readership alike" (2013, p. 1) comment Ellen Dengel-Janic and Christoph Reinfandt. However, the creation and consumption of the 'images of the other culture' also happened on the other side of the divide. That they were not authoritative and dominant is due to the writers' own doubly marginalized position in the society by dint of being colonized women. However, that they were able to voice their perception itself speaks of some power. In this entire 'redesigning of power' process, transculturality plays a major yet unconventional role. Each of the narrative uses the trope of transculturality in its own unique way. In Krishnabhabini Das' *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā*, the author encounters the 'other' dominant culture, which leaves her with some impressions later serving as a recipe of a better society. Thus, through this encounter, she tries to appropriate the 'better' and 'superior' aspects of the other culture and encourage her countrymen to do so as well. Thus, one culture goes through a process of translation via the author. The author juxtaposes her own cultural sensibilities with that of

the ‘other’ culture to derive a superior hybrid culture out of the selected mixture of the two. However, as we come to know from the travelogue, she herself was acculturated in terms of her dress and probably other issues, which come in the process of living in a country for eight years. In *Kardoo the Hindu Girl*, the narrator Brittan in a way of representing the Hindu culture, tries to bring out the so-called base and even barbaric elements of it. Quite unconsciously perhaps, in a few places, she takes western culture as a parameter and comes up with a vehement critique of the Hindu culture. No amalgamation occurs here, but both the cultures are kept separate and different intentionally by stressing the hierarchy.

Toru Dutt [toru dutta] in her fantasy fictions however, stays away from comparative analysis of cultures. She does that personally in her letters to Ms. Martin. Her fictions are evident of her fascination and perhaps mental acculturation of the European culture. Toru’s views are mainly romantic and fictitious. But in her narratives, we see a complete sweep over of one culture by another. It is notable to mention that she had called Indians ‘natives’ in one of her letters to Ms. Martin only to be reproved by her and sought an apology. Toru, in the later part of her short life, did discover the literary gems of her own culture and was much fascinated and engrossed in them. However, in her novels we rarely come across an amalgamation.

Lastly, in the periodicals there are instances of looking up to the superior colonial culture by the Bengali women to inspire themselves to philanthropy. The periodicals contained ample columns, which made a comparison between the seemingly superior and inferior culture of the colonizer and colonized respectively. But at the same time, imitation of the other culture was very much encouraged for the betterment of society. Learning from the colonizers was a major theme of these narratives. Also, the imitable noble aspects of perseverance, strength, kindness, and humility of European feminine character were attributed to the superior culture of Europe.

Clearly, cross-cultural exchange is the essential ingredient of these narratives through which the ‘other’ is represented. They are more about the ‘encounters’ of the cultures and the literary manifestation of the interaction that comes out of them. Toru’s fantasy fictional narratives represent and share as much the colonial culture as does Krishnabhabini’s cultural recipe of greatness. Meaningful interpretations of these narratives shed as much light on the colonizer’s culture as the culture of the colonized.

To conclude, the narratives in the course of the following chapters, provide us with a set of images of the European women. These images owe as much to the objectivity of the temporal setting, as to the author's own mind. The authors, through their texts, act as mediators of incidents and characters and eventually engage readers in their act of representation.

2. State of the art

A dissertation on nineteenth century Bengali women and their writings invariably calls for a literature review to act as a basis and a point of departure for such a study. Quite a voluminous amount of scholarly work has been and still is produced on colonial Bengal involving women and their writings. Nineteenth-century Bengal, not only staged the capital of colonial British administration, but was also a hotbed of social, cultural and political changes; this is discussed in the introductory chapter and will be further explained in specific contexts in later chapters. This constant social and political flux, its relevance and relation to the colonial regime attracted and still attracts much scholarly attention.

Besides providing an overview of major trends in scholarly discussions of Bengali women's writings in the nineteenth century, this chapter introduces the other side of the *gaze*: European women looking at Indian women and how their gaze shaped the existing discourse through construction of major tropes. Since the imperial women's gaze on Indian/Bengali women has received major focus only in the last decades, it is fitting to deal with the prominent themes in this chapter, thereby preparing the readers for the overall scenario of the colonial gaze and focus on the point of departure in the subsequent sections of this thesis.

As highlighted in chapter 1, I focus on colonial literature from the mid - eighteenth to the first decade of the nineteenth century. Hence, I begin with a comprehensive analysis of European women's writings during the same period for the sake of temporal parity. The discussion will provide a general, however, not a generalized idea of the major trends in English/European women's writings on Bengali/Indian women and how those writings have been critically evaluated by the scholars.

> The dominant images of British women in India are either *memsahibs* [memsāhib], the wives of British officials and businesswomen, or missionaries, either single women or the wives of male missionaries. They have often been characterized as arrogant exponents of British culture or Christianity as practiced in a western context and individuals with almost no interest in India, its culture or its people (Ramusack 1990, p. 309).

Thus writes Barbara Ramusack (1990) in her article, which actually highlights the three main roles of European women in India as a colony: as cultural and religious missionaries, maternal imperialists and feminist allies. In order to understand the logic behind these diverse set of motivations that shaped British women's interest in India and Indian women, some background information on the social history of Victorian England is required.

Nineteenth-century England was a society riddled with inequalities. These inequalities, Joan Perkin (1989) comments, can be traced to the introduction of the feudal societal structure after the Norman Conquest.[63] All along the eighteenth century, women were subjected to strict social customs and legislative controls relegating them to be dependent on their fathers before marriage and their husbands afterwards. *Commentaries on the laws of England* (1765-69) refers to the oft quoted and documented legal luminaries of the day Sir William Blackstone, where the status of women is described as—"[B]y marriage […] the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being, or legal existence of a woman is suspended during marriage, or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband, under whose wing, protection and cover she performs everything"[64] (cited in Perkin 1989, p. 1-2). However, from this status of *persona non grata*, women began to emerge with a consciousness about their rights and sense of emancipation during the Victorian period. Mary Wollstonecraft's seminal treatise on women's rights and freedom heralded a new age.[65] It was during this time that the law came to "recognize (*but not always to guarantee*) equality of women with men in matters of divorce, family property, equivalent work and equal pay" (Perkin 1989, p. 2-3), though embracing the change in thought and spreading the new sense of commanding equality was quite slow and confined mainly to a small group of British women. Marriage as the goal in women's life was still held as ideal and success of a woman's life was often measured by what kind of suitors one could draw towards herself. There is mention of the idea of courtship, and British especially English women's cosmetic obsession and coquettishness in courtship in Krishnabhabini Das' *Englandey Bangamahila*.[66] Thus, while the majority of British women still found marriage as some sort of freedom from parental supervision and entry into a new life irrespective of

[63] See Perkin, "[T]he subjection of women was enshrined in English law and custom for nine hundred years. Common Law reflected rather than caused that subjection, which was based on the physical and political reality that, after the Norman Conquest even more than before, men controlled the resources of society. Things had not always been so starkly inequitable. In Anglo-Saxon England women had rights to property, to a share in control of domestic affairs and of children, and even in the last resort to divorce or legal separation, departing with the children and half the marital goods. It was the full imposition of feudalism by the Normans, based on military service by male barons and knights, which destroyed the legal rights of women" (Perkin 1989, p. 1).

[64] It is to be noted here that marital property and its distribution and related issues were mainly confined to the propertied classes. Women from the majority of poor, working classes without savings were dependent on daily allowances and wages and marriage for them carried no special financial upgrading.

[65] Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, written in 1792, is the first of its kind treatise on feminist philosophy. The author stood up for female education and equal rights at a time when women were urged to be beautiful, attractive, innocent, and submissive. She also challenged the image of women as portrayed by male writers and philosophers.

[66] This is dealt with in details in the next chapter on Krishnabhabini's travelogue. Perkin remarks, "[…] emancipation was a central concern for only a small minority of women. The great majority of wives not only accepted but embraced their lot. Marriage was the life plan of most women, and the single state a fate to be avoided like the plague" (Perkin 1989, p. 3).

the other forms of control and dependence it elicited, a minor schism was becoming increasingly aware of their rights, which manifested in the campaign towards suffrage.[67] Discussions were heard about the "women question", their position and role in the British society. Antoinette Burton shows in her book (1994) that the "women question" received a boost because of the imperial enterprise of Britain. Prominent figures like Florence Nightingale bolstered the idea of contribution of women[68] to the nation through her overseas enterprise. Imperialism to some extent supported and validated women's demand of their rights and greater participation, co-opting the imperial agenda to further the movement.[69]

Perhaps because of its association with the imperial agenda, British feminist movement was not isolated and confined to British women alone. In fact, feminists shared the imperial mission of civilizing the colonies by citing examples and voicing concerns about the poor, hopeless, and unrepresented sisterhood in the colonies. This not only instilled fresh energy into the British Feminist movement, but it was in sync with the motive of validating colonization. Hence, though a majority of British women in England was satisfied and accustomed with the marital bliss or lack of it, it did not dampen the feminist movement, as the target of emancipation lay not at home but in the colonies. Burton quotes Sarah Amos in her book to validate the point: "[W]e are struggling not just for English women alone, but for all the women, degraded, miserable, unheard of, for whose life and happiness England has daily to answer to God[70]" (Burton 1994, p. 3). Thus, the movement was characterized by a universality which not only tended to undermine the separate and differential needs and character of the Indian women's struggle, but also subjected them to the British feminist benevolence and generosity. However, this universality of benevolence engendered the

[67] Women's suffrage movement.

[68] Cf., Burton, "[A]lthough she never called herself a feminist, after the Crimean War Florence Nightingale nonetheless became a symbol in the public mind of what one female's emancipation could do for Britain's imperial interest, and feminists claimed her as one of their own until World War I and beyond" (Burton 1994, p. 3). The figure of Nightingale also served as a role model to Bengali women as is discussed in the chapter on journal articles.

[69] Cf., Burton, "[T]he "scramble" for Africa and the ongoing struggle for women's rights occurred virtually at the same time. Significantly, British Feminists noted the coincidence and exploited it in order to advance arguments for what many believed to be the most fundamental right of all: Women's suffrage" (Burton 1994, p. 3).

[70] The perceived lack of freedom of Indian women is something one can contest about. E.g., Mary Frances Billington in her writings assured: "[A]nd if I can only convince some of those who vote away blithely, in a confidence profound as their ignorance, upon matters which are grave as issues of life and death to our Eastern fellow-subjects of the Crown, that Indian women are not altogether in such pitiful plight as some of their so-called friends come and tell us, my inquiries will not have been made in vain (Billington 1895 cited in Ghose 1998, p. 173).

need to recognize Indian women as a part of the imperial citizenship as well with its inherent agenda:

> Arguments for recognition as imperial citizens were predicated on the imagery of Indian women, whom British feminist writers depicted as helpless victims awaiting the representation of their plight and the redress of their condition at the hands of their sisters in the metropole. Oriental womanhood as a trope for sexual difference, primitive society, and colonial backwardness was certainly not limited to British feminist writing. British official concern about the practice of suttee had been part of colonial discourse practically since the Battle of Plassey (1757); rhetoric about Indian women's condition, which was equated with helplessness and backwardness, was no less crucial to notions of British cultural superiority and to rationales for the British imperial presence in India than the alleged effeminacy of the stereotypical "oriental" male. Indeed, in order to justify their own participation in the imperial nation-state, late-Victorian feminists drew on some of the same arguments about Indian family life and domestic practices that had been deployed by British men in the 1830s and 1840s in order to legitimate control over Indian men (Burton 1994, p. 7).

The above quote clearly and succinctly explains how Indian womanhood served a specific agenda of the colonial enterprise. However, with the theoretical justification, India also proved to be a destination for both feminists and non-feminists alike, all of whom were coming in search of husbands. Christian missionaries, resident wives, travelers, feminists comprised the mainstream visitors to the subcontinent. Particularly after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, seen by many scholars as the first war of independence, British administration encouraged a greater influx of British women in the colony to curb and control British/European soldiers' mixing and interaction with native women. These groups were derisively called "fishing fleets."[71] Additionally, some writers also claim that the increasing number of unmarried women in Britain became a cause of concern who were encouraged and sent to travel through the colonies to find husbands for themselves.[72] After landing in

[71] Cf., MacMillan "[I]n the seventeenth and eighteenth century women were sent by the shipload in what was called "fishing fleets", to search for husbands in India. Such arrangements were made by the East Indian Company for whom these men worked. Margaret Macmillan writes: "[T]he cargo, divided into 'gentlewomen' and 'others', were given one set of clothes each and were supported for a year-quite long enough, it was thought, for them to find themselves husbands", […] [T]he journey took as long as six months. The invention of steam power and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 helped shorten the trip to about four weeks. This, as well as the establishment of large administrative and military institutions that accompanied all colonial governments, increased the number of English women who traveled to India in the capacity of wife, sister, fiancée, daughter, and missionary. Yet, throughout the British rule in India, European men outnumbered European women three to one" (MacMillan 1988 cited in Geroge 1991, p. 214-215). Also, see Barr (1976) & Fowler (1987).

[72] W.R Greg in 1862 lamented, "[T]here is an enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation […] a number which, positively and relatively, is indicative of an unwholesome social state, and which is both productive and prognostic of much wretchedness and wrong" (Greg 1869, p. 2). The issue of redundant women in Victorian England is dealt with by many scholars for example (Sen 2002, p. 4).

the colonies the British women invested their *strength and leisure* [73] in seeing, learning, and analyzing different aspects of native women. The next section offers a rough overview of the discourses, which developed as an outcome of British women's interaction with the colonized womanhood, as well as the scholarly studies these discourses have prompted in the recent past.

The discourse on Bengali/Indian women, generated by resident British and to some extent other European women revolves mainly around a few major tropes based on their visibility to the European women's eyes: the *zenana* [jenānā] and the *antahpur* [antaḥpur][74] including their inmates the *purdanashin* [par·dānaśīn],[75] the dancers and entertainers called the *nautch* [nāc'] *girl* (dancing girl), and another subsection of the *antahpur*-inmates namely the *sati.*[76] While the *nautchgirls* and *purdahnashins* showcased the two extremes of the realm of Indian womanhood—one of hypervisibility and the other of invisibility, the category of *sati* seemed to expose and define the 'barbaric' side of the colony and the subsequent wretchedness of native womanhood thereby justifying cultural, political and religious subjugation of the colony.[77]

Shirley Foster (2004) in the context of Turkish *harems* in her article mentions that "[T]he central signifier in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Orientalist discourse was the *harem* or *zenana*. The harem was perceived as a site of sexual transgression, forbidden territory, a segregated space barred to men and charged with erotic significance, about which 'knowledge' could be only voyeuristically obtained and imaginatively reproduced" (Foster 2004, p. 7). This mirrored the Indian secluded quarters as well, although European women's description of the secluded state provided some insider's view. Indrani Sen (2002) sums up as follows the major trends in the *memsahib'*s description of the *zenana*:

---

[73] "Have you leisure? Have you strength? [...] If so […] there is a career open […]" called Josephine Butler championing the cause of Indian womanhood (cited in Burton 1994, p. 8).
[74] Both *Zenana* and *Antahpur* refer to the segregated female quarters in India.
[75] *Purdahnashin* literally means one who keeps the *purdah* or the veil. The performance of *nautch* or dance was one of the major sources of entertainment in the parties hosted by the *babus* and other resourceful natives where European officials and ladies were invited. The descriptions range from description and analysis of the *nautch* to their possible far-reaching effect of young European. The discussion on *purdahnashins was mainly accompanied with description of lives in zenanas and harems.*
[76] *Satī* literally means the virtuous one. In the eighteenth century *sati* or the Hindu wife became the site of much legal, social and political contention. This is discussed in detail in the subsequent section. Besides these major tropes, there have been other interests and curiosities of imperial women as well, native servants, weather of the subcontinent, *babus*, *bibis* etc. However, these three can be said to have been the major preoccupation in their writings.
[77] The debate of *suttee* is dealt with in details in the chapter on *Kardoo the Hindu girl.*

> A variety of constructs of the zenana are available for that period. For instance, one strand in white women's discursive writings of the late 19th century de-sexualized the harem and domesticated it as an image of the middle-class home. Thus, Mary Frances Billington, the journalist-author of Women of India (1895) sought to demystify its lurid aura and called it 'a rather dull place, if anything' (Billington 1973: XII). However, while one missionary opinion located it as an oppressive world under the tyranny of the mother-in-law (Weitbrecht 1875: 43), in contrast Billington (1973: XIII) observed that 'Indian women are not altogether in such a pitiful plight as some of their so-called friends come and tell us'. Most notably, Maud Diver valorized the community behind the purdah ruled by the Big Mother or grandmother. She argued that life behind the purdah was in fact less lonely than that of a single English working woman's and that well-meaning English workers in the zenana had not understood the complexities of the situation (Diver 1909: 165-68). Diver constructed purdah as a female domain with plenty of human communication, generating thereby a dominant myth of a privileged and pristine female space, which even today continues to have wide currency (Sen 2002, p. 55).

It is worth remembering that encounters with *purdahnashins* in *antahpurs* and harems were exclusive rights of the *memsahibs* since European men were barred from such encounters.[78] It is misleading however to sweepingly assume that these encounters and the discourse they produced were not affected by the individual cultural, political, and imperial background of the visitors. The respective backgrounds of the visitors both unified and diversified the discourse on native women based on their perceptions of the 'other'. An example of this phenomenon is provide in *Memsahibs Abroad* (1998), which is a collection of narratives written by European women on different aspects of the Indian society. Ghose, the editor of the collection, dedicates an entire chapter on European women's perception of Indian women titled "Encounters with Native women". Diversity was the ruling theme in these encounters discourse where the encounters and their circumstances were as varied as their authors themselves. While a distinction is made between a Hindu and a Muslim *zenana*, many European especially British women did confess that the situation was not markedly different from that at home,[79] except for the perceived exotic grandeur, the scandalous existence in isolation (*zenana* or *antahpur*) and the lack of freedom.

[78] Here, it is worth noticing an interesting asymmetry and duality: While the European women could write about and exoticize native women based on their exclusivity and visibility, the Bengali women could write about the European women only when they ceased to be invisible and exclusive.

[79] Fanny Parks wrote, "[T]he laws of England relative to married women, and the state of slavery to which those laws degrade them, render the lives of some few in the higher, and of thousands in the lower ranks of life, one perpetual sati, or burning of the heart, from which they have no refuge but the grave, or the cap of liberty,--i.e. the widow's, and either is a sad consolation" (Parks 1850, p. 420). Mary Frances Billington makes a comparative analysis of the working condition and labour situation in the colony and the metropole and arrives at the conclusion that, "[A]ll qualifications as to differing standards of comfort and domestic surroundings are ignored, but when these are taken into consideration, and the situation of labour studied dispassionately, I am very far from being prepared to admit that the average Indian woman has any cause to envy her European sister" (Billington 1894, p. 171).

In reviewing the major strains of the discourse revolving around Indian women, Indira Ghose and Indrani Sen offer interesting insights into the contribution of European women towards the formation of perspective on native women; Ghose talks about a "keen demand for eyewitness accounts in the domestic market" (Ghose 1998, p. 142) for the first hand reports and experiences of European women in *antahpur* and *zenana* with their inmates. Accordingly, there were little chances that any essential and valuable communication could take place between the inmates and the visitors,[80] each account offering their own perspective of the condition of Indian women. Indrani Sen remarks that "one of the most striking features of the Anglo-Indian[81] discourse on Indian women was its preoccupation with *purdah*, which was in fact the great divide, the impenetrable barrier, subject to numerous fantasies, curiosity and myth-making, separating as it did the 'native' women from imperial rulers" (Sen 2001, p. 6).

Anne Catherine Elwood, Marianne Postans, Fanny Parks, Emily Eden, Mary Carpenter, Mary Martha Sherwood, Emma Roberts, Marcus Fuller, Elizabeth Cooper, Julia Maitland were some of the notable European women whose writings on *zenana*, *nautchgirls* and *purdahnashins* have prompted studies and analysis. While some of them favorably reviewed the cordial atmosphere within the secluded quarters and their inmates, many of them expressed the contrary. The likes of Anne Katherine Elwood and Emily Eden found *nautch* (the anglicized form of *nach* [nāc'] or dance) as a form of entertainment quite graceful and appealing albeit the acts of dancers somewhat 'coquettish', yet the "most fastidious prude might witness, without running a risk of any offence to her [*nautch* dancer] modesty."[82] Elwood even expressed her desire to import the *nautchgirls* to the English stage. Eden talks about the performance as "[T]he whole thing was like a dream, it was so curious and unnatural" (Eden 1867, p. 28). Elizabeth Cooper found that the *nautchgirls* were enjoying the "only real freedom"[83] granted to Indian women. She finds them a necessary part of ceremonies like weddings and feasts and addressed with honor: "[T]he dancing is extremely modest, as the dancer is fully clothed, and it is the graceful, languorous poses of her slim body, the waving of her arms heavily laden with bracelets, and the slow moving, gliding

[80] See Ghose, "[R]eal communication or reciprocity rarely took place: both parties were far too firmly rooted in their own beliefs. In fact, encounters with Indian women were often used as an opportunity to confirm one's own ideology" (Ghose 1998, p. 142).
[81] It is not just a part of the Anglo-Indian discourse but also the European discourse.
[82] See Elwood (1830) & Eden (1866).
[83] See Cooper "[T]he latter are taught to read and write, to play musical instruments, and to make themselves attractive and charming to men, they come and go freely, mingling with both men and women" (Cooper 1915, p. 98).

steps that keep time to the tinkle of the anklets, that charm her admirers"[84] (1915, p. 98). Cooper's description of the *nautchgirl* rings in unison with the description of the royal lady in *zenana* described by Elwood:

> She received us most courteously, and with much grace as an English princess […]. She was a pretty woman, with soft languishing eyes, very white teeth, and an agreeable and expressive countenance. Her costume was a handsome saree, much worked with gold, and her arms, ankles, and throat were loaded with gorgeous bangles and necklaces of pure gold; a number of handsome pearls were in her hair, and massy rings in her nose and ears, but her ornaments were rather heavy than elegant, and more valuable than brilliant (Elwood 1830 cited in Ghose 1998, p. 144).

It is interesting to note that European women were more inquisitive and attracted towards the physical features of the Indian women. Almost all these descriptions *contain* a vivid portrayal of the 'other' bodies. Amelia Cary Falkland, for example, in her description of Hindu *zenana* women notes,

> This time I could see the ladies, although the tent was dark. One [woman] was more ugly than another; they had small, black, lifeless eyes, flattish noses, large mouths, teeth discolored by chewing paun, and on their foreheads a red sectarian circular spot […]" (Falkland 1857 cited in Ghose 1998, p. 148).

Fanny Parks however considered it her dream come true to witness "native ladies of the East" in their somewhat natural habitat: "[W]as not this delightful? All my dreams […] were to be turned into reality. I was to have an opportunity of viewing life in the *zenana*, of seeing the native ladies of the East, women of high rank, in the seclusion of their own apartments, in private life" (Parks 1850, p. I 378). Later, the author remarks,

> How beautiful she looked! How very beautiful! Her animated countenance was constantly varying, and her dark eyes struck fire when a joyous thought crossed her mind […] Mulka walks very gracefully, and is as straight as an arrow. In Europe, how rarely—how very rarely does a woman walk gracefully! Bound up in stays, the body is as stiff as a lobster in its shell; that snake-like undulating movement—the poetry of motion—is lost, destroyed by the stiffness of the waist and hip […]. Her eyes, which are very long, large, and dark, are remarkably fine […]. Her forehead is very fine; her nose delicate, and remarkably beautiful,--so finely chiseled; her mouth appeared less beautiful, lips being rather thin […]. Her figure is tall and commanding; her hair jet black, very long and straight; her hands and arms are lovely, very lovely (Parks 1850, p. I 383-384).

Even though the inmates were so overwhelmingly beautiful to Parks, she found the *zenana* as a place was "full of intrigue, scandal and chit-chat". In Park's description, the cultural

[84] In Cooper's book (1915), she includes Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, and Indian woman under one 'oriental' umbrella—thereby generalizing the 'exotic.'

gap and the resultant impression are quite apparent. We hear her representation of the confusion on the part of the natives:

> The old Begum said to Colonel Gardner, 'they are curious creatures, these English ladies; I cannot understand them or their ways--their ways are so odd!' And yet the Begum must have seen so many European ladies, I wonder she had not become more reconciled to our *odd ways*" (cited in Ghose 1998, p. 162).

Marianne Postans' description echoes a similar sentiment: "[t]he Beebees had not, on any previous occasion, met a European lady, and they perplexed me with questions upon our manners and habits of passing time" (cited in Ghose, 1998, p. 151). Postans' reception of *nautch* was also 'doubtful'. She writes, "[…] [t]he *natch* woman of India, on her flat foot, with her doubtfully poetic gestures, and hand upraised, in style so essaying, rather as a fishwife than a Houri, to render to every ear the glowing anacreons of the immortal Hafiz" (Postans 93, p. 1857).

Extreme reactions of the *nautch* performance are also found in the writings of the European women. Mary Martha Sherwood, Emma Roberts, Marcus Fuller and Julia Maitland found the popular form of entertainment quite 'barbaric' and 'inharmonious.'[85] The music is said to be "a mixture of a twang and whine, and quite monotonous, without even a pretence to a tune"[86] and capable of inducing the listener to sleep. However, European ladies also

[85] It can be claimed that the general conservative attitude of these women towards the form of entertainment emanates from either their position as missionaries and reformers or a general feeling of antipathy towards the colony. They had a clear political, religious, and reformist agenda unlike other pleasure and adventure seeking European female travelers. *A Historical Dictionary of British Women* (2003) writes on Mary Martha Sherwood, "[D]espite some insight into the working of children's minds, her books are pious, didactic, and chillingly Calvinistic. Mrs. Sherwood founded the first orphan asylum in India and adopted three orphans in addition to her own family of five" (Hartley 2003, p. 392). Emma Roberts followed her sister and brother-in-law Captain Robert Adair McNaughten of the 61st Bengal Infantry to India in 1828 and is recorded to have said "[T]here cannot be a more wretched situation than that of a young woman in India who has been induced to follow the fortunes of her married sister under the delusive expectation that she will exchange the privations attached to limited means in England for the far-famed luxuries of the East" (Conroy 1998, n.p.). Jennie Fuller or Mrs. Marcus B. Fuller was a "[m]issionary with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) in India. […] engaging in evangelism and orphan ministry from 1877 to 1880. […] [I]n the late 1890s Jennie Fuller wrote articles for the Bombay Guardian, a Christian weekly newspaper, including well.researched series concerning the social conditions of women in India" (Ed. Anderson 1999, p. 231). Finally, Julia Maitland was actively engaged in educating children during her stay in India roughly from 1836 till 1839. "Julia Thomas' (Maitland) commitment to education was, however, inseparable from an evangelistic fervor that reminded undiluted by contact with native culture during her stay in India. She believed that European education must necessarily conflict with Indian religion, and was critical of instances in which the government proclaimed, 'all respect be paid to native religions' (Maitland 1843 cited in Wang 2004).

[86] See Maitland (1843).

observed the performance differently, catering to European ladies and gentlemen. Indeed, Emma Roberts saw the dance as bait with its selective gestures accordingly to companies.

While in the company of ladies, it is 'dull and decorous' in exclusively male company it is supposed to assume a different character altogether. Fuller urged for the ban of *nautch* performance, citing its unhealthy effects on the society, just as Mary Martha Sherwood warned about the effects on unsuspecting Englishmen. She observes:

> All these Englishmen who were beguiled by this sweet music had had mothers at home, and some had mothers still, who in the distant land of their children's birth, still cared, and prayed, and wept for the once blooming boys, who were then slowly sacrificing themselves to drinking, smoking, want of rest, and the witcheries of the unhappy daughters of heathens and infidels […] (Darton 1910, p. 449-50).

Scholarly works on the theme of European women's representation of *nautch* girls and *purdahnashins* mainly revolve around the themes of colonial anxiety, sexual jealousy and the imperial urge to penetrate the veil (symbolizing both the mystified seclusion and their sartorial veil), though this representation, is neither homogeneous nor monolithic as the discourse based on them. In the entire issue, the seen-unseen tension and dichotomy play a significant role. The imperial women, by dint of their privilege 'to see' their colonized counterparts played dominant parts in constructing the narrative and the discourse on their 'subjects' much ahead of the imperial men.[87] This representation is reflected in travelogues, memoirs, journal entries, fictions, novels and as many conceivable genres. Such a discourse, with a focus on the physical incongruities, uniqueness and curiousness of the physical and geographical space of the native women also bolstered the imperial agenda.[88] Hence, the reconstruction of the colonial discourses can be interpreted as theoretical tools employed by European women who, though not directly attached to the enterprise of colonialism, had their stakes in it.[89] It is interesting to note that the representation of colonized Indian women by their Western counterparts resembled the different categories of analysis pointed out by Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) in her discussion of the 'third world woman' as represented in western feminist scholarship. With just a slight readjustment, one can see how the tropes of defining a homogenized 'colonized woman' based on their subordination,

[87] See Janaki Nair (1990).

[88] For example, travelogue has been one of such talked about genres which is said to further colonial interests. It goes hand in hand with the colonial expansion. See Pratt (1992), Bhabha (1983), Spivak (1999) (1993, p. 179-200). Missionary texts too harped on these incongruities like *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl.*

[89] Janaki Nair's article *Uncovering the Zenana* offers a comprehensive view of Englishwomen's contribution towards the formation of what she calls the visions of Indian womanhood. She writes, "[T]hus Pat Barr's assessment of Englishwomen's roles in the Victorian period establishes that they, too, as wives of Viceroys, military officers, and civil officials, fulfilled the arduous task of building an empire" (Nair 1990, p. 12).

can be referred back to the colonial regime in India. The projection of colonized women as victims of male violence have been one of the most prominent ways, "in which 'women' as a category of analysis is used in western feminist discourse on women to construct 'third-world women' as a homogeneous 'powerless' group often located as implicit *victims* of particular cultural and socio-economic systems […]" (Mohanty 1988, p. 66). Numerous debates and discussions on *sati*, child marriage, including specific cases[90] which gained huge publicity in the metropole, firmly established the picture of sexually and physically exploited colonized women in the psyche of European women. Marriage as an institution, especially child marriage, and by extension widowhood with its related problems[91] was also seen as perpetuating the subordination of women within a familial structure. Second to such universalized and homogenized projections was the category of colonized women as universal dependents. In fact, the entire monologue on the part of western women's 'caring' for the Indian women were based on the latter's inability to take care of themselves. The political and economic dependence of Indian women on their male counterparts and sometimes the inability to think rationally and act on their own were highlighted especially in the missionary narratives. Finally, Mohanty exemplifies the homogeneous representation of 'third-world' women:

> Thus it is revealing that for Perdita Huston[92] women in the third-world countries she writes about have 'needs' and 'problems', but few if any have 'choices' or the freedom to act. This is an interesting representation of women in the third world, one which is significant in suggesting a latent self-representation of western women which bears looking at (Mohanty 1988, p. 72).

This thesis substantiates that gazing through literature is a two-way process in which the representation of the 'other' inadvertently reveals a major part of the self. Resident Englishwomen in India have been much under focus for their assessment of the Indian women. Scholarly contributions to this phenomenon have been quite diverse — for some the *memsahibs'* writings voiced the imperial women's concern about the colony and the native women, as an extension of their global feminism (Burton 1994); for other scholars the opposition between and echoes of the female colonizer's voice and that of their male

[90] The cases of Rukmabai and Elokeshi received great publicity. See for details Tanika Sarkar's analysis on both the cases. In 1887, Rukmabai an educated girl from carpenter caste "refused to live with her uneducated, consumptive husband, claiming that since the marriage was contracted in in her infancy it could be repudiated by her decision as an adult" (Sarkar 1993, p. 1870). Elokeshi a housewife in Bengal was killed by her husband in a fit of rage after her alleged extra-marital relationship with *mohonto* [mahanta], the priest of a temple was discovered (Sarkar 2001, p. 546-565).

[91] *Kardoo The HIndu Girl* exemplifies such a 'model' family where these issues are discussed and critiqued

[92] Perdita Constance Huston (1936-2001) was an American journalist, remembered for her contribution to women's rights.

counterparts were more important.[93] Scholars have also focused on the conformity as well as the negation of their outlooks and social behavior based on social forces at play in Victorian England. Nair offers an example where "some women who were critics of patriarchy at home and of the empire itself unwittingly resorted to the formulations of earlier writers in their visions of Indian womanhood" (Nair 1990, p. 14). Spreading feminist thoughts in England in the nineteenth century is a phenomenon that paved the way for the assessment of the Indian women by their imperial counterparts. While the white women's curiosity about the natives can be attributed to more imperial masculine emotions, the care and concern are largely attributed by scholars to the rise of feminism and the urge to find a fitting subject to bestow their new found feminist sentiments. Scholars like Antoinette Burton professed the idea that "emancipation of white women […] [was] dependent on the existence of a colonized Indian womanhood" (Burton 1990, p. 295). Hence, the written accords are essentially some form of this feminist concern or the other for the less fortunate sisters. Also, similar to imperialism, feminism, obligated a moral responsibility[94] that explains the 'savior' tone of certain tracts in the imperial discourse penned by European women.

Memsahibs also discovered striking similarities in the social conditions between the European and Indian women, thereby trying to view the colonized and colonizer women as

[93]See for details Anne Mcclintock (2013). Macclintock traces the ambiguous colonial gender relationship: "Colonial women were also ambiguously placed within this process [colonialism]. Barred from the corridors of formal power, they experienced the privileges and social contradictions of imperialism very differently from colonial men. Whether they were shipped out as convicts or conscripted into sexual and domestic servitude; whether they served discreetly as the elbow of power as colonial officers' wives, upholding the boundaries of empire and bearing its sons and daughters; whether they ran missionary schools or hospital wards in remote outposts or worked their husbands' shops and farms, colonial women made none of the direct economic or military decisions of empire and very few reaped its vast profits. Marital laws, property laws, land laws and the intractable violence of male decree bound them in gendered patterns of disadvantage and frustration. […] [N]onetheless, the rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided—if borrowed—power, not only over colonized women but also over colonized men. As such, white women were not the hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting" (Macclintock 2013, p. 6).

[94]"The redemption of colonial peoples was considered to be instrumental to the survival of the nation-in-the-empire, and this may be counted as one reason British feminists adopted Indian women as objects of feminist salvation. Woman-in-the-(British)-nation was clearly the savior of the imperial nation as a whole. Woman-in-the-nation was also, as Maude Diver observed, the uplifter of any nation; targeting Indian woman was therefore a culturally appropriate method for woman-in-the-(imperial)-nation to save civilization by uplifting women-in-the-(colonial)-nation. Taking responsibility for Indian women was at once a fulfilment of imperial duty and proof of imperial citizenship. Significantly for the development of an imperially minded feminism, this harmonized well with the basic assumptions of the late-nineteenth-century British imperial mission. Uprisings and unrest in various localities of the empire had, by the end of the 1860s, signaled a shift in justification for the British rule away from moral force toward military might. But the notion of moral responsibility (later, "trusteeship") remained at the core of British imperial ideology" (Burton 1994, p. 60).

a homogeneous block with the same problems and cures. Frances Billington's description of the coal-mine workers is one such example,

> At the Girideh coal mines, she [Billington] found women working underground to be a perfect contrast to the women of English mining towns whom she described with alliterative fury as "swearing drunken, degraded, disgraces"; the most remarkable point about the Girideh women was their "perfect gentleness and modesty," "general quiet, good order, discipline, and respect" (cited in Nair 1990, p. 19).

It is quite possible that one has as many strands or themes of writings about Indian women as many women who wrote them.

Besides the *nautch* girls and the *purdahnashins*, imperial masters were concerned about perceived religious and cultural atrocities in the native society. Shampa Roy (2012) writes,

> Of the multiple and heterogeneous practices that shaped Indian women's lives, the sati and the zenana were always singled out in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English travel and literary writings to function as definitive tropes of Indian femininity as oppressed and decadent. Popularly available as cultural shorthand for describing the barbarism of India, these images helped consolidate the colonial government's claim in the early years of the nineteenth century that it was rescuing India from political and social anarchy through its Empire-building activities (2012, p. 47-48).

Kardoo the Hindu Girl, a missionary text analyzed in a subsequent chapter of this dissertation was among the hundreds of examples of missionaries as well as European women's preoccupation with the practice of widow burning (*sati*). The ritual of *sati* was more of a spectacle mobilizing strong emotions in the imperial rulers but also providing the justification required to continue the colonial rule.[95] Though from the descriptions of the *sati* debate between the British administration and the natives in the writings of Tanika Sarkar (2012, 1987) and Lata Mani (1987, 1998, 1986) it is apparent that the administration was careful not to ruffle the native population by interfering in the indigenous customs, one hardly gets such a sense in the writings of the imperial women. The description of widow immolation or *sati* is almost without variation: a general outline of the plot is a non-

[95] Besides the practical and legal side of the colonial debate on sati as is discussed hereafter, the ritual generated some interesting reactions in Europe as well. Cf., Kate Teltscher, "[I]t is a sign of the deep ambivalence of some European writers that, despite the apparent obstacles, they do indeed attempt to reclaim her. One way is to view the sati not from a Christian perspective, but treat her rather as a literary figure, a tragic heroine. Suicide, as attempted in classical texts and on the contemporary stage, seems to have been acceptable. In *The English Debate on Suicide from Donne to Hume*, S.E Sprott argues that 'Brutus on his own sword and Cleopatra holding the asps to her breast appear to have been granted an existence in art that was not read at a time as a direct humanist thesis on the ethics of suicide. Outside literature, the pagan morality was unacceptable, though paraded on the stages and in novels'" (Teltscher 1995, p. 56).

consensual young widow being thrown in the burning pyre of her dead husband by force and often under the influence of drugs--her shrieks and cries filling up the air but conveniently drowned under the loud sound of the drums and chants--the widow's fruitless and desperate efforts to save herself from being burned to death. In some narrations, if the victim was lucky enough then she would be rescued by missionaries otherwise that would be the end of her ill-fated life. While the colonial administration invested some time before banning the practice, taking into account the very problematic idea of the 'consent' of the widow,[96] the imperial women's narrative almost never talked about any kind of consent or agency. *Sati* and its horrors are mainly highlighted by the missionaries in their narratives where it serves as an incriminating evidence of the degradation and inhumane treatment of the native women in the hands of the native men. Besides justifying the colonial regime, *sati* also provided a medium for channeling the feminist energy of the imperial women. Clare Midgley writes: "[B]etween 13 February 1829 and 29 March 1830 a total of 14 separate groups of women from around England sent petitions to Parliament calling on it to abolish sati, or rather what they described as 'the practice in India of burning widows on the funeral piles of their husbands' (Midgley 2006, p. 95). Midgley further noted that this initiative of abolition of *sati* was more of a preoccupation of missionaries than the feminist activists. Among the missionaries, the movement for the abolition of *sati* was directed and represented in the British parliament by the Evangelical Anglicans: "[I]n their propaganda the position of women, and in particular the practice of sati, played a crucial role in arguments that Britain had a duty to bring Christianity and civilization to its Indian subjects. A practice which was confined to a minority of Hindus came to stand for the depravity of the culture of the Indian subcontinent as a whole" (Midgley 2006, p. 97). As a subsequent chapter on a missionary narrative will demonstrate, maintenance of mission activities was mainly dependent on sales proceeds of mission literature highlighting native deprivations like *sati* and child marriage among others. Sympathizing with the condition of sisters living in heathen lands and thus doomed by fate was also a popular method of gaining support and money for mission activities in India. However, accounts on *sati* written by travelers like Fanny Parks (1794-1875) described the practice more as a patriarchal domination, a part of the universal subjugation of women rather than a complete 'native' cultural phenomenon.[97]

[96] See Sarkar (2012; 1987) & Mani (1999; 1986).

[97] See Lydia Murdoch, "Parks presented sati as a patriarchal practice—rather than an inherently Indian or religious rite—that stemmed from the desire to deprive widows of their property. She also favourably contrasted the Indian treatment of women to the English in several areas […]" (Murdoch 2013, p. 251).

Parks also accused the British administration for its laxity and inherent economic interest regards to banning *sati*:

> Parks suggests that there would initially have been little resistance to the British government abolishing the practice before missionaries came on the scene. She also casts doubt on the disinterested humanitarianism of the government, pointing out that it was happy to go along with 'native superstition' when it was profitable to do so: 'witness the tax they levy on pilgrims'" (Midgley 2007, n.p.).

In her description of an incident of *sati* in 1828, which she had not witnessed herself but learnt from her husband Charles Parks, a clerk with the East India Company, Fanny's description of the victim is one of an impulsive as well as foolhardy who is more driven by emotions rather than sensibility. The determination of the bereaved wife of a Hindu who strongly insists to burn herself to bring social prestige to the family, herself and her dead husband to the heavens, could not be broken by the magistrate. However, on sensing the first heat of the flames, she flies out of the pyre and jumps into the river.[98] Marcus Fuller saw behind the apparent resolve and heroism of the *sati* victims, the lure of a fabled paradise with the husband in their afterlife. Since the lot of widows was far from enviable, many were ready to suffer the momentary suffocation and pain than the slow torture of widowhood.[99]

Thus, the body of the Indian women, invisible and mysterious, or visible and entertaining, or even used as a sacrifice to the customs and burnt, remained a central preoccupation for the white women. The moral, emotional and political compulsions of the white women, much like the white men, had a pronounced imperialist agenda of saving the brown women from the brown men.[100]

On the cusp of a spate of reforms, the imperialists also elicited consensus from amongst the native reformers and thinkers and the literate elites. Enlightened Indian males decidedly wanted to have their share of contribution in the dawning of a new age of social reforms revolving around women. Readers already have an idea of the drift of social reforms that brought major changes in the household and the larger society in the nineteenth century from discussions in the introductory chapter. Eighteenth and nineteenth century Bengal have been much under discussion for 1) being the capital of the colonial regime, hence the center of reforms and administrative attention, 2) promoting an age of transition, 3) for hosting the

[98] See Parks (1850).
[99] See Fuller (1900, p. 50-60).
[100] See Spivak (1988).

dawning of the Bengali renaissance. Scholars have focused on the transition of '*meyechele*' (the derogatory, subhuman woman) to *bhadramahila* (the lady), the resultant shift and effect on women's popular culture in nineteenth century Bengal as well as their contribution to nationalism.[101] Facts and fictions in the form of periodicals, novels, autobiographies, diaries, and biographies have been excavated for analysis and critique, citing the active or passive presence and or absence of indigenous women in the fabric of colonial discourse. Across castes, religions, and cultures, women's social, cultural, political, and economic roles have been studied on the broader and more diverse canvas of the colonial regime. Scholars have also attended to nineteenth century Bengali women through individual protagonists who had distinct achievements to their credit even in that general atmosphere of repression, and as a whole— to study the general trend of female emancipation in the society.[102] Topics ranging from motherhood to prostitution, and gender relations between Bengali men and women in the colonial regime, arts, aesthetics etc., have received adequate attention.[103] Indian scholars have focused on the colonial tropes of Indian womanhood like *nautchgirls*, *zenana* and *sati*, re-evaluating them from the vantage point of different post-societal and temporal perspectives, giving voice to both the colonized and the subaltern. The discourse of looking back at the colonizer and evaluating the effect of the interaction of the colonizer and the colonized, as well as its impact on the overall status of both have been studied by scholars, highlighting that colonization was never a one-way process. Both the colonizer and the colonized have been involved in an inextricable exchange of ideas, effects and processes, though the flow had been asymmetrical, governed by power relations between the ruler and its subject, being as such substantively biased towards the former.

The aforementioned power and representation asymmetry exists in the division of colonial discourses written by the colonizers and the colonized as well. Compared to the voluminous factual, fact-based, and fictitious writings of the imperialists, the Indian documentation of the colonial regime is significantly inconspicuous and this absence is more glaring for the literature authored by Bengali women.

[101] This section on scholarly attention on *Bhadramahila* and their social setting in nineteenth century has been dealt with each time in all the subsequent chapters according to the contexts.
[102] Female figures like Rassundari debi, Hemantakumari Chaudhury, Haimabati Sen, Rokeya Sakhwat Hossian are some notable nineteenth century Bengali characters who exemplified female strength and perseverance. These figures recur throughout the thesis.
[103] See for example, Banerjee (1989); Sarkar (2001); Chatterjee (1989); Chakrabarty (2009); and Raychaudhury (2000).

With an endeavor to address this gap, this thesis brings together different genres of writing where the European/Western women are studied by Bengali women. This is an attempt to reverse the Eurocentric viewer-viewed quotient of the orient being the object to be studied and looked at and the Occident as the subject who looks—via literature. Narratives, be it the factual descriptions or the creative literary texts, form a major part of the colonial discourse which has been analysed to ascertain major trends in colonial literature and writing. With this said, this dissertation is mainly concerned with creative literary texts in the form of fictions and fictional autobiographies as well as more factual variations like travelogues and journal articles.

Nineteenth century Bengal was already producing discourse on the colonizer. Within that dominant discourse, the presence and existence of an alternative discourse produced by Bengali women command importance by virtue of their individuality. The women writers exercised their 'authority' and voiced their opinion about the colonizers, distinct from the mainstream Bengali male-dominated knowledge production. Even though one may see it as subordinate to the dominant discourse, it is alternative, competitive, and contrasting. This entails that Bengali women claimed a space of their own by exercising the power of discourse. Such discursive power consolidated the feminist consciousness, still in its infancy but burgeoning.[104] Krishnabhabini's leaving her young daughter back home in Bengal and staying in England with her husband for eight years could well be attributed to female empowerment and expression of one's free will. Even *Kardoo the Hindu Girl*, on a narrative level, subverts the power hierarchy and gives a 'voice' to an otherwise powerless Hindu woman to narrate her life story. Another phase of this power to write is the power to self-criticize, exemplified through the columns in the Bengali periodicals, by their criticism of the lazy and indolent Bengali *bhadramahilas* themselves. This power of self-criticism is very much nestled and harbored within the greater power of being 'themselves' and reviewing their own social conditions. Toru's empowerment exemplifies the growth of a woman's thinking, independent of and exceptional to the social conditions of Bengal of her time. Her selective defiance of the Bengali culture[105] brings out the social criticism, from an individual and contrasting angle.

[104] Feminism and its emergence are dealt with in the chapter on charity and philanthropy.
[105] Refer to her letters to Ms. Martin, her lifelong friend where she expresses her critical opinions on the Hindu society. In Toru's personal letters written to Ms. Martin, her addressing the Hindus as natives and the typical western/colonial/Christian ways of critiquing goddess Kali and other festivities clearly spell out her desire not to belong to this side of the divide.

The aim of the thesis is to show the empowerment of the Bengali women under colonialism through the manifestation of power through literature. The historical analysis of the texts and their settings uncover the overall contexuality of these texts in the backdrop of colonial discourse written on Europe and the West. The heterogeneity of gaze, its intersection through variegated narratives and cultural nuances together with its representation of the subject and the object through various genres are studied next.

3. Bilet[106] as a spectacle: Krishnabhabini das' *Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā* and observations of the female spectator[107]

3.1 Introduction

The idea of gazing at the cultural other is explored next through four literary case studies, belonging to the nineteenth century colonial Bengal. These case studies belong to different genres, with each exploring particular aspects of the act of gaze and reconstruction via gaze and perspective that is unique to the literary genre. This chapter introduces the most common form of cross-cultural dialogue in literature—via travel narrative. Travelogues have been one of the most obvious ways of looking at and defining the cultural 'other', since travel brings two cultures physically together and the agents have a face-to face interaction with each other, all too often, laced with intricacies and dichotomies of complex socio-cultural nature. The thesis starts the process of looking back at the other through a travelogue written by a Bengali woman. Through an analysis of the travelogue, this chapter not only attempts to interpret the cultural signifiers of nineteenth century Bengali society which influenced the author's interpretation of the 'other' culture, but also delineates her projection of cultural and societal issues through the travel narrative. The colonized colonizer hierarchy in the viewer-viewed equation also provides an interesting angle to the entire gazing scenario as will be discussed subsequently. Finally, the use of the genre of travelogue to spell out freedom for women is analyzed below.

So, arduously breaking the cage,

Ushering myself towards wisdom,

Concealing my pain,

Constantly wiping tears, lest someone sees it.[108] (Dās 1996: 15[109])

[106] *Bilet* in Bengali means abroad or foreign land. It mainly signified England in colonial times.

[107] An esrlier version of this chapter, titled "Breaking the Cage: Traveling, Freedom, and English Society in Imlande Bangamahila" has been published in ASIEN, The German Journal on Contemporary Asia, Nr. 130, 2014.

[108] This is an extract from the poems Krishnabhabini wrote in *Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā*. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the original Bengali text are mine. Original Bengali quote: Tāi bahukaṣṭe piñjar bhāṅgiẏe,/ haẏechi bāhir jñān'cakṣu tare,/ lukāẏe rākhiẏe bedanā antare,/muchi aśru sadā keha dekhe bhaẏe" (Dās 1996, p. 15).

[109] I have used Simonti Sen's (Sīmantī sen's) edited version of the travelogue, *Kṛṣṇabhābinī dāser iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* (1996).

So wrote Krishnabhabini Das (Kṛṣṇabhābinī dās) (1864-1919) in a poetic interlude to her travelogue *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* (Bengali Woman in England), (1885). 'Breaking the cage' is seemingly the key theme behind her poem as well as her life; liberating oneself, physically as well as mentally, from the household and traditional behavioral norms of woman/mother of the nineteenth century Bengal and the emerging as a middle-class housewife in the literary and social scenario of colonial Calcutta was no mean feat at that time.[110] Therefore, we see the other side of the liberation which was tearful and painful for her. It is quite possible that Krishnabhabini refers to the widening space in her inter-personal relationships that her great journey brought with it, especially her separation with her daughter. In her life, we see the inevitable struggle of a housewife's duty and responsibility and a traveler's quest for sights and knowledge. With a personal life as intricate as her writings and treatises on women's life and freedom, Krishnabhabini das deserves more attention than she has received. This chapter looks at her travelogue, *Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā,* one of the most detailed[111] yet under researched travelogues written by a Bengali woman of her time. In her travelogue, Krishnabhabini is the female spectator, gazing at the colonizer's life and society and thereby coming up with her conceptions of *bilet*' or the foreign land. In major ways, she also challenges the existing constructions of the colonizer in Bengali society with the purpose of revising the stereotypes through a parallel yet alternate discourse. However, before we delve into the nuances of the travelogue it is imperative to look at the conditions, both social and personal, that underpinned her work.

Krishnabhabini wrote *Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā* during the eight years of her stay in England with her husband, Debendranath Das, an English educated lawyer. Debendranath was a progressive, liberal husband and companion both in the contemporary and traditional sense of the term, encouraging his wife's travel and education pursuits. He himself was well read and took care that Krishnabhabini was not deprived of the enlightenment that education brings. The resultant gratitude that Krishnabhabini felt for her husband is apparent from her acknowledgment of her husband's efforts, both in general for her education and in particular for framing the travelogue in its final form.[112] However, in her personal life, the author

[110] However, her commendable feat did not earn her fame or recognition. Krishnabhabini was not the much talked about literary or reformist figure of the century and her travelogue is only recently recovered from the depths of obscurity by Simonti Sen.

[111] *Iṃlaṇḍe sāt mās* or *Seven Months in England* is another well-known travelogue written by Jagat'mohinī Caudhurī and published in 1902. Nevertheless, when it comes to details of depiction, *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* far surpasses its contemporaries.

[112] Krishnabhabini writes: "[M]y husband has adequately helped me in subjects like education and politics; he has read through the entire manuscript and edited and altered it in places, and according to his advice I have inserted many new topics in certain sections. Without his care and efforts, I could not have brought out this

suffered a fair share of disappointments and pain of separation. While her husband was still pursuing his studies in England, their first child died. This deeply shocked Krishnabhabini and she looked for some solace when her husband returned. Unfortunately, Debendranath had a clash of opinions with his father, which prompted him to leave home again for England. This time he took Krishnabhabini with him but had to submit to the strict orders of his father of leaving behind Tilottama (Tilottamā), their second child. Tilottama grew up under the guidance, traditions of her grandfather, but this separation caused a life-long rift between the mother, and daughter, which finally ended with the latter,'s death. Krishnabhabini herself died in 1919 at the age of fifty-one[113].

3.2 Travelogue, emergence of travelogue and gazing via travelogues

In her seminal work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt talks about the essential space of encounter that gives rise to the formation of opinions and ideas about the cultural other—the contact zone. Pratt defines the contact zone as:

> [t]he space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. […] "contact zone" shifts the centre of gravity and the point of view. It invokes the space and time where subjects previously separated are co-present, the point at which their trajectories now intersect (Pratt 1992, p. 8).

For Krishnabhabini, her journey and stay in England exposed her to such a *contact zone* whereby the previously unknown or only imagined aspects of the British people came to be known to her, namely how the imperialists behave in their 'natural habitat'. In the Bengali year 1297 (1890), five years after *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* was published, Krishnabhabini wrote in the May edition of the Bengali journal *Bhāratī o bālak* (Calcutta 1877-1926):

> [O]ur Bengali language has an old adage, one whose cooking I have not tasted is always a great chef, woman I have not lived with is always a great home-maker; actually I now clearly realize how true this statement is. One cannot adequately understand the good or bad qualities of a nation, or a person without cohabiting with them."[114]

book in its present form." Original: "Śikṣā, rāj'nīti ityādi kaẏek'ṭā biṣaẏe āmār svāmī yatheṣṭa sāhāyya kariẏāchen; tini ei pustaker ādyapānta pāṭh kariẏā anek sthal saṃśodhan o paribartan kariẏāchen, ebaṃ tā̃hār parāmarśe sthāne sthāne anek nūtan biṣaẏ sannibeś kariẏāchi. tā̃hār jatna o pariśram binā āmi kakhanaï ei pustak bartamān ākāre bāhire ānite pāritām nā" (Dās 1996, p. 6).

[113] For background information on Krishnabhabini, see Simonti Sen's Introduction in *Kṛṣṇabhābinī dāser Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* (1996).

[114] Original: "Āmāder bāṃlā bhāṣāẏ ek'ṭi purāṇ kathā āche, yār hāte khāini se baṛa rā̃dhunī, yār saṅge ghar karini se baṛa gharuṇī,--bāstabik e kathātā ye katadūr satẏa tāhā āmi ekhan spaṣṭa bujhitechi. Kona byakti bā jātir saṅge ghar nā karile tāhār upar'bhitar bhālamanda kakhana samyakˈrūpe bujhā yāẏ nā."

This is an insightful remark because here the author warns the reader against stereotyping a particular culture without direct interaction and at the same time, she vouches for her own absolute narrative authority and authenticity, as she is the one who actually interacted with the British in the *contact zone*. Pratt's (1991) essential constituents of the relationships between cultural agents in the *contact zone*, namely inequality, coercion and conflict are more of a cerebral nature in Krishnabhabini, when she critically analyzes the imperialists' characteristic.[115] There is no description of discrimination and conflict the author might have faced personally during her encounter of the 'other'. However, the raging inequality and disdain for other cultures[116] prevalent in the British society are presented to the readers in a generalized fashion, as the notable 'characteristics' of the English 'race'[117].

What makes the travelogue unique is the coexistence of appreciation alongside criticism of the English people—scathing criticism of perceived deviance and lapses of character beside the overwhelming appreciation of all things imitable, which according to the author, if diligently followed, would contribute to the development of Indian society.

Before taking a deeper look at the nuances of Krishnabhabini's travelogue, it is imperative to situate her and her text in the contemporary scenario of travelling and travel writing in Bengal. Simonti Sen's book (2005) provides a comprehensive analysis of Bengali travel narratives as a mode of literary and nationalist expression in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. In her book, Sen traces the idea of travel among Bengali Hindus, which was not so widespread and well-enthused unlike in the west. It is only in the age of colonialism and under its resultant effects that Indians started taking travel seriously as a way of widening their horizons and experiencing the previously known. However, before this phase of dropping resistance, crossing the *kalapani* (kālāpāni) or black waters was considered a taboo resulting in losing one's caste and desecrating oneself.[118] The debate around crossing the seas gained much momentum after the number of travelers increased

[115] Krishnabhabini's primary preoccupation in her travelogue is to discuss the various inherent and acquired characteristics of English people. These characteristics are discussed in detail in the later sections of the chapter.
[116] The author is critical of what she deems as the English habit of disdain and slighting other cultures. This is discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.
[117] Krishnabhabini uses the Bengali term *jāti*, which can be translated as 'race'. Here, it signifies nation.
[118] This idea of desecration came from the fear of getting in physical contact with foreigners who were termed as *mlecchas* and untouchables. See Sushmita Arp's article "[C]ontroversies about Sea Journeys to England in Nineteenth-Century Bengal", where she states that "[M]any family elders or leaders of local caste communities had reservations about such journeys, fearing that the traveler might be forced to take forbidden food, would not be able to maintain ritual purity, or would get into overly close contact with foreigners" (Arp 2004, p. 120).

considerably around the 1860s. Arp in her book titled *Kālāpāni* (2000) traces the origin of the resentment against travelling across the seas:

> By the time of the Muslim invasion […] Puranic Hinduism was triumphant. Its puritanical element was no doubt strengthened by the invasion. With the *mleccha*[119] overrunning the land the *brahman*'s traditional antipathy to the foreigner must have been intensified. In such circumstances it is understandable that the religious objection to seafaring would spread, first through the *brahman* caste, and then downwards from the *brahman* to the lower classes"[120] (as quoted in Arp 2000, p. 8).

Arp further situates Indian's aversion to travel by quoting from the Smritis:

> *Zu dvijāsyabdhau tu nauyātuḥ śodhitasyāpi saṃgrahaḥ* heißt es bei Anantadeva hingegen (S. 574):
>
> *Pratyantadeśagamananimittapunaḥsamskāre kṛteˈpy abdhau nauyātuḥ saṃsargaḥ kalau niṣidhyate* |
>
> „Es wird der Umgang mit einem auf dem Ozean Schiffreidenden im Kaliyuga verboten, auch wenn er eine Wiederholung der [für die verschiedenen Lebensstadien vorgeschreibenen] Riten (*saṃskāra*) durchgeführt hat, die dadurch veranlaßt wird (d.h. notwendig wird), daß man sich in ein anderes Land begibt" (Arp 2000, p. 31).

However, Tapan Raychaudhuri (1988) gives another view of the Hindu stigma against sea voyages. He writes,

> The restrictions on sea voyage probably had historical origins—the destruction of Indian merchant fleets by Arab pirates. The nineteenth century practice of ostracizing those who had gone abroad, less strong in Maharashtra than in Bengal, owed much to the arrogance of those ostracized. If the 'England-returned' were a little more respectful to their own society, as was the case in Maharashtra, very probably the problem would disappear" (Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 37).

Further reemphasizing the traditional unpopularity of the traveler in Hindu literature and comparing the figure (of the traveler) with its western counterpart, Simonti Sen (2005) notes:

---

[119] The term signifies the untouchable. See Arp „Der Begriff mleccha hat eine deutlich pejorative Konnotation und bezeichnet den Fremden, der sich im sozialen, religiösen und in der Regel auch geographischen Sinne außerhalb der von den Dharmasastras gelehrten Gesellschaftsordnung befindet" (Arp 2000, p. 9).

[120] Cf. Arp, "[B]efore the 1870s, when the first high caste Hindus went abroad, the propriety of the sea journeys, as it were, was no public issue yet, and the sea voyage question was basically as affair of the individual travelers and their families. Many family elders or leaders of local caste communities had reservations about such journeys, fearing that the traveler might be forced to take forbidden food, would not be able to maintain racial purity, or would get into overly close contact with foreigners. Such reservations were also partly reflected in sastric literature. Among the first high caste Indians in Europe were Rammohun Roy, who visited England in 1831 on behalf of the Mughal emperor Akbar Shah II, and Dwarkanath Tagore, who travelled in 1842 and was accompanied by the first four Indians to study in England. Until the second half of the century, however there were rather few high-caste visitors to the West. The largest groups of Indian travelers in those years were servants accompanying members of the East India Company, and Indian seamen working on British ships. These people usually belonged to low castes and therefore their behavior was beyond the pale of attention of sastric orthodoxy and unlikely to provoke the latter's interference" (Arp 2004, p. 120).

> It is perhaps not inappropriate to maintain that a traveler has never been a popular figure in the Hindu canonical tradition. In contrast, from the ancient lore, through medieval romances to genres of modern self-expression, a traveler has been variously featured in Western imaginative articulation, travel being persistently viewed as exciting and liberating (Sen 2005, p. 1).

Hence, while the west saw it as salvation, Hinduism saw it as synonymous to meaningless wandering:

> [I]n Bengali the word travel translates into bhraman, a derivative of the Sanskritic root word *bhram* meaning to mistake or to err[121]. In this sense, *bhraman* (*bhramaṇ*) can be taken to mean aimless or disoriented wandering, an act which would not normally be valorized in the Hindu tradition, which is heavily biased in favour of sedentariness" (Sen 2005, p. 2).

In fact, nor was stirring from home considered a true sign of happiness in the times of Mahabharata.[122]

3.3 Travelogues and colonialism

Travel writing in the age of colonial expansion has received much focus with their main contribution being to unfurl the minds of the travelers through their description of the landscapes and societies. Colonial motivation to travel has been traced back to fill voids or blank spaces in the map as a way of defining the yet undefined. Reasons like commercial exploitation and exploration of race ideologies, also features in the list as discussed by Tim Youngs (2006) in the introduction of his edited volume.[123] However, the underlying factor propelling the major drive behind exploration was curiosity. Curiosity for the unknown is a phenomenon, which is observed almost uniformly in travel literature, be it from the empire or the colony's point of view.

[121] It is important to mention here that the English and the French translation of the word travel do not valorize the act either. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, the word travel was first used in the fourteenth century. The origin of the word is from Middle English *travailen, travelen* which signifies to torment, to labour or to strive. In Old French, the word *travailler* would mean to labour strenuously. This etymological origin could signify the extreme hazardous conditions under which travel expeditions used to take place in ancient times.

[122] See Sen, "[B]eing asked by Yaksha as to who was truly happy, Yudhisthira, the eldest and wisest of the Pandava brothers, replied, "[A] man who cooketh in his own house, on the fifth or the sixth or the sixth part of the day with scanty vegetables, but who is not in debt and who stirreth not from home, is truly happy" (Sen 2005, p. 2).

[123] Important characteristics of nineteenth century travel writing in the western world, he argues, mainly had the following motivation: "[F]irst, that there were still, in the last quarter of the century, large uncharted parts of the world. Second, a motivation of travel was to fill those blanks (though they were not, of course, blanks to those who lived there). Third, once 'discovered', many of those places would be exploitated for their commercial potential. Fourth, the ideologies of race impacted on the representation of those places, as well as on dealings with those who inhabited them […]" (Young 2006, p. 2).

Travel experiences are as complex and layered, as is the motivation to travel; and hence codified travel experiences are not simplified records either. A travel narrative, as a way of exploring the foreign land, comes with the cultural, social, political, and other baggage of the narrator. As Young puts it,

> Travel writing is not a literal and objective record of journeys undertaken. It carries preconceptions that, even if challenged, provide a reference point. It is influenced, if not determined, by its author's gender, class, age, nationality, cultural background and education. It is ideological. And it is a literary form that draws on the conventions of other literary genres. Narrators, characters, plots and dialogue are all shaped accordingly" (Young 2006, p. 2-3).

What Young stresses here is the role of the author's perspective in the formation of the travelogue.[124] This is further explored in the analysis of Krishnabhabini's travelogue in the next sections.

The nineteenth century saw a boom in 'European tourism' towards the rest of the world especially their contemporary or potential colonies like Africa, Middle East, Indian subcontinent to name a few. Also the 'grand tour' was replaced by 'mass tourism'[125] with the inventions facilitating faster modes of travel like the railways that enabled far flung spaces come within reach of travelers.

Hand in hand with the boom in travel, travel writing also gained impetus as the urge to document and report about the newfound lands, which became a preoccupation with the tourists and travelers. However, travel writing dates back to antiquity, with writers exploring the spectrums of the act of travelling itself. While, earliest travel writings like the Christian allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) dealt with the symbolic journey of life, thus equating travel with life itself, Homer's *Odyssey* (8th century BC) lent the required balance of seriousness, risk, adventure and glory that is normally associated with travel at his time. Hence, Georges Van Abbeele rightly calls travel an "Odyssean enterprise" (Abbeele 1992, p. xv), something which is largely associated with broadening of the horizons of knowledge

[124] It is worth mentioning here that the Indian womanhood stereotypes of *nautchgirls* and *purdahnashins* that the previous chapter dealt with is the result of the tropes dealt with and described in numerous travelogues written by the European women. This is a good example of perspectives that play a role in forming and maintaining the cultural stereotypes.

[125] See for example Young's edited volume where he describes different kinds of traveler emerging in the nineteenth century. Young writes "[…] Britain's expanding role in the world 'meant that larger and larger numbers of travelers and explorers made journeys to report upon it' (Bridges 2002, p. 55); a point also made by Peter Kitson, who notes in addition the 'advent of a different breed of traveler: the "globetrotter", akin to our modern conception of the tourist'" (Kitson 2003 cited in Young 2006, p. 5).

and emancipation of the self.[126] A reflection of the same idea was heard in colonial Bengal when stalwarts of the society like Swami Vivekananda started associating travel with the reconstitution of the nation. In 1892, Swami Vivekananda (svāmī bibekānanda) (1863-1902) wrote to Pandit Shankarlal (paṇḍit śaṅkarˈlāl): "[W]e must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations if we really want to be nation again" (Vivekananda 1919, p. 2). However, Tapan Raychaudhuri (1988) presents a contradictory side of the travel-for-emancipation idea in his chapter on Bhudev Mukhopadhyay[127]. Raychaudhuri remarks that "[I]t was well to remember that travel abroad was no proven antidote for narrow parochialism. The attitudes of the English in India should disabuse one's mind of such notions." (Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 37) Raychaudhuri also points out that nationalists in the likes of Bhudeb saw a redeeming feature in the parochialism, which Hinduism was accused of in the nineteenth century: "the vast territories of the Hindu homeland were an epitome of the world and tradition prescribed pilgrimages across its length and breadth. Hence even parochialism in India was not to be equated with a total narrowness of outlook" (Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 37). In spite of the undercurrent of thoughts stressing the self-sufficiency of India in terms of ideals and traditions, colonialism definitely stressed on absorption with the metropolis culture with the colony. The flourishing of print culture made travel literature among others, readily accessible to the Bengali domestic sphere. England as a geographical space and the site of perceived superior culture became very appealing and consumable as an idea to the Bengali readers. Ideas were abound in the notable travelogues of the period, [128] which not only provided vivid pictures of the

[126] Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (2002) provide an interesting condition to the approach while summing up the early forms of travel writing: "[T]he biblical and classical traditions are both rich in examples of travel writing, literal and symbolic—Exodus, the punishment of Cain, the Argonauts, the Aeneid—which provide a corpus of reference and intertext for modern writers. In particular, Homer's Odysseus gave his name to the word we still use to describe an epic journey, and his episodic adventures offer a blueprint for the romance, indirection, and danger of travel as well as the joy (and danger) of homecoming. Societal attitudes to travel have always been ambivalent. Travel broadens the mind, and knowledge of the distant places and people or do not come back at all. Pilgrims are necessary for Christian salvation, but must be carefully controlled (Hulme & Young eds. 2002, p. 2).

[127] Bhudev Mukhopadhyay (1827-1894) was a writer, thinker, intellectual in nineteenth century Bengal. He was an orthodox nationalist extremely conscious and proud of not only Hindu culture but also Brahminical traditions. Raychoudhury writes about him, "Bhudev observed rigidly the Brahminical restrictions on commensality in all his contacts with Europeans. In declining invitations to take food in any European home, he explained his reasons according to his assessment of his would-be host's personality. He did not invoke the Hindu scriptures so dear to him, for he was extremely sensitive about slighting comments on them" For more details, see Raychaudhuri's chapter on Bhudev (Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 49).

[128] Refer to Simonti Sen (2005) and Sisir Kumar Das (1991) for details.

geographical space but also encouraged Bengalis to travel, besides emphasizing at a definite and strong bond with England[129]. As Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay mentions in his article,

> [T]he colonial Bengali visitors' first impression of England, as we will see, was tainted with a sense of déjà vu. For these colonial tourists, travel to England was not so much a journey into the unknown as a confirmation of what was already known about England thanks to 'print capitalism' and 'travel capitalism.' Our travelers were not on the lookout for the marvelous and the unknown—their gaze constantly scrutinized whether the real England measured up to their hyperreal image of England (Mukhopadhyay 2002, p. 293).[130]

The stakes of Bengali women, in adding up to the body of discourses and counter-discourses that were being produced in Bengal, weighing the pros and cons of foreign travel, are somewhat difficult to ascertain; mainly because they did not directly and substantially contribute to the dialogue except for a few instances, and mainly remained in the shadows of their travelling husbands. Travels to Europe enlightened Bengali men and provided them with certain models for the advancement of the Bengali women at home who were still confined within the four walls of domesticity. Somewhat similar to the doctrine of separate spheres operating in Victorian England, women in nineteenth century Bengal were also meant to mind the household and hence their freedom, if any, was mainly private and domestic.[131]

> [I]n general, a Bengali woman would be engaged in household chores from dawn till midnight. Depending on the financial state of her household, she might be able to afford a number of servants, but overseeing and controlling the staff and taking important decisions normally remained in the hands of the mistress. This regime left her with little space or energy for anything else (Chatterjee 2014, p. 12).

A voluminous amount has been written on domesticity and Bengali women in the nineteenth century, most of which is referred to in the introductory chapter. An overview of the domestic life of Bengali women tending their children and serving their husbands—carrying

[129] "[T]he travelogues dealing with Europe and other countries celebrate the joy, as well as strangeness, of encountering the other. These travelogues are to a great extent an ideological representation of Indo-european relationship […]" (Dās 1991, p. 254).

[130] A very notable anecdote exemplifying the familiarity Bengalis gained of England, through the travelogues is Nirad C. Chaudhury's story of directing his cab driver in a veteran's fashion when he came to England for the first time. The only thing which struck the driver was that some of the landmarks he described were obsolete. Hans Harder in his article argues the same: "[F]urther, we have to take into account the fact thatnone of these travelogue writers ame unprepared to Britain, and their experienceof the British in India as well as a sometimes extensive fore-knowledge about Britain posed to them two more comparative exercises, namely the contrasts between their image of Britain and the reality they confronted, and the difference between the British in the colonies and at home" (Harder 2004, p. 135).

[131] Cf. Banerjee: "[…] equation of women with the home became the only kind of freedom—i.e., [sic], private—[…]. […] actually, in the context of colonialism, they became the captives of a male fantasy—of their over-protectedness, over-possessiveness […]" (1989, p. 1044).

out their *saṃsār dharma*[132], is featured in Rassundari Dasi's writings. She was one of the leading figures of the century, offering a vivid description of her family chores in her autobiography *Āmār jīban* (1876)[133]. After her mother-in-law lost her sight from a fever, Rassundari was left in charge of the household, described by her as follows:

> [a]ll the household chores fell on my shoulders. I was worried out of my wits. […] Also, this household was a quite a large organism. There was the household deity, and tending to him was a daily chore since his meals had to be ritually cooked. There was a perpetual flow of guests and they had to be fed separately. Our own meals were on a large scale. Though I had no brothers-in-law, there were still a number of servants and maidservants. I had to cook for twenty five to twenty six people twice a day. On top of this, my blind mother-in-law had to be cared for. I had only one maidservant to help me out, and she, too, was absent at that time. I was all by myself. Hurled into this ocean of responsibilities, I felt myself to be completely inadequate (Dās 1999, p. 159).

Later, when painting the general condition of married women, Rassundari writes:

> Women were not educated in those days. They had to do all the work at home. If they had a single moment of leisure, they were expected to tend to the head of the household. That meant they had to stand at his side meekly and humbly. People used to insist that women were only meant for domestic chores. Newly-wedded girls had to be especially hard-working and quiet. They had to work from behind a long veil and then they would get to be known as good wives (Dās 1999, p. 159-160).

Tanika Sarkar's commentary in this context is also worth noting: "[T]he woman enters *saṃsār* through the sacrament of marriage, the only sacrament that is available to her. For her, *saṃsār* is the unending flow of domestic work and responsibilities, primarily connected with cooking, serving, and child-rearing" (Sarkar 2001, p. 101f.).

The picture presented by Rassundari can be generalized. She belonged to one of the affluent families but the presence of maidservants was not of much help. Rassundari had her first child when she was eighteen and the last when she turned forty-one. The years in between as is evident from her autobiography was a continuous phase of mental, physical and emotional hardships where god seemed to be the only respite. Having numerous children and toiling in the household was not only common but also deemed as a normal part of womanhood's *dharma* or moral duty.[134] The popular domestic advice manuals of the period

[132] Here it means household duties.

[133] For more details, see Tanika Sarkar's English translation of Rassundari Dasi's autobiography (Sarkar & Dāsi 1999).

[134] The term *Dharma* comes up repeatedly in the Bengali texts dealt with in the thesis, especially Krishnabhabini's travelogue and the journal articles dealt with in the last chapter. Though the term bears different meanings according to its context and usage, it is imperative to have a look at the broader sense of the term. I will refer to Hans Harder's explanation: "[*D*]*harma*, as is widely known, is derived from dhṛ 'to hold, support', and thus may be interpreted as 'that which holds'. Some very commonly used translations are

substantiated this. A typical nineteenth century domestic advice manual for women called *Strīr sahit kathopakathan* ("Conversations with the Wife") asserts:

> Wife: When you become a householder, you have to look out for so many things […] you have to try so hard to protect your husband, yourself, your offspring, and your home from the evil. At every step of the way you have to look after your husband's happiness; you have to work very hard to keep your husband's love. Is all this an easy task? On top of that, there are all these other things to consider—family relations, male and female servants, guests and beggars, the cow and her young, society, the government, and dharma (Walsh 1997, p. 641).

It is of little wonder that when they were so repressed under the yoke of domesticity they would be left with little time or energy to make themselves heard. However, examples are there, including Rassundari herself, who tried to teach herself the alphabet under secrecy, away from the prying eyes of the house inmates.[135] Many women were supported by their husbands in the art of learning like Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and Krishnabhabini Das. Thus, though women occupied the center in colonial Bengal in the nineteenth century, when it came to social reform and related discourses, men's representation of societal challenges had the upper hand. Nevertheless, the 1860s have been described by Malini Bhattacharya and Abhijit Sen (2003) as the 'watershed period' when women started coming out and actively contributing to the 'literate culture': "[a] fairly large number of writings by women may be found between this time and the beginning of the twentieth century in various periodicals and magazines of the period. Some of the pieces were also independent publications" (Bhattacharya, Sen 2003, p. 4). With the increase in the western reform influence, the issue of women's education became connected to social power, freedom, and development. The *bhadralok* society, though deeply divided on the debate on justifiability of women's education, also provided the necessary impetus required for the development of women.[136] Gradually, the push and struggle for freedom came, in a large way, from the women themselves. Efforts of expression regarding oppression under patriarchy, evaluating their status with reference to the women of the West, and interpreting the colonized-colonizer relationship for the furtherance of their freedom were some of the issues gaining

'law', '(world) order' as well as 'righteousness'. *Dharma* is also a set of rules regulating almost all aspects of life; as such it has again and again been codified in Dharmasastras, i.e. 'the teaching (or science) of 'righteousness', etc." (Harder 2001, p. 180). For further details, see Harder (2001).

[135] The reasons for such secrecy could be the negative connotation attached to gaining literacy and education in the society. Education was supposed to bring the curse of widowhood upon females and later educated women were listed as socially aberrant, selfish and responsible for destroying the family foundation. This comes up for discussion in subsequent chapters.

[136] Development of *bhadralok* society and their attitude towards women are dealt with in the introductory chapters.

momentum in the second half of the nineteenth century. An example of the thought process of Bengali women at the time is available in Girindramohini's (Girīndramohinī Dāsī) ideas of women's freedom:

> [C]ompared to an Englishman's efficiency, fearlessness, and steadiness, a Bengali man appears as a woman. But we cannot draw the conclusion that the Bengali men were created to serve as Englishmen's clerks all their lives […] it is no longer acceptable to claim that simply because women have performed small domestic chores, they will never rise above it even after they have received education" (Dāsi cited in Bhattacharya, Sen 2003, p. 10).

Along with a greater consciousness of her surroundings and her position in society, educated Bengali women also started reviewing their own weakness and flaws that have resulted in such a subjugated state.[137] Krishnabhabini's travelogue, though written in the form of a travelogue, is majorly a critique of two societies: evaluation of her own society and the perceived flaws, shortcomings and advancements of the English society. Having provided a general background and referral points, it is now easier to evaluate Krishnabhabini's travelogue. *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā*, at certain points, is a reflection of some of the common themes and ideas prevalent in the Bengali travelogues at the time, notwithstanding, includes some uniqueness as well.

Krishnabhabini exercised some authority through her travelogue, but her position was still that of a colonized woman in the nineteenth century scenario. Hence, she was in a unique position of power and powerlessness. The title that she selected for her travelogue, on a scrutiny, also presents insightful trajectories.

3.4 Overview, nuances and themes

England and *baṅgamahilā* being the two parts of it, on one level, *A Bengali woman in England* (literal translation) does not so much give away the condition of the Bengali woman living in England, or how the Bengali woman is faring in England, but it is more about how the Bengali woman finds England to be. It is a certain asymmetrical balance between how England has influenced the Bengali woman and how the Bengali woman perceives and translates England for a specific purpose. *Deś*, mainly country, but more precisely *baṅgadeś* or Bengal is the major preoccupation of Krishnabhabini as is apparent from the beginning of her travelogue. She bids a tearful goodbye to her *deś*, symbolized as the mother. Apologizing first for not being of much help to her mother, she seeks to see the

[137] The periodicals included columns where Bengali women discussed their narrow-mindedness, laziness and other such problems inherent in themselves, which would come in the way of achieving total freedom.

land of freedom and learn from Britain so that she can broaden her horizons, learn from the rulers and come back to serve her motherland:

[I] hoped in my heart [that] with my beloved

Will care for thy well being

But the desire remained unfulfilled

Still remains secretly inside.

…

Since long in my heart

A hidden hope springs

To witness cherished freedom

To visit the land [where] it resides.[138]

Thus with the urge to see the unseen and know the unknown, Krishnabhabini set sail for England. What she saw and experienced was written down as a means to reach out the greater Bengali population. It was a norm for women writers to open their travelogues with the familiar 'apology'[139] for encroaching the predominantly male domain—of travel and documenting travel experiences; and this norm was not confined to the Western travel discourse, as we see in the prologue of *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā*. A standard invocation mainly consisted of the predominant theme of humility assuring that no lofty theme has been aimed at or being intended to achieve in the particular travelogue, and at the same time, mentioning the key ingredients that should keep the travel narrative worthy of the reader's time and attention. Krishnabhabini sticks to this norm of initiating and introducing her project with

[138] Original poem: "Mane āśā chila priẏatama sane, / taba hita tare kariba yatan, / kintu se bāsanā haẏ'ni pūraṇ, / ekhano antare raẏeche gopane. […] bahudin hate hṛdaẏe āmār, / gopane raẏeche ek āśālatā, / dekhibār tare priẏa svādhīnatā, / yāiba ye deśe basati uhār" (Dās 1996, p. 14).

[139] There are no indications that apologies, as a part of Bengali literature, was imitated, and or reproduced from Western literary traditions. Introductions and prefaces in Bengali, even the ones written by male authors, almost always contained apologies. However, the act of apologizing for a literary endeavor has an interesting origin. Mostly associated with and abundantly found in western travel narratives, this apology was a necessary part of women's writing. Kristi Siegel explains it in detail, "[E]arly women travel writers skirted a delicate course. To get an audience, a woman needed to provide material that was reasonably exciting; to keep an audience, she needed to remain a lady. Given that travel—and particularly unescorted travel—was deemed inappropriate for a lady, women often employed a narrative stance that could be described as the decorum of indecorum, a fine balance in which they strained the conventions of femininity, but did not break them. Most early travel writing began with an apology (i.e., for writing in the first person, for engaging in such inappropriate activity, for bothering the reader with their trivial endeavors, and so forth) that, again, affirmed their status as ladies and also served to reassure readers they would not be competing with men" (Siegel 2004, p. 2-3).

humility and apology. The prologue is her statement on the usefulness, authenticity, and appeal of her literary endeavor without overemphasizing anything. She remarks, "[…] I am attempting to bring out this little, partially complete book to the public with the hope of entertaining you. My intention behind writing this book is not to earn a name for myself as a housewife or to exhibit my erudition and intelligence"[140] (Dās 1996, p. 5). Further explaining her motive, the author wrote that the new objects she witnessed, and her lived experiences, had given rise to new ideas in her mind, which she wanted to share with her readers. The author humbly acknowledged that her book lacks the lofty themes or *rasas* of a good literature and was completely shorn of any linguistic ornamentation; but its main idea was to point out the differences between a life of freedom and repression as pointed by the author in the prologue. As an act of identifying herself with the masses, or making the masses identify with her, Krishnabhabini addressed to the female section of her readers, imploring that she too, had been, like them, confined within the household and detached from the happenings of the outside world. In her words: "I have always been eager to know every aspect of my nation, and whenever I heard someone was going to England or had returned from there, I would feel excited. I would be restless to listen to various new aspects of England from those who had just returned from there"[141] (Dās 1996, p. 5). What, she thought, set her apart, from other women in her position, was her indomitable desire to know about the world and her dissatisfaction to remain confined in the household. She also mentioned that her travelogue could serve as a manual for the aspiring Indian travelers and helped them know some important insider's information about the English society[142] or at least to satiate the curiosity, shared by the natives about England. 'Authenticity' and 'impartiality' of the travelogue have also been stressed in the introduction itself. She mentioned the use of English books and newspapers and some friendly native English informants to arrive at conclusions in her work, besides the popular and available discourses of famous English and French writers on England. In her own words:

[140] Original: "Āp'nāder cittabinodaner āśāẏ āmi eta kṣudra o asampurṇa abasthāẏ ei sāmānya pustakkhāni janasamāje bāhir karite prabṛtta haïẏāchi. āmi gṛhakartrī nām pāibār bā nijer bidyā buddhi prākāś karibār abhilāṣe ei pustak likhite ārambha kari nāi" (Dās 1996, p. 5).

[141] Original text, "Deśer samasta byāpār uttam'rūpe jānibār nimitta lālāẏita haïtām, ebaṃ keha bilāt jāitechen kiṃbā keha bilāt haïte phiriẏā āsitechen śunilei man nāchiẏā uṭhita, bideś haïte pratyāgata byaktider nikaṭe giẏā bideś sambandhīẏa nānā prakār nūtan biṣaẏ śunibār janya byāsta haïtām" (Dās 1996, p. 5).

[142] Krishnabhabini covers a wide range of topics in her travelogue, ranging from geographical location of different places in London to manners and customs of everyday English life; general characteristics of men and women to queen Victoria's household, theaters, clubs, pubs, and museums. Her list is exhaustive which can, quite ably give someone a general idea of the country. She hopes that aspirant travelers to London will find her travelogue interesting as a document providing them with useful information about the city before actually settling in.

> To be accurate and true in my writing of this volume, I have consulted English books, periodicals and newspapers as well as a couple of trusted English friends to learn certain aspects of their customs and ways of thinking. Being circumspect about erring, I also read books written by the English to understand how they judged themselves while some other foreign writers helped me understand how they perceived the good and the bad of the race. I particularly benefitted from a book on England by noted French scholar Monsieur Taine. My husband helped on issues of education and politics (Dās 1996, p. 6)[143].

That the book could serve as a manual for Bengali men and women who could or could not have the opportunity to visit England has been stressed in the beginning. She also underscores her impartiality[144] of judgment and narration of English characters and customs and calls for an open mind to appreciate her writing. What is important and rightly stressed at in her prologue is the manifold importance of her literary exertion to the Bengalis, and one can safely say that the book rightly lives up to the claim the author makes, since such detailed descriptions of any nation, its behavior, and the society indeed rarely come across, however generalized and opinionated they may seem at times.

3.5 Perceptions of English life and society

Krishnabhabini's first perception of London was of a 'city of shops', 'city of theaters' or even the 'city of wealth' (Dās 1996, p. 39). The metropolis to her was a congested space with uniformly grey houses without any open space between them like she was used to seeing at home. Frequently, the houses were replaced by shops on both sides of the streets lighted with gas lamps, seducing people with the glitter of commodities (Dās 1996, p. 39-40). For poor people, Krishnabhabini remarks (Dās 1996, p. 40), it must have been very tough to control their greed in the face of such temptation. For the author, London, full of riches, was primarily a city of rich people and only the affluent could enjoy their life there.

---

[143] Original: "Ei pustak' racanāẏ āmi kona kona biṣaẏe iṃrājī grantha, māsik patrikā o saṃbādpatrer sāhāyya laïẏāchi ebaṃ ācār bybahār sambandhe dui ekjan biśvāsī iṃrāj bandhur sahit parāmarśa kariẏā yathārtha kathā likhite ceṣṭā kariẏāchi. Āmār kona biśaẏe bhram' haẏ ei asaṃkāẏ iṃrej'rā nije āpnāder sambandhe kirūp bicār kare ebaṃ bidesīẏerā ihāder doṣ'guṇ sambandhe ki bibecanā kare, tāhā jānibār nimitta iṃrāj'racita o bidesīẏar kartṛk likhita kataguli pustak' pāṭh kariẏāchi; ihāder madhye bikhyāta farāsī paṇḍit masio ṭener racita iṃlaṇḍsambandhiẏa ek'khāni grantha haïte anek upakār pāiẏāchi. Śikṣā, rāj'nīti ityādi kaẏek'ṭa biṣaẏe āmār svāmī yatheṣṭa sāhāyya kariẏāchen."

[144] Krishnabhabini writes "[…] India and England are so different and the accord between the Indians and English is such that impartially evaluating the characteristics and qualities of the English becomes almost impossible. Only if the readers be liberal and can read the book without any prejudice about the English, will they be able to judge the extent of my success in maintaining neutrality." Original: "Bhāratbarṣa o iṃlaṇḍer madhye ye rūp amīl prabhed ebaṃ iṃlaṇḍ'bāsīder sahit bhārat'bāsīder yerūp sambandha, tāhāte sthir'citte iṃrāj'der guṇāguṇ parẏālocanā karā āmāder pakṣe ati kaṭhīn byāpār; ataeb pāṭhak'barga yadi uhāder sambandhe samasta kusaṃskār parityāg kariẏā udār'citte ei pustak'khāni pāṭh karen, tāhā haïle, apakṣapāt bicāre āmi katadūr saphal haïẏāchi ihā bujhite pāriben" (Das 1996, p. 6).

Thus, from the onset, Krishnabhabini describes an excluding character of the metropolis: a city, which was sad for the poor and enjoyable for the rich—a city which made the deprived acutely aware of their deprivation. This was the first blow that the author might have received on her preconceived ideas of absolute freedom reigning in the metropolis. With gradual progress, we shall see how there seems to appear a gap between the ideas the author might have had in her mind before she set sail for England and the reality that greeted her there. Hence, her tone became overly judgmental at times, with her realizing that she caould not serve England and the English people on a platter for the consumption of her countrymen and women without some disclaimers and riders. Krishnabhabini further observed, quite minutely, the physical characteristics of the Londoners. The population was quite varied with men and women with rosy complexion, well-built bodies, and energized animated countenance besides the calmer expressionless faces and frailer bodies (Dās 1996, p. 48). However, in spite of their bodily differences, Englishmen came across to Krishnabhabini as bold, determined, patient, and laborious. Their industriousness was commendable as failures failed to deter them from their chosen actions.

Accumulating wealth was the greatest motive of their lives, observed Krishnabhabini: English people were especially deft in accumulating wealth from other countries. She remarked that even when they adopted reprehensible means in their bid to earn a fortune abroad, no penitence was evoked in their minds[145] (Dās 1996, p. 49). Money-mindedness of European culture was a major point of critique among the enlightened Bengali personalities. Tapan Raychaudhuri's discussion on Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (Baṅkim꞉candra Caṭṭopādhyāy) exposes an almost similar perspective to that of Krishnabhabini. Raychaudhuri writes,

> Material prosperity had become the be all and end all of human existence. The quest for money, status and fame was accepted now in one's very infancy as the ultimate goal. […] [T]he threefold objective exalted by western civilization and its colonial disciples was dominated by one central concern—money. Bankim's Kanaklata lampooned this insatiable thirst in a language of rare passion: 'Hara hara bom bom! Pour more money on the heaps of money! Money is devotion, money is salvation, money is worship, money is the only way! Money is *dharma*, money is *artha*, money is *kama*, money is *moksha*![…] [T]he English with copper-coloured beard are the priests at this ritual; the mantras are read from Adam Smith's *purana* and Mill's

[145] Original quote: "Arthalābher janya bideśe giẏā kona prakār nindanīẏa upāẏ abalamban karileo ihāder mane ātmaglānir udaẏ haẏ'nā" (Dās 1996, p. 49).

> *tantra*;…education and enterprise are the offerings at this worship and the human heart is the animal to be sacrificed[146] (Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 163).

Materialism of the west vs spiritualism of the East was a discourse much in vogue in the colonial times. Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi were major proponents of Indian spiritualism each adding their own strand of philosophy and thinking to it. "They argued that the materialism of the West created warfare and colonial exploitation, while the spirituality of the East provided an alternative that would lead to world peace and equal prosperity for all" (Veer 2009, p. 1109). However, a flipside to this binary was also the position of rational Europe with the irrational/backward East. Pratik Chakraborty (2001) mentions this binary in his article on Mahendra Lal Sircar[147]:

> To Sircar, contemporary India in many ways represented all that was opposed to modern, rational and progressive ideas. In drawing distinctions between the East and the West, Sircar, much like his contemporary Bankim, had ascribed to Europe a rational, progressive culture while portraying Asia as suffering from a regressive, irrational mindset. He pointed out that Asia was yet to develop a material culture. The greatest obstacle here was the lack of a truly scientific temperament. Hindu culture constituted the greatest evil: it was marked by orthodoxy, polytheism, idolatry and priesthood, none of which he found compatible with the scientific spirit (Chakraborty 2001, p. 249).

Krishnabhabini observed that self-interest and vanity is another notable characteristic of the English people. *Svārtha*, the Bengali term she used to define self-interest is also related to the word *svārthapar* meaning selfish. *Svārtha* connotes the narrow self-indulgence which is opposed to the more redeeming and virtuous idea of *parārtha*—interest of others. It is worth mentioning here that selflessness was a much stressed ideal in the nineteenth century educated Bengali society. Tapan Raychaudhuri's assessment of Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay, one of the luminaries of the day, brings out this point. Mukhopadhayay was a sceptic when it came to 'learning' from the West in matters of family and society as India's moral and social standards were very different from the West. Raychaudhuri writes, "[…] [h]e was convinced that the norms of Indian society, emphasizing a selfless concern for others, especially as enshrined in the traditional family system, were superior to those of Europe"

[146]The speech excerpt of Kanaklatā is from Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Kamalākānter daptar* (1875)–*āmār man* (29-30) as cited in Raychaudhuri (1988).

[147] Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar (1833-1904) was a social reformer and founder of Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. He was an avid proponent of scientific studies. Chakraborty writes, "[F]or Sircar, science was the metaphor of nationalism. He stressed that political nationalism had no meaning without science as its guiding spirit. For more details, see Chakraborty (2001, p. 247).

(Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 43-44). Krishnabhabini maintained a balanced approach and was of the opinion that many English characteristics should be followed. However, some of her ideas mirror Mukhopadhyay's thoughts as well, even though there are no clear indication that she was acquainted with Mukhopadhyay's ideologies and writings. English people, the author asserts, were not only self-centered but also keen on taking other people's share of resources: "[t]hey believe that every country and every race in the world exists only to satisfy their heart' desire"[148] (Dās 1996, p. 49). During her stay in England, Krishnabhabini realized that money was the most desirable thing for the English people and she expressed her critique in unmixed terms: "[T]hey have cast a widespread net to accumulate wealth, be it in their own country or across foreign lands and wherever they smell money, the avaricious Englishmen pounce on it like vultures"[149] (Dās 1996, p. 49). The author further substantiated her claims by exemplifying the notoriousness of English business strategies. The bloodshed and cost incurred in forcibly introducing opium trade in China and thereby forcing the Chinese people to drink the poison, had failed to induce any anguish in the English heart. Here, she compared that other countries like India, Germany, France, and China respected knowledge and intelligence more than materialism. However, in England money and riches were worth more than intrinsic humanitarian qualities. The colonizer's materialism was a subject of much discussion along the Bengali intellectuals. "Bhudev traced this meanness of spirit to self-centered individualism, economic competition among nations and the breathless anxiety that went with the single-minded pursuit of wealth" (Raychaudhuri 1988, p. 89). The notion that obsession with materialism can give birth to false pride was emphasized by Krishnabhabini in her comparative analysis of English behavior with that of French and Germans. Even though other European countries were in no way inferior to England and in some cases maybe even superior, the English were portrayed to show hatred towards these nationalities. Hatred for foreigners also existed within the English society. In this context, the readers were not told if Krishnabhabini herself experienced racism, but she reported that the English showed disrespect and pride in interacting with foreigners. They appeared unfriendly and serious to the author and common English people could not bear foreigners, she observed. This was ironic to the

[148] Original: "Ihāder biśvās ei je, pṛthibīr sakal deś o sakal jāti kebal ihāder manobāñchā paritṛpta karibār janya sṛjita haïẏāche" (Dās 1996, p. 49).
[149] Original: "Ki svadeś, ki bideś, sarbatraï ṭākā dharibār janya jāl pātiẏā rākhiẏāche, ebaṃ yekhāne arther gandha pāi, sei khānei dhan'lolup iṃrāj āmiṣ'lobhī gṛdhrer nyāẏ dhābamān haẏ" (Das 1996, p. 49).

author because while British people went to other countries to take away everything, their heartfelt wish was that foreigners stayed out of their country (Dās 1996, p. 50)[150].

Krishnabhabini was also critical of the class system based on economic status of the people. The author explored that interclass mobility and relationships were almost non-existing as lords never made marital alliances or otherwise with the poor and the economically disadvantaged classes. Such alliances could cause them to be boycotted socially. Since the division in society was stringent between the haves and the have nots, she argued that English people devoted their lives in accumulation of wealth without which their lives could become miserable. Furthermore, in her descriptions of the different classes of English society, Krishnabhabini made a distinction between the *bhadralok* and the *chotalok (choṭalokˈ)*, the former being the moneyed class and the latter being the poor people who were shorn of all civilizing ideals. She mentioned that the latter were almost sub-human:

> [T]he poor in this country could be better described as insolent, because in our country and in other European countries, the poor are humble and respectful of others. But in England, especially in London, the poor are like animals. One, visiting these parts of the city will not think that there is a single gentleman in London or that England is a civilized country (Dās 1996, p. 41)[151].

Since the society was so competitive and polarized on the basis of wealth and resources, it is quite imaginable that English people were distant from softer and finer human emotions of love, humility, sympathy. Krishnabhabini was openly judgmental about the English people and especially those belonging to the poorer sections; she called them hard-hearted and not moved by other people's sorrows. She also called them cruel and torturous to the weak and meek.[152] Krishnabhabini also exemplified ridiculing the foreigners, laughing and

150Original: "Ār sādhāraṇ lok bideśīẏader duichaḳṣe dekhite pārenā; iṃrājerā sakal deśe giẏā sarbasva laiẏā āse, kintu kona bideśīẏa edeśe nā bās kare—ihāi ihāder ekānta icchā" [Common people of England despise foreigners; while the English loot other countries barren, they earnestly wish that no foreigners should live in their country] (Dās 1996, p. 50).

151 Original: "Edeśer daridrader garib'mānuṣer badale "choṭalok" balite haẏ kāraṇ āmāder deśer o iuroper anyānya deśer garib'lokerā namra o loker mān rākhiẏā cale; kintu iṃlaṇḍer, biśeṣ laṇḍaner daridralokerā ekebāre paśur mata. Keha ei bhāge gele mane karibe nā ye laṇḍane ek'ṭio bhadralok āche bā iṃlaṇḍ ek'ṭi sabhya deś" Dās 1996, p. 41).

152 Original: "Sādhāraṇ iṃrājerā nija ātmīẏa kuṭumber kaṣṭa dekhileo adhik kātar haẏ nā. sacharāchar ihārā durbal'der upar adhik atyācār kariẏā thāke ebaṃ durbhāgyader sahānubhūti kare nā" [The adversities of their relatives do not perturb common Englishmen, generally they torture the weak and never sympathise with them] (Dās 1996, p. 51).

making fun of others who do not look like themselves, as special traits of these people with her personal experiences.[153]

As a final reprehensible characteristic, the author mentioned the lack of communication between people on the streets. She found them extraordinarily quiet and blamed the natural environment for the silence and muteness of the people. She mentioned that bad environment made it difficult to exchange pleasantries and form communication in the streets: "I feel that people here love to be so quiet and reticent because of the weather, which is truly terrible and makes socializing in the outdoors hard"[154] (Dās 1996, p. 54).

However, a scathing criticism was not all what Krishnabhabini had to offer. She defended her criticism by claiming that "[S]ince Indians have so long been subservient to the British that many-a-times [we] fail to notice the good qualities of the independent nations. It is not wise to ignore good qualities of people and just discuss the negative ones."[155] (Dās 1996, p. 55) She further claimed that we would have known nothing about the English and she would not have come up with the book if the entire English population just had been full of negative qualities. The evils of the English heart were well balanced by their industriousness, labor, determination, vigor, boldness etc. Work and activity were like music to the English. Krishnabhabini attributed this also to the climate. Unlike people in India, English people did not get tired soon and they were never afraid of hard work. This had been the major contributing factor behind the success of the English in trade and commerce. Enthusiasm was another commendable quality identified by the author. They were always inventing things and constantly advancing their trade and business. A different side of their selfishness was self-reliance and self-respect. They did not seek others' help in their work and felt embarrassed to do so. The author mentioned that the Indian scenario where able and matured children did not feel ashamed to live off their parents, were not found in England. Self-reliance was encouraged by parents in their children from a very young age. The most striking quality of English people that attached them together however was national unity. It was because of this sense of national unity that English people had been able to manage

[153] Krishnabhabini mentioned that she had once heard from a foreign woman that in the beginning of her stay in England, if she would go to a shop and speak incorrect English, then the shopkeepers instead of helping her out, would laugh at and ridicule her (Dās 1996, p. 53).

[154] Krishnabhabini compared the situation with other countries and places where it was customary for strangers to chat in the streets and exchange pleasantries—something that she missed in the English people. Original: "Āmār mane haẏ, edeśer kadarya jal'bāẏur doṣei iṃrej'rā eta nistabdha haïẏā thāk'te bhālabāshe, yathārthaï ekhān'kār jal bāyu yerūp jaghanya tāhāte rāstā ghāṭe miśāmiśi karā bhār" (Dās 1996, p. 54).

[155] Original: "Ābār ām'rā bahudin parādhīn āchi baliẏā anek samaẏe svādhīn jātider sadguṇ'guli dekhite pāinā. Loker bhālo guṇ'guli upekṣā kariẏā kebal manda guṇ'guli alocanā karā sādhur kāj naẏ" (Dās 1996, p. 55).

everything right from small laundry to the massive imperialistic project, whereas Indians had lagged behind due to lack of family, social, or national unity. This unity had caused them to defend the name of their 'race'. They never misbehaved with their own people: "[T]hey would rather swindle other nationalities but never be nasty to their own countrymen. […] The English people do not suffer from any inferiority and never bow down to others"[156] (Dās 1996, p. 57).

Krishnabhabini finally arrived at the conclusion, at the end of her analysis of the English character and behavior, that even though they were not overly friendly to foreigners, they did not take the initiative and caused them harm. The lack of softness in their character did not make them dangerous. On the contrary, the country housed many overly nice and soft people as well who were open to strangers and foreigners.

3.6 Freedom and unfreedom: comparative analysis of women at home and women in England

Traveling for women especially during the colonial times had mostly been either a privilege or a compulsion (Borch 2004, p. 282). Colonial India was among the favorite destinations for white women either accompanying their husbands, for mission activities[157] or as "fishing fleets"[158]. The bleak socio-economic condition at home motivated many British women to come to the colonies.[159] (Perkin 1993, p. 6-7) But for the Indians, it was more of a privilege to visit the land of the rulers, more so when the traveler was a woman. The enthusiasm and excitement accompanying this privilege is apparent to readers in Krishnabhabini's opening chapters, describing her voyage from Calcutta to London via Bombay and Venice. The eagerness and passion of her adventure as well as the initiation of her voyage were somewhat balanced with the feeling of pain emanating out of separation from her own country. The author mentioned her home leaving as a 'painful' experience[160] incomparable

[156] Original: "Ihārā baraṃ anya jātir nikaṭ juẏāchurī karibe tathāpi deśīẏa lokeder sahit nīc' bybahār karibe nā. […] imṛej'rā kakhan nija jātike heẏa jñān karenā o anyer kāche abanataśir haïẏā calenā" (Dās 1996, p. 57).

[157] Cf. Borch: "[E]ven the missionaries were compelled by the humanitarian and religious concern to protect the indigenous peoples by Christianizing them and teaching them to live like Europeans [which] would assist the running of the colonies by assimilating them and making them governable. Conversely, many missionaries were favourably inclined towards colonial expansion, as this would bring more heathens into this position" (2004, p. 282).

[158] Cf. Sen: "[…] shiploads of women, derisively called 'fishing fleets' would face the hardships of the sea voyage and come out to the East" (1997, p. 358).

[159] Victorian society was crippled by many evils at that time—poverty, lack of clinical facilities, alarming child mortality rate, child labour including their engagement in dangerous occupations, lack of proper education etc. Children esp. little girls were subjected to strict discipline sometime bordering on ruthlessness. Little girls were subjected to corporal punishments and taught to suppress themselves to be more ladylike. For further reference, see Perkin (1993).

[160] Original: "Kintu āmār mata ki keha svadeś chāṛiẏā anek diner janya bideśe jāiteche? Bodh haẏ nā; tabe āmār e kaṣṭer sahit āj anya kāhāro kaṣṭer tulanā haẏ nā" [Does anyone travel abroad for a long time? I guess

with anyone else's sorrows. An immediate change that she noticed while leaving her homeland was the transformation of her dress. She was out of her 'purdah' and free to look around. The veil, which had been limiting her vision, was henceforth removed and this was the first step towards her freedom. Krishnabhabini recollected,

> "[…] Earlier while going to my father's place I would veil my face while crossing this station, but where is my veil today? My fingers touched my hat while trying to adjust my veil and made me slightly embarrassed. Today even my acquaintances will not be able to recognize me and might even bow to me or be afraid of me and keep a distance thinking me as a memsahib. What amazing difference dresses can make!"[161] (Dās 1996, p. 7).

There was a striking resemblance in connecting mobility with women's dress at that time, as Mary Morris reflects in her article: "I find it revealing that the bindings in women's corsets were called *stays*. Someone who wore stays wouldn't be going very far" (Morris 1992, p. 25). The act of travel itself had multiple layers of subversive implications attached to it, as Chu-Chueh Cheng points out in her article that "more than just an act of physical movement, travel also implies transience, transgression, and deviance"[162] (Cheng 2004, p. 125). It is worth mentioning that Krishnabhabini's life also symbolized transgression and deviance, first by forgoing the conventional role of a mother, of a housewife and of a Hindu woman. The household or the *saṃsār*, which was one of the prime *dharmas* of a Hindu lady took a back seat when the desire to know the unknown drove Krishnabhabini out of her familiar domain of the household. Freedom, the magic word that Krishnabhabini came up with repeatedly in her travelogue also served as the guiding principle. However, as we will see, her idea of freedom was all pervasive in human life—first as a nationalist sentiment where she craved for the freedom of her motherland from the hands of the colonizers and then, as a woman, in support of greater political and social choices for women aimed at contributing to the progress of her society. For her, individual freedom and freedom for her country ceased to be two different goals but merged into a unified way to achieve the development of the Indian society. In the wake of her attachment to her oppressed homeland and shackled society, travel to England became a necessary, self-inflicted exercise to awaken the nationalist in her and through her, in her poor, indolent brethren; and this motive

---

not; however, there cannot be any comparison between my anguish and that of someone else] (Dās 1996, p. 7).

[161] Original: "Āge pitrālaẏe yāibār samaẏ mukh ḍhākiẏā ei ṣṭeśan diẏā yāitām, kaï āj āmār se ghomṭā kothāẏ? ghom'ṭā ṭānite giẏā māthāẏ ṭupite hāth ṭhekāte nijer poṣāk dekhiẏā mane mane ek'ṭu lajjā haïla. āj āmāke kona parichita lok dekhile cinite pāribe nā, haïta "mem᾽ sāheb" baliẏā selām karibe athabā bhaẏe sariẏā yāibe. ki āścharya! poṣāke eta prabhed!" (Dās 1996, p. 7).

[162] For more details on women and travel, see Siegel (ed. 2004).

was quite prominent in her travelogue where she spelled out a recipe for an ideal society. Clearly, the travelogue acted as a catalyst for the unraveling of an unconventional Bengali middle class Hindu woman's nationalist dream and aspirations. In order to achieve her aims of actualizing the precise recipe, which made the English so successful and thriving as a nation, the author, turned her gaze to the women in English society and the way they were treated. She repeatedly compared the women in England to the ones back home. The first qualities that Krishnabhabini noticed in the characters and behavior of English women were efficiency, cleverness, and education. They quite resembled their men in matters of dedication to their duties. Even though they did not have immediate household chores, they always remained occupied in some necessary artwork. English women were the real 'queen' of the household. Since they did not have the division between the *antarmahal* (the inner and private part of the household, assigned to women) and *bāhirmahal* (the outer part of the household frequented by men and guests) like in Bengali households, English women took part in the running and maintenance of the household as well as entertaining guests and other work. Since domestic help was not easily available and was expensive as well, they managed the entire household.

Women from affluent households who could afford servants did pass their time singing, dressing up and reading, but this was seen as atypical of English women. Rich ladies across cultures indulged in such behavior, observed Krishnabhabini: "[H]ere, the way women generally assist men or at times perform men's job is rare in our country. Besides work befitting of women, the English women run stores, work as clerks, teach in schools, write books and newspapers, convene assembly, deliver speeches, and perform many other manly work very efficiently"[163] (Dās 1996, p. 74). The author constantly stressed the equality of labor between men and women harping on the fact that there was no such thing as manly work or womanly work; English women exemplified the fact that most work is suitable for anyone who was dedicated and willing. The author further commented that one should not form an opinion of the habits and ways of life of English women by watching their activities in Bengal, where they were indolent, lazy, and spoilt with ready availability of servants, they spent their time dressing up, singing, eating, gossiping, roaming around, and spending their husband's excess earnings. In their natural habitat, Krishnabhabini found English

[163] Original: "Ekhāne strīloke sacarācar yerūp puruṣer sāhāẏatā kare o anek samaẏe puruṣer kāj kariẏā thāke, erūp āmāder deśe prāy'i dṛṣṭa haẏ na. nārīr ucit kāj byatīta imṛāj strīlokerā dokān cālāẏ, kerāṇīgiri kare, skule śikṣā deẏ, pustak o saṃbād᾽patra lekhe, sabhā kariẏā baktṛtā deẏ ityādi anek puruṣer karma ati sundar'rūpe nirbāha kare."

women physically well endowed and robust. However, this physical toughness also contributed to less feminine grace in their physicality, according to the author. Normally they were not ugly. However, the fairness of complexion usually made them look beautiful at the first glance. A deeper introspection could prove that their bodies lacked feminine delicate shape and beauty. Though most of them were slim, the author saw them as somewhat masculine. At times, their beauty was mainly cosmetic. Krishnabhabini observed, "[I]n reality, I have never seen anywhere else the artificial beauty I have observed in English women. Seemingly, if Indian women were white complexioned and dressed finely, they would have appeared more magical and beautiful English ladies[164]" (Dās 1996, p. 76). Krishnabhabini stressed the major affection of English women, namely dressing up. They took great care and pains[165] to dress themselves in various colors and outfits, which, she saw as lacking taste. In reality they had little clue as to what suited them (Dās 1996, p. 76). The author surmised that one major reason as to why the women attached such great importance to dresses was that society judged people based on their dresses. A poor woman dressed in fineries was more well received that a rich woman who was careless about her attire.

Krishnabhabini attributed the maturity of English women with the word *caturatā*, which means cunning. She referred to some kind of street smartness that the women gathered and developed while interacting with different people. Unlike Bengali women who got married at a very young age and were entangled in household duties, English women got more time socializing and knowing the world outside their home. Their knowledge of the world and interaction with strangers also included their quest for husbands. This endeavor, for Krishnabhabini, was one of the most important tasks a woman had when she had reached of age. Normally, they did not seek the help of parents and elders. However, Krishnabhabini also remarked that the opinion Indians had about English women about their character was incorrect. In spite of their socializing, English women could really be virtuous and dedicated

[164] Original quote: "Bāstabik' imļaṇḍīẏa strīlok'der madhye yeman kṛtrim soundarya dekhiẏāchi serūp ār kothao dekhi nāi. Bodh'haẏ bhārat'barṣīẏa mahilāder sādā raṃ haïle ebaṃ tāhārā sucāru paricchad' parile, sundarī imṛāj strīder apekṣā adhik' mohinī han'."

[165] The author here mentions the use of corsets and crinoline etc. which greatly alters the shape of the body at times making it painful and hugely uncomfortable for the wearer. This also makes is difficult to judge a real beauty at sight. Original: "Imṛāj mahilārā saundarya bṛddhi karibār janya eta prakār kṛtrim jinis byabahār kare ye, tāhāder biṣaẏ śunile cam'kiẏā jāite haẏ. kar'seṭ, krinolin prabhṛti nānā prakār drabya dvārā śarīrer gaṛaṇ o ākṛti eman paribartan karāiẏā deẏ ye, ke yathārtha sundarī ār ke sājān sundarī tāhā nirṇaẏ karā asādhya" [It is astonishing how many artificial things English women use to enhance their beauty. By wearing things like corset and crinoline, the posture and the gait can be altered so much that it is impossible to determine who is really beautiful and who is just a camouflaged beauty] (Dās 1996, p. 77).

to their husbands. She even emphasized the fact that it was easy for secluded [Bengali] women to maintain their virtue since they did not interact with the opposite sex. Nevertheless, the virtuous English women were virtuous; even after they stayed among and interacted openly with men (Dās 1996, p. 79). Here, Krishnabhbini reflected exactly the words of her contemporary Bengali male traveler, Troilakyanath Mukharjee (Trailokyanāth Mukhārjī) who visited England in 1886. Mukharjee wrote in his travelogue, *A Visit to Europe*, (1989):

> [B]ut the most serious argument brought forward against Zanana emancipation is that education and liberty in women will lead to immorality. I venture to say this notion is entirely a mistaken one. I may not approve some of the European customs and may not desire their introduction into this country, but this I can unhesitatingly assert that with all the education, all the freedom and all the independence allowed to women in Europe there is not more immorality there than there is in India (Mukharjee 1989, p. 51).

Some notable English and European female characters served as references and inspirations to the Bengali women in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. A separate chapter of this dissertation deals with those figures and the particular way they inspired the latter. In Krishnabhabini's travelogue, we find a mention of some of such personalities already well known in India including Lady Baker, Lady Brassey, Mary Carpenter, Florence Nightingale etc. the achievements and services of whom towards their own societies are exemplified by the author as woman's strength.

Having painted a fairly positive picture of English women, and comparing them with Bengali women, Krishnabhabini arrived at the conclusion that ages of subjection and subservience had made Bengali women weak willed, clumsy, and lethargic. In addition, the men were afraid to give them freedom lest they misused that. However, like the baby that took one step at a time and learnt to walk, the author thought similarly of Bengali women, who should be gradually granted some freedom. For Krishnabhabini, ideally, men should have lead the way and thereby helped the women make their own choices.

3.7 Social and conjugal life

That a sound cooperation between the sexes was necessary for the development and smooth functioning of a society was much stressed by Krishnabhabini in her travelogue. To start with, she described in detail the courtship and marriage practices of the English people. She started her discussion with the following sentence, "[N]either women nor men in England marry against their will, nor their parents force their ward into marriage and make their lives

thorny"[166] (Dās 1996, p. 91). The idea of two consenting adults getting into marital alliance was a symbol of gender relations in advanced societies, asserted Krishnabhabini while she compared it with the repressive social system and conjugal alliances in the Indian scenario.[167] Men and women of marriageable age in England met fell in love, and courted without the interference of their parents and once they were sure of their feelings for each other, informed their respective parents and tied the knot. Even though this system was not immune to its flaws as revealed by cases of infidelity and breaking of engagement, the author found it empowering for both the parties involved. The period immediately after the marriage was also nice as the author noted: "at this time, the newly wed stays unaware of the bitterness of domesticity, annoyance of children, problems with servants and other such irritants of family life, and believe marital life only as the reservoir of happiness"[168] (Dās 1996, p. 94). The domestic life of a married couple in England was also much different from their Indian counterparts. Except for the time when the husband was working, the couple stayed together, ate, and roamed around, shared domestic duties, discussed about religion and worldly affairs together. They shared their sorrows and happiness together, prayed to god and the wife helped the husband in different activities as well, observed Krishnabhabini. On the incapability of the husband, the wife toiled to arrange for food for the husband and children. To a nineteenth century enlightened Bengali woman, this might have seemed the utopia of gender and domestic relations and the author rightly admitted that. A strong conjugal bond kept English men strongly dedicated to their wives and prevented them for seeking pleasures elsewhere, concluded the author. Very few people in India knew the ideal man-woman relationship, lamented the author. Superstition, evil practices, child marriage, and inappropriate behavior of parents towards their children were some of the root causes for such skewed gender relations in India. The wife was oblivious of the ways the husbands spent his time, which was mainly occupied with his friends in unhealthy activities and the

[166] Original: "Imḷaṇḍe strīlok kiṃbā puruṣ kehaï nija icchā byatireke kakhana bibāha kare nā, ebaṃ edeśiẏa pitāmātārāo kakhana bal'pūrbak bibāha diẏā putrakanyār jībane kaṇṭak ropaṇ karen nā" (Dās 1996, p. 91).

[167] Krishnabhabini's approval and appreciation of English courtship values are also reflected in T N Mukharjee's *A Visit to Europe*. Mukharjee writes, "[T]he time of courtship with its first sensation of love, the earnest longing to see the object of one's affection, the joy of meeting, the pain of separation, the hopes and doubts, and many little things which make one now transcendently happy, now dolefully miserable, they remember in after days as the sweetest moments of life. The mind of an oriental youth can be possessed with a temporary infatuation, but it has really no opportunity to experience the romance of love. The custom of the country has thus deprived him of one of the charming excitement of life" (Mukharjee 1889, p. 49).

[168] Original: "Ei samaẏ nabadampati saṃsārer jvālā, santāner upadrab, dās'dāsīr jhañjhāṭ ityādi gārhasthya jībaner kona prakār kaṣṭa jāne nā, ebaṃ bibāher jīban'ke kebal sukher ādhār baliẏāi biśvās kare" (Dās 1996, p. 98).

husband had no clue of the *abarodh ˈbāsinī* wife whom he rarely saw.[169] The same unhealthy relation was extended towards the children, noted Krishnabhabini. The frequent tussles and violent separation that characterized many filial relationships in India was missing in Britain, the main reason being that children were reared up in different ways. As long as British children stayed with their parents, they were loved and taken care of. After that, they were left to find their ways of life by themselves. This kept the sweetness of the relation intact. Once the children were of age, British parents treated them as friends unlike the controlling Indian parents who were offended once the children did something of their own will. Krishnabhabini mentioned that such an ideal relationship as was prevalent in England enhanced the feeling of respect children had for their parents. In addition, since the siblings grew up together without parental discrimination, their relations were also strong and without hatred. Brothers and sisters, subjected to the same care, love, and education maintained their good relationship even after they were married and lived separate lives[170] (Dās 1996, p. 97).

3.8 Remarks on alcoholism

Krishnabhabini's comments of the alcoholism of English people were quite radical and scathing. She commented that the habit of drinking of Englishmen surpassed all other European countries and drunken Englishmen were similar to animals in their behavior. It is worth noting that Krishnabhabini, time and again compared drunken or otherwise British people of lowly and poor status as animals, the origin of which can be traced to Partha Chatterjee's analysis of the 'new woman'. He refers to Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay's essay on "Modesty" (Lajjāsīlatā) written in 1969, which carried a strong nationalist fervor. Chatterjee writes,

> [h]e [Bhudeb] talks of the natural and social principles which provide the basis for the feminine virtues. Modesty, or decorum in manner and conduct, he says, is a specifically human trait; it does not exist in animal nature. It is human aversion to the purely animal traits that gives rise to virtues such as modesty. In this aspect, human beings seek to cultivate in themselves, and in their civilization, spiritual or god-like qualities wholly opposed to forms of behavior which prevail in animal nature. Further, within the human species, women cultivate and cherish these god-

[169] Original: "Āmāder deśer dampati jīban ki kaṣṭakar tāhā bujhite pārile mane bhayaṃkar biṣād upasthit haẏ. abaruddhā strī, svāmī ki prakāre samasta din kāṭān, tāhā jānen nā, ebaṃ strī kirūpe kāl'yāpan karen tāhāo svāmī jānen nā" [Couples in our country become extremely depressed when they realise how difficult life is. A constricted wife hardly knows how her husband spends his days while the husband is equally unaware about how his wife spends her time] (Dās 1996, p. 95).

[170] Original: "Bālyakāl haïte bhāibon ek'sthāne o ek'bhābe pālita haẏ. […] Abibāhita bhāiboner madhye ye kebal bhālobāsā thāke tāhā naẏ, bibāher par'o ihārā parasparer prati samān sneha prakāś karey" [Siblings are raised in the same place and same way through their childhood. They not merely love each other when they are unmarried but continue sharing similar bond of affection even after their marriage] (Dās 1996, p. 97).

> like qualities far more than men. Protected to a certain extent from the purely material pursuits of securing a livelihood in the external world, women express in their appearance and behavior the spiritual qualities that are the characteristic of civilized and refined human society (Chatterjee 1989, p. 626).

Thus the binaries of material/spiritual, divine/animalistic, masculine/feminine were created by the Bengali writers and thinkers, irrespective of their sex, which conformed and highlighted the nationalistic ideologies—much like the content of Bhudeb's writings. He further extended these dichotomies to his analysis of Bengali and European societies, based on exclusion and free-mixing of men and women respectively. Thus, societies which encouraged free mixing of sexes tended to be "somewhat coarse, devoid of spiritual qualities and relatively prominent in animal traits" (Chatterjee 1989, p. 626) and this coarseness can show itself in the female population of such a society. Krishnabhabini, being the avid advocate of gender equality and fairness, however refrained from tracing the animal instincts of British to free mixing between men and women and kept it confined to materialism in general and alcoholism in particular.

The nineteenth century was marked by the nationalistic enterprise of emphasizing and rationalizing the traditional cultures, customs, habits and ways of life, thereby confirming the unnecessity to imitate the West (Chatterjee 1989). Interestingly this 'inferior-superior' comparative analysis was mutual among the colonizers and the colonized and even extended to eating and drinking habits. Krishnabhabini's observations on British habits of alcohol consumption are balanced with the alleged self-restraint and frugality of Indian/Bengali farmers: "[F]armers in our country do not consider drinking and profusive meat eating as the prime objective of their lives, and like people in similar conditions here, are not brutish"[171] (Dās 1996, p. 109). Besides alcoholism, the discussion on vegetarianism and nonvegetarianism also gained a momentum as Jayanta Sengupta remarks in his article on colonial Bengal culinary traditions:

> [I]n the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century discourse on food, the issue of vegetarianism versus non-vegetarianism became a cultural question, with much significance for nationalist thought. Whether one ate animal flesh or not became a marker of civilizational characteristics or distinctions. The material/spiritual dichotomy—a rhetorical creation of nationalist thought, in which the difference between western and Indian civilizations is reflected—was used freely in the comparative discussion of food as well. The flesh-eating habits of the west were

[171] Original: "Āmāder deśer cāśārā madyapān, rāśi rāśi maṃsha āhār ityādi ke jībaner pradhān uddeśya bhābiẏā ekhānkār oi abasthār lokeder mata paśubat' haïẏa thāke nā."

> argued to have contributed to what was considered to be a grossly materialistic civilization, thriving on crude physicality/coarse vulgarity (Sengupta 2010, p. 95).

However, these observations were not one sided and the Europeans were not overly enthusiastic about the cooking/eating habits of the Indians:

> [T]he Indian kitchen as an object of revulsion was the other part of the same worldview. The dark mysteries of the Orient manifested themselves within the cookhouse in many ways—through the heat, smoke and filth, as well as through the sunning of foxy cooks or bawarchis, who pinched provisions, padded their accounts, and—worst of all—used their curry powder to enliven what a 1906 cookbook described as 'superannuated fish or meat'" (Sengupta 2010, p. 86).

Just as Krishnabhabini attributed animal qualities to alcoholic Englishmen, the colonizers traced the much hyped Indian effeminacy to the hot and humid climate as well as consumption of rice which was considered as "easily digestible food, obtained with little labor" (Sengupta 2010, p. 87) and hence fitting the slothful ways of the Bengalis. Thus, Krishnabhabini echoed the popular nationalistic dichotomies of material vs spiritual as well as the divine vs the animalistic while making her assessment of the weaknesses and vices of the British character.

Krishnabhabini redirected her readers to wonder at the question of why there were so many poor people in such miserable condition in England even though the country was sucking out wealth from other countries; she then presented the possible answer to her readers. Alcoholism had plagued the English society. Even though drinking among the nobles had reduced compared to the past, as the author observed and informed, the drinking habit among the lower sections of the society or the *choṭalok'* stayed the same. The author mentioned the saying: "[w]hen drunk, the French talk, Germans sleep and the British fight" (Dās 1996, p. 100).[172] Krishnabhabini further informed her readers "the poor people of this country waste one-fourth of their daily income on alcohol. Especially Saturday is a horrible day. After getting paid, the poor seek shelter after their working hours and do not leave till they have any money left"[173] (Dās 1996, p. 101). The author further narrated a scene where four generations of a family, the grandmother, mother, daughter and a little child were sitting together in a pub drinking. The mother poured some gin in the mouth of the little child so that he could com to know the taste of alcohol—a move which was much praised by the

[172] Original, "Kathita āche ye, mātāl haïle pharāsīrā bake, jārmāṇerā ghumaẏ ār iṃrājerā mārāmāri kare" (Dās 1996, p. 100).

[173] Original: "Edesīẏa daridralokerā pratidiner upārjaner caturthāṃśa kebal made naṣṭa kare. biśeṣ śanibār ekhān'kār ek'ṭi bhaẏaṃkar din. Daridrerā māhinā pāiẏā chutīr par bikāl belay mader dokāne giẏā aśraẏ laẏ o yatakṣaṇ hāte tākā thāke tatakṣaṇ dokān haïte uṭhe nā" (Dās 1996, p. 101).

father. Such a scene could only be witnessed in England, remarked Krishnabhabini. The passage ended with a word of caution for the Indian youth, lest they should imitate this practice of the colonizers. It is worth mentioning here that class played a major role in Krishnabhabini's assessment of alcoholism in British society.

3.9 Ideas of nation-building as learnt from England

Freedom is the most powerful motif in the travelogue of Krishnabhabini, documenting England, socially, geographically and culturally with vivid details. The travelogue also brings out her anticipation and what she witnessed after she started living in England. Even though she was scathingly judgmental and opinionated about the colonizer's land, her ideas on freedom did not undergo much change during her stay:

> If someone asks me "you have witnessed many differences between India and England, which one appealed to you the most?" Then I will briefly respond that England is the foundation of free-spirited life and my India is subjugated. It is said that even if a slave lands on the English soil, he becomes free. I have experienced it myself since I started breathing the air of free England and living with people who enjoy freedom; a new spirit is kindled in my heart[174] (Dās 1996, p. 129).

A greater part of the freedom that British people in general and British women in particular experienced came from education. To the author, education was the singular redeeming factor that enhanced and enriched the life of the people. From Krishnabhabini's description, one gets an idea of the educational infrastructure of nineteenth century England. Every village had at least two to three schools, which gave people the fair option of education irrespective of their economic background. The schools and educational institutions were not dependent on governmental help but were established by rich or ordinary people[175] (Dās 1996, p. 115). The facility was equally available to both the sexes with an abundance of schools for women. England was full of educated people in responsible positions. However, too many educated people were also queuing for jobs, which were not abundant, remarked, the author (Dās 1996, p. 116). "In our country, writers such as Hem˙candra bābu, Bańkim˙

[174] Original "Yadi keha āmāke jijñāsā karen je "bhāratbarṣa o iṃlaṇḍe eta prabhed dekhile kintu sakaler apekṣā kon'ṭi biśeṣ kariẏā tomār mane lagiẏāche?" tāhā haïle āmi saṃkhepe uttar di ye iṃlaṇḍ svādhīn jībaner ādhār, ār āmāder bhārat ekebāre parādhīn. kathāẏ bale ye, krītadās paryanta iṃlaṇḍer māṭite pā dile tatkhaṇāt svādhīn haïyā yāẏ; āmi nijeo dekhitechi ye, yatadin haïte iṃlaṇḍer svādhīn bāẏu seban karitechi, yatadin haïte svādhīn mānuṣer sahit ekatra bās karitechi, tatadin haite āmār mane ek nūtan bhāber udaẏ haïyāche" (Dās 1996, p. 129).

[175] Original: "Edeśe kehaï kona skul ba kalej sthāpaner janya gabarn'meṇṭer sāhāyyer apekṣā kare nā, adhikāṃśa bidyālaẏ kona dhanī bā sādhāraṇ loker dvārā sthāpita" [In this country no one waits for the government to establish a school or a college, majority of the schools are established either by someone wealthy or even common citizens] (Dās 1996, p. 115).

bābu[176] and a few others have written some excellent books to grace our mother language and have become famous in the entire Bengal. Here there are numerous such writers; hence none of them individually enjoy such fame […]"[177] (Dās 1996, p. 116). We notice certain disparaging strain in the tone of the author, probably hinting at the radical patriarchic ideals propagated by the two writers. Also, that the fame of Bankim Chandra and Hemchandra was dependent on the sparse population of intellectuals in the Bengali society, and that there was no dearth of such thinkers and writers in the British society, was also a way of Krishnabhabini's proclaiming the latter's superior intellectual standards.

Krishnabhabini further concentrated on the linguistic nationalism of the British people. Even though many had knowledge of French, German, and other foreign languages, they never forsook their own languages to read books in foreign languages and if there were better books available in other languages, they translated them in their own language. Compared to this, many Indians felt discouraged or even hated to read books in their native language after they had learnt English[178] (Dās 1996, p. 117).

Besides education, much stress was given to physical education. The author mentioned gymnastics and cricket as being prominent among the physical activities. Women, like men also attained expertise in strengthening activities like gymnastics. Besides, walking, hiking, horse-riding, running, lawn tennis were certain sports where women were at par with men. Krishnabhabini mentioned that even Indian men perhaps could not walk as much as an Englishwoman could. Those seventeen and eighteen years old Bengali young men who thought, they had attained maturity and abstained from all sorts of strengthening exercises, or thought that those exercises did not go well with education, should have come to England and witnessed the proper amalgamation of education with sports—adviced Krishnabhabini.

Female education had all the aspects of male education. Every locality in London had at least two to three schools for women. Even in institutions in London, Oxford and Cambridge, women were receiving the same education as men under the same teacher and were passing the same exams. Even in the tough examinations, where few men appeared, women

[176] Hemchandra Bandopadhyay (1838-1903) was a Bengali nationalist writer and poet mainly known for his poem 'Bharat Sangit' (1870). Bankim Chandra Chattopadhy (1838-1894) was a Bengali nationalist writer and poet and thinker.

[177] Original: "Āmāder deśe hem'candra bābu, baṅkim· bābu prabhṛti granthakār katak'guli utkṛṣṭa pustak likhiẏā mātṛbhāṣār mukhojjval kariẏāchen baliẏā samasta baṅgadeśe tāhāder nām bikhyāta haïyāche; ekhane orūp granthakār ye kata achen tāhār saṃkhyā nāi, sejanẏa tāhāder ata nām'o nāi" (Dās 1996, p. 116).

[178] Original: "Kintu idānīntan anek śikṣita bhārat'barṣiẏera iṃrāji śikhiẏā ār svadeśīẏa bhāṣāẏ likhita pustak paṛite cahen nā kiṃbā ghṛṇā karen" [Nowadays, after learning English, many educated Indians despise reading books written in their native languages] (Dās 1996, p. 117).

competed and became successful. Krishnabhabini found no fault with the education scenario of England of the nineteenth century, the major reason seemingly, the gender equality that prevailed in the system. She wrote: "[T]here is ample educational facility for women in England. There's no dearth of good schools for girls in any city; in London two or three girls' schools can be found in every locality. In the universities of London, Oxford and Cambridge, women enjoy equal educational opportunities as men" (Dās 1996, p. 74).[179] Later, she proclaimed that the best novels of her time were indeed penned by British women. As extracurricular activities, girls took part in sewing, knitting, music, exercise, and sometimes even cooking. British parents ensured that their daughters attained expertise in those subjects. They were equally enthusiastic about their daughters' education as they were about their sons'. With an abundance of female teachers, the parents employed them to teach their daughters like they did for their sons and spent equal money for both of them. Even daughters of ordinary *gṛhastha* (householders) educated their daughters till eighteen years of age (Dās 1996, p. 75).

3.10 Major points of analysis

Krishnabhabini's critical reading of the English society veers around some major points. Her travelogue can be seen as an exercise in returning or reversing the gaze. Hans Harder offers a lucid explanation of this reversal or reverse flow in his article (2004):

> [s]ince what is interesting about Bengali travel accounts on Britain […] is precisely that, seen from this perspective, they reverse the colonial hierarchy of motion, exchange and observation. The writers travel on the same fixed trajectories of the colonial superstructure, but they do so against the grain; they make the colonial masters at home the object of their evaluation (Harder 2004, p. 132).

Krishnabhabini was not the first traveler to place the metropole under scrutiny. But she was definitely the first *bhadramahila* to give an in depth analysis of the intricacies of the British society. She reversed the flow of Eurocentric viewing and commenting on the exotic and the uncanny 'orient'. Julie F. Codell, in her article talks about such reversals in context of travelogues written by Indian men. Krishnabhabini was not very different from them when authoring the narrative of reversals:

> […] [o]ne of their many reversals of generic features, such as the Western smorgasbord descriptions of sights, tastes, and sounds. Most Western travelers explored the "unexplored"—places Europeans had not been before, which they tried

[179] Original: "Iṃlaṇḍe strīlokeder śikṣār janya bilakṣaṇ subidhā āche. Kona nagare bālikāder bhāla bhāla skul o kālejer abhāb nāi; laṇḍane prāẏ prati pāṛātei dui tin'ṭā kariẏā choṭa choṭa bālikābidyālaẏ dekhite paoẏā jāẏ. āj'kāl laṇḍaṇ, aksˈphorḍ, kembrij prabhṛti biśvabidyālaẏe strīlokerā puruṣder samān śikṣā pāiẏā thāke" (Dās 1996, p. 74).

> to dominate through heroic claims and notions of the "other" as exotic, inferior, quaint, erotic, and picturesque. Indian travelers played with these conventions by applying them to the over-explored, over-discovered Western metropole, reversing the hierarchy of periphery and center, and recalling the aristocratic eighteenth-century Grand Tour of Europe (Codell 2007, p. 174).

Though Krishnabhabini's role in the English society was that of an 'other,' an outsider, she also became the voice of the 'other' namely the English women in Indian society. Her travelogue, according to her claims was the 'authentic' first-hand information about the ruling class for people who were too far away to see and experience them in their natural setting. She also worked as the translator of the colonizer's culture to her people. Thus, Krishnabhabini, through her narration, exercised the power of gaze and in turn the power of shaping opinion of her native people about the colonizer. This brought the readers to the major points of her narrative, namely the theoretical aspects of the formation of her perspective and her point of view, which can be explained in terms of Genette's theory of focalization. Following Genette's triadic typology of zero, internal and external focalization,[180] one can classify Krishnabhabini's narrative as a case of internal focalization where the events and experiences are presented and even restricted to the point of view or perspective of the narrator[181]. In the travelogue, Krishnabhabini herself is the focal character and her narration is a chequered fabric of preconceived visions of her mind, omniscient visions (consisting of sweeping generalizations, comparisons, and absolute judgments) as well as visions from the outside, where she maintains a strict distance from her characters, without signs of personal involvement and intimacy.[182] As is the case with internal focalization, the author here, invites and leads the readers to experience England and English society as she herself did.

[180] See Genette (1983). Articles of Nelles (1990) and Edmiston (1989) explain it further, "Genette distinguishes between three types of restriction. A non-focalized text, or zero focalization, means that the narrator is unlimited spatially and unrestricted in psychological access to the characters. In internal focalization, the narrator is limited spatially but has access to the mind of the focal character. External focalization also involves a spatial limitation, but this time the narrator has no psychological privilege and is limited to the role of witness" (Edminston 1989, p. 730).

[181] Critics have however termed Genette's internal or restricted focalization as problematic. "[I]n addition to a straight forward single character bound epistemology it can also denote the mixed position of "narratorial co-vision" with a defined reflector character, which, however, goes along with a reductionist external perspective onto all other characters. Moreover, "internal focalization can also be used to describe the case of an autobiographic narration where the mode of focalization is completely self-centered." (Meister, Schönert 2009, p. 15).

[182] Krishnabhabini's visions correspond to Jean Pouillon's tripartite division of vision. Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory defines Pouillon's three vision modes: "*vision avec* ('vision with', i.e., from within a character's mind), *vision par derriere* ('vision from behind', or from an omniscient narratorial vantage), and *vision du dehors* ('vision from outside', a camera-like view)" (2010, p. 174).

Her narratorial self is a part of her ethnographic self, residing among her subjects, and presenting empirical evidence of the colonizer's culture. However, there is a fine balance between her empirical observation and her predetermined perspectives. Time and again, the author took recourse to comparing the British 'race' with the other European counterparts like the German or the French and extending it to the Chinese, or the American. Readers do not have the information if she visited and stayed in all of these countries. It is not clear to the reader how informed she was about these societies or what were her sources of information: It is possible that most of her knowledge and ideas were based on the general knowledge prevalent in the British society at the time of her residence. For example, on the subject of British snobbery and pride, the author remarked that in spite of the fact that France and Germany are in no way inferior to the British in terms of education, intellect, vigor, and heroism, yet, the proud British expressed condescension and hatred to those nationalities. While travelling abroad in other European countries, the British neglected many aspects and interacted with the foreigners with arrogance, besides showing off their greatness to the people. She observed, "[C]ountries like France and Germany are in no way inferior to England; the French and the Germans on the contrary are superior in many aspects and are not substandard to the English in education, intellect, might and power. Even then the haughty English ridicule the culture, customs and mores of these 'races'" (Dās 1996, p. 50).[183] There is no hint as to where the author might have got this information.

Krishnabhabini's travelogue, from the literary point of view, shows signs of conforming to the Victorian travel writing tradition: the autobiographical elements, social criticism, and its frequent and strong vilification of the 'racial other.' The vivid description of localities, streets, landmarks and spaces like parks, houses etc. resembles, in some way, exoticizing the spectacle.[184] Also by using her travelogue as a forum for addressing the social, political, and cultural issues of Bengal in the backdrop of similar situations and issues in England, she conformed to a popular practice among the Victorian travel writers, whose "[a]ccounts of foreign countries provide a forum for addressing domestic issues of the traveled regions, those of their home-land, or a combination of both" (Siegel 2004, p. 124).

[183] Original: "Eman ki phrāns, jārmāṇī prabhṛti deś sabhyatāẏ iṃlaṇḍ haite kona kramei hīn naẏ ebaṃ pharāsīrā bā jārmānerā bidyā, buddhi, tej, parākramˈ ityādite iṃrāj'der apekṣā kakhanaï nikṛṣṭa naẏ, baraṃ anek biṣaẏe ihāder apekṣā śreṣṭha, tathāpi garbita iṃrājerā oi sakal jātir bhinna rīti, nīti o cāl'calane ghṛṇā pradarśan kariẏā thāke".

[184] For example, see Chu-Chueh Cheng, (2004, p. 123).

Her observation also lacks personal touch or intimacy with her 'subjects' of gaze. The readers see her as the unattached 'outsider' situated at the spatial divide. At times, her gaze is sweeping and generalizing, ignoring the constituent individuals. When making comments on English men or women and their habits, she never comes up with personal anecdotes to validate her claims or provide an exceptional example. This lack of personal intimacy lends a high pedestal to her as a narrator who is looking at her subject from the other side of a clearly defined boundary. She encounters the west armed with her personal worldview and her preconceived perspective. Travel to England has been empowering to Krishnabhabini at many levels. Besides giving her the freedom to leave the usual routine and confining domesticity, and witness and experience a new country, her travelogue spelled out that empowerment. Cheng mentions in the context of the inherent qualities of travelogues and Victorian travel writing,

> [T]here are several ways to look at travel literature's generic encroachment. Historically, travel writing has been deployed as an author's strategy of validating his or her viewpoint. Like their literary predecessors, many Victorian writers used distant and exotic travels to authenticate their experiences, which in turn ascertained the authority of their writing. Socially, travel writing relocates ideological transgressions to a distant land and thereby allows the author greater freedom to address controversial issues. Keenly aware of the empowerment of travel, Victorian women writers used travel literature effectively to win recognition for themselves…[V]ictorian women writers also used travel writing as a transitional genre to mediate the conflicting roles they played in the private sphere and the public arena. Travel literature allowed them to voice their views in an acceptable form that veiled their participation in public forums through seemingly personal accounts (Cheng 2004, p. 125-126).

Even though gaining recognition might have been one slight agenda in Krishnabhabini, but empowerment and authority to address otherwise problematic issues like women's education, empowerment, and freedom, were definitely part of her literary exercise. And the author rightly did that as a way of voicing her own opinion which was further veiled with the motive of informing people back home. Hence, the travelogue gave the author not only a voice, but also a channel to participate in the ripe and animated atmosphere of nineteenth century colonial politics and culture in Bengal. The feel of power that oozes out of the pages of criticism of the colonizer's culture and practices in *Iṃlaṇḍe Baṅgamahilā*, defies the fact that the writer belongs to the class of the ruled. In so doing, this disseminates and subverts colonial power. Also, Krishnhabini's narrative strategies of selective repetition and highlighting, contribute to the making of a 'story'-like discourse on the colonizer's society, much in tune of what Hayden White remarks in *Narrative Dynamics* (2002):

> [N]o given set of casually recorded historical events can in itself constitute a story; the most it might offer to the historian are story elements. The events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motif repetition, variation of time and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the employment of a novel or a play (White 2002, p. 194).

One can also read a certain sense of rivalry and the wish to establish moral authority in her narrative when Krishnabhabini discusses about the manners, customs and characters of Englishwomen. Placing the Indian and the English women side by side, the ease with which she dismisses the latter on grounds of moral laxity, inhospitality, humility etc., inevitably draws our attention towards her self-conscious approach towards the women of the ruling class. That the author has a class conscious approach is not only apparent from her using the term *choṭalok* to refer to the lowly classes and their seemingly 'animalistic' behavior, or criticizing British women, but the very act of writing a travelogue puts her in a higher class pedestal. The genre itself is associated to the empowered class since it has been hegemonized by the economically well-off, educated, adventurous, and predominantly male travelers, tracing its lineage from the travel writings of white powerful European males. Migrant workers, slaves and the likes rarely had the privilege to write travelogues and gaze at the cultural 'other.'[185] Even though this shows that gazing itself is a privilege limited to the ones who *can* gaze and who can talk about what they have gazed at, there are exceptions in the form of what one can call *mute gaze*. Mute gaze should be considered an important and alternative part of the gaze discourse, whereby members of the subaltern groups can gaze back at the privileged other. Instances of mute gazing can be found in the narratives that grew around and on the behavior of native servants in colonial India. Contributed by British and Anglo-Indian writers, especially resident wives of British officials, these narratives expose a certain 'surveillance' the residents found themselves under. Hibbert (1978) records one such interaction between Charlotte Canning, wife of the then Governor-General of India Lord Canning and her Indian servants:

[185] See Clifford, "[V]ictorian bourgeois travelers, men and women, were usually accompanied by servants, many of whom were people of colour. These individuals have never achieved the status of "travelers". Their experiences, the cross-cultural links they made, their different access to the societies visited—such encounters seldom find serious representation in the literature of travel. Racism certainly has a great deal to do with this. For in the dominant discourses of travel, a nonwhite person cannot figure as a heroic explorer, aesthetic interpreter, or scientific authority. […] A host of servants, helpers, companions, guides, and bearers have been excluded from the role of proper travelers because of their race and class, and because theirs seemed to be a dependant status in relation to the supposed independence of the individualist, bourgeois voyager" (Clifford 1997, p. 33).

> Charlotte Canning found the lack of privacy as disconcerting as the damp and heat. Dark servants glided into the room and stood in attitudes of silent submission for minutes on end 'without one realizing that one was no longer alone'. 'I am not sure,' she wrote home, 'that I do not regret creaking footmen. These gliding people come and stand by one, and will wait an hour with their eyes fixed on one, and their hands joined as if to say their prayers, if you do not see them; and one is quite startled to find them patiently waiting when one looks round' (Hibbert 1978, p. 27).

Collingham (2001) further remarks,

> [T]he presence of Indian servants in the bungalow opened up the private sphere of the British in India to the gaze of members of the Indian population. In Britain there was also a danger of the middle-class private sphere being revealed to the servants, and this put pressure on the family to exercise restraint in their presence. […] [T]he relaxation of boundaries demarcating family and servants is more surprising in the Indian context, where race complicated the servant-employer relationship. The domestic space of the tiny British elite was laid bare to the view of members of a subjugated race. The failure to regulate contact with Indian servants within the home meant that the behavior of the British could be monitored by their subjects not only in public but also in private" (2001, p. 104-105).

Thus, seemingly private arenas were exposed to the gaze of the native servants, who, without having the power to document their gaze or publicly talk about it, did subject the ruling class to their mute scrutiny. In fact, even the behavior of female servants and wet nurses, who worked in the British households were no different from their male counterparts, as Frances Wells talks about referring to her ayah:

> [a]s soon as I can after breakfast for they do irritate me so I can hardly bear it. Fancy a woman squatting down by baby's side, doing nothing but watching your every movement, and fixing her eyes full on your face, hardly ever even blinking them: it is the custom of ladies to allow this but it almost drives me wild, and I am never happy till I have got rid of these creatures, for whom I entertain the most profound aversion" (Berners Papers 1854 cited in Collingham 2001, p. 106).

These instances substantiate that even if the subalterns could not speak, but they could definitely gaze and subtly redefine the power equation between the masters and their servants through this mute surveillance. One interesting aspect of this mute gaze is that, the object gazed at never tried to engage with the gaze and on the contrary tried to avoid and obliterate it, by firing servants. However, in tune with the Foucaldian concept, the mute gaze of the servants was also capable of controlling the objects gazed at:

> Indian servants expected to perform even the most menial tasks such as picking up something that had been dropped, moving a chair or letting the blinds down, this meant that they needed to be in constant attendance, and thus the openness of Anglo-Indian family life was to some extent imposed on the British by their servants, who

> by restricting the movements of their employers 'assert[ed] the boundaries of their domain'" (Collingham 2001, p. 106).

This substantiates the argument that gazing back at the colonial establishment was not only confined to learned, travelled, and so-called enlightened and progressive classes, but also could be found in the subaltern groups.

Returning to Krishnabhabini, her travelogue has a clear political agenda while carrying a sentimental perspective as well. She initiates her travelogue with a mellifluous poem about her overwhelming desire to witness the 'land of freedom'[186]—different from her own confining and limiting space. In her poem, two themes are prominent: first, the feeling of confinement and the urge to visit a place, which promises freedom, and second, the symbolism. Her *deś*, besides signifying the sentimentalized nation, also symbolizes the *saṃsār* or the domestic household, which is equally unfree and confining for women. This feeling of confinement also corresponds to the geographical and the domestic space. For her, transcending of the *saṃsār* boundaries is also akin to transcending the national and geographical boundaries. Visualizing England, from afar (Bengal), as the land of freedom has a strong idealistic implication, which however fades once she starts living there. Later, in Krishnabhabini's depiction of England in the travelogue, she attempts a more balanced approach by highlighting both positive and negative aspects of English society—the positive ideals are imitable for India; whereas the negative practices are to be abhorred. Krishnabhabini, being a woman and aware of her limitations however refrained from 'determining India's future', though she had her suggestions in her travelogue.

There is an interesting point of difference between Indian and Western travelers, observes Codell (2007). Even though Indian travelers like their western counterparts were privileged and had the leisure and the means to satisfy their urge to experience distant lands, yet, unlike their western counterparts, Indian travelers were not looking for self-discovery, especially when travelling to Britain: "[T]hey wanted to see Britain and Europe first hand, judge what their colonizers told them, discover what colonizers did not say, and transmit information to other Indians" (Codell 2007, p. 174). Thus while western travelers were busy exploring the unexplored, "Indian travelers played with these conventions by applying them to the over-explored, over-discovered Western metropole, reversing the hierarchy of periphery

[186] "Since long in my heart/Remains hidden, a desire/To see my freedom /To visit the land [where] it resides"—this poem is already quoted earlier.

and center, and recalling the aristocratic eighteenth-century Grand Tour of Europe" (Codell 2007, p. 174). The reverence and magnification that travel to England gave rise to, was more of a generic phenomenon. Imagining the 'mother country' as utopia and the travel as a pilgrimage was not uncommon in Indian travelogues.[187] T N Mukharjee was famously quoted to have envisioned India's regeneration and transformation into utopia through English women:

> Yet the bright faces of women, the reflection of their pure innocent hearts, freely moving around us, can alone efface the brutal instincts which man has received as a legacy from his primitive ancestor and which still maintains the kinship between him and the lower animals….[G]ive us mothers like English mothers to bring up our boys, young girls to spur impetuous youths on to noble deeds, wives to steer our manhood safely through the whirlpools of life, and elegant ladies to refine, revive and invigorate our rotten society—then India will be regenerated in twenty years' time (Mukharjee 1889, p. 53).

3.11 'Construction' of the English society by Krishnabhabini

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, one of the most notable and articulate intellectuals of nineteenth century Bengal, in his appraisal of a travel account[188], wrote about the 'constructedness' of social and historical representation; for example, a Frenchman's account of England is very different from an Englishman's description of his land, and for that matter, an Indian's description of England would have some distinguishing traits unavailable elsewhere. Bankimchandra Chatterjee's notion of individual construction of a society is relevant when writing about *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā*, since in this discourse, the duel between 'construction' and 'authenticity' is all-pervasive. Simonti Sen rightly points out in her book (2004), that "the call for an authentic depiction was actually a call for the creation of an England of the Bengali/Indian's own that could be used, *manipulated* and *handled* in all the ways that were deemed necessary to fulfill the demands of an emerging nation" (Sen 2004, p. 7). Nothing can further consolidate the claim than Krishnabhabini's travelogue.

The essential component of the traveler's gaze as is manifested in *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* is that in the process of 'experiencing' the colonizer's society and 'representing' them, the author represents herself. Hence, her critical gaze at the imperialists throws a light at her own society as well as her mental makeup: It is a preoccupation of the thesis, as previously

[187] See Codell (2007).
[188] The travel account is Romesh Chunder Dutt's *Three Years in Europe, 1868 to 1871*, Bankimchandra wrote 'We read English books written by Englishmen and the England painted by them is typically an Englishman's view of England. What England will look through our Indian eyes we are unable to see in English publications. […] we gather that an Englishman's England is substantially different from a Frenchman's England' (1911).

stated, to show that gazing at the other never exists in isolation but comes with a fair share of self-representation of the spectator. Through this literary endeavor of representation of the 'other' simultaneously with the representation of the self, she mediates the imagined, established, and experienced image of contemporary English society and people before presenting it to her own society. Her acquired perceptions, which helped her conceptualize England and the English society forms the essence of her gaze. These perceptions throw as much light on Krishnabhabini as the *bangamahila* as on her textual creation—England.

3.12 Conclusion

Krishnabhabini Das came back from England after eight years with a very little impact of English life and living left in her. The author, who left her child to stay with her husband and donned the English gown and talked about freedom in her early life, came back to her homeland and urged her ailing daughter to leave her husband. She herself followed strict codes of widowhood[189] as well thereby suggesting a shift towards 'tradition'. Her later treatises on women's freedom had a more conservative expression with much emphasis on women's duty and discipline. As Himani Banerji (1994) rightly points out, "[E]ssays such as Krishnabhabini Das's 'Strilok O Purush' (Women and Men), or articles in *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* explicitly connect shame and 'civilization' with de-sexualization and a de-physicalization, enjoining women to be actively self-denying" (Banerji 1994, p. 178). Thus, for Krishnabhabini, England or *bilet* stayed as a conglomeration of ideas, some to be accepted and others to be avoided. Her overwhelming occupation with the idea of freedom failed to mature or contribute to personal liberation and stayed more at the level of societal ambition. However, none can overlook or undermine her preoccupation with the condition of Indian women and her travelogue is a testament to her effort to come up with the attributes of an egalitarian social system which would not only spell out greater freedom for women but would also retrieve and sustain India's independence, since women are the pillars of the family and society. For the author, no nation could develop leaving behind its women.

[189] For details of Krishnabhabini's life refer to the foreword by Simonti Sen (1996).

4. Fantasizing the 'other' in Toru Dutt's novels

4.1 Introduction

The translation of gazing, an act purely physical, into literature, involves certain degrees of imagination. While dealing with literary writers, one cannot claim a complete withdrawal of authorial imagination and the resultant interference even in genres based on real-life experiences, like autobiographies and travelogues. While Krishnabhabini communicated her gazing through the realistic genre of travelogue as shown in the previous chapter, her narrative is replete with perceptions, preconceived notions, guesses, and generalizations, which in some ways, borrow from her imagination. The author dealt with in this chapter, Toru Dutt, takes gazing into a purely imaginative realm. The chapter takes into account her two fictions, one of them incomplete, to delineate her gaze at the 'imagined' European woman. Her endeavor, though belongs to the discourse of returning the gaze, is purely romantic, at times borrowing literary mechanisms from western writers.

Toru Dutt's literary fame stands almost in solitude and as an exception in the colonial period in Bengal. Her writings were, on one hand, exemplary of the scholarly transaction between Britain and its colony, thereby indicating the native's capability to accomplish literary exercises in the English language and on the other hand, highlighted as exceptional achievements of a woman belonging to a subjugated and oppressed culture. Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay (2013) further clarifies the author's position,

> [W]hile women were conspicuous by their absence from the colonial archives, Dutt had a prominent presence. This had in large measure to do with her being seen as an 'exception' to the otherwise demure and silent Indian (most often Hindu) women. In fact, her legitimacy in the Fin de Siecle canon stems from her unusual achievements as a Hindu woman. […] [S]he came to represent a woman's voice from across the seas who had fought against all the odds of the Hindu society and soon figured in the literary anthologies of women in the nineteenth century. Consequently, she became the ideal Indian subject who had been salvaged from the oppressive native regime and was suitably educated to have produced 'authentic' Indian tales" (Chattopadhyay 2013, p. 134-135).

However, it is certain that Toru's fame as a writer is not just based on her gender but her versatility in dealing with foreign languages, which she mastered with ease and elegance and is evident from her writings[190]. The literary exercises of Toru Dutt, which this chapter taken into consideration can be grouped under what Susie Tharu termed as Indo-Anglian

[190] For more details, see Chattopadhyay (2013, p. 130-157).

literature, defined as "a literary sub-culture that owes its existence to the British presence in India. […] [O]ne locates this point of origin, precisely because a principal burden of this literature can be regarded as a working out of the urgencies that arise from the Indo-British encounter" (Tharu 1989, p. 257). While the justification of colonial regime was provided by the colonizers as the Indians' inherent weakness, immorality and incapability to just self-government, this put the educated Indians under certain "psycho-cultural" pressure—to prove themselves to the colonial masters[191], Tharu observes. Hence,

> [C]onfronted with the image the West provided with, Indian intellectuals of that time reacted in two related ways. They identified positively with the British diagnosis of 'the Indian condition' and the consequent prescription for our redemption. […] [B]ut at the same time, they felt constrained at a personal level to prove their humanity in the eyes of those who doubted it. It was necessary for them to demonstrate that Indians were not innately or naturally bestial, and that with stern application we could attain an intellectual standing as well as a strength of character and purpose that was self-evidently on par with that of white men (Tharu 1989, p. 258).

Tharu thus reads Toru's inclination to European culture, civilization, and her literary and linguistic choices as a conscious endeavor to signify a departure from her allegedly 'inferior' society and culture and prove her deft over and assimilation into the colonizer's culture. Toru's fluency in English and French is seen by Tharu as, "[B]eing both Indian and female, she has not just to match, but to outdo, the British who found French notoriously difficult" (Tharu 1989, p. 258). The forthcoming discussion of her novels will substantiate the claim. However, before going into her novels, it is important to have a look at the writer, who is considered as one of the most anglophile Bengali women of nineteenth century Bengal.

4.2 Toru Dutt's life and times

Toru Dutt, the youngest of the three children of Govin Chunder Dutt and Kshetramoni Dutt, was born on 4th March 1856, in Rambagan (rāmbāgān), 12 Manicktolla Street right in the heart of colonial Calcutta. Govin Chunder had two other children, a son, Abju, born in 1851, who died when Toru was nine years old; and a daughter Aru who was born in 1854 and who died in 1874 when Toru was eighteen years old. Toru herself bade an untimely goodbye to the world three years later in 1877. She and her family were devout Christians being

[191] See Tharu, "[C]olonial presence gave rise to a torturous psycho-cultural situation for Indian, more so for those who came into close contact with it. British imperialism justified its continued, and after 1857, militaristic, presence in India […] through an elaborately developed ideology of racism, designed to prove Indians (especially the urban upper castes) as weak and immoral, incapable of just government. Imperial presence was projected as necessary, benign, restraining, parental. Obviously this ideology helped entrench colonial presence by convincing the colonized of their fundamental inhumanity and the consequent need for the colonizer#s permanent presence" (Tharu 1989, p. 257-258).

baptized at the Christ Church, Cornwallis Square, Calcutta in 1862.[192] The Bengali writer, mainly known for her inclination towards Europe both in real life and in her writings, was trained and well versed in English, French, and music, especially playing the piano and singing.[193] However, as her biographer Harihar Das points out, in one of her letters to her cousin she could not write her own name in Bengali without a mistake.[194] The inability to write her name in her mother tongue was not much scorned upon in her family circle, for, as Padmini Sengupta remarks, "[S]he was born in a period of Indian history which was over-shadowed by Macauley's Minute[195] and Lord William Bentinck's[196] ruling of 1835, promoting European education among the 'natives' and channeling all educational funds towards the use of 'English education alone'" (Sengupta 1977, p. 7). Privilege and ostracism, knowledge and loneliness, travel and confinement, death and longing—these formed prominent patterns in the author's short life of twenty-one years. Compared to the treatment female children were subjected to at the time,[197] Toru's life was one of safety, abundance and wish-fulfillment with trips and stays in Europe and the scope of education in England. Nonetheless, death of siblings and the resultant loneliness was her constant companion as is evident from her letters written to Ms. Mary Martin, her lifelong English friend. Towards the end, her own frequent illness prevented her from going back to England which she

[192] For more details on childhood of Toru, see Sengupta (1977, p. 22-28).

[193] "Toru and Aru both began to learn to play the piano and to sing under an English teacher, Mrs. Sinaes. They further developed these talents in Europe and both excelled as pianists and singers with deep *contralto* voices" (Sengupta 1968, p. 23).

[194] "Toru was very fond of children, and wrote a characteristic Bengali letter from Brompton, London, on September 26, 1870, to a little cousin in Calcutta. It also shows the poor knowledge she had of her mother tongue, even to the extent of mis-spelling her own name" (Das 1921, p. 28).

[195] Thomas Babington Macaulay was a historian, essayist and parliamentarian in charge of educational and legal reforms in colonial India. His Minute on Indian Education (1835) proposed the greatness of English education over Arabic and Sanskrit. He is famously quoted to have said "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a chass of persons Indian in blood and colour and English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Victoria Institutions 2013, p. 12). While Macauley reinterated the importance of teaching English to the natives, the process gained a greater impetus with David Hare's founding the Hindu College in January 1817 and William Carey's establishing the Serampore College in 1818. It is important to note that the spreading of English education in India was a complex process full of tugs and pulls of colonial politics and administration. Several scholarly works deal with the colonial policies and implications of making a class of interpreters among the natives for supposedly smooth colonial governance. Refer to Tejaswini Niranjana's article for a succinct sumup: (1990, p. 773-779).

[196] Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839) was a British soldier and statesman. He served as the Governor General of India from 1828-1835 and reformed the court system to make English rather than Persian the official court language. Bentinck is also known to have encouraged English education among the Indians.

[197] Cf., Bagchi: "[T]o begin with, she is sought to be left outside the purview of literate culture. For the Hindu girl child there was a widely prevalent belief that education induces early widowhood […] [T]his is the world in which women are governed by oral culture rather than by print culture. Proverbs and the '*bratakathas*' [bratakathā] (the instructional narratives accompanying the ritual penance known as the '*bratas*') are the major sources of the personality-formation of the girl child and should therefore, be studied with some care to understand the emergence of the girl child" (Bagchi 1993, p. 2216).

constantly desired as shown in her letters. Toru also faced a kind of ostracism[198] by virtue of her European education[199] and conversion to Christianity.[200]

In a colonial societal setting where English education was much in vogue, the same (i.e. English education) was not deemed necessary for the women at home. There was a major stress to keep the domestic sanctum intact and untouched from the colonizer's intrusion.[201] However, cultural intrusions of colonialism seeped into the domestic sphere anyway, whereby, from matters of inter-personal relations between the sexes, to ethics and aesthetics of household arrangements came under scrutiny and transformation.[202] Still, this transformation was not simply copying the European/English culture. The advice manuals[203] of the century that addressed every aspect of the household and interpersonal relationships aimed at creating a 'new woman.'[204] This category of 'new woman' is seen as a nationalist construct; one, who would be free from traditional and confining dicta of Hindu patriarchy. She would resemble neither the fabled lazy *memsahib* nor her own superstitious and illiterate sisters. She would be educated, virtuous with knowledge of hygiene, and able to "run the household according to the new physical and economic conditions set by the outside world" (Chatterjee 1993, p. 129f.). Then, finally, they would neither resemble the men in their own society nor the women from the West (Walsh 1997, p. 644).[205]

Tapan Raychaudhuri in his article 'Love in a Colonial Climate' portrays a more intimate, domestic picture of women of the time.[206] For the author, the sole purpose of the institution

[198] Toru's feeling of alienation which can be traced to her localization is discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.
[199] Toru's earliest education started with a Christian private tutor named Babu Shib Chunder Bannerjee. In France, around 1870 Toru and her sister attended a *Pensionnat* where they studied French. Toru and her family moved to Cambridge in 1871 where Toru and her sister attended the High Lectures for Women. For more details, see Sengupta (1977) and Das (1921).
[200] The Dutts of Rambagan was converted to Christianity in 1862, six years after Toru was born. Though interest in Bible and enthusiasm in English literature was prominent in the family from the time of Toru's grandfather, Rasamoy Dutt, Toru's uncles finally took the decision following one of the brother's death. Details of the conversion can be found in Sengupta (1977, p. 18-21).
[201] Partha Chatterjee observes, "[N]o encroachment by the colonizer must be allowed in that inner sanctum. In the world, imitation of, and adaptation to western norms was a necessity; at home they were tantamount to annihilation of one's very identity." For more details, see (Chatterjee 1990) (Sarkar 1985).
[202] See Judith Walsh: "[W]hat relationship should exist between a husband and a wife, how a mother should raise her children, even how kitchen spices should be stored in a storeroom wall—all had become issues for debate and contestation" (1997, p. 643). This is discussed in details in the introductory chapter.
[203] Writings in popular Bengali periodicals like *Bāmābodhinī patrika*, *Dāsī* etc., and also books like *Ramaṇir kartabya* (The Duties of Women, 1890), *Strīr prati svāmīr upadeś* (A husband's Advice to His Wife, 1884) where popular late nineteenth century advice manuals aimed at portraying the 'ideal' wife or the *ginni*. Advice ranged from cooking, cleaning, household aesthetics, views on female literacy and others.
[204] See Sumit Sarkar (2008), Partha Chatterjee (1993), Tanika Sarkar (1987).
[205] This is discussed in details in the introductory chapter.
[206] Toru's portrayal of love and its deviation in the colonial atmosphere is taken up again later in the subsequent sections.

of marriage was the production of sons to continue the lineage; but most importantly, "[A] young girl was given in marriage to a family rather than an individual. Felicity for the large family unit rather than the individuals who got married was evidently the primary purpose of the institution" (Raychaudhuri 2000: 351). Domesticity and household, though undergoing a transformation, was still of enormous importance; so was the kitchen, and a makeover of relations between the sexes in the new colonized societal order, implied that Bengal was still comfortable in imagining women solely in the role of the wife and the mother. It was a time when:

> [t]he domestic arena was recognized as the most suitable school for girls. Within the family little girls were socialized into growing up as model wives and the tools of this socialization came from the rituals accompanying the major *rites de passage* such as birth, death and puberty and marriage and childbirth as well as the ritual practices of everyday living (Bagchi 1993, p. 2216).

Amidst such an atmosphere, when family and even extended family formed the loci of a Bengali woman's life, Toru's life stands apart as strikingly individualistic and nonconformist. She is at times oblivious and at times critical of her society, busy learning and living. This makes her one of the most fascinating female characters of the century.

Toru spent her time learning new languages and read the likes of John Milton (1608-1674) and Victor Hugo (1802-1885).[207] Well versed in English and French, she was "[u]nusual in mid-nineteenth century Calcutta" (Lokuge 2006, p. XV). Gifted with progressive Christian parents[208] and a wonderful memory, she was not only confined to European literature but also learned mythologies like the Indian epic Ramayana.[209]

Toru Dutt's life offers a variation, an exception to the 'normal' colonial womanhood, and education was just one part of it. At a time when foreign travel or crossing the 'black waters'[210] was unacceptable, Toru travelled with her family for four years to Europe, specifically staying in France and England which left an indelible impression on her mind.

---

[207] Sengupta: Toru "was so interested in French history that she translated Victor Hugo's speech delivered in the French legislative assembly in 1851, and published the translation under the title, 'A Scene from Contemporary History' in the Bengal Magazine" (1977, p. 31).

[208] Whether Christianity ensures progression is a debatable topic. However, in Govin Dutt's family, Christianity, knowledge of European literature, international travelling without the stigma of crossing 'black water', and freedom for their women from child marriage etc. seemed to go hand in hand.

[209] Toru's poem 'Sita' reflects her emotional response to the story of the epic and the character of Sita as she heard from her mother.

[210] There was a sense of profanation attached to the crossing of 'black waters.' "[T]hey said that those that crossed the *kala pani* [black waters] lost their caste. That they were damned for several generations and that they were reborn again and again without ever knowing peace. They said that beyond the kala pani there was only misfortune, the sulfur of hell and the cries of wandering souls" (Appanah-Mouriquant 2003 cited in Ravindranathan 2008, p. 183). This is also discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter.

As apparent from her letters to her lifelong friend Mary Martin,[211] those were the times she thoroughly enjoyed her life, learning and travelling in Europe. Returning to Calcutta, Toru and her parents' life was put to two 'sore trials' in the form of the death of Aru and Abju, and Toru sought solace in her literary pursuits. Besides reading voraciously the works of writers ranging from Hugo to Austen, she produced her two novels, *Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden* (1878) and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d' Arvers* (1879). In addition, her *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882) was published posthumously and consisted of original narrative poems from the *Rāmāẏaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, and the *Viṣṇu purāṇa* as well as seven original compositions. *A Scene from Contemporary History* (1875), and the much acclaimed *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1876), which is a collection of translated French poems.

4.3 General overview of plots and narration

Toru Dutt is the first Bengali woman writer to not only portrays an idealistic and abstract image of the European women, but also writing two novels on the central theme of conjugal and pre-marital love. The present chapter analyzes the two novels of Toru Dutt, *Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden* an unfinished romance, published in parts in the Bengal Magazine in August 1877-July 1878 and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d' Arvers*, originally a French novel published by Didier, Paris in 1879. Here is a rough overview of the plots and narrative strategies before an indepth analysis:

Le Journal is written in the form of diary entries by a fifteen-year-old girl Marguerite d'Arvers who has just completed her time at a convent and has returned home on her fifteenth birthday. The first journal entry is dated August 20, 1860 and the duration of the novel covers the span of a year and half. The events of the narrative take place in a small village in France. Harihar Das states that the novel is Toru's "[a]ttempt to reproduce scenes from the life of French society in the sixties of the last century, and is peculiarly interesting because of the astonishing revelation it gives of the mind and accomplishments of its writer" (Das 1921, p. 321). The portrayal of Marguerite almost resembles a fairy-tale: a superlatively pious, chaste, obliging and good at heart little lady whom everyone in the village knows or loves. On the eve of her homecoming, she meets her childhood friends after a long time, which includes the Countess of Pleouarven and her two sons, Gaston and Dunois, Madame Goserell and her daughter Eurphonie. A few days later a young military

[211] Miss Mary Martin, a vicar's daughter, whom she had met in Cambridge, England, remained a life-long friend of Toru Dutt. Later with her help, Toru's biographer Harihar Das published her letters in the form of *The Life and Letters of Toru Dutt*. For more details, see (Sengupta 1977, p. 36-37).

officer Louis Lefevre comes to visit the house who has also been a childhood friend of Marguerite but she does not remember him. Louis being an orphan and son of an old friend of the d'Arvers is much loved and cherished by Marguerite's parents. As time passes by, visiting neighbors, riding ponies, visiting castles etc., Marguerite develops love and emotions for the Count Dunois; because of which she declines Louis' proposal for marriage. Louis, heartbroken, leaves the house. However, it so happens that both Count Dunois and his brother Gaston are simultaneously attracted to a young woman called Jeannette, who is the maid to the Countess.[212] As a result, brotherly love is replaced by jealousy and rivalry, which ultimately results in the murder of Gaston in the hands of Dunois. Unable to bear the guilt of his crime, Dunois becomes mad and commits suicide in the prison. Marguerite after some dilemma agrees to marry Louis and her sisterly affection by then is adequately transformed into a genuine deep love for Louis. The story reaches a tragic end when Marguerite herself dies shortly after giving birth to her baby boy.

Le Journal is written from the protagonist's perspective, "by a 'narrating I', who takes part in the action in the fictional world as a character or 'experiencing I'." (Nuenning 2004, p. 111) The events narrated right after the birth of Marguerite's child is recounted by an omniscient authorial narrator, situated outside the world of characters of *Le Journal*. One can attribute this narrative irregularity as Toru's unmindfulness; she might have revised it if she had had the time, as these are creations of her last days when she used to be frequently ill and destabilized. However, this sudden and perhaps unintentional change of narration gives a strong and surprisingly profound feeling of alienation to the text working just in favor of the flow of the narrative. Marguerite alienates and distances herself from her world as soon as she has the revelatory dream of staring into death's face; anticipating her exit, she loosens hold of the story of her life and steps outside it in a perfunctory fashion, hinting a cessation in involvement. Marguerite's self-adulation in the process of writing her journal is sometimes interfering in the narrative. There is much focus on her charity, her beauty and purity, and of her being loved and adored by everyone else, or even how she saves the life of a little child just by giving a few warm sips of milk. From there, the distinct shift in the narration seems not only cold but also as an attempt to prepare the readers for the end.

In *Le Journal*, because of this shift in narration, one can make a distinction between the *focalizer*, who is Marguerite, also the protagonist of the novel, experiencing and perceiving the actions in the story, and the *narrator,* omniscient author herself who takes charge in the

[212] Seeing the poor state of Jeannette's family, Marguerite had actually recommended her to the countess.

end. Marguerite functions as "a psychological center of orientation through whose perceptions and consciousness the fictional events are filtered" (Nünning 1004, p. 118). It is also worth mentioning here that in this novel, both homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration [213] exists. Marguerite who is a character in her own story and hence the homodiegetic narrator, stays until the birth of her baby when the author, as the heterodiegetic narrator, posed outside the story-realm takes over.

In the novel *Bianca*, a romance of eight chapters and unfinished, the action takes place in a Spanish family[214] consisting of the protagonist Bianca and her father settled in an English village. The story opens with the grim scene of Bianca's elder sister Inez's burial description. However, as the family recovers from the loss, Inez's fiancé Mr. Ingram proposes to Bianca, in spite of his still existing feelings for late Inez, only to be politely declined. Bianca clarifies that she could only harbor sisterly love for the lover of her dead sister. However, Bianca is deeply attracted to the widowed Lady Moore's son, the young Lord Moore. Being friends with Lord Moore's sister Margaret, she is invited to visit the Moore Hall where accidently Lord Moore arrives and notices Bianca, much to the disapproval of his mother. The aristocratic elderly woman is not fond of Bianca because of her 'low birth' [215] and unsuccessfully tries to dissuade her son from marrying Bianca. The protagonist breaks the news of her weakness to her father following an encounter between her and Lord Moore, which gets intimate by a kiss. However, since the father strongly disapproves of the match, Bianca decides to abide by his wish and retires to her room when Lord Moore appears to visit her. Meanwhile, Mr. Garcia is perturbed, moved and forced to give his consent witnessing the sad plight of the young man. All these take a toll on Bianca's health and she falls ill; but as she recovers from her delirium, she and Lord Moore tie the knot in spite of the disapproval of the lady Moore. The story remains incomplete with the mention of Lord Moore's departure for the Crimean War and the parting of the couple.

Unlike *Le Journal*, *Bianca* has no narrative shifts or change of voices. A third person omniscient narrator narrates the story from outside. However, the focus is strongly on Bianca and hence the other characters do not receive equal attention or the scope to evolve

[213] A heterodiegetic narrator is not a part of the narrative, more often being an omniscient narrator. On the other hand, a homodiegetic narrator is a character inside the narrative world and is a protagonist of the narrative.
[214] It is worth mentioning here that Bianca is not a Spanish name, but of Italian origin. It could be an unintentional lapse on the part of the author or a fanciful exotic imagining.
[215] Lady Moore exclaims at her son's insistence to marry Bianca, "[M]arry *her*! Marry a Spanish gipsy; an adventurer's daughter; she might have been a zingara for aught we know!" Through Lady Moore's treatment of Bianca, Toru exposes the cold and discriminating nature of the British gentility.

and grow. Bianca is clearly the focalizer of the story and the readers perceive the storyline through her. The little note by Toru's father in the end of the story calls it an abandoned project. However, as an irregularity in *Bianca*, Colin Moore's name suddenly changes to Henry in the middle of the story: "This could mean that Toru stopped writing the novel at chapter 8 and returned to it after a stretch of time" (Lokuge 2006, p. xxxvi).

4.4 Dominant themes: love, death, illness, alienation

Priya Joshi, in her study on the print culture in India and the role of novel in cultural transmissions between India and Britain, maintains that between 1850 and 1900 English books were the only western books available in India and

> [I]mports of books and printed matter from Britain were almost 95 percent of total book imports into India […] [I]n this milieu, the British novel was introduced as an educational tool; yet, […] it was also widely consumed outside and beyond the sphere of education and leisure. The novel had a role in the transmission and institutionalization of British literary culture during the mid-nineteenth-century colonial period (Joshi 1998, p. 201).

Bengal too showed great enthusiasm for English books, particularly novels. Joshi further writes, "[W]hile it is difficult to reconstruct exactly what books were borrowed by the increased number of readers, the Report of the Calcutta Public Library, for instance, documents that almost three times as many "Prose works of Imagination" were requested compared to "General Literature" (Joshi 1998, p. 205). This shows the general appetite and enthusiasm of the book readers towards novel reading in colonial Calcutta.[216] Indeed, Toru belonged to a family of English literature enthusiasts. Her grandfather Rasamoy Dutt had a commendable collection of books on English literature and her father Govin Chunder wrote the Dutt Family Album, the first ever anthology of English poetry published by a Bengali.[217] Hence, Toru's family provided the necessary care she required to cultivate interest and experiment with writing novel in English. Toru Dutt's novels come at a time when European standards of gender relations were serving as a model for restructuring native domesticity and gender companionship. However, the idea of visualizing European woman as a

[216] Even though English novels became popular in the colony, it is a matter of debate as to why it was so. Joshi mentions this debate in her article, "[W]hereas realism in Britain explained and "translated" the transformations of an industrializing, urban, and technology-driven landscape to its readers, who "learned" emerging codes of social conduct and organization from the novel, British realism in India has little explanatory or socializing power to offer. The caste, class, colonial, and gender hierarchies in India left little room for social or economic mobility, romantic love, or domestic autonomy, all dominant themes in British realist novels. The well-made universe of Western realism was both alienating and defamiliarizing to a colonial reader, who turned into a more familiar, antirealist literary landscape for pleasure: that of melodrama, romance, and the gothic" (Joshi 1998, p. 212-13).

[217] See Lootens (2006).

romantic ideal fueling amorous imagination came to Toru. Love figures as a dominant theme in her two novels are portrayed in different forms—filial love, amorous love, passion, and longing all find their manifestation in the storyline. However, amorous love is more often boldly proclaimed than shyly hidden. In *Le Journal,* Marguerite is a darling of her parents: every statement of D'Arvers to their daughter is accompanied with a kiss. Then, Louis walks into her life as the young army officer, who is also much loved by her parents, since he became an orphan. Louis' proposal to Marguerite turns out to be an awkward and painful situation for both of them is described as follows:

> I looked up and smiled, and found his face was clouded with thoughts. He took my hand in his hand and, suddenly, in low, emotion-charged voice, said: 'Marguerite, I love you dearly, dearer than my life, dearer than all that my words can express! Will you become my wife, my beloved life's partner?'
>
> At first, I looked at him in fear. But when he had finished, I cried out, 'Oh, Louis, Don't say that! It cannot be!'
>
> I hid my face in my hands, for I felt like weeping.
>
> 'Do you not love me, Marguerite?' His voice was choked.
>
> 'Oh yes, But not the way you mean.' (Dutt 2006, p. 33)

Marguerite is secretly in love with the young count Dunois. But unfortunately Dunois and his brother, both oblivious of Marguerite's fascination are engaged in chasing the countess' maid-in-waiting: this information is however exposed much later in one of the tragic climaxes. Prior to this, Marguerite daydreams about Dunois and their proximity fuels the lady's desires. The reader is offered a glimpse of Marguerite's heart in the following passage:

> I was watching the goldfish playing in the basin of the fountain. He—I mean the Count [Dunois]—came and stood close beside me with dreamy eyes. The tiny fish were busy chasing each other…I could see them clearly in that translucent basin.
>
> 'How charming!' I exclaimed. 'How beautiful!'
>
> 'Indeed, the sight is extremely beautiful, Mademoiselle!' The reflection of your face is indeed beautiful!' Dunois said.
>
> 'That isn't what I mean,' I protested, quite astonished, 'I was admiring the fish playing there—how nice they are!'
>
> 'But I was only admiring the shadow of your figure, ever so charming and beautiful, Mademoiselle!'
>
> This made me blush so much that I could no longer look at him. His words have such a magic that my heart leaps every time I hear him speak to me! That sonorous voice slightly vibrant with a note of gaiety is so harmonious to the ear—it sounds like the splashing of waves against a cliff (Dutt 2006, p. 15-16).

Then, on another occasion of making rounds in the village with count Dunois, Marguerite remarks, "'God bless you!' I repeated, noting the gracious smile on the Count's stern, proud lips. His wind-blown locks fell across his ivory forehead, and a strange, sweet look came into his eagle eyes. I could not but love such a man" (Dutt 2006, p. 28). The readers come to know that Marguerite's feelings for Dunois attains no reciprocation and that Dunois kills his brother Gaston in a fit of jealousy stemming from the pursuit of the single subject of both the brothers' attention. After being arrested, Dunois kills himself in the prison in anguish and agony. With Dunois away from the scene forever, Marguerite returns to Louis, her friendly feelings undergoing sufficient change to accommodate him as a husband and lover. The constant trepidation for Louis and the feeling of guilt in Marguerite has so long prevented both of them from attaining happiness. She remarks: "[H]ad I, then, been offered the cup of happiness and had pushed it away with my own hands?" (Dutt 2006, p. 36). Finally, such unrequited status of emotions transforms into a fulfilment—

> This morning I woke up very late. Louis entered at that moment and greeted me, 'At last you are awake!' As I looked at him in astonishment he reminded me, 'You've forgotten everything, *my little wife*?'
>
> His closing words flooded me with a luminous joy and I looked up at *my husband*. So handsome did he look, and so strong! (Dutt 2006, p. 62).

With the passage of time, the amorous love blooms:

> 'Our son will be extremely handsome, Louis, if he resembles his father,' I whispered in his ear.
>
> 'If I'm handsome, give me a kiss, my love!' he answered with a laugh. I leaned down while he put his arm around my neck and murmured, 'Marguerite, Marguerite, how much I love you!' (Dutt 2006, p. 68).

In due course of a happy marital life, Marguerite bears a son, days after which she dies. It is interesting to note that Toru wanted her protagonist Marguerite to go through the experiences of womanhood, namely marriage, child bearing and also love, at a very early stage, as Harihar Das notes: "Marguerite, we feel, is too old for her age. She manifests the experience of womanhood while yet in her teens" (Das 1921, p. 325). This is quite contradictory to the author's personal and critical views on early marriage of the Hindus as evident from her letters to Mary Martin. The entire range of incidents, which takes a little over one year, is finished while Marguerite is only sixteen to seventeen years old. The author's awareness of the matter is apparent when readers know through Theresa's speech

in *Le Journal*: "'[Now I must call her Madame! Just fancy that the child is already married! Ah, how old I have become!'" (Dutt 2006, p. 63).

It is to be noted that most of the characters in the novels go through an unrequited love experience. Dunois and Gaston even lose their life in the very pursuit. However, for the protagonist Marguerite, love undergoes a transformation through the passage of time and thus attains fruition. This transformation is the result of the social changes and alteration of the social relations she has with her potential suitor Dunois. This thought is reflected in Sudipta Kaviraj's essay on love. Kaviraj notes that:

> […] [t]he ideal of love has a dual character. It is simultaneously an aesthetic and a social ideal. The emotion of love thus constituted can be experienced and enacted in real lives only if the social world is transformed in deeply significant ways. As social relations exist in a structure, a revolutionary change in the nature of love and marriage […] could not happen without all the other relations surrounding the couple also undergoing changes consistent with the central shift (Kaviraj 2007, p. 179).

Toru thus shows remarkable maturity in handling the growth and transformation of love in the plot. Her portrayal of love is somewhat animated, palpable and in close relation to nature. In a discussion of lovers, love traditions, love stories and especially women in the nineteenth century Bengali life and literature, Nirad C. Chaudhury (1970) writes about love and its close relation to nature especially rivers of Bengal. Referring to short stories and novels of writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore in *Bāṅāli jībane ramaṇi* (*Women in the lives of Bengalis*), he deftly explains the subtle nuances of romantic love, which are essentially body-bound. Toru's portrayal of love between characters in her story closely resembles that romantic emotion with a balance between mind and body that eventually transcends the body and finds its manifestation in nature.

Hailing Bankimchandra (Baṅkimˈcandra) as the pioneer of 'new love' in the nineteenth century Bengali's life, Nirad Chaudhury quotes Bankim's assessment of Dinabandhu Mitra's treatment of love and lovers in *Līlābatī* and other books:

> He [Dinabandhu Mitra] did not have any experience about the class of heroines like Kamini or Lilabati, because no Kamini or Lilabati existed or exists in Bengali society. A grown-up Hindu girl, who is being courted and who had surrendered her heart and mind to the courter, did not exist in Bengali society. Just these days I hear of a couple of them. Women like these exist in English homes. English maiden-life is like that[218] (Chaudhury 1970, p. 109-110).

[218] Original: "Līlābatī bā kaminīr śreṇīr nāẏikā sambandhe tāhār kona abhijñatā chila nā, kena nā kona līlābatī bā kāminī bāṅgālāsamāje chila nā bā nāi. Hindur ghare dheṛe meẏe, kortˈśiper pātrī haiẏā yini korṭ karitechen,

Bankim even ridiculed Dinabandhu's heroes as without any occupation except for philanthropy or courtship (Chaudhury 1970: 110). Interestingly however, Bankim himself made one of his heroines Radharani, a young girl of merely eleven years, propose to the nineteen-year-old hero (Chaudhury 1970, p. 111). Chaudhury interprets Bankim's shift not as a satire or ridicule of the 'new trend', but emanating out of a deeper understanding of the evolution of love. In the late nineteenth century, there emerged two divisions in the love stories of Bengal: one based on Calcutta as the burgeoning colonial city where writers like Tagore experimented with the idea of the *femme fatale* in his story *Kaṅkāl* (skeleton). These love stories were mainly tragic, portraying the terrible effects of the city on the psyche of the lovers.[219] The other stream of love stories written by Bankim Chandra, Sarat Chandra (Śaratˈcandra) and Rabindranath (Rabīndranāth) were based on village lives. These love stories focused on the hurdles in the life of lovers like the caste system. However, they also portrayed the easy relationships between the villagers which were devoid of the narrow selfishness of city inhabitants and their hankering for materialism.

Toru conformed to the Bengali tradition of love stories only to a certain extent in terms of basic romantic feelings coupled with an involvement with nature, she maintained her autonomy with the major part. Toru's individualism is reflected in her stories where the protagonists are mainly focused on themselves. Here, society, politics or economy have no role to play in their interpersonal relationships.[220]

There is a remarkable balance in Marguerite's expression of emotions. She is portrayed as perfectly in control of her sentiments in spite of her inexperienced youth. She is assertive when she needs to be and demure when situation demands. Toru's portrayal of both Bianca and Marguerite is a far cry from the traditional Bengali woman, which can remind one of the Bronte Sisters creative endeavors just a couple of decades before Toru. Joyce Van Tassel-Baska (1995) writes:

> [I]n fact, all of Bronte sisters' novels were considered too raw at first publication because of their passionate intensity and portrayal of women rebelling against the social norms of the times. [Charlotte] Bronte's continual quest for the real behind the conventional in her female characters marks her as the most important fictional writer of her time on the plight of women (Berg 1987; Fraser 1988). Steinem (1992) cited Jane Eyre as an exemplum

tẽhāke prāṇ maṇ samarpaṇ kariẏā basiẏā āche, eman meẏe bāṅgālī samāje chila nā—kebal āj'kāl nāki dui ek'ṭā haïteche śunitechi. Iṃrejer ghare teman meẏe āche; iṃrej kanẏā-jībani tāi."

[219] Cf., Chaudhury 116-121.

[220] Nonetheless, it might be unfair to compare twenty-year-old Toru's maturity of handling plots and characters with stalwarts like Tagore or Bankim.

> of the independent woman, secure in who she is and confident enough to hold out for a better life (Tassel-Baska 1995, p. 16).

The ideal of shame or *lajjā* as a desirable feminine trait[221] is present in Marguerite in abundance. Writers like Sudeshna Chakravarty (2003, p. 109) have attributed the colonial fixation with female modesty and coyness as essential ingredient of feminine attractiveness, to Victorian cultural influence. Chakravarty writes: "[M]odesty is an ornament for woman. This ornament is even more precious than life itself; this was the belief in Victorian England."[222] (Chakravarty 2003, p. 110) However, Kaviraj traces this emotion of *lajja* (lajjā) to pre-modern Bengali literature. He explains how *lajjā* is "associated with propriety and modesty in social contexts and it can be entirely compatible with a sense of value in one's beauty, perceiving beauty as a great gift" (Kaviraj 2007, p. 165). Marguerite, without doubt takes some demure pride in her own beauty as is evident from her own adulation about her physical attributes whether it is the Countess exclaiming: "[H]ow pretty and loving you are!" (Dutt 2006, p. 5) or she describing herself:

> I was busy eating mulberries and my lips were stained with their juice. All of a sudden we heard the trot of horses and they appeared. I was about to run away for, with hair unruly and lips purple, I was a sight.
>
> Father caught me by the hand. His eyes shining with mischief. 'Look Dunois, at the savage Breton lass.' He called out.
>
> 'Say, rather the wood nymph, General,' rejoined the Count.
>
> I blushed. How could I look attractive in that disarray? (Dutt 2006, p. 6).

Toru's characters are also blessed with flawless physical attributes. This again is a reflection of what Helene Moglen (1984) writes about the Victorian novelist Charlotte Bronte: "Charlotte fantasized about social and psychological interaction in a world of wits and beautiful woman; about courtships and, increasingly, about seduction and adultery" (Moglen 1984, p. 27). It is not just Marguerite, but Dunois who is superlatively handsome and manly:

> He was tall; perhaps a shade thin; his black locks fell to his shoulders; and his dark eyes were deep and well shaped. He affected a tender black moustache, perfectly trimmed, which emphasized a certain sternness in the chin. His complexion was of an almost feminine fairness, a quality of his high birth (Dutt 2006, p. 6).

[221] *Lajjā* can mean both shame and modesty. However, in the context of Bengali women it mainly implied a mix of shyness and modesty which formed an integral part of colonial feminine civility.
[222] Original text: "Lajjā nārīr bhuṣan. Se bhuṣan jībaner tulanāẏ adhik mūlyabān, ei chila bhikˈṭoriẏān iṃlaṇder biśvās."

These descriptions of the male and female physique lend a fairytale flavor to the narrative. Louis, another major character of the narrative is described as follows:

> Louis seemed to be hardly twenty. A sunburnt face, shaded with a shadow of a moustache; a fine figure, with the chest of a Hercules; the hair brown and thick. Such is his portrait, in a few words. His clear, bold, brown eyes were filled with sweetness and sincerity; now and then an expression of sorrow came to his lips, when he spoke. But when he smiled, his entire face became radiant (Dutt 2006, p. 7).

The 'sternness' of Dunois or the herculean chest of Louis and the hint of masculinity associated with the descriptions stand in a perfect contrast with the frail and beautiful Marguerite. At the same time, Dutt breaks away from the damsel-in-distress cliché. Marguerite requires no saving, be it emotional or physical; she may suffer from a very few occasions of indecisiveness but in the end, she is the one who saves and comforts people of her village and obliges her lover Louis.

Bianca as a narrative also centers on love and the longing of Bianca for Lord Colin Moore. However, delineation of passionate love in this plot is somewhat more articulate than in *Le Journal.* A notable point is how Bianca, as a heroine is not as beautiful as Marguerite. Toru describes her thus:

> She was not beautiful; of the middle height, her slight figure was very graceful; her face was not quite oval; her forehead was low, her lips were full, sensitive and mobile; her color was dark; have you ever seen an Italian peasant girl? When she blushed or was excited, the color mounted warm and deep to her pale olive cheek; she was beautiful then; her dark brown eyes—'just like Keeper's' (the dog's) her father would say smiling,--were large and full; in fact this pair of eyes and her long, black curls were her only points of beauty (Dutt 2006, p. 93).

The readers come to know from the behavior of Lady Moore that she does not approve of her son's proximity and subsequent attachment to Bianca. The first encounter is realistically described where under the cold gazes of the disapproving mother Lord Moore comes 'dangerously' close to Bianca. The little child Willie who is in Bianca's lap, half asleep insists on a kiss from Lord Moore and "Lord Moore bent over the little face; his drooping brown hair almost touched Bianca's forehead as he kissed the child. There was a keen brightness in his hazel eyes, an unusual glow on his white forehead as he turned towards his mother" (Dutt 2006, p. 101). The speculation that the 'brightness' and 'glow' could be the result of his forbidden and yet to be articulated but palpable passion, lends an air of subtle eroticism to the entire description. Later, when Colin walks alone with Bianca to see her off to her place, Toru lets the reader get inside Bianca's mind:

> [S]ince she was alone with him, her manner had involuntarily changed towards him; she was subdued; she felt that this man walking by her side, had a power over her heart which perhaps he himself did not know. She loved him with all the fire and glow of her *warm southern blood*[223]. Did he love her? She never asked the question to herself, she never thought of it. Sometimes a word from him would make her believe so, and then the red blood would send a dark flush on her olive cheek, a bright flash would come into her brown eyes, but she never let herself be deceived (Dutt 2006, p. 103).

Toru subscribes to and successfully uses the popular personality-constructs of 'passion' and 'sensuality' attributed to the inhabitants of the warm southern countries of the Mediterranean. A mixture of Spanish and gypsy blood in Bianca is a hint of her exoticism, subterranean sexuality and temperament. These traits in the protagonist's character complement the overall darkness and turbulence in the plot. Darkness of emotions and melancholia[224] presides and prevails over the general atmosphere of *Bianca* from the very beginning. Unlike *Le Journal* where an overall atmosphere of enjoyment and levity prevail barring the two intermittent climaxes of tragedy, *Bianca* gathers emotional storm clouds from the beginning with the death of Inez. A description of an intense verbal duel between Lady Moore and her son Colin confirms the opposition faced by Bianca and Colin from the mother. Lady Moore is portrayed as the prototypical domineering upper class lady not only exercising control over the lives of others but also having strong and discriminating opinions about people. Lady Moore comes to her son with the proposals of potential brides fearing that her son might be interested in the 'dark as a gipsy' Spanish girl Bianca. However, Colin refuses each of the potential brides thus making clear to his mother his choice. This is what follows as a reaction:

> My lady's eyes shot an angry flash at her son, which was lost on him, for he was not looking at her. 'And you like a sooty complexion, a snub nose, a low forehead, and a girl without a penny. But she cannot marry you; she is too far gone with'—'Mother!' he turned upon her fiercely. There was no display of passion, but the tone of his voice, his vein-swollen forehead, the dark light in his hazel eyes silenced my lady. She had never seen a man angry before (Dutt 2006, p. 105).

[223] The Mediterranean was infamous in literature as morally detrimental and fuelling passion and sensual indulgence. Hence, people of Mediterranean origin were characterized as passionate and sexual among other things. Cf., John Pemble, "[T]he Mediterranean resorts were condemned for moral reasons. British medical opinion insisted that dissipation and sensual indulgence were detrimental to health, and in the South the patient was tantalized by incitements to fatal pleasure—warmth, natural beauty, art, and fashionable and brilliant society" (1987, p. 251). Emphasis added.

[224] While in endrocentric renaissance and psychoanalysis, melancholia is seen as a creative lack, Toru's portrayal of melancholia in her novels is a manifestation of mourning and loss predominantly as a result of death. For details on melancholy, see introduction of Schiesari (1992).

But love triumphs inevitably and all opposition is washed away in the face of the passion of the lovers. Toru describes a well-timed romantic situation, which accelerates the pace of love. After a meeting, when the lovers tend to part:

> She [Bianca] gave him her hand. 'Goodbye,' said she; he had bent down to shake hands with her as she sat on the grass; he took her hand in his and looked into her face; a strange light, a deep passion was in his hazel eyes; impetuously, as if urged by an irresistible destiny, he stooped down and kissed her on the mouth. The instant after, he was gone. Bianca looked after him. A strange feeling of unutterable bliss mingled with pain came upon her; 'Oh, if he would kiss me again!' She felt as if she had drunk of the heavenly hydromel of the poets, she wanted to take a deeper draught of the drink of the gods. She had never been kissed by a man. Mr. Garcia had not kissed her once since she was four years old. How strange, how soul-thrilling that touch of his lips was. It sent all the dark blood rushing to her olive cheeks and forehead. She buried her face in her hands and wept (Dutt 2006, p. 108).

The whole range of unsettling emotions and especially the feeling of committing a 'great sin' (Dutt 2006, p. 108) that comes a few sentences later, revolving the first kiss, exposes of the intricacies of Bianca's mind. Her feelings conform to the typical Victorian ideas of morality. Anything sexual or physical was forbidden:

> [W]omen, belonging to noble families were not flesh and blood beings but goddesses. This was at least one stream of thought of Victorian England. The body which was so carefully covered was actually non-existent. According to the famous doctor Acton, women are devoid of desire and passion, even within the legal boundaries of marriage they do not have any physical need or urge. In a conjugal life, women come in the arms of their husbands to beget children and men to satisfy their base instincts (Thompson 1999, p. 4-5).[225]

However, the amount of passion Toru allows in Bianca's and Marguerite's character is definitely more than the Victorian permissible standards. The comparison between lovers' kissing on the mouth and a father's affectionate kiss somehow exposes the lack of the author's personal experience regarding such amorous encounters. Reflecting the state of Bianca's mind and the intensity of her passions, certain passages in the story tend to be dramatic. For example, the quoted monologue where Bianca compares herself with her dead sister Inez, thereby implying that life without her lover is not one worth living. To her father, Bianca says the following in a delirium before the news of her father's consent is broken to her:

> 'Ah! Chit! Hush! Do not name him; the wound is sore yet father, very sore. O God! I am *so* cold!' She went on, after a pause, her eyes dilated, and fixed toward the window. 'It's all white with snow, --and she is so delicate; why should she lie under

[225] For further details, see see Thompson (ed. 1999, p. 1-24).

> the earth with nothing between her and the snow but a thin plank of oak!' She half rose, 'I am now like you Inez dear! Oh! That I were lying cold and still beside you under the snow!' She lay back again; then suddenly with a piteous cry, --'Don't do it again, my lord, don't. Father is so angry.' She was greatly fond of poetry, and in her delirium she uttered stray verses applying them to herself. 'Father, it was not wrong; I love him Father; he is "my lion and my noble lord"— "the god of my life"!' Her eyes fell on her father; 'Oh where is he? He was sitting here a minute ago, and now there's only Father' (Dutt 2006, p. 112).

After receiving the consent to marry, everything goes well with Bianca and Colin Moore and they live together till Colin is called off for the Crimean war in Sevastopol. The story breaks off here.

Toru's portrayal of love and courtship, seeped with tensions and drama, is a break from the nineteenth century documentation of conjugal/amorous traditions by women, which usually veered around family (saṃsār), and welfare of all. "Tagore, in one of his most sensitive literary essays, describes Uma's initial failure to win the love of Siva when she appeared as an enchantress because such please-oriented love was not conducive to the welfare of all *sakaler maṅgal*," notes Tapan Raychaudhury (2000). [226]

As mentioned earlier, Bankim Chandra had already proclaimed that the class of young women indulging in courtship is non-existent in Bengal. In the prevalent atmosphere of child marriage[227] and *kulīn* polygamy, [228] women were rarely given the chance to choose her own destiny let alone enjoy her conjugal life. Hence, Toru's portrayal of her heroines comes across as a distinct shift from the tradition—i.e. bold and in control of themselves without being outright rebels. Nineteenth century offers a different facet concerning matters of conjugal love and sexuality, as is evident from some of the memoirs of the late nineteenth century, penned down by women like Rassundari debi (c 1809-?), Saradasundari (1819-1907), Hamabati sen (c 1866-1933) etc. one can gauge their conditions within the four walls of the household. Rassundari remarks about marriage in her autobiography, *Āmār jīban*

[226] Tagore, (1985 cited in Raychaudhury 2000, p. 351).
[227] Viewed mainly as a practice to control feminine sexuality, young girls sometimes as young as four years old were married off before she had attained puberty. Cf., Raychaudhury: "[T]he belief system informed by patriarchal values emphasized the occult implications of uncontrolled female sexuality. An unchaste wife was supposed to be source of endless misfortunes to her husband's family. Child marriage was evidently meant to ensure that this highly disruptive force was contained within the bounds of legitimate conjugal relationship as soon as a young girl became aware of her sexual urge" (2000, p. 352).
[228] Kulin Brahmins originated from Kanya-Kubja or Kannauj in North India and their stories date back to the time of lord Rama. From the very early period, they migrated and settled in different parts of the country as well as in Bengal. To preserve their purity of blood marital alliance was restricted within certain closed circles of themselves. This practice degenerated largely in colonial Bengal when polygamy and child marriage became rampant in order to preserve the *kulinata* (the state of remaining kulin). For more information, see Khare (1960) and Banerjee (1989).

published in two parts (1876 &1906): "[P]eople keep birds in cages for their own amusement. I felt my predicament to be similar" (Debī 1981: 17). Saradasundari in her *Ātmakathā* (1913) hints at the fact that pre-puberty sex was existent and a child bride married at the age of nine or earlier would return to her husband's home before she attained maturity (Debī 1986, p. 8). Haimabati Sen's accounts of her married life[229] are however, the most explicit account of sexual experiences of a Bengali woman. She talks about her disgust of a particular instance of waking up to find her husband making out with a prostitute. Rassundari's experience of childhood and puberty is of pure innocence, bordering on immaturity. She is silent of her bodily experiences, pleasant or not, except in a symbolical way when she recalls with joy and wonder, in *Āmār jīban*, how her body flowered and bore fruits through god's miraculous ways. However, the author keeps one wondering if this refers to a happy conjugal life. Another dimension of the conjugal issue was the willing or unwilling surrender or subjugation of the female self and the body to the husband. Except for Haimabati who, as Raychaudhuri remarks, married an 'unmitigated scoundrel', no one actually contests or challenges the role of man as the supremo of the family having absolute authority over their wedded wives. Keeping these instances in mind, the world that Toru weaves for her female characters is indeed very different.

Death, which has haunted the author in her real life, is present in her novels as well. In fact, the plots reveal a constant strife between love, life and death. Toru's protagonists are fragile by nature, more so physically and they fall frequent prey to illness. Sometimes these illnesses are manifestations of their repressed passion and emotions as in *Bianca*. The men in the stories almost never fall ill except again for reasons of irrepressible emotions. Death and illness are somewhat linked together in the narratives. Hence, death is never accidental. They are always preceded by a slow preparation for receiving the ultimate end. This preparation acts to evoke sympathy for the soon to decease character(s) and the anxiety if it will be the end or a recovery. *Bianca* starts with death and *Le Journal* ends with the death of Marguerite. Death has a fatality attached to it every time. The first death the reader encounters in *Le Journal* is a murder. Dunois the count kills his brother Gaston in a fit of passionate jealousy over a woman. The sight is described as follows:

[229] Haimabati married at the age of nine and recalled her trauma when she writes her biography in her seventies. Cf., Dasgupta "Haimabati's Memoirs, written sometime in the last decade of her life (1923-33), are full of details of this life [in her *sasurbari*] and of the time when she would visit her parental home" (2010, n.p.).

> My God! I shall never forget that sight in my life. On the table lay Gaston's body. The lips were gaping, the glassy eyes widely opened, the shirt and suit soaked with dark, clotted blood, and the right breast pierced by a bullet (Dutt 2006, p. 45).

The perpetrator after the crime is left in much agony as is expected after such an impulsive act: "[T]hen there was a tumult of sobbing and whispering, followed by silence. Dunois had closed his eyes and lay immobile, shivering from time to time" (Dutt 2006, p. 46). Before Dunois is carried away to the prison, the readers come to know the precise feeling this man has in his heart about Marguerite, which is perhaps nothing more than brotherly affection. Before being led away to the prison, Dunois "[d]isengaged himself, turned towards me and said, 'Adieu, Marguerite!' And regarding me with his great, dark eyes, he requested me, 'Remember me in your prayers, will you not, as brother gone astray?'" (Dutt 2006, p. 51). Dunois' self-dubbing as Marguerite's brother is a wise and moralizing move on the part of Toru, which serves to keep Marguerite's as well as the readers' conscience clear by putting an end to the unsuccessful relationship.

As an aftermath of the emotional and psychological load of Dunois' crime and her own unrequited love for the criminal, Marguerite falls ill. The illness turns to be serious: "I was in fever and delirium. There was no hope of my recovery, so serious was it!" (Dutt 2006, p. 52). And with the recovery from the fever, one sees the return of her dormant feelings for Louis, now that Dunois is dead in the prison. The next onslaught of death occurs on Marguerite's body when she is pregnant with Louis' child. However, before the actual end she has a clear premonition of the end through a dream:

> 'I dreamed I was all alone, asleep on the bed, when suddenly someone knocked at the window. I woke up, but was so sleepy and so much afraid that I didn't dare open the window. Then I seemed to hear the voice of Father calling out from his room, *Open the door, Marguerite; it is your husband*. I got up and opened the door. No one was there. I went down to the sitting-room looking for you. And there, indeed, you were, near the window with your back to the door. I went to you and leaned my head against your shoulder. You put your arm around me, but your head was turned away—I could not see your face! I raised my eyes towards you. Oh, God! It was not your face at all: it was Death's! And on that I woke up' (Dutt 2006, p. 77).

Death putting an arm around her can be interpreted as surrendering peacefully to the inevitable end. Toru's preoccupation with death, due to her personal experiences, leads her to dedicate twelve pages for the description of the last days of Marguerite. The plot ends with her momentary recovery, going back to a feverish delirium and her eventual death. Louis, the newly born child, and everyone else fade into obscurity. While descriptions of love may seem as dramatic and slightly removed from reality, the descriptions of death in

the book are quite vivid, crafted with deft intensity and heart wrenching sorrow, as the last lines of Marguerite stand witness:

> 'It's quite dark, Come closer, my love, closer!' She pressed her husband's hand. 'I'm tired,' she murmured, 'so tired…I am going to sleep now. Kiss me, my beloved, before I sleep.' He kissed her. 'God take us into his protection!' she sighed. Such, from childhood, had been her last prayer before sleeping. She closed her eyes; her lips parted slightly, and her pure soul flew thence to the bosom of her God, and Marguerite slept the sleep of death (Dutt 2006, p. 88).

The pain and poignancy of Inez's death in *Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden* is shared by nature, reminding the readers of the connection between human feelings and nature in the Romantic literary tradition.[230] "[I]t was a cold, drizzling day of February. The bare trees waved their withered branches to the biting wind, in a weird and mournful manner, as if they were wringing their hands in agonized despair" (Dutt 2006, p. 91)—is how the author opens the novel. What follows is a detailed description of the funeral and the despair in the heart of the old father and the younger sister on the death of Inez: "[T]he father went straight to the room whence the dead had been borne away, where she had passed her last days. His daughter did not follow. She knew she could do nothing to console him. God even cannot, sometimes." (Dutt 2006, p. 92)

Next, one finds a lone father and daughter's slow passing of days with the thought and fear of imminent death overshadowing their lives, till Lord Colin Moore emerges and the matter that is second most important to death, namely love, is brought in. However, again, Bianca falls seriously ill when the emotional turbulence regarding her attachment to Colin and her father's disapproval becomes too much for her. The pattern of the fevers suffered by Bianca and Marguerite is somewhat similar: a confused delirious state when they talk about incoherent things from long past or a frightening future. Losing of consciousness and the ability to think coherently accompanies these fevers thereby exposing the weak bodies and overworked minds (Dutt 2006, p. 115-117). Medical help almost never works successfully and the life or death depends on some miraculous or sinister plan of nature. God, however, in whom the protagonists, Marguerite and Bianca have enormous faith, is never to be blamed for the untimely separations, his verdicts are borne with enormous stoicism, and respect for his will.

[230] This particular literary device of attributing human feelings and emotions to nature is known as *pathetic fallacy* and is discussed in the next section.

4.5 Gothic[231] elements: repression, madness, castle, nature

Another evidence of Toru's deftness as the author of romance is the presence of gothic elements in *Le Journal*. The elements of gothic especially repression, madness, mysteries, secrets, and occasional gruesome violence are adequately present and flawlessly handled by the author. Gothic also fits the fantasy element of the plot which Coral Ann Howells talks about in her book *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction*:

> As the first popular fiction in English, Gothic was always closer to Romance than to realism for it marked a decisive shift of emphasis away from the everyday world of social conventions towards the subjective life of feeling and imagination, so opening up the wilder territories of fantasy and the dream life which had been traditionally regarded as the domain of poetry and the drama rather than of fiction (Howells 1978, p. vii).

Gothicism in literature was introduced in 1764 with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and it gained steady prominence and nurturing in the hands of authors like Mary Shelly, Ann Radcliffe, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell etc. Romance is inseparably attached to Gothic:

> By adapting a mode [romance] which is recognized as being separate from everyday life, they were free to create a fictional world which embodied their fears and fantasies and offered a retreat from insoluble problems, while at the same time it rendered their fears ultimately harmless by containing and distancing them in a fantasy (Howells 1978, p. 7).

Another notable feature of the gothic genre of writing has been its popularity with female writers.[232] It is unanimously agreed that feelings of sexual and social anxiety and emotional restlessness find their voice through gothic writing. Toru does not deviate from this convention. Plouarven castle, the home of Count Dunois and his family has a lurid history. Dunois tells the story of one of his ancestors: Henry de Plouarven, who owned the castle, had a daughter as his only child. Simultaneously, with the loneliness of the two inmates of the castle, a stranger knight who had come to the castle on a cold December evening makes his presence felt. He is provided hospitality for a couple of days. His description as given by Toru perfectly fits the image of a dark knight, mysterious and erotic:

---

[231] Talking about gothic elements in Toru's works, one is tempted to look for other writers in Bengal who might have experiemented with the genre and its elements. In *Durgeshnandini* (1865), Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay included some of it in his plot. However, the essence of gothic novel, as we know it, namely the psycho-sexual repression of feminine emotions can preclude Chattopadhyay's claim at inaugurating the genre to Bengali audience.

[232] Howells writes "Gothic was the first kind of fiction where women writers outnumbered men and where feminine perspectives had a decisive influence on shaping the distinctive characteristics and plot configurations of a literary genre" (Howells 1978, p. viii).

> He was about twenty-five; his armor was all black, except for the feathers on his hood—which were white like snow. He was tall, his curly locks fell to his temples; they were raven black and hid a scar across his forehead; this scar, and his black moustache gave him a striking virile beauty. His dark and pensive eyes never left the young girl from the moment he first saw her. She too could not resist the attraction she felt towards him. Her blue eyes were constantly stealing glances towards the knight's noble face, and her innocent cheeks flushed whenever the knight tries to address her. The Count made the young man stay on for a couple of days. Then, while taking leave of the Lady Catherine, the knight offered her a white rose, bidding her *adieu* instead of *au revoir* (Dutt 2006, p. 17).

With the disappearance of the knight, the lady died presumably of separation from the lover and consequent heartache, and "'[P]eople believe,' Dunois went on, 'that every December, on moonlight nights, the Count's daughter can be seen here, extended as he found her, in death […]'" (Dutt 2006, p. 17). It is no coincidence that the present dwellers of the accursed castle, namely Count Dunois, his brother, and their mother Countess Madame de Plouarven, also fall under the thrall of misfortune. The murder of one brother, the suicide of another and the madness of the mother—all because of an unrequited love affair, seems like an inescapable curse continuing for generations. The second mention of the castle comes a little later when Dunois gives a conducted trip of the castle to Marguerite. The study has "only four windows and this give the room a gloomy look." (Dutt 2006, p. 42) There also hangs a portrait of the ill-fated queen Catherine who 'died of love' (Dutt 2006, p. 42). There is also an underground passage where Dunois asks Marguerite if she will be frightened. She asks him the reason and the Count replies that "'[I]t's so dark inside. Moreover, people say that Count Arthur de Plouarven murdered someone there in the year of grace 909. Even now traces of blood are visible on the ground.'" (Dutt 2006, p. 42) The scary rumor attached to the underground passage is somewhat validated by description: "[T]he daylight enters here feebly through a narrow iron grille, which makes the interior the more eerie. The passage was long, very long, and pitch dark towards the end" (Dutt 2006, p. 42). The short journey comes to an end after about fifteen minutes when they find the exit through a small door which leads to the open fields.

In *Le Journal* happiness of the characters is always under the shadow of tragedy. What starts with a joyful reunion of the parents with their only daughter ends in their losing her. Even though Marguerite marries the man of her choice and also bears him a baby, she dies in the end. Madness as a gothic theme is not well explored in the novel except in a passing reference in which the mother of the dead Count goes mad. However, near madness delirium

is experienced by the protagonists Marguerite and Bianca during their emotional stress induced fevers, as discussed earlier, which could be read as psychosis.[233]

Nature also plays a part in enhancing the gothic atmosphere of the narratives, being in accord with the mood of the protagonists and hinting or preserving the sense of doom. John Ruskin in his essay *Modern Painters* (1856) referred to this technique of attributing one's emotions to the nature, as a sign of mental and physical weakness and morbidity: "[T]he temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, […] that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or over-clouded, or over-dazzled by emotion" (1856, p. 80). He further clarified that, "[A]ll violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the 'Pathetic Fallacy'" (1856, p. 80). Toru's use of the literary device reflects the protagonist's intense mental and stressful physical state. Right after Marguerite refuses the Captain's proposal to marry him, and he leaves the house, rejected and sorry, nature seems to reflect her mood: "[T]he wind was becoming chilly, and the stars were pale" (Dutt 2006, p. 36). A little later, Marguerite writes, "I opened the window again. An ice-cold blast blew into the room and seemed to pierce me to the marrow. A vague feeling of impending evil took hold of me, and I hurriedly closed the window" (Dutt 2006, p. 36). Simultaneously good mood, happiness, love and recovery from illness is accompanied by sunshine, blue sky, glitter of the sun in azure waters and ripples of the sea gleaming in the moonlight, like in this instance: "[A]nd now, I love you so much, Louis! I went to open the window. The warm October sun flooded into our room. The radiant face of the sun seemed to greet me, 'Hail!' and the birds repeated, 'Hail!' I felt like proclaiming my joy to the whole world. I whispered it to the roses as I plucked their sweet-scented blossoms fresh with dew drops […]" (Dutt 2006, p. 66-67).

4.6 Faith and religion

Toru was raised in a family of devout Christians. Mrs. Barton, a well-known missionary who had acquaintance with the Dutt family in Calcutta wrote, "[T]hese Dutt families were the backbone and mainstay of the Christian Church and congregation which was in Cornwallis Square" (Das 1921, p. 10). Harihar Das also writes about Toru's father Govin Chunder as, "[H]is disposition was gentle, and his erudition and literary attainments place him in the front rank of Indian writers of English in those days" (Das 1921, p. 8). Toru's

[233] Psychosis is a generic psychiatric term to denote a condition where the patient loses touch with the reality. Toru's characters show similar symptoms during their illness.

mother Kshetramoni Dutt translated from English into Bengali a book called *The Blood of Jesus*[234]. Thus, brought up in an erudite atmosphere, Toru had a natural inclination towards Christianity. Religion and faith in Christ was more like an anchor in the day-to-day world for her. The readers note a resemblance of somewhat similar faith in Christianity in Toru's protagonists as well. In fact, religion and death forms the common points of reference both in the author's life and in her novels. Like the author, her protagonists bear their loss with patience, stoicism, and resilience. In a letter dated September 12, 1874, Toru writes to Ms. Martin: "[T]he Lord has taken dear Aru from us. It is a sore trial for us, but His will be done. We know He doeth all things for our good" (Das 1921, p. 65). This sentiment sums up Toru's attitude towards Christianity. However, her religion was also something that contributed to her being an outcaste in the Hindu, nationalist society, as Chattopadhyay remarks,

> [A]s an upper caste woman with an unprecedented access to education she was privileged but on the other hand her position as a Christian outcaste in a largely conservative patriarchal society makes her ventures seem powerless. […] Dutt's quasi-hagiographic status as a 'great' Indian poet both in her times as well as in the twentieth century comes not only with a compromised understanding of either the 'colonial' or the 'nationalist' lens but is often connected to a cavernous understanding of religion" (Chattopadhyay 2013, p. 141).

Moreover, religion does play a role in the lives of her protagonists. Death loses some of its pain and becomes more bearable with serenity due to the presence of the Christian god. Sister Veronique's death description where she talks about seeing "a more glorious day" promises the happiness emanating out of a soul's union with the Maker. Marguerite being a devout Christian, seeks refuge in god during moments of hesitation. Unsure if her refusal to Louis is fair or not, she kneels before crucifix and prays: "O God, be with us and forsake us not; be with us ever!" (Dutt 2006, p. 36). Throughout, the textual reference to god comes like a motif. *Bianca* starting with the death and burial scene has a solemn reference and prayer to Christ from Hiob, Old Testament: "[T]he Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Dutt 2006, p. 92). The effect of Christianity on her writings comes from her conversion and faith in real life. However, her faith did not contradict her later interests in Hindu myths, epics, and legends most of which she gathered from her mother.[235]

[234] See Das 1921, p. 7.
[235] Cf., Das "[I]t is to her mother's influence that we owe these beautiful little *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*, the leading characteristic of which is 'a Vedic solemnity and simplicity of temper' (1921, p. 329).

4.7 Protagonists, alienation and viewing the self through the other

Having discussed in depth the two novels of Toru Dutt, a fundamental question remains: why did Toru choose European protagonists for her stories? There is no simple answer to this, but the readers could arrive at some sturdy conclusions, by focusing on the aspect of the author's localization. Alpana Sharma Knippling (2000) succinctly sums up Toru's "in-between position" in her article:

> Toru's writings dislodge fixed binaries of sedimented thought and force us into a place where we may consider the productive politics of an in-between position. Not quite Indian yet not English either; well-versed in European literature, yet not writing from the "original" place of that literature's imagined "truth" and "value"; female and cloistered, yet (relatively) liberated; young, yet mature beyond her years […] (Knippling 2000, p. 224).

The author's distancing herself from the major feminist and societal issues of her day is reflected in her novels, and this distancing and alienation is replete in her location as well. At best, one can call Toru's literary appeal as transcending geographical and linguistic boundaries, at worst, she never belonged to anywhere. As Knippling remarks,

> Dutt achieved neither literary success in England nor freedom and mobility in India. Excluded by orthodox Hindu society on account of her family's conversion, yet not wholly included in the British social order or account of her Indian/"native" origin, Toru traversed the improvisational space in-between these two positions. European reviewers of her French translations were more astounded at her polished literary skills than accepting of them; they neutralized their astonishment with a patronizing stance toward the imagined oddity of the exotic colonial creature they were dealing with. Indian readers, on the other hand, felt that Toru's Sanskrit translations redeemed and corrected her prior Westernization, making her a genuine "daughter of India"; still others regarded her Sanskrit translations as naïve and amateurish forays into a world about which she knew very little. Thus, Toru's life and work constitute an overdetermined site upon which both colonial and anticolonial imperatives competed to weave a complicated pattern indeed. (Knippling 2000, p. 216-217).

Subsequently, it is not easy to decipher the boarders of the Bengali and European societies in Toru. Her association and estrangement to one or the other society is also a result of a sentimental mix as is expressed by Lincoln, however generically:

> Because there are virtually infinite grounds on which individual and group similarity/dissimilarity may be perceived and corresponding sentiments of affinity/estrangement evoked, the boarders of society are never a simple matter. In practices there always exist potential bases for associating and for dissociating one's self and one's group from others, and the vast majority of social sentiments are ambivalent mixes in which potential sources of affinity are (partially and perhaps temporarily) overlooked or suppressed in the interests of establishing a clear social border or, conversely, potential sources of estrangement are similarly treated in order

> to effect or preserve a desired level of social integration and solidarity (Lincoln 2014, p. 8-9).

Lincoln further remarks that social borders metaphorically can signify those situations when estranging emotions and sentiments which are instrumental in separating an individual from his/her own society gains momentum. Also, since social borders are neither "natural, inevitable, nor immutable" (Lincoln 2014, p. 9), they can change leading to the individual's coming back to the fold given there is a "new social formation"[236] (ibid). In Toru's case there was no external or perceptible societal transformation *per se* that could bring her affinity back to the Bengali society; however, her reading and rewriting the ancient myths, ballads, and legends can be loosely interpreted as her rediscovering an alternative world of indigenous literary treasures through previously unknown language (Sanskrit), which might have generated some bonding and affinity with the past of a severed society.

Toru's love for European society, especially for England is well known through her letters written to her friend Ms. Martin. Toru's father, Govin Chunder Dutt, took his wife and daughters to Europe in 1869, their first stops being Marseille and later Nice[237] in France. Harihar Das, Toru's biographer comments that they were in fact the first Bengali ladies to travel to Europe. Coming back to Calcutta after four years, Toru resumes her contact with Ms. Martin through letters, which give the readers a lot of insight into Toru's mind. One recurrent theme of the letters was Toru's desire to return to Europe and settle there for good. In a letter dated December 19, 1873, Toru writes, "[W]e hope (D.V.) to return to England and settle there for good." Another one on March 10, 1874 states, "[W]e hope to go to England, I do not know if we shall be able to go; this time Papa says he will sell all we have here and go to England and settle there for good."[238] Even though Toru had a special bonding to the country house in Baugmaree, which she frequented, she could not get rid of

[236] Cf., Lincoln, "[t]he metaphor of social borders may be understood to describe those situations in which sentiments of estrangement clearly and powerfully predominate over those of affinity, so that groups of persons experience themselves as separate and different from other groups with whom they might potentially be associated. Second, such borders being neither natural, inevitable, nor immutable, affinity may in the course of events come to predominate over estrangement, with the consequent emergence of a new social formation in which previously separate social groups are mutually encompassed" (Lincoln 2014, p. 9).

[237] We have some frequent references of Nice in *Le Journal*.

[238] In one of her letters dated May 9, 1874, Toru complains about the weather. She writes "[I]t is dreadfully hot now here; the heat is quite unbearable during the middle part of the day. No noontide walks here as in England! If you walk even a mile or two, you are sure to have cholera! We do miss our country walks in England." In yet another letter dated November 17, 1874, she writes, "[P]apa wants to buy a carriage and a pair of horses; but I am set against it. I tell him if he allows himself to be entramelled in Calcutta by equipages and gardens, we shall never be able to go to Europe again."

the feeling of cultural as well as physical displacement. Even the weather of the country augmented her 'out of place' feeling:

> [H]er love of her family property, Baugmaree Country House outside the city in Calcutta, cannot entirely shield her from the difficulties of cultural displacement. Her sister Aru has died of TB and Toru, turns away from the Indian world around her. Her pain and deprivation surfacing as colonial ennui, she writes to Mary Martin: 'The free air of Europe, and the free life there, are things not to be had here. We cannot stir out from our own garden without being started at, or having a sun-stroke'. Her own bodily self becomes the surest index of her alienation" (Alexander 1989, p. 368).

The wistfulness with which Toru talks about England and her desire to settle there not only provide an insight into her longing for the place but also justifies her selection of the storyline, casts and location of her novels. One can further talk about a relation between fantasy and identity formation through Judith Butler, who writes, "[I]dentification is never simply mimetic but involves a strategy of wish fulfillment; one identifies not with an empirical person but with a fantasy […]" (Butler 1990, p. 334). Toru's novels could have served as a wish-fulfilling project at the same time serving as alter-egos whereby the writer identified herself with the protagonists. This identification and wish-fulfillment seems to be triggered by the social milieu which could have fueled a sense of alienation from the Bengali/Hindu/Christian society. Subrata Dasgupta writes in a comparative analysis about Toru, Rassundari Devi, and Haimavati Sen, that "Toru's loneliness lay in her situation as an ultra-literate, multi-lingual, Christian, well-travelled Indian woman, a circumstance that would scarcely make sense to any other woman (except her own sister) in her Bengali milieu" (Dasgupta 2010). For a further clarification, one can look at Rosemary Jackson's work on literary fantasies where she explains: "[L]ike any other text, a literary fantasy is produced within, and determined by, its social context. Though it might struggle against the limits of this context, often being articulated upon that very struggle, it cannot be understood in isolation from it" (Jackson 2003, p. 3). This social context, almost solely focused on alienation, was present in and provided by the contemporary society.

Toru's alienation from the contemporary Bengali society is complete and apparent from her letters. Her family members, as converted Christians, were considered as outcaste and barred from attending family functions like marriages. In turn, quite unconsciously Toru calls her countrymen 'natives.' Writing on this subject to Ms. Martin, Toru apologize to her in a letter dated March 13, 1876: "[T]hank you very much for what you say about calling my countrymen 'natives'; the reproof is just, and I stand corrected, I shall take care and not

call them natives again. It is indeed a term only used by prejudiced Anglo-Indians, and I am really ashamed to have used it" (Das 1921, p. 131-132). In another letter, written eleven days later, which stands a witness to her isolation, Toru writes,

> We do not go much into society now. The Bengali reunions are always for men. Wives and daughters and all women-kind are confined to the house, under lock and key, *`a la lettre*! and Europeans are generally supercilious and look down on Bengalis. I have not been to one dinner party or any party at all since we left Europe. And then I do not know any people here, except those of our kith and kin, and some of them I do not know (Das 1921, p. 141).

That fact that Toru remained unmarried even after reaching the conventional marriageable age for Bengali girls resulted in her feeling further isolated. This is apparent from the following piece in one of her letters:

> Marriage, you must know, is a great thing with the Hindus. An unmarried girl of fifteen is never heard of in our country. If any friend of my grandmother happens to see me, the first question is, if I am married; and considerable astonishment, and perhaps a little scandal, follows the reply, for it is considered scandalous if a girl is not 'wooed and married […] before she is eight years old! (Das 1921, p. 152).

Even though Toru was unabashed about her unmarried state, she spelled different rules for her protagonists. Marguerite is fifteen when she comes back home from school and since the entire span of events takes one year, she experiences marriage and motherhood when she is still in her mid-teens. A plausible explanation could be that in love stories that Toru envisioned, once the characters have found their 'true' love in each other, the inevitable conclusion would be marriage and the consummation of love. Likewise, in *Bianca*, the couple insists on institutionalizing their relationship. That they could not live happily ever after was a manifestation to Toru's sense of fatality and the role of destiny interfering in the flow of events.

Toru reminds the readers of missionary Harriet G. Brittan's opinion about the Hindu goddess Kali from the previous chapter. In a letter to Ms. Martin, describing the celebration of *Kali puja* or the worship of goddess Kali, she writes:

> One feels sometimes so sad when one looks on all these processions following a graven image, offering goats, and other sacrifices to it, and bowing themselves before it. Oh, that all India should turn to the true and loving God, who is alone able to save us and cleanse us from our sins!
>
> Have you ever seen a picture of the idol, Kali? It is the most hideous thing you can imagine. She is represented as a female as black as night, with her tongue of the deepest red, thrust out of her mouth, almost half a yard long, with a chaplet of skulls round her neck; with one hand she holds a sword, the other grasps a newly-severed

head of a human being by the hair. She is said to be very blood-thirsty (Das 1921, p. 227).

4.8 Intertextuality

Toru's psychological and emotional alienation from Calcutta as well from Bengali Hindu/Christian society and simultaneous proximity with Europe's life and literature can perhaps explain her choosing of European characters and spaces for her novels. It is quite possible too that Toru felt Bengali women 'unfit' for the major subject she dealt with namely premarital courtship. Given her reading of Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell, etc., imagining European women in relatively free European societies for the manifestation of complex emotions such as love and jealousy, seems to have been an easier and more likeable task for the young author. A closer look will confirm that Toru's life had quite some similarities with Charlotte Bronte. Both the authors' lives were rocked by the death of their loved ones at a very young age,[239] fueling a sense of isolation and alienation. Joyce Van Tassel-Baska (1995) makes a comparative analysis of Bronte and Virginia Wolf, where she brings out the common points of life and writings of the two authors: "[t]he exorcism of family trauma and the importance of significant individuals in their lives came through the use of creative imagination and found permanence in their works of literature […], [B]y being able to transform painful life experiences into fictional form, they received relief from internal burdens of highly charged events" (Tassel-Baska 1995, p. 17-18). This comments sums up Toru's approach towards reflecting life in literature. Furthermore, Tassel-Baska writes:

> Loneliness seemed omnipresent throughout the lives of both Bronte and Wolf. Friendships of both women were scant and somewhat erratic due to location and lifestyle. Bronte made two lifelong friends at the one school she attended. For a substantial period of her life, her own sisters and brother were her best and only social contacts […] (Tassel-Baska 1995, p. 18).

Secondly, Both Bronte[240] and Toru were self-taught women. Finally, besides confirming that her work is her best companion,[241] Bronte "was prescient about her own mortality. Nine years before her death in a letter to Ellen Nussey, her lifelong friend, she wrote "[I]t would be presumptuous in me to calculate on a long life, a truth obvious enough" (Tassel-Baska

[239] For a detailed analysis on Charlotte Bronte's life and her novels see Moglen (1984).
[240] Cf., Tassel-Baska, "[I]n the case of Bronte, it was her brother Branwell on whom the meagre family allotment for education was to go. He quickly squandered it in London. […] [T]he Bronte children were transformed by nightly reading and discussion around the dining room table at the Haworth Parsonage. For Emily and Anne Bronte, the fantasy worlds of Angria and Gondal, created out of their fascination with gothic art and literature, became their daily reality (1995, p. 17).
[241] Thus wrote Charlotte in a letter to her publisher William Smith Williams in July 26, 1849.

1995, p. 16). Toru, as expressed through her letters and from what the readers get from the story of her life, comes across as a self-immersed woman. Her handful of pleasures included riding and taking care of her two horses, cats and kittens, and literary exercises like reading and writing.[242] Her letters namely explores herself and other things in relation to herself. We find an almost similar reflection of this same self-preoccupation in her heroines as well. The diary entries of Marguerite in *Le Journal* are full of her own praises and how everything is perfect or made perfect by her slightest effort. All through the narrative, the readers read how beautiful the villagers find Marguerite to be and how praised and adored she is because of her kindness. One particular incident where she revives a dying child with a warm cover and a few sips of warm milk is not only far-fetched from reality but also hint at narcissism through narrative.

Scholars including her biographer Harihar Das had claimed proximity of Toru's life with her characters. Her descriptions of French countryside, her protagonist's love for horses, and special relationship with child figures in both the stories (perhaps a reflection of her cousin Varuna) could actually be fragments inspired by reality. However, on a deeper level, both Marguerite and Bianca could be read as fantasies of the 'other' at the same time being reflections of her own self, in an endeavor of looking at herself as the 'other'. Jackson in her book writes that fantasy protests against particular constraints and is in itself an attempt to "compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" (Jackson 2003, p. 3). This, in a nutshell, describes Toru's endeavor of her two novels. The books can be seen as her attempt to break free from the cultural constraints of the Bengali society while speaking of her personal loss through a manifestation of desire.

While Toru's novels speak of her proximity to the characters, simultaneously, they also do speak of Toru's handling of situations beyond her experience. While creating the individual life and actions of her characters, Toru places imagination ahead of realism and her personal life experience. Toru shares this willful and aesthetic obliteration of experience with the last generation of Victorian women novelists many of whom believed that experience "spoils you. It ties you hand and foot. It perverts you, twists you, blinds you to everything but yourself. I know women—artists—who have never got over their experience […]" (Sinclair

[242] Toru's letters written to Ms. Martin carries regular updates about Toru's pet animals and birds. The pet kittens called Peenoo and Baguette, canaries, guinea pigs and mainly the two horses Gentille and Jeunette find regular mention in the letters.

1910 cited in Showalter 1977, p. 242). However, Toru's literary imagination has another character to it. Her imagination gives her certain textual liberties, which convinces her readers of her distance from the Bengali society. Meera Jagannathan (2011) remarks that

> [t]his dialectic of distanciation and displacement has logical grounds, as this is but a symptom of the internal conflict of the perceived "other" who seeks solace from the mythic past as a bulwark against the trauma of rejection by contemporary society. The alienation suffered in the present is assuaged by the textually created idyllic world order that serves as a paradigm for society. In other words, it is a nostalgic yearning for a perfect world of moral certitudes and clearly marked social hierarchies that compelled Dutt to take such aesthetic liberties" (Jagannathan 2011, p. 17).

As an example of "textually created mythic idyllic world", Jagannathan refers to the world of Marguerite, which is restricted to convents, castles, and woods. "[t]he convent figuring as the place of piety, the castle one of sin and dissipation, and the woods as the place of both temptation and redemption, for it is in the woods that Marguerite first encounters the Count, and later agrees to marry the virtuous and stoic Louis" (Jagannathan 2011, p. 16). Further Toru's France or Paris exists outside the real time since there are no mentions of the important social, political, cultural, or historical events[243].

4.9 Interplay of multiple gaze and concluding remarks

What makes the analysis of Toru Dutt's novels engaging is the diverse interplay of gazes—her 'visual' relationship with the spaces, characters, and a myriad of other objects she comes across, interacts with, and decides to write about in her life. The characters of her novels are the results of her gaze at the European society where she lived and longed to return; they also decipher her relation to the society. The characters, their etiquettes, scenes, and environmental settings of the novels are quite convincing and life-like, probably generated from the author's travels and readings with a heady mix of her imagination. As the author and the omniscient narrator, she gazes at her characters, constructs, and directs them. The characters inside the ambit of the story, also gazes at each other, though, in this case, the predominant gaze either is the gaze of the two protagonists Bianca and Marguerite, who are either kept at the focal point of the narrative or helps to unfold the plot. In Toru's novels the readers are shown the incidents through the limited vision of the protagonist though in *Le Journal* the omniscient narrator takes over towards the end causing an interrupted gaze and

[243] Cf., Jagannathan, "[T]he restricted spaces, in conjunction with a simple plot line, direct a narrative whose time-frame seems to exist outside real time. For example, there is no mention of the advance of industrialization during this period in France, even when the setting changes from the French countryside to Paris. Nor are there any references to the historical or political events that we know were part of the reality. For all practical purposes, Dutt's France is situated outside any influence of its historic age" (2011, p. 17).

a change in perspective. However, these different narrative consciousness and perspectives join to form the bigger picture of Toru's gaze at the Europeans, their society and culture—a gaze, which is fraught with tensions and ruptures like her plots of her novels. Meena Alexander succinctly sums up the situation as,

> Though in her very last years she was able, through the use of Hindu mythology (e.g, her 'Prahlad' poem) to confront something of the tyranny of the British imperial power; her torn, conflicted life in letters emerges in her constant attempts at translation [of] the irresolute, if brilliant efforts to bring her two worlds of England and Calcutta together. Her letters penned obsessively to Miss Martin, or to Clarissa Bader in France were attempts to search out through feminine others something of the real substances of her alienated life, herself as she was, cut loose from the marginality forced upon her in part by her own colonized gaze" (Alexander 1989, p. 367).

Through her colonized gaze, Toru assessed not only the societies and themes of love and death but also patriarchy, though she rarely addresses the burning gender issues of Bengali society. Contrary to the contemporary Victorian tradition she followed, Toru did not indulge in attacking or belittling men. In her novels, men are capable of loving and responding to love—they are kind fathers and sensitive lovers and as much victims of fate as the women and at times, as much as weak.

Toru's interstitial position makes it possible for her to look at her own people like the 'other' and look at the 'other' as a reflection of her own self. Outside the narratives, Toru's letters to Ms. Martin were observations and analyses of her own society, which she gazed at, translated and narrated to her friend. Such early accounts contain a critical perspective of Hindu society and its cultural and religious practices like worships and marriage. Later accounts however, at times contain incidents of British brutality on Indians, which she finds disturbing.

The receptor of these communications, Ms. Martin's response to Toru's letters is traceable through Toru's response to them. Ms. Martin's gaze is thus somewhat mediated where she gazes at the Bengali society through Toru's letters, learns, and even speaks back. The readers catch a glimpse of this process through the way Toru responds to Ms. Martin's letters. Finally, Toru's later engagement to the Indian legends and myths can be read as gaze redirected towards her society to revisit and rewrite the past through her literary endeavor. This gazing back and forth can be read as a result of her in-between position, which gives rise to so many interconnecting and intersecting gazes. This could be partly a reflection of the author's searching for the self and the 'home'. Alexander explains it further,

> [S]he also composed poems in which the tangled longings of her 'native' self were feverishly portrayed, the contortions of a colonial education well accomplished forcing her into a series of false positions. In the poignant letters to Mary Martin, her English friend, one sees how her territorial displacements (the family lived in Calcutta, in England and in France) alienate her from any possible world in which she might have been at home, though perhaps even that presumption is naïve, ringing false to a woman raised without choice to the sorts of cultural and geographic complexities that Toru Dutt inherited" (Alexander 1989, p. 367).

Reading Toru is in a way watching her subvert the established and fixed literary standards (read western) she borrows from—this is best exemplified by her novels and to a certain degree from her other literary creations. In Toru one can find the best of both worlds perhaps in some chaos and confusion. What Knippling remarks about her verse, holds true for her novels as well:

> [T]he rules of Toru's poetic translation are best described as arbitrary. If a word or idea sounded good and looked good, it went in. This is not to say that her verse was sloppy or haphazard. But, cloistered at home and accessing European literature through her father's library, English newspapers, and articles of random interest to her in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, she subjected her verse to her own rigorous standards and the influence of her own personal favorites in the canon (Knippling 2000, p. 218).

Thus, to conclude, Toru's literary gaze primarily consisted of a passionate and immersed self-gazing and viewing other elements in relation to herself. This self-explorative gaze on the one hand challenges the established female iconography of her times and on the other shows the power of a liberating female imagination. Freedom—cultural, bodily, and psychological becomes a part of such imagination. "[T]he questions of a lasting freedom, of a sublime transcendence that so often haunt the imagination, do not vanish. On the contrary they take on an added edge since they seem so close, indeed at times inseparable from the figures of a previously sanctioned femininity, a borrowed, archaic language in which one has so often figured forth one's intimate self: or if not the self, then the quest for a voice untouched by the impotence of femininity. Tragically, it sometimes appears that the cost for such an easing of constraints is loss of the bodily hold on the world, the seat of the writer's sensuous knowledge" (Alexander 1989, p. 368).

5. *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* and impersonation of the heathen 'other'

5.1 Introduction

While the third and fourth chapters of this thesis analyzed the more straightforward nuances of gazing through novels, this chapter deals with another genre of literary narration: the autobiography. *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* (1869), first anonymously published in London and then in New York in 1869, was written by an American missionary Harriette G. Brittan (1823-1897), who stayed in Calcutta and Madras and noted the conditions of Bengali women. She put together her observations in one book, each chapter dealing with one or more of her perceived 'aberrations' of Hindu religion. The form of the missionary's narration is autobiographical, where Kardoo, a Hindu Brahmin girl, narrates her life from childhood to adulthood, focusing on particular religious and cultural incidents, which took place in her life. The choice of genre, in this case, is a narrative strategy to emphasize the authenticity of the incidents. However, the resultant effect is an interesting blurring of the borders between the author and the protagonist. This chapter, besides offering a detailed textual analysis of Brittan's book, looks at the narrative technique and the intercultural and interreligious dialogue (and monologue) it evokes. At the onset it should be cleared that even though this thesis is not about canonical texts, and *Kardoo* is indeed not one given how unidentified and explored [244] it is, however it is a compendium of canonical tropes propagated by European missionaries on Indian society. *Kardoo* provides an interesting case study of a narrative, which stands on the blurred border of being canonical and unrecognized, of being an autobiography striving for authenticity yet being impersonated and counterfeit—characters which can bring out the multiplicity and hidden depths of gaze itself as well as voice.

5.2 Situating *Kardoo*

Kardoo was not the only endeavor of missionary Brittan to uplift women from non-Christian backgrounds. She wrote *Shoshie, the Hindu Zenana Teacher*,[245] which was published in 1873 in New York. *Shoshie* is written in a similar style as *Kardoo*, as an autobiography. In the introductory chapter of the book, we come to know about the reception of Kardoo: "[M]y

[244] My friend and colleage Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay (2013) has included an analysis of this text in her thesis albeit from a different standpoint. The narrative offers an excellent opportunity of reading the intermingling of narrative voices and gazes of the autor and narrator, which is precisely the reason it is included here.

[245] *Shoshie*, like *Kardoo* has chapters focussing on "cruel superstitions." "widowhood," "funeral rites," "the Goddess Kali." However, Brittan looks at these from the perspective of the lower caste, the Sudra. *Kardoo*'s story is that of an upper caste affluent Brahmin family.

dear young friends, I have heard that you have read with great interest the life of a Hindoo girl named Kardoo, and that it has made you think more about the people of my dear country, India; and that it has made you take a deeper interest in the Mission work particularly for the girls and women of that land" (Brittan 1873, p.7). Both, *Kardoo* and *Shoshie*, form part of the discourse which highlighted the prevalent conditions of Indian womanhood in the late nineteenth century. Though these texts differ in their ways of narration, thematically they belong to the likes of Mrs. Marcus Fuller's *The Wrongs of Indian Womanhood* (1900), or Mrs. Hannah Catherine Mullens' *Phulmaṇi o karuṇār bibaraṇ* (The story of Phulmani and Karuna) (1852)[246], which focused on the redeeming effects of Christianity as a religion as well as a way of life.

"[W]ith earnest prayers that this may be its *effect*[247], I beg you to accept this little book" (Brittan 1869, p. 4), wrote Brittan in the dedication section of her book. The effects that Brittan had desired, are mainly twofold: first, "[t]o rouse if possible, stronger feelings of love and commiseration" (Brittan 1869, p. 3) in the hearts of the targeted readers. Second, to make the readers contemplate, by comparing their own lives with that of the Hindu women, "[t]o think less of the little privations" (Brittan 1869, p. 4) they sometimes might have to endure. To authenticate her missionary objectives, Brittan took recourse to the genre of autobiography. *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* is framed in the form of a life narrative of a young Hindu girl, written *in ultimas res*[248] where she tells her story from the childhood till she is saved from the burning pyre of her dead husband by the Christian missionaries in a recollection or flashback. Being a prototypical missionary text, with the sole idea to uphold the 'glory of Christianity' by stressing the 'horrors of heathendom,' *Kardoo* has little exceptional to offer in terms of story line or treatment of the plot. However, the impersonation of the author as the protagonist, sometimes blurring the lines between the two, and the almost exclusive focus on the onslaught on the corporeal self of the Hindus make this narrative worth analyzing in terms of form and content.

Kardoo the Hindoo Girl brings a shift in the way we have seen gazing so far in the thesis. It delves into the complexities of the action by offering a clear distinction between the

[246] This book is ascribed to be the first work of prose fiction, written by woman in Bengali language. "[W]omen are the main characters in *Phulmani o karunar*, which depicts the everyday life of ordinary village folk, their superstitions, religious traditions and customs (Tharu & Lalitha eds. 2004, p. 203-204).
[247] From the onset, it is made clear by the author that she intends her endeavor to be effective. Hence the book had its specific purpose, dedicated to a specific audience group. The gradual unfurling of the plot will further clarify the effect of the book.
[248] Cf. Nünning (2004, p. 110): "[…] [t]he analytical structure of beginning with the end of the story and gradually revealing the conditions of its beginning."

'narrator' (missionary Brittan) and the 'focalizer' (Kardoo) in the formation of the 'point of view'. However, it is difficult to decide if Brittan is the homodiegetic (narrator appears as a character within her own story) or the heterodiegetic (narrator is situated outside the story) narrator. As the author, she is placed outside the narrative thus being heterodiegetic; while as Kardoo, she is placed inside the story, as center of all story events, whereby she becomes homodiegetic narrator. While on one level, it is a western missionary's assessment of the Hindu culture, religion, and their impact on the Hindu bodies from a pre-formed and pre-conceived perspective, on a different level, it is also a Hindu woman looking at her own corporeal self and the impact of religion, culture and society on that self. While Brittan narrates, Kardoo the Hindu girl experiences. The combined effect offers a mosaic of heterogeneous and contested gaze on the Hindu society and womanhood. While the last decades of scholarship has argued about the increased fictionalization of the autobiographical self, thereby proclaiming that "the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure"[249] (Eakin 1985, p. 3), thus subverting the claim to authenticity of the genre, *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* reiterates the fictional character of the autobiographical self at a different level. Here, the self of Kardoo is indeed fictive and the narrative framework in which the author missionary puts her further enhances her fictitiousness and absurdity.

5.3 The purpose of *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl*

To figure out the purpose of *Kardoo*, it is important to trace the audience that missionary Brittan targeted at. Maina Chawla Singh (2013) gives a broad spectrum of possible readers of missionary narratives:

> Texts by missionary authors generally targeted two kinds of readers. They were either aimed at home churches and potential recruits (western readers) or were written as aids for missionary work and, therefore, meant for the "native" population, for instance, missionary stories, journals, or pamphlets published in the vernacular. Then there were also texts meant for circulation among church-related audiences—missionary directories and journals in English, published locally in South Asia—which served as key sites for missionary networking across race and denomination (Singh 2013, p. 139).

[249] For further details, see Eakin (1985).

Since Kardoo was written in English, it was most possibly meant for the first class of readers as mentioned by Singh. In the preface to *Kardoo*, Sarah D. Doremus,[250] founder of the Woman's Union Missionary Society, who sent Ms. Brittan to India, remarked:

> Appreciating that the gospel of Christ alone, has placed the women of our own favoured land in the happy and enviable position they occupy, they have sought by the direct agency of their own sex, to *elevate* and *Christianize*[251] the women of the East, whose idolatry and superstition have doomed them to lives of degradation and bitterness (Brittan 1869, p. 5).

Elevation and Christianization are the two important ideas in the quote above and behind the birth of *Kardoo* as a text. The mission's and missionaries' urge to elevate and Christianize the women of the East presupposes their lives of degradation and bitterness. The primary reason for such a life lies in the women of the east's idolatry and superstition—these are the major points of focus that the preface of the book *Kardoo the Hindu Girl* asks the reader to consider. It is also important to mention that throughout the narrative, the author does not leave any space for the readers to infer on the condition of Hindu society and the life of the Hindus. Brittan guides the gaze of the readers with very specific details and examples and leads them to the conclusion. The major instances of idolatry and superstition are exemplified in the text with vivid details to specific outcomes as to how they can affect a Hindu woman's life.

The brief note on the popularity of *Kardoo* as a text is already hinted by missionary Brittan in her other book *Shoshie*. The "Nineteenth Annual Report for 1879 of The Woman's Union Missionary Society of America for the Heathen Lands", published in January 1880 in New York, includes the sales figures of *Kardoo*. The treasurer's report of Chicago branch containing entries for February 3 and July 29, indicates and earning of 75 cents and 4 dollars respectively from the sales of the book. The earning of July 29 also informs that the 4 dollars are "[F]or the sale of eight copies of Kardoo, at the Tract House" (1880, p. 29).

The chain of events starts with introducing Kardoo's family and her background: Kardoo's father is a lawyer, a famous one and of good caste. He is educated and possessing great wealth. Kardoo's mother also belongs to a "very high caste" (Brittan 1869, p. 10) described as tender and gentle with a loving heart. Kardoo has one elder brother and one baby brother of importance to the narrative plot. From the early childhood, Kardoo is subjected to various

[250] The Bill Graham Center Archives (2008) states that Miss Sarah D. Doremus, daughter of Sarah Platt Doremus who founded the Woman's Union Missionary Society (WUMS) of America for Heathen Lands in November 1860. Sarah D. Doremus was also active in the organization and served as corresponding Secretary.
[251] Author's emphasis.

gender inequalities practiced in Hindu society. In spite of having an educated father, Brittan shows that, Kardoo is deprived of his love and care, as it is not a societal norm for Hindu fathers to adore their daughters. The house where they lived had different furnishing arrangements for male and female quarters.[252] Kardoo's childhood is described as being devoid of a "[b]eautiful garden to play in, [there were] no toys, no books to amuse me, no pleasant walks in the fields, no school to attend. None of these are for Hindu girls" (Brittan 1869, p. 17).

Brittan, through Kardoo, then goes on to describe the family dynamics of a Hindu society. There are usually a large number of members (70 in the case of Kardoo's family) living together in a single house. The women are secluded and deprived of meeting or talking to their husbands. Though the eldest male member of the family is considered the head, the eldest female member is portrayed as the tyrannous matriarch. Kardoo's grandmother's character is painted as one with a lot of cruelty and "[n]o husband could protect his wife from any unkindness, or even cruelty" (Brittan 1869, p. 20) of the elderly matriarch.

"[T]he children are all spoiled in India" (Brittan 1869, p. 20)—declares Kardoo as they grow up unrestrained and undisciplined by their parents. The boys are not punished following the norms of the patriarchal society, because "[boys are] of the superior sex" (Brittan 1869, p. 20) and girls are indulged keeping in mind their bleak enslaved future: "[S]he [mother] will not punish a girl, because she knows what a slave she will be when married; therefore, she wishes to grant her every pleasure while she is a child" (Brittan 1869, p. 20-21). Brittan tells that the future of women is bleak, given the atmosphere of 'depravity', which reigns in a Hindu household. Listening to and propagating licentious and sad stories and pagan anecdotes is one of the major pastimes of a Hindu woman. Kardoo laments that there are "no beautiful stories to teach us [young Hindu girls] to be good and holy, and thus to be happy" (Brittan 1869, p. 30).

After a detailed and critical description of a Hindu ways of life, including the most important part of it via the worship of gods and goddesses,[253] Kardoo recollects the sad string of incidents that predominates her life. The incidents start with Kardoo's most beloved uncle

[252] Kardoo recounts "[T]he upper rooms are used by the babus. Some of these are very handsomely furnished with matting, chairs, carpets, couches, pictures, placed in the greatest confusion, and rarely dusted or kept clean. […] [T]he upper rooms are used by the woman and children of the family. These rooms have no windows or doors, except those opening into the verandah, so that the women never catch a glimpse of anything going on in the street" (Brittan 1869, p. 13-15).
[253] Discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

Chundro, who was a rebel in the family of Hindus because he believed in Christ and the holy Bible. When he came out publicly with his lack of faith in the Hindu goddess Kali, he was sent to the holy city of Benares with the pretext of looking after the family business but mainly to facilitate the regaining of his "faith in the religion of his forefathers" (Brittan 1869, p. 74). Unfortunately, in a short time Chundro is killed by the *thags* (ṭhag), a sect of men known as the devotees of Kali whose profession is killing and looting hapless travelers for money and valuables.[254] Kardoo informs the readers that the victims of thags are offerings to Kali and the coincidence of Chundro's death shortly after his 'blasphemous' declaration of loss of faith in Kali was seen as highly ominous and significant. The nagging fear of Kardoo's mother and grandmother about Kali's seeking revenge eventually materializes (Brittan 1869, p. 98). With the death of Chundro, his wife, Berash's tale of woe began. She was forbidden to leave her in-laws house by the matriarch, Kardoo's grandmother (late Chundro's mother). Kardoo observes that her "[g]randmother continually lamented that on account of her son's dying so far away from home, the proper respect could not be paid to him as his funeral, of having his wife burned with him" (Brittan 1869, p. 99). To compensate for *satī,* [255] the eleven year old child widow of Chundro is described as being put through immense suffering, which not only included stripping her off her fineries of ornaments and dressing, but also being subject to worst forms of deprivation like sufficient food and water. The reader is informed that fasting is an integral part of a widow's life as "[…] [S]he is compelled to fast two whole days in each week, not a drop of water being allowed to pass her lips, even if she is dying" (Brittan 1869, p. 101). After hours of excruciating pain and suffering, without food and water, Berash passed away with the hope of meeting the 'great God' (Brittan 1869, p. 108) in heaven who is not like "[…] Kali, who hates us" (Brittan 1869, p. 103).

[254] British administration was preoccupied with these notorious highway robbers and killers, first observed in 1816 by Dr. Sherwood. Their main technique was befriending and later strangulation of gullible travelers to rob them of their possession. Detailed analysis and commentary is provided in subsequent sections of this chapter.

[255] The subject of *satī* has received voluminous attention and mention from the British colonialists as well as other European settlers taking interest in the colonial society. Transfer of first-hand information happened through extensive writings on the subject. Though reluctant in the beginning to interfere in the Hindu cultural and religious practices, British government finally interfered with other Hindu reformist thinkers like Raja Rammohan Roy. In 1798 the Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir John Ansthruter banned the practice in Calcutta. Lord William Bentick finally banned the practice in Bengal in 1829 which is forty years before Brittan wrote *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl*. The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine in December 1809 carried a vivid description of the ritual under the heading "Hindoo Superstition" by Claudius Buchanan who had written similar treatises on the subject. "[A]s early as 1811, a letter to the editor in the American magazine the Panoplist stated that among the principal reasons for engaging in foreign missions was "the suppression of various kinds of cruelty such as the burning of the widows" (Pruitt 2005, p. 66). For more details, see Pruitt (2005). The discussion is further taken up in the analysis section of this chapter.

After the death of Chundro and his wife, Prosonno, Kardoo's brother fell ill. In a state of desperation to get back her son from what seemed like an incurable illness, Kardoo's mother vowed to Kali to sacrifice her latest born son if Prosonno regained his health. Almost immediately to everyone's surprise, Prosonno started recovering and after five months, another male child was born in the family called Luckie. For months, the parents and Kardoo braced themselves for the final moment of the baby's sacrifice. Finally, the day appeared and the parents left for a religious fair and festival held in the banks of the holy river Ganges. As Kardoo heard about the sacrifice of the little baby, she learned that her mother:

> […] [W]alked quickly down to the river's brink, and without pausing an instant, flung her babe from her as far as she could into the water. He sunk, rose again instantly, and as instantly the immense head and open jaws of an alligator appeared beside him; the next moment the headless trunk of the babe floated before us, dyeing the water with its blood (Brittan 1869, p. 124).

The trail of woes in the family did not end with the sacrifice and the resulting brutal death of Luckie. Kardoo was married off to a *Kulin Brahmin.*[256] She stayed at her mother-in-law's house for a short time and then came back to her parent's place to be joined by her husband shortly after. The husband is described to be a pleasant man from whatever little interaction Kardoo had with him. He abandoned her soon and nothing more was heard of him until his death.

Kardoo's narrative of her own married life is interrupted by other instances of tragedy. Kardoo's father's friend-turned-into-enemy plotted a vicious revenge against him. He invited Kardoo's father for a *Nautch* or dancing girl show and at the same time tricked Kardoo's mother by sending her false invitation to the family priest's house. In a turn of events the *pāl'ki*[257] and the bearers were directed to bring Kardoo's mother to the same *nautch*[258] performance. When her mother emerged from the palki thinking she had arrived at the priest's place, face unveiled, ready to be received by the priest's wife, "[S]he

[256] Kūlīn brahmins originated from Kanẏā-Kubja or Kannauj in North India and their stories dates back to the time of lord Rama. From the very early period they migrated and settled in different parts of the country as well as in Bengal. To preserve their purity of blood marital alliance was restricted within certain closed circles of themselves. This practice degenerated largely in colonial Bengal when polygamy and child marriage became rampant in order to preserve the *kulīnatā* (the state of remaining kulin). For more information, see Khare (1960, p. 348-367) and Banerjee (1989, p. 127-177).

[257] A closed carriage for transportation used by the wealthy classes carried by four men called bearers.

[258] *Nautch* is a derivative of the Bengali word '*nach*' [nāc'] or dance. It refers to performances by dancing girls accompanied by live music or singing. It was much in vogue in colonial India for the entertainment of the rich natives and British officials.

immediately perceived that there were three or four other *babus*[259] in the room, who had been invited […]" (Brittan 1869, p. 135), to witness the defamation of Kardoo's father. Kardoo's father handled the situation by sending the mother to the house and departing with a gentle unperturbed thanksgiving to the host and the guest; coming back home, he beat his wife to death. Kardoo, in a vain attempt to save her mother was knocked unconscious by her father and on regaining consciousness, came to know about the death of the mother from her elder brother Prosonno. Brittan further exposes the colonial male psyche through Prosonno's remark about the action of the father and its result:

> […] [I]t was right; my mother must die; nothing else could wipe out the disgrace she was exposed to. That man had dared even to touch her. It was impossible she should live after this. Much as I love my mother, I could not wish her to live after being so polluted (Brittan 1869, p. 138).

Since law and order condition in India is portrayed by Brittan as slack enough not to take notice of this murder, the incident was quickly forgotten and never mentioned: "[I]n cases of murder here, unless there are actual witnesses, it is impossible to bring the criminals to justice" (Brittan 1869, p. 143). Also Kardoo's father did not take any initiative to punish the man indirectly responsible for his wife's death. The mother's death changed her father: "[H]eretofore he was calm, dignified and gentle; now he became stern and forbidding"[260] (Brittan 1869, p. 143). In addition, his mind started to be more inclined towards religion. "[H]e became sullener and morose, until he was dreaded by the whole household" (Brittan 1869, p. 143). Meanwhile, Kardoo's much feared grandmother, the matriarch of the family, developed gangrene, which spread to her whole body and there was no hope for survival. Kardoo's father decided to carry her to the Ganges on whose shore the suffering should die.[261] In spite of interferences from Christian minded uncles who forbade Kardoo's father to embark upon such an act of cruelty, they could not prevent it. The grandmother was carried to the Ganges and Kardoo's father waited impatiently for her to die. However, after some time, when things were not ending hastily enough, he sealed the nostrils and mouth of

[259] Form of politely addressing the gentility in Bengal. Variously used for namely the English educated clerks as well as the socially respected and is still in use as polite address. From Brittan's description it can be ascertained that Kardoo's father was a *bābu*.

[260] This transformation for the worse could be interpreted as the gradual degeneration of the character that refuses to stop or learn from the past cruelties, because heathenism depletes the heart of its sensibilities. The sublime humane elements of pity and compassion are missing from a 'pagan' heart.

[261] Brittan describes it as "ancient", "bigoted" and "evil" Hindu custom, "[H]e therefore ordered her to be placed upon a bier similar to those on which the dead are carried, and covered with a sheet, to be taken to a small open shade on the banks of the river, close by the burning *ghat* [ghāṭ]. This shed is expressly built to shelter the dying, who are placed in view of the river, so that their last look may be on its holy waters" (Brittan 1869, p. 145).

the mother with some 'holy' mud brought from the bed of the river, thus speeded up the end, and cremated the body.[262] Shortly after, Kardoo received the news that her husband had married again and she was indifferent to it because she never received any special affection or care from the husband in the first place.

Kardoo provides another example of her father's greater inclination towards religious fanaticism. He undertook the Hindu festival of hook swinging or what is known as *caṛak pūjā*. It is described as a religious festival in which men, often under the influence of drugs, swing from a pole with one end of the rope attached to the pole while the other end stays attached to the person's body by means of hooks piercing the skin. Kardoo informed the reader that her father undertook this ordeal on the persuasion of the family priest "to bring peace to his conscience" (Brittan 1869, p. 152). As a result of this undertaking, Kardoo, one day, found her father lying on the floor; his back "was dreadfully swollen and inflamed, with four gaping wounds in it, where the flesh must have been torn and lacerated" (Brittan 1869, p. 149).[263]

Kardoo's already tragic narrative heads for a climax when the next mishap in her life centers not on one of her family members but on herself. After being married for eight years and devoid of any connection with her husband, Kardoo one day was summoned by her father, being asked to put on her jewels and the finest of her sarees. In a while, Kardoo came to know that her husband has expired and she was being called to perform *sati* or widow immolation—a ritual by which the widow is burnt on the same pyre of her dead husband. Kardoo begged and implored but all went in vain as the father said "[t]he time has come when I [Kardoo] should perform my part by the sacrifice of myself, and thus not only gain felicity, but confer a lasting benefit on my family" (Brittan 1869, p. 156). Even though Kardoo's husband married other women, Kardoo, by dint of being the first wife was entitled to the 'privilege.' The narrative concentrates on the details of Kardoo's ordeal where she was prepared for the final ceremony by being drugged so that her resistance was subdued. However, the drug failed to weaken Kardoo's will to survive and after the first agony of the heat and smoke she flung herself off the pyre. What followed, as described by Kardoo herself, "[I]nstantly my father and several priests lifted me, and with many execrations put me again upon the funeral pyre; but once more, in the intensity of my sufferings, I leaped

[262] This is also another recurring theme of missionary narratives where instead of striving for the recovery of the sick, the relatives would try to hasten the end. This is discussed in detail in subsequent sections.
[263] Further discussed in details in the subsequent sections.

up, and sprang to the ground" (Brittan 1869, p. 163). She became unconscious and when she finally regained consciousness, found herself in the shelter of Christian missionaries who had saved her from imminent death. *Sati* as a prominent colonial trope signifying the oppression of colonized men over colonized women and hence justifying colonial rule has received significant focus during and after the colonial era both by colonizers and scholars alike. Lata Mani mentions about the common discourse on *sati* in India, which was characterized by the "[c]entrality of brahmanic scriptures, unreflexive indigenous obedience to these texts, and the religious nature of sati" (Mani 1987, p. 124-25). Mani further mentions Walter Ewer's account of *sati*, who was the Acting Superintendent of Police in the Lower Provinces around 1818 gathering eyewitnesses for the abolition of the practice. The readers get an idea of how the colonial law-keepers viewed the practice, "Ewer proposed that the contemporary practice of *sati* bore little resemblance to its scriptural model, which he defined as a voluntary act of devotion carried out for the spiritual benefit of the widow and the deceased. In reality, he argued, widows were coerced, and *sati* was performed for the material gain of surviving relatives. Ewer suggested that relatives might thereby spare themselves both the expense of maintaining the widow and the irritation of her legal right over the family estate" (Mani 1987, p. 125). This is in close connection with the missionary accounts of the practice. The practice of *sati* sparked a debate among the colonialists who feared interfering in Hindu religious practices and the ensuing unpopularity. However, with the growing incidents of the practice, it was unanimous that a total abolition should follow. Indigenous resistance against the practice came from reformers like Rammohan Roy who published his tracts against *sati*. 'Willful' submission of widowed women to partake in the practice has also been used to prolong its justification (Sarkar 2012). Nonetheless, the willfulness of the widow was seen as problematic: "[T]he widow, until she burnt to death, could turn either divine or malevolent. If she went through the ritual with resolution, she would become a holy figure, adored and worshipped. On the other hand, she could equally change into the folk devil, which often tried to escape from the pyre and thereby plunged her lineage into everlasting shame. […] Her mortal body was a theatre of contrary possibilities. And so was her agency" (Sarkar 2012, p. 310). The practice, after much discussion among colonial officials and native reformers, was eventually abolished by the then Governor General Lord William Bentinck in December 1829. As Mani argues, the colonialists' desire to abolish the practice was not the problem; however, the feasibility of interference in the native religious practice was (Mani 1986). However, the outcry against *sati* is borne out of the "[c]onception of colonial subjects [which] held the majority to be

ignorant of their "religion." Religion was equated with scripture. Knowledge of the scriptures was held to be largely the monopoly of Brahmin pundits. Their knowledge was however believed to be corrupt and self-serving. The civilizing mission of colonization was thus seen to lie in protecting the 'weak' against the 'artful'" (Mani 1986, p. 35).[264] We see an almost unmixed reflection of this thought in Brittan's sensational account of the practice. The recounting of the event via Kardoo, the survivor of *sati* adds to the authenticity and questionability of the practice, which is in fact, the desired aim of the narrator.

Physical and emotional recovery from what she was subjected to in her life was not easy or fast, but she slowly revived due to the care and sweet words of the missionaries. She was addressed as "dear child" (Brittan 1869, p. 166) which no one had done after the death of her mother and thus Kardoo finds a familial environment in the mission and a mother figure in the missionary. It is worth noticing how the projection of the colony as the child or a woman in need of maintenance, disciplining, and care by the 'father-figure' metropole was a prominent trope of the time. Anne Mcclintock (2013) further clarifies the trope of the family in this regard, which justified the subordination of women by man and child by the father, thereby marking the colonial hierarchical relations as 'natural.' Mcclintock remarks:

> [t]he family offered an invaluable trope for figuring historical time. Within the family metaphor, both social hierarchy (synchronic hierarchy) and historical change (diachronic hierarchy) could be portrayed as natural and inevitable, rather than as historically constructed and therefore subject to change. Projecting the family image onto national and imperial progress enabled what was often murderously violent change to be legitimized as the progressive unfolding of natural decree. Imperial intervention could thus be figured as a linear, nonrevolutionary progression that naturally contained hierarchy within unity: paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children. The trope of the organic family became invaluable in its capacity to give state and imperial intervention the alibi of nature (Mcclintock 2013, p. 45).

The reader reaches the culmination of the woeful narrative of *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* with one last incident. While Kardoo was being enlightened in the company of missionaries, (Brittan 1869, p. 171) one day, in the missionary compound the Christian priest brought a man who had flung himself in front of the chariot of lord Jagannāth in the hope of redemption. He had been severely wounded with "both his legs crushed in a frightful manner"[265] (Brittan 1869, p. 179). Kardoo learned that the man was a Brahmin and when

[264] Refer to Lata Mani (1998); Loomba (1993, p. 209-227) and Sarkar (2012, p. 295-320) for further details on scholarship on *sati*.

[265] Though Brittan's commentary on Jagannath and the chariot festival is limited to the extent of informing the reader about wild devotees coming under the wheels of the chariot and crushing themselves to death to attain salvation, colonial officials and missionaries saw more to it. The descriptions of Claudius Buchanan, a protestant missionary, are notable in this respect where he not only stressed the blood and death associated

she went to have a look at him, she discovered to her woe and dismay that he was her father. In the beginning, the father abhorred his daughter as "[a] vile outcaste" (Brittan 1869, p. 180) but gradually as his end hastened, he called his daughter and admitted his sin and lamented his inability to earn the mercy of his own god. However, with the hope to earn the mercy of the Son of God, Christ, he cast his last breath.

The story of Kardoo's life ends with the twin hopes that she would be reunited with her family in heaven through the blood of Christ and that India's "[…] [c]hildren may soon turn from their dumb idols to serve the living God" (Brittan 1869, p. 183). Kardoo, the character ends her story with a thanks to the "[K]ind ladies from Christian lands, even from far-off America, [who] are spending their days in our prison homes, telling of Jesus and his love" (Brittan 1869, p. 182). She, "as a daughter of India", thanks the aforementioned missionaries, "[t]hat you are working for her [India] deliverance from the gross darkness of heathenism" (Brittan 1869, p. 183).

5.4 Brittan, mission work, and missionary politics

S. C Bartlett, in his pamphlet titled 'A Plea for Foreign Missions' published by the in 1867, wrote, "[I]t is selfish, it is inexcusable, it is wicked to hide that light at home. All Christendom would deplore it, and God would frown upon it" (Bartlett 1867, p. 10). By the 'light at home', he meant the light of Christianity that would enlighten and redeem the rest of the world. Barbara Welter (1978) in her article on protestant women's missionary career in nineteenth century America quotes an observer: "[W]e need the romance, the unworldliness, the heroism of foreign missions" (Welter 1978, p. 625). She further remarks that "[E]arly attempts to encourage women to become missionaries, and to support the missionary venture at home, emphasized the depraved condition of women in heathen lands" (Welter 1978, p. 630). American women went to the 'heathen' lands both as wives of missionaries and as single women.[266] Harriette G. Brittan also belonged to the groups of

with the sacrifices but also the licentiousness of the priests, their indecent gestures and obscenity in the ritual and ceremony conducted by the priests: "[T]o make this absolutely clear to his European readers he compared his [Lord Jagannath] worship with the worship of the god Moloch in the Old Testament, and with the ancient feasts of Bacchus which, he claimed, included 'the same obscenities, the same bloody rites, and the same emblem of the generative power'" (Oddie 2006, p. 81). For more details, see Oddie (2006).

[266] Cf., Welters "[T]he ability of women to love was the theme of many nineteenth-century novels; her search for a fitting love object was the theme of as many lives. The foreign missions provided a dramatic setting where that 'perfect love, all other loves excelling' could be acted out to the final act of love, the laying down of life itself" (1978, p. 626). Welters further explores in her article how this cultivation of love further matched the fact that how cheap and convenient and less troublesome it was considered to send women for mission work. Thus patient, self-denying, self-sacrificing women were much in demand.

missionaries who set sail for India with the zeal to bring Christianity to the 'dark' corner of the earth.

Brittan's presence in the text is as palpable as Kardoo the protagonist. The readers perceive Kardoo through Brittan's ideas, representations and projections. Being a fictional character, Kardoo is rendered powerless in the hands of the author. Hence, the missionary's attempt in choosing an autobiography as a genre of writing to stress the authentic prototypical individual, suffers a setback. Brittan's omnipresence in the narrative and also her contribution in shaping Kardoo's character require a look at her own background as a missionary. Brittan was born in England in June 1822. In her early years, she moved to the United States and settled in Brooklyn. Brittan was sent to Calcutta by the Women's Union Missionary Society[267] in 1862, among the first group of single American women to engage in foreign mission work. The society, formed with the idea of reaching and teaching the native women in the *zenanas* worked avidly towards this end. In their twenty-fifth anniversary report published in January 1886, the vice-president of the society, Mrs. S. E Warner, talks about the 'need' of their mission activities to bring in the change in the lives of secluded women of India. She writes:

> [N]ative gentlemen of India, themselves often educated at European universities, began to feel the need of some degree of cultivation for their wives; if no more than to know pretty methods of broidery and fancy needle-work, and the younger and better class of men CRAVED A CHANGE, but knew not how it could be brought about. A demand arose for such foreign teachers as could safely be trusted within their jealously guarded ZENANAS, or women's apartments. It was to help meet this wonderful demand for lady teachers that this Society was organized, under the leadership of Mrs. T. C. Doremus, of New York, to send out and support single women to visit and teach these "hidden ones" who could literally be reached in no other way (Warner 1886, p. 18).

The published missionary reports served the primary objective of informing about the 'degenerate state of subjects in heathen lands' besides talking about their success stories. At times, indigenous support was also mentioned to gain a greater validity of the endeavor, like in the one quoted above where native Indian men are taken into privy and that the missionary society was working according to the wishes and in conformity with the men. Missionary texts reemphasize and nurture the set notions of the 'other' as Maina Chawla Singh (2000)

[267] Cf., Cady & Webber "[T]he Women's Union Missionary Society was the first organization of women in America dedicated to helping women in Africa and Asia. For 15 years, it operated out of the Doremus home. The first missionary they sponsored, Harriet Britain, [sic.] went out to Indian in 1862. Twenty years later, the society was supporting over 100 missionaries at 12 stations. By the time she died, Doremus had directed over 1,000 female teachers, doctors, evangelists, and relief workers to mission work all over the world" (Cady& Webber eds. 2006, p. 61).

argues in her book that American women's participation and attitude towards overseas missionary work was situated within a complex sociological and religious paradigm in the United States, that "[i]t was inextricably linked to the prevailing gender relations that governed the structure of Protestant churches in contemporary America. Denied the platform to speak, and the pulpit to preach by most denominations, their exclusion encouraged North American churchwomen toward the second half of the nineteenth century to focus their strategies toward work for women and children" (Singh 2000, p. 10). Thus, overseas missions served two purposes: on the one hand, they gave the American woman the tool to address their own exclusion from church matters. On the other hand, they easily fitted themselves in places, which were the most difficult for male missionaries to reach, namely the secluded quarters of women and children. Thus, to ensure the far-reaching effects of Christian missions and to access the household, female missionaries made themselves indispensable. Writing missionary texts and pamphlets was a necessary part of the mission activities and thus the literature produced was so voluminous that missionary discourse forms an entire genre of narratives. However, at the heart of the discourse remained a few central and common themes—"[c]entral to which was the figure of the 'heathen women', reproduced widely in mission reports and pamphlets" (Singh 2000, p. 10). Singh further states that this "[c]onstruction of the Other situated in the world of 'darkness and dirt' were symbolically related to perceptions of the Self as 'redeemer' and 'harbinger of light'[268](Singh 2000, p. 10). *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* and its likes formed a part of the discourse highlighting the success of mission activity. The once Hindu *zenana* girl now converted to Christianity, served as a congratulatory and encouraging project to the missionaries themselves by highlighting the achievement of their enterprise.

Karen Sanchez-Eppler provides a further in-depth analysis. In her article (1996), she informs the readers about the nineteenth century scenario of American mission politics:

> [B]y the 1880s the US was sending out into the "heathen" world the largest number of Protestant missionaries. Increasingly, these missionaries were women: missionary wives and unmarried female missionaries comprised 60% of the American mission force by 1890. Hence, the feminization of the foreign mission movement coincided both with the rapid growth in American missions abroad and with the increasing US interest in international expansion (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 399).

[268] Cf., Singh: "Images of degradation and narratives of "Christian progress" that pervade missionary writings were aimed at an audience whose eagerness for success stories of conversions generated considerable anxieties among the missionaries to produce a triumphalist discourse, even when conversions were rare" (Singh 2000, p. 11).

Domesticity formed an important part and focus of the proselytizing missions. Thus, "[T]ransporting their Victorian bric-a-brac and their domestic behaviors and ideals to Asia and Africa as well as to the un-Christian tribes and slums within the US territory, these women embodied a domestic empire" (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 399-400). The readers are well aware of the focus on the haphazardness of Hindu domesticity in the beginning of *Kardoo*, including food and table manners—sans table. Compared to Europeans, a remarkably different Hindu style of eating is depicted, not only in the fact that there are brick and earthen floor instead of table and mere hands instead of cutlery, but also because children and the mother eat from the same brass plate and drink water from a pitcher held up high. Kardoo remarks that "[…] [t]o excel in cooking was at that time the only accomplishment to which a Hindu woman might aspire" (Brittan 1869, p. 33). Kardoo's chief preoccupation in her childhood, in her own words was "[H]elping my mother to burn spices for the curry, braiding her hair, and listening to her strange stories of the gods and goddesses" (Brittan 1869, p. 33). Here, the description of the lack of Hindu table manners is openly referred to. Quoting Kardoo: "[T]ake a look at us as we are eating our dinner, and what do you see? A father and mother, with their children, sitting down around a table spread with a clean cloth, and before eating, lifting up their hands and asking a blessing, and giving thanks to the Giver of all? No, dear friends, you would see nothing of this sort" (Brittan 1869, p. 31). Besides implying the monotony of a single curry with meat, fish, or vegetables in it, which is eaten with rice, the experience of sitting together and eating is also emphasized. The father or the head and other male members of the family have their food first followed by the women and children who eat the leftover. "[W]e had no spoons or knives or forks" (Brittan 1869, p. 33), and with the leftover food, the family including the mother and the children sit on the floor, "[a]round the plate and each one putting his or her hand into the dish, would take up a small portion of rice, and squeezing that, with the curry, into a round ball, would toss it down the throat" (Brittan 1869, p. 32). Interestingly enough, the very same theme is dealt with in another missionary text by Samuel Young, *Missionary Narrative of the Triumphs of Grace; As Seen in the Conversion of Kafirs, Hottentots, Fingos and Other Natives of South Africa* (1843). Young begins by describing not religious rites but dining arrangements: "[T]hey use no tables, dishes, knives, or forks at their meals; but everyone helps himself by means of sticks, to the meat which is in the pot" (As quoted in Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 412). It should be noted that focus on this particular aspect of missionary concern—that of sitting together on the floor as a result of the absence of table and chairs

and cutlery, emphasizes the absence of "[d]ivisions and distinctions characteristic of the well-kept nineteenth-century American home […]" (ibid).

Harriette G. Brittan starts the tale of Kardoo with a description of her house. She remarks that in general, "[i]n very few of these houses do you see any windows, and the few they have, are small and barred like those of a prison, instead of having glass. In the rainy season these windows are closed by shutters on the inside" (Brittan 1869, p. 13). This description of the general exterior of a house has not only a feeling of confinement and suffocation but also an implied comparison to an American house in the phrase 'instead of having glass' (ibid). A while later in her description, she admits that the rooms used by *babus* are "[v]ery handsomely furnished with matting. Chairs, carpets, couches, pictures" but they are "[…] [p]laced in the greatest confusion and rarely dusted and kept clean. Thick black cobwebs hang everywhere, it being considered a sin to disturb a spider" (Brittan 1869, p. 14). Hence, the unkempt and unclean household comes with a religious backing. Eppler further remarks that, "[h]eathenism may be a religious problem, requiring the religious solution of conversion, but its sign is not spiritual so much as domestic" (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 412). Again, we see that the tank in which the Hindu women of a household bathes might get very green and muddy in the dry season, but the women bathe in it every day "for the Hindu religion commands this to be done" (Brittan 1869, p. 16).

It is interesting to note that the 19th century American missionaries "[r]ejected the biological determinism that characterized scientific racialism during the second half of the nineteenth century" (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 405), thereby certifying the 'heathen' and racially others as fit to embrace Christianity. However, the mission workers distinguished between race and culture. So while racial hierarchy could be overlooked in the proselytizing missions—whereby "[…] [d]ark-skinned people were capable of embracing Christian beliefs, values and even behaviors" (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 406) cultural superiority should be stressed. Thus, missionary activities fully supported "an ethnocentric cultural imperialism" (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 406). Here, the superior imperialist culture as propagated by the female missionaries was one of domesticity that branched out and gave rise to cultural empathy and cultural chauvinism. This empathy and chauvinism in turn formed the core ingredient in the self-empowerment of the American missionaries. Harriette G. Brittan's preoccupation with Kardoo's childhood and domestic life and the detailed description of the prototypical Hindu household with a minute eye for detail substantiate the norm of the day as highlighted above.

Brittan compares Kardoo's childhood to an American girl's and highlights the stark differences between the two, and the tensions and miseries in the former. Her father's education as a barrister and his noble caste and financial affluence do not make much of a difference in his treatment of the little girl child in the family. Talking about her father, Kardoo remarks:

> [W]hen I did see him, he always spoke kindly and pleasantly to me; but he never took me up in his arms and kissed me; he never set me on his knee and showed me pictures, or told me pretty stories, *as your father does*[269]. No; I was a girl! There was no need for me to know any thing but how to cook and to braid my hair (Brittan 1869, p. 10).

Hence, there is a direct reference to the American childhood. Somewhat later, Kardoo remarks that "[t]he children are all spoiled in India," (Brittan 1869, p. 20) in a sweeping generalization but also implying the 'unspoiled' state of American childhood.

5.5 Treatment of the native body: violence and vigilance on native bodyscape

"[M]y name is Kardoo. What a strange name, I think I hear some of you say. Is it a boy's name? No, it's a girl's name, but not that of an American child" (Brittan 1869, p. 7). Thus starts *Kardoo*. There is a couple of characteristics as well as politics of naming the characters in the plot. First, names like Kardoo, Berash that are both names of female characters are not Bengali names. Kardoo does not have a definite meaning. However, Berash could be interpreted as sans *ras* or the sap of life. This naming the colonized 'other' in terms of meaningless and often derogatory terms serves some purposes—first to deepen the divide between the self (the American self in this case) and the other. Second, the inability to discern the gender from the name de-sexualizes the person. Naming is the first step towards creating and establishing an individual's identity; and when the naming is 'strange' the individual also loses her familiarity and becomes a strange being—an object of observation and curiosity. It also becomes apparent in the course of the narrative that Kardoo and Berash not only signify the strange but also the neglected.

In many ways, *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* is an impossible text; a heathen dystopia where every form of suffering conceivable is packed into one exemplary Hindu family. Brittan's idea was to create an example, to create an impression in the minds of the readers, American

[269] Here 'your' is the reader's. The narrative is posed as Kardoo having a monologue. The readers are the mute listeners. From this phrase, it is apparent that the readers are not Indian/Hindu/Bengali, but the American public. A comparison is attempted, possibly to invoke sympathy, where matured readers are led down the memory lane and encouraged to reminisce about their loving childhoods. That memory is compared to Kardoo's memories of her own childhood to bring out the differences between the two cultures. Author's emphasis.

or otherwise. Hence, her tale embodies all forms of suffering which the 'other' culture and religious paganism can entail upon individuals. It is imperative to have a closer look at the idea of bodily suffering that *Kardoo* highlights since bodily suffering is the central focus of the text.

The native women's body has been a singular point of attention and reference for Brittan in her book. The book highlights the human body primarily in its various forms of suffering and mutilation, bodily emissions like blood, and brutality like beating, beheading, starving, and being fed by animals. The author starts with the important aspect of dressing the body, which in one way or the other also contributes to the physical feeling of inadequacy (i.e. by being inadequately covered), suffocation or discomfort. Brittan, through Kardoo recounts that, "[u]ntil I was six years old, my only articles of dress were a gold necklace, some gold bracelets, and some silver bangles on my ankles" (Brittan 1869, p. 21). After describing at length the saree, Kardoo remarks that "[…] but at Poojahs, or on special occasions, when we were supposed to be dressed, the material was thin as gauze" (Brittan 1869, p. 22). It is interesting to note that Fanny Parks (1850), raises a similar concern, while commenting on the *sari* that she saw worn by Calcutta *zenana* women: "[O]n beholding their attire I was no longer surprised that no other men than their husbands were permitted to enter the zenana […] the dress was rather transparent, almost useless as a veil […] the form of the limbs and the tint of the skin is traced through it" (Parks 1850, p. 59-60). Later Kardoo remarks that "[I] wore a saree made of the finest gauze, my legs, arms, head, and neck loaded with jewelry—bracelets, and chains so heavy that they made me ache all over, though I was very proud of them" (Brittan 1869, p. 49). Kardoo describes the bridal dressing in such terms:

> [T]he ears were pierced in six places, and loaded down with earrings of the most exquisite workmanship; some of them were so long they touched the neck, while the hoops of others were three inches in diameter. A necklace of pearls clasped her throat, and below this, around her neck, were a dozen chains, each longer than the upper one, and of different workmanship. Both arms were covered with armlets and bracelets, excepting just at the bend of the elbow. Passing four times around her loins was a very heavy gold chain, fastened by a massive gold buckle set with precious stones.
>
> She had as many as a dozen silver bangles on each leg, some falling over the foot as far as the toes, these being very wide, and edged with a fringe of small silver bells that made a soft tinkling noise, like little bells, as she moved (Brittan 1869, p. 82-83).

The presence of adverbs like 'pierced', 'loaded', 'clasped', 'fastened' signifies an idea of confinement and hindrance rather than adornment. Being a missionary, Brittan had her ideas

of simplicity; she quotes the words of the apostle Paul to women that they adorn themselves "[n]ot with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (Brittan 1869, p. 83). Hindu marriage is described as a long pagan mindless ritual 'very tedious' (Brittan 1869, p. 84), with long blowing of horns and "[i]n a tray on her head she carried red hot or blazing coals" (Brittan 1869, p. 86) which were thrown on the grooms head[270]. Kardoo wistfully remarks that the Hindu marriage ceremony is way "[d]ifferent from the simplicity of a Christian wedding, where the blessing of God is invoked on loving hearts"[271] (Brittan 1869, p. 91). However, in the ceremony of union or marriage, Kardoo describes the ritual of lighting the wisp of straw which is symbolic of the promise of the groom that "[h]e will at least find as much as a wisp of straw with which to burn or scorch his wife's face at her death" (Brittan 1869, p. 91).

Kardoo, as the voice of Brittan, upholds for criticism and comparison the repulsive sexuality that emanates through their transparent dresses, as well as the indecency of working women in the Hindu society. Groups of daily service women, like the barber's wife, have been blamed with the onus of polluting the moral environment. Their "fearfully depraved and licentious" (Brittan 1869, p. 23) stories and songs[272] are said to be of immense entertainment to the native women and children. Thus "[t]he more vile and polluting the story, the more it was enjoyed by the listeners," (ibid) signifying the 'inclination' towards moral degeneration of the Hindus. It is worth mentioning here that Brittan only reflects the prevailing idea of her time that deviant sexuality thrives in the tropics. While sexual restraint was considered a civilized, related to moral purity, and one's prestige, and essentially a forte of the colonial masters, anxiety prevailed about upholding the moral purity in the tropical colony. Collingham remarks,

> The properly circumstanced Victorian man, leading a temperate life, was supposed to be able to gradually transform and restrain his libido. Those seeking to regulate

[270] This is unverified information. There is no record of such ritual in a Hindu marriage.
[271] This and some other comparisons occur in the text without references as to how Kardoo, the girl from a Hindu family witnessed these events in the American society.
[272] It is to be noted here that the 'fear' of depravity was not just confined to missionaries working in Bengal, in close connection to Bengali women but formed one of the pivotal reasons for women's reform and education to the western educated *Bhadraloks*. Cf., Kumar, "[U]nder colonial influence, the *bradralok* learnt to view these forms [*kīr'tans*, *pa̐chālis*, *kathakatās*] as low and 'obscene': from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century both missionary and administrative literature abounds with horrified descriptions of the abandonment which 'even' upper-class natives enjoyed both in religious ritual and entertainment. Nor is it surprising that the ribald humour of popular Bengali songs, in particular, drew disfavor from the Victorians, who condemned so much of their own literary heritage as being lewd. The *bradralok* began to frown upon popular, traditional songs and recitals within the *andarmahal* as exposing women to wantonness and vulgarity: at the same time, women's enjoyment of such entertainment was described as indicating their 'natural' tendency towards depravity" (Kumar 1993, p. 15).

> Anglo-Indian sexuality were faced by the problem that sexual restraint was believed to be much more difficult to achieve in the tropics. The heat had long been renowned for stimulating the sexual organs and desires. The theme of the sexual licentiousness of Indians ran through writing on India from the comments of Abbe Dubois in 1817, who identified the Hindu religion as the source of sexual wantonness, to George ManMunn's fascination in the 1930s with the link between sex and murder in the cult of the goddess Kali. The sexual stimulation which the European experienced in the tropics was often interpreted as yet another indication of his internal physical and moral degeneration (Collingham 2001, p. 182).

Thus while sexual aberration in the colony was a major highlight, so was the relation of that aberration to weather, religion, and way of life. Interestingly Brittan also takes up Kali to substantiate her views on degeneration of the Hindus—this is discussed in detail in the subsequent sections. In the long line of unnatural deaths in the family, Chundro comes first. He is killed by the thags and all the victims of thags have similar features, namely: "[t]he frightful looking corpse is found lying on its back, with distended eyes, protruding tongue, and clenched hands. As every corpse that has been destroyed by the thags is found in precisely the same attitude, with its tongue and eyes resembling somewhat the pictures of Kali, they are instantly known as victims dedicated to her" (Brittan 1869, p. 97). Inclusion of the infamous highway murderers or thags in the narration fits the missionary scheme well for two major reasons: Since *Kardoo*'s plot is a conglomeration of native brutality, thags fit altogether in that scheme, and they were claimed to be the followers of the goddess Kali. Thus, the mention of the brutality of the thags sets the stage for the critique of the goddess Kali, who preoccupies the missionary.

There is no dearth of scholarly writings on thugs although there is a lack of unanimity in the existing narratives. Opinions range from calling the thugs mere chimeras of colonial imagination to justify British rule, to archival reports confirming their existence and suppression.[273] Some of the leading commentators on the subject, like Martine van Woerkens (2002) described thugs as follows:

> [O]n 3 October 1830, the readers of the Calcutta Literary Gazette discovered an amazing text in their magazine. It revealed that in India there were devotees who partook in a horrible cult of the goddess Kali, this under the benevolent gaze of the priests of the temple dedicated to her. Having come as pilgrims, these monstrous men regularly offered their Goddess the fruits of the most reprehensible acts known to humankind: they murdered innocent travelers and then stole all of their belongings. They then set down a portion of this revolting haul at the feet of their goddess. It is said that the priests promised a glorious future to these abominable pilgrims, these murderers oozing with devotion. Far from acting in an isolated manner, they

[273] See Henry Schwarz (2010, p. 25-33).

> depended on a powerful organization that prescribed their conduct (Woerkens 2002, p. 1-2).

The thags or the highway robbers were known for the distinct was of murder.[274] Brittan, conforming to the prevalent thag discourse, traces the cruelty of the clans to Kali, the patron deity of the clan. She writes: "[B]ut the sacrifices she [Kali] likes best are the human sacrifices. For this reason, the Thugs are continually seeking new victims to offer to her. They are a sort of secret brotherhood, known to each other, but to no one else" (Brittan 1869, p. 5). Her description of the thugs serves the missionary purpose of generating awe in the minds of the readers, and with a connection of the murderous clan to one of the deities also helps to substantiate her claim of native cultural and religious depravity:

> [T]he victim is always strangled; the instrument of death being ever at hand. The long cloth worn by the natives in India can in an instant be stripped off the person, and wound around the neck of the victim. They become so expert in this, that no cry can even escape the lips. All that is known is, that the frightful looking corpse is found lying on its back, with distended eyes, protruding tongue, and clenched hands. As every corpse that has been destroyed by the Thugs is found in precisely the same attitude, with its tongue and eyes resembling somewhat the pictures of Kali, they are instantly known as victims dedicated to her (Brittan 1869, p. 97).

Hence, Britttan's description has nothing new to add to the prominent thug discourse of the period.[275] Parama Roy in her book gives a valid sum up of the construction of thags in popular works of the period, especially Sleeman. She writes, "[T]hey are characterized instead as hereditary killers whose 'joyous occupation" (1998, n.p.). was, paradoxically, not only a matter of caste duty and therefore ontological necessity but also a prime instance of unalienated labor. By the time we come to James Sleeman's hagiographic account of his grandfather's exploits, the act of strangulation has not only been uncoupled from the usual motives for murder but has acquired a quasi-libidinal charge:

> [T]he taking of human life for the sheer lust of killing was the Thugs' main object: the plunder, however pleasant, being a secondary consideration […]. Here was no

[274] Here is a description by a thag himself — captured Ghulam Hussain, between 1808-09: "[W]e murdered him in the following manner: Ramsooth […] strangled him with a handkerchief; when he was senseless one of the party inflicted wounds with a knife in both eyes and another wounded him, in the same manner, in his belly so that no person might recognize the body" (Lloyd 2006, p. 2).

[275] Sleeman (1836) in his book commented: "[T]here are Thugs at Jubulpore from all quarters of India; from Lodheeana to the Carnatick, and from the Indus to the Ganges. Some of them have been in the habit of holding, what I may fairly call unreserved communication with European gentlemen for more than twelve years; and yet there is not among them one who doubts the divine origin of the system of Thuggee—not one who doubts, that he and all who have followed the trade of murder with the prescribed rites and observances, were acting under the immediate orders and auspices of the Goddess Devee, Durga, Kalee or Bhawanee, as she is indifferently called, and consequently there is not one who feels the slightest remorse for the murders which he may, in the course of his vocation, have perpetrated or assisted in perpetrating" (Sleeman 1836, p. 7).

> body of amateur assassins, driven to crime by force of circumstance, but men of seeming respectability and high intelligence, often occupying positions of importance and responsibility in their normal lives, secretly trained from boyhood to the highest degree of skill in strangulation (Roy 1998).

Suppression of thags was supposed to have been done concretely under the governor generalship of Lord William Bentinck in the 1830s. Tom Lloyd in his aforementioned article, comments: "[h]istorians must be open to the possibility that the discourse on 'thuggee' is entirely self-referential; its only basis in actuality being the existence of the discourse itself" (Lloyd 2006, p. 4). However, that the existence of the thug justified their suppression and carrying out of the colonial administration is irrefutable. It is also notable that the thug's barbaric hyper-masculinity complemented the untamed native sexuality and cruelty of their patron goddess Kali as well. The thugs and their murder and loot were the fitting ritual to appease the bloodthirsty patron goddess. Roy establishes that "Sleeman is not alone in this reading of the combined erotic and religious investment in the murder. Taylor, in *Confession of a Thug*, hints at the homoerotic subtext of a thug's murder of a handsome lad […]" (Roy 1998, p. 46). Brittan, from her missionary standpoint, refrains from adding any respectability or eroticism in her description of the thags. She, nonetheless, highlights the contribution of colonial regime in handling the group: "[f]or since the English rule in India, these murderers have been hunted down […]" (Brittan 1869, p. 98).

The story, after the death of Chundro, focuses on Berash, Chundro's widow. As she could not perform *sati*, due to the unavailability of her husband's body in an intact form, Kardoo's grandmother considered it an "incumbent duty" (Brittan 1869, p. 99) to inflict on Berash the pain of widowhood. First, she was forbidden to go back to her father's place ever. Her body was stripped off her jewels and any form of adornments and was made to wear a coarse saree. "[S]he must never sleep again on the bedstead, but must always lie on a mat on the floor" (Brittan 1869, p. 100). A prominent emphasis is put on the suffering of the body by issuing all kinds of discomfort to exhort the penance: "[s]he must do all the commonest, meanest drudgery in the house, and never eat until everyone else has finished, and then very sparingly, and of the poorest food." (ibid) Further bodily deprivation was in the form of fasting. Berash, as Kardoo mentions, was "[c]ompelled to fast two whole days in each week, not a drop of water being allowed to pass her lips, even if she is dying" (Brittan 1869, p. 101) which expedited her death. The description of Berash's last days is done with utmost vividness. The readers are informed that while the child widow was weakened and taken ill, no one came to her to take care or to give her food to eat. The reason is "[S]he is a widow;

and according to the women's superstitions, if they showed pity or compassion for her, the like calamity would befall them" (Brittan 1869, p.102). Berash died of thirst and fever, Kardoo summoning up enough courage to perform the forbidden act of pouring a few drops of water in her mouth before she died. The next morning the cold and stiff body of Berash was taken away to the burning *ghāṭ*. Instead of going for an elaborate cremating ritual, the face was blackened by a burning wisp of straw "[a]nd then the poor little body was flung into the Ganges to be eaten by a shark or alligator" (Brittan 1869, p. 110).

The narrative is focused on the all pervasiveness of brutality and violence on the body which is not confined to age or sex or marital status. The next character to meet a violent end is Kardoo's baby brother, Luckie. He was offered to the goddess Kali even before he was born to trade the life of his then ill elder brother. Child sacrifices have been much discussed in missionary novels. For instance, in *Faith and Victory: A Story of the Progress of Christianity in Bengal*, written by Hannah Catherine Mullens, in 1865 opens with a similar story: where the Mohonto or the head priest was but to conduct the ritual of sacrificing a sleeping infant to the Ganges if he had not been prevented by the timely intervention of a missionary and some armed government sepoys (Mullens 1865, p. 12-14). The narratives projected the image of fearful and unenlightened mothers who were coaxed to this rite by the profit-seeking priests, earning great wealth from these sacrifices. However, in Luckie's case, no divine or missionary intervention was available save the little infant; he is hurled to the sea to appease the god (Brittan 1869, p. 124). It is interesting to note here that Missionary Brittan refrains from mentioning or drawing a parallel between the themes of child sacrifice as mentioned in Bible with Hinduism. Abraham and Isaac's story from *Genesis* is also about child sacrifice, though it was abandoned due to heavenly intervention.

Kardoo's mother's character is portrayed by Brittan as a muted, passive force in the family, only occasionally surfacing when her children denied following "the sacred religion of his fathers" (Brittan 1869, p. 53). She had little to say though she was not devoid of love for her children or the family. Brittan highlights her moral depravity, which was coordinated with the stoicism she contained in suffering for the religion. Sanchez-Eppler comments on the generic portrayal of characteristics of such mothers: "[H]eathen mothers not only frequently fail to conform to these bourgeois idealizations of motherhood, but their deviance takes quite dramatic and terrifying forms—they feed their babies to fish and alligators (the most often repeated image of heathen maternal depravity)" (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 414). Kardoo's mother was eventually killed by her father in a violent way and she herself takes

part in the overall scheme of dramatic violence by killing her youngest child.[276] As "[t]he power of depictions of maternal violence depends upon the idealization of maternal nurture," (Sanchez-Eppler 1996, p. 414) so after Luckie was born "[i]f any one hastily entered the room, she would clasp her babe to her breast, as if she expected it to be torn from her arms." (Brittan 1869, p. 114) Later, her feelings change in the face of inevitability of circumstances so that "[T]he next day when he [Luckie] cried, she told me to feed him, but she never looked at him" (Brittan 1869, p. 123).

Kardoo's mother being the wife and mistress of the household was the carrier and the bearer of shame and honor of the family and she was killed precisely because she was tricked into losing that shame and honor. Defamation of the family occurred through the woman and once she was 'polluted', she lost her right to live: such is the turn of narrative devised by Brittan.[277] The situation is described as: "[M]y mother rose and went to meet him as he [the father] entered the room; but ere she could utter one word, my father with a blow of the fist struck her to the earth. He then jumped upon her body, and with both fists and feet began beating her life out of her" (Brittan 1869, p. 136). The prevailing scene of anarchy and violence depicted here is domestic and autocratic with no one to stop or rival the head of the family and no law to prevent it. "[I]n India, there is no coroner's inquest, no doctor's certificate, no one to examine whether the body is really dead, or how it died" (Brittan 1869, p. 140). According to the missionary, the violence in the society is supported and perpetuated by patriarchy or more precisely, 'heathen' patriarchy, which is presented as more brutal and unreasonable than Christian patriarchy. Brittan's portrayal of the cruel death of the mother on the hands of the father is clarified by Sanchez-Eppler:

> "Brittan's reimaging of this scene unmasks the extent to which missionary fantasies of heathen domestic order generally work to construct an image of a happy American domesticity dependent not only on Christian faith but also on patriarchal gender arrangements: the cult of domesticity's penchant for idealizing and blaming the comparatively powerless mother" (1996, p. 416).

[276] The killing of her own child by the mother was a recurring theme in the missionary texts. Rev James Peggs who, in the 1840s, had produced two sensationalist books, themselves drawing on much second hand material, called *The Infanticides Cry to Britain* (1844) and *A cry from the Ganges* (1843). He wrote, for example, on female infanticide amongst the Jahreja Rajputs, 'to render this death, if possible, more horrible. The mother is commonly the executioner of her own offspring' (Peggs 1844 cited in Price & Shildrick 1999, p. 391). Moreover, "[I]n popular missionary writings and pamphlets of the time, the concerns about 'our eastern sisters' were matched by numerous stories detailing not simply well-rehearsed issues such as child marriage and widowhood but the failure of Indian women to care properly for their children and to hold families together" (Price& Shildrick 1999, p. 396).

[277] Refer to earlier sections for the background of Kardoo's mother's death.

Blaming the mother for the degenerative conditions of Hindu women was a popular trope employed in missionary writings of the time. Price and Shildrick (1999) further explain that this trope was an extension of the missionary stance of portraying the colonized women now always as weak victims but also at times as:

> [m]orally licentious and blameworthy individuals, providing new and fertile ground for furthering the project of mapping and remapping the sexual body. As a part of this counter discourse which became ever more insistent, the issue of motherhood was a central concern. The maternal role of Indian women was seen as a source of moral degeneracy, responsible for the ills of the Indian family […] (Price, Shildrick 1999, p. 395-396).

Just as conjugal love has no place within the familial structures of the 'heathen' society, neither does filial love. This is rightly manifested in the treatment of Kardoo's grandmother who had been the elderly matriarch of the family but her power was mainly confined to making strict household decisions. When she fell ill, she was taken to the Ganges and left there to die without medical attention and care or even food. This treatment was meted out by her son. A similar description is also available in Mullen's *Faith and Victory* while describing the "strange vagaries of Hinduism" (Mullens 1865, p. 2). Enthusiasm to leave the departing on the shores of the Ganges,[278] to accelerate his/her entry into the Hindu heaven has been a preoccupation with the native Hindus—observes Mullens. She describes the shores of the Ganges where there, "[w]as raised a funeral pile, and as the sons set fire to the corpse of her who had given them birth they rejoiced over her good fortune in dying at that sacred spot on that sacred day, and spoke of her soul as having passed into the heavens" (Mullens 1865, p. 1).

However, in the case of Kardoo's grandmother, her son could not wait until her death and in order to expedite the end he "[b]rought some holy mud and sealed the lips and nostrils of the woman thus suffocating her to death" (Brittan 1869, p. 147). It is worth noting that except for Chundro who was killed by the thags, the rest of the family members are involved in killing each other, which might hint at a self-destructive or self-mutilating process inherent in the cultural and religious dictums of the society and its inhabitants.

In the long line of deaths, Brittan choses the almost inevitable and sort of clichéd form of end for Kardoo, although she survives to tell her tale. Kardoo was chosen to perform *sati* for her dead husband, though she had been living away from her husband for eight years and there were ample number of wives of her husband to bear the seeming 'privilege' and 'honor.' The description of *sati* is not different from the standard description of the ritual in

[278] Alternatively, referred to as *Sagor* or *Sagaur*.

standard missionary texts. Kardoo was drugged to wean away her resistance and what follows is "[A] tumultuous noise, beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, blowing of horns, shrieks and shouts from the priest […]" (Brittan 1869, p. 162), all in an effort to drown the cries of the burning widow. Kardoo escaped death narrowly with the timely intervention of the priest and the magistrate—the same people who could not interfere when the mother was murdered. But as stated above, behind Kardoo's survival is the purpose of reproduction and narration and hence bringing into focus the rituals of the Hindu society. Kardoo, thus with burns and scars, but with proper help and medication and care was nursed back to health by the missionaries. She converted to Christianity with some repentance: "[I] was continually trying to do something by which I could merit forgiveness. I would sometimes think, Oh, if I could be more sorry for my sins—if I could repent more bitterly—could only love Christ more!" (Brittan 1869, p. 171-172). It is unclear, however, what exactly she wanted to repent on. The plot portrays Kardoo as a passive onlooker of the chain of events and an equally passive recipient of its effects, without any wrongdoing to be accounted for. Seemingly, missionary Brittan considered and wished to project the non-believers of Christ as the sinners, with an inner stirring for repentance on the realization of their lack of faith.

Kardoo's father, the learned barrister, met a fate similar to the other members of his family. He inflicted serious wounds on his body as a penance to Lord Shiva in the Charak festival, which however failed to give him any mental peace.[279] As a last effort to achieve peace, Kardoo's father threw himself in front of the wheels of the chariot of the Jagannath, being fatally injured—"two of his legs crushed in a frightful manner" (Brittan 1869, p. 179). The festival not only captured the attention of the missionaries, but also disturbed the likes of William Carey who wrote in detail about the practice. The elasticity of human skin surprised him along with the revelation from one of his informer pundits that the ritual is not mentioned in the scriptures or *śāstras* but is an entire product of human innovation.[280]

Kardoo's father was brought to the same missionary camp where Kardoo was living. Her "once noble-looking" father was turned into an unrecognizable "disgusting object" (Brittan 1869, p. 180). Even though at the sight of his daughter, the father flew into a fit of anger and called her a "vile outcast" (Brittan 1869, p. 180), yet before breathing his last, he

[279] Kardoo's father being of high caste would not have been performing in the Charak [caṛak'] festival, which was meant for the lowest caste. Through the festival the hook-swingers received some attention as disciples of Lord Shiva. Also following William Carey one comes to know that hook-swinging was not an act of atonement but "done in consequence of a vow made in distress." As quoted in Oddie (2006: 143) if that is true then Kardoo's father performing hook-swinging to gain mental peace does not hold ground.
[280] For details, see *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society* Vol.1 (1809).

repented and acknowledged the glory of the Father almighty and his son Jesus for the latter's sacrifice for humanity calling himself a sinner (Brittan 1869, p. 181-182). The narrative ends with Kardoo proclaiming herself the daughter of India, thanking the missionaries for their service to the people of the country and to herself, "for her deliverance from the gross darkness of heathenism". Thus Kardoo is transformed from the "Hindoo girl" to "the once Hindoo zenana girl" (Brittan 1869, p. 183).

5.6 Treatment of the native deities

The treatment of the corporeal self in the narrative owes to the native deities and their characteristics. Anger of the gods and their appeasement through sacrifice form the two major sources of such sufferings. The 'benevolent' Christian god also figures in places but as point of reference and comparison to the native gods. Kardoo wistfully remarks in the beginning of the narrative: "[m]y infant lips were never taught to lisp my heavenly Father's name. My mother never told me of that good Shepherd, the dear Saviour, who gathers the little lambs in his arms, and folds them to his bosom" (Brittan 1869, p. 34). This is quite an impractical demand given that fact that Kardoo's family is devout Hindu. Brittan's portrayal of the Hindu gods is at the focal point of suffering of the Hindus and just as the family's sequence of disasters present a picture of a suffering society that is constantly at a threat of demolition, mutilation, and death at the very moment they fail to appease a god. This lends the gods an animated existence. They are constant watch keepers and sacrifice-hungry, bloodthirsty beings. The deity who has been most maligned and most animated in this respect is the Hindu goddess Kali. The first mention of Kali in the narrative is as "[t]he goddess of vengeance. […] [A]ll trouble they [Hindus] suppose comes from her, and in all time of affliction they offer to her propitiatory sacrifices, and make promises of large gifts and offerings" (Brittan 1869, p. 54-55). Further, in the narrative, it becomes imperative for the missionary to delve deep into this dark goddess:

> Kali, as I before said, is the goddess of destruction, or vengeance. She is represented as a gigantic woman of a deep blue color, standing on the body of a man of the same size, which is painted white. She has four hands: in one she holds a bleeding head; in the second she brandishes a large knife; while the other two are uplifted, but empty. Around her neck, for a garland, she has forty bleeding heads; around her waist a girdle of human hands. She is represented as loaded with jewelry, but stained in many places with the blood of the trophies she carries. Her tongue sticks out so far that it almost touches her chest. Her position is on the man's body, but starting back as if in horror. The reason for her being represented thus, is that she is worshipped only from fear; and it is thought that this appearance, and the story belonging to it, will inspire a salutary fear and terror, and indeed it does (Brittan 1869, p. 58).

Partha Mitter in his book, *Much Maligned Monsters* (1977) writes:

> [B]y the third decade of the eighteenth century much information about Indian gods had been received in Europe through missionary and secular efforts […] [T]his new development inevitably led to the dissolution of the long-standing monster tradition, for no longer could Hindu gods be regarded as thoroughly incomprehensible and bizarre" (Mitter 1977, p. 73).

However, it seems like this comprehension was limited in its own way due to a personal interpretation while the 'monster tradition' was not entirely dealt away with, especially if it served specific missionary purpose(s). The above description of Kali very much borders on the 'monstrous' and the 'bizarre' reflecting the equivocal colonial/missionary knowledge and understanding of the deity. Chundro, Kardoo's uncle, who has been the first religious dissident in the family becomes a spokesman of the missionary author when he exclaims to Kardoo's mother "[w]hy, sister, you could not surely suppose that hideous thing which we had down there to be a divine or holy thing?" (Brittan 1869, p. 66) and then with logic tries to persuade the mother of Kali's barbarity:

> [B]ut, my sister, I cannot believe that a great and holy being could like to be represented, even for an hour, by an object such as that, or would take up its abode in it, or could wish to be regarded as so cruel and bloodthirsty. What do you think of any woman who could cut off the heads of her enemies, then hang them for a necklace, all bleeding and ghastly, around her neck? You would shrink from such a woman with horror; and surely these gods ought to be better than we. No, I am disgusted with this our religion; it is only the Christian religion that teaches of a holy and pure God (Brittan 1869, p. 67).

Kali's representation by Brittan is linear and uni-dimensional, only harping at the fearful aspect of her appearance. The empowered feminine side of Kali, which keeps the dormant Shiva under her feet, finds no mention in Brittan's analysis. In a narrative where she is preoccupied with the powerlessness of Hindus, mainly Hindu women, Kali could have been seen as the ultimate symbol of defiance and irrepressible power, which could in turn, have been used as a motivation against fear and oppression. In fact, while imperial women identified "Kali-worship as a sign of the colonized culture's residual barbarism and a regressive, debilitating force, contemporary bourgeois Hindu nationalist writings in Bengal were appropriating the figure of Kali in their construction of the icon of the mother nation—Bharat Mata—who exhorted her sons into energetic action on the path to liberty and was a key figure in the emergence of brave youths" (Roy 2010, p. 94). Thus Kali was on one hand a mother figure, yet not domestic, and on the other hand was the wife, yet a symbol of

strength and defiance[281]. Tanika Sarkar (2001) further explains Kali's insubordinate image and how this was used during the swadeshi times by nationalist thinkers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay:

> Although used earlier by Bankim, this figure becomes universalized from Swadeshi times, due perhaps to a more clearly and openly articulated sense of anger. The meaning of Kali is comprehended in two very different ways. Bankim saw in her a measure of our shame, deprivation and exploitation. Kali is a have-not figure, a woman who has abandoned her femininity and even a basic sense of shame. […] The woman on top signifies a total collapse of the ordered world, a violence directed basically against the self. Other poets, like Mukunda Das, have, however, glorified in her power, in her capacity to destroy evil and transcend death. […] The wrath of Kali also evoked a powerful image of a transformation of the rich country into a desolate, awesome cremation ground. […] Through her thirst for revenge, through her insistence on the martyrdom of her sons, Kali will make a nation of heroes out of slumbering Indians. The two modes of representing Kali indicate, perhaps, an inner tension within nationalism about the principle of female strength and about the violence and destructiveness latent in it (Sarkar 2001, p. 255-256).

Since the first tremors of Swadeshi movement were already being felt as early as 1850s, it is quite possible that missionary Brittan was perhaps acquainted with the revolutionary image associated with the deity. However, Kali's iconography is at cross-purposes with Brittan's both missionary objectives and Victorian ideals of womanhood. The deity is more comfortably imagined by the missionary as an epitome of impropriety, antagonistic with the prevailing feminine ideals than as a source of deviant power. Brittan's representative, Chundro is afraid because Kali hates all humanity, and "[t]akes delight in their misery and death; consequently, continual sacrifices are offered to her, to avert evil from the heads of those who are supposed to have fallen under her displeasure" (Brittan 1869, p. 95). Kali's comparison with a bloodthirsty woman further animates the character of the deity and makes the 'fear' almost palpable and tangible to the readers. Kali's promptness in satiating her instincts of revenge is well underlined through incidents where Chundro almost immediately gets the punishment for his 'blasphemous' utterance, by being murdered by the thags. As a further addition to cite the 'vengefulness' of the Hindu gods, it is said "[I]f a Hindoo is known to say a word disrespectful of any of the gods, that man is immediately marked out for destruction; and he is watched and followed, until some convenient time

[281] Cf., Dalmiya: "Kali is both a wife and a mother. But she is also an immodest, aggressive, and grotesque wife and a terrifying, violent, and self-absorbed mother. Now Kali does not constitute a straightforward redefinition of the concepts of "wife" and "mother": that these concepts retain their usual connotations of conventional subservience (in the case of "wife") and caring attentiveness (in the case of "mother") becomes clear as Kali is constantly admonished for her deviations from societal norms definitive of wifehood and motherhood" (2000, p.126-127).

arrives to dispatch him" (Brittan 1869, p. 96). It is a bit unclear as to who is keeping this watch over the blasphemous person—the gods or their representatives on earth—the priests who are portrayed as the epitome of greed and cruelty, profiting, in the name of the goddess from the 'gullibility' of the Hindus. However, whoever the perpetrator is, they all seem to be a part of the one large unholy and powerful nexus comprising of the god and their priests. Kali claims her sacrifice through her worshippers and always leaves a sign on her victims: due to strangulation, the eyes and tongue are protruded like that of the deity herself.

Kali makes her appearance for the third time in the narrative responsible for death of Luckie. Luckie's sacrifice and gruesome death along with the resultant repugnance of Kardoo towards the Hindu religion with its strict barbaric codes, is pacified by her mother with fatalism and fear:

> [O]h, my child, my child, speak not so! If we rebel against the gods, or think hard thoughts of them, they will punish us until we repent, ay, taking from us our very heart's blood. And why should they not? They are all-powerful, they made us, they give us all that we have, and we must do what they wish us (Brittan 1869, p. 125).

Besides Kali and Shiva, Jagannath is also mentioned among Hindu gods who rank behind Kali in terms of cruelty supported and practiced by his followers. Jagannath or Juggernaut is also as 'ugly' as Kali, according to Brittan. Juggernaut's history of ugliness is described in detail where the carpenter commissioned to build a beautiful idol of the lord is interrupted by the king and hence the idol is left unfinished. Later the carpenter, who was as ugly as the idol he created emerged as the lord himself and hence the idol is left as it is without beautification or modification (Brittan 1869, p. 39-44). Partha Mitter (1977) ascribes this reaction of westerners towards Hindu idols and images, as received from travelers, arising out of a clash of tastes, and ignorance of Hindu iconography.[282] Juggernaut, though not directly partaking in cruelty unlike Kali, however has his chariot festival where many 'superstitious' natives flung themselves in from the car to achieve salvation and is crushed

[282] Brittan's dubbing of unfinished Jagannath idol as ugly is a reflection of the overall western traveler's attitude and the knowledge about Indian gods they disseminated through their writings. Mitter sums it up as: "[T]he early travelers formed an especially privileged class. The number of people who had either the financial means or the opportunity to undertake a long and difficult journey or a sea voyage to Indian was very small indeed. Therefore, these fortunate few had the sole privilege of disseminating information about Indian art on their return. Naturally, they also had an overwhelming share in forming the early Western image of Indian art. It does not surprise us that these travelers believed in the essential truthfulness of their reports, which were of course unquestioningly accepted by their contemporaries. […] The outcome of this was the universal use of certain popular European stereotypes for delineating Indian gods, whether in literature or in the graphic medium. The most famous of all stereotypes was that of monsters, presented in books as authentic portraits of Indian gods. The typical reactions of an early western traveler were bound to reflect certain prejudices stemming from his Christian background as well as from a clash of tastes involving two very different traditions, which were further reinforced by a total ignorance of Hindu iconography" (Mitter 1977, p. 2).

to death or maimed for life. This and other rituals that led to immediate death or crippling of the body came under sharp missionary focus. These rituals, branded as superstitions were graphically narrated to justify accelerated mission activities in the concerned provinces. Books like *Christian Researches in Asia* (Buchanan 1812), *India and Indian Missions* (Duff 1839), *Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India* (Buchanan 1805) was hugely popular and one drew upon one another while constructing and reconstructing discourses on Hindu superstition.

Shiva or Sheve is portrayed as the one who takes away all pretty things from the worshippers and never gives back any (Brittan 1869, p. 36-38). Yet, he is not dangerous. The fact that he stays dormant under the feet of his overly sexual, barbaric wife does not make him the focus of crisis in the thought process of the missionary mind. He is in fact very well going with the image of the 'effeminate Bengali man'. "[T]o him [Shiva] every woman prays that she may have that greatest of all blessings, offspring" (Brittan 1869, p. 38). It is notable here that all these portrayal of gods are in stark contrast with the occasional mention of Jesus, who is "[t]he great God who made everything; he made you, and he gives you all things that you have. He loves you like a father […] He has done so much for you, that you should love him better than anybody else, and try to do what will please him" (Brittan 1869, p. 52). Besides making Kali's 'ghastliness' a focus of the text, which forms an overt connection with the goddess' untamed sexuality, Brittan is silent on other explicit mentions of the subject. Even though she deals with a married woman as her major voice and her life as her subject, no mention is made about her conjugal life of Kardoo with her husband, or other couples in the story.

5.7 The godmen or the 'gooroos'

In Abbe Dubois' *Letters on the State of Christianity in India* (1823), he remarked that "[t]he Hindoos may be divided into two classes—the imposters, and the dupes. The latter include the bulk of the Indian population; and the former is composed of the whole tribe of Brahmins'" (Dubois 1823, p. 87). This statement in a nutshell describes the essence of the missionary construction of Brahmins, and especially the religious gurus in colonial India. They are portrayed prominently as perpetrators of 'heinous crimes' like widow burning, child sacrifice, more often than not coaxing the gullible masses to perform sacrifices as an ablution for their sin and thereby extracting fat remuneration for themselves. *Kardoo the Hindu Girl* describes these priests not in any exceptionally different way from other missionary narratives or interpretations. They are portrayed as the catalysts of mindless

pagan ceremonies. The priest is described by Kardoo as an essential part of a Hindu household:

> [E]very household of standing has belonging to it a gooroo, or a Brahmin priest, who is the head man at the celebration of poojah, marriages, shaads or ceremonies after death. This priest is permitted to enter the women's part of the house to give them instruction in the rites and ceremonies of their religion. […] [T]hese old Brahmin priests have full as much sway and power over the minds of the people here as the Romish priests have in Catholic countries (Brittan 1869, p. 48).

In the course of the story, we come to know that the family priest had much to contribute in the sacrifice of Luckie. He cajoled the parents and warned them of the impending doom if the promise of the sacrifice is not kept. In addition, in Kardoo's performing of *sati* the guru plays a prominent role. Since no family will do anything to vex the guru, and always obey his orders, this has been used as a ploy to lure Kardoo's mother out of the house and thus defame Kardoo's father that would ultimately lead to the murder of the mother. The gurus are portrayed, without any deviation, as parasites feeding on the fear of religion of the masses—their prime objective being to continue to fuel the people's fear and anxiety of the religion to further their own needs. It is to be noted here that like any other character, Brittan's portrayal of gurus is also uni-dimensional. Sujata Patel (2007) in her article mentions,

> [G]urus are and have been of various kinds and the history of Hinduism, before and during colonial times and later has attested to their sublime power together with their unworthiness and dubious reputation. The gurus that emerged during the colonial period and whose missions and sangathanas stood the test of time were distinctive. Not only were they educated (most had English education), but also, they came from the savarna upper caste groups, and had been at some time teachers and educators (Patel 2007, p. 1092).[283]

However, it is worth mentioning here that gurus have not always been kindly dealt with in vernacular literature. Catharina Kiehnle (2006) talks about the practices of gurus in Mumbai in 1861:

> *vallabhācārī mahants* (religious leaders who are in charge of monastaries) who sexually abused the wives and daughters of devotees on the grounds of the *puṣṭimārg* (path of well-being) rule that 'body, mind, and fortune' should be made over to the *guru*. Due to the enormous proportions the misuse had taken with the Vallabhācārīs, and coming at a time when Christian critics were viewing Indian religions with hostile eyes, the case was a blow for the pious and those who wanted to create 'hinduism' on a par with Christianity. A similar wave of dismay arose when soon

[283] For details, see Patel (2007) and Copley (2000).

> afterwards a Bengal *mahant* of tarakesvar seduced a woman devotee[284], who was subsequently killed by her husband. The case was dealt with in at least eight plays and novels between 1873 and 1876 (Atre, Kiehnle 2006, p. 13).

There has been parity in the portrayal of the gurus in missionary texts in particular; we can refer to Mrs. Mullens' *Faith and Victory*. An excerpt from the description of an unsuccessful attempt of child sacrifice, this is how the high priest or the Mohonto is portrayed:

> [A]s the brahminee [a Brahmin woman, the mother] approached the high priest, she presented him with a gold mohur [coin], on a beautiful muslin handkerchief embroidered with silver; the elder boy in his turn laid at his feet several yards of the finest silk, and then the mother's trembling hand held open that of her babe, while the avaricious priest took from the unconscious child the silver bells, which till now had adorned his little feet. This rite (which seemed to afford exquisite delight to the Mohonto) being completed, he dismissed them with his blessing […] (Mullens 1865, p. 12).

Hindu priests or gurus came under critical review especially of missionaries for being the interpreter of religion to the masses. This is seen more as a clash of the interpreters of two religions towards supremacy and with their proselytizing missions.

5.8 Authenticity and narration

The purpose of *Kardoo* as a text is two-dimensional: first, it serves to guide the gaze and inform the uninformed reader about the lives of Hindu men and women under Hinduism; and second, the text is meant for proselytizing purpose. *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* in fact serves as an umbrella text accommodating all the perceived cruelties of the Hindu culture and religion. Brittan's use of the genre of autobiography serves the purpose of authenticity. The acutely private and individual genre as well as the self-revelatory aspect of autobiography becomes a tool in the hand of the missionary. Hence, while the private and individual aspect of the genre has been denied by representing Kardoo as a prototype, the self-revelatory factor lends certain credulity to the narrative. This could be looked as interplay between the unique and the ordinary. Kardoo is unique because she can make herself heard but at the same time, she is ordinary because many others share her fate. The protagonist functions in the plot without driving it. The autobiography of a Hindu woman is meant to make the readers curious and this curiosity enhances the power and authority and to some extent the credulity of the narrative to the uninformed readers. However, the cracks in the cementing of the two personas namely the author and the narrator, Brittan the missionary and Kardoo the Hindoo zenana girl, are quite apparent throughout the narrative.

[284] See for details Sripantha's *Mohanta Elokeshi Sambad* [Mohanta elokeśī saṃbād] (1992) and Tanika Sarkar's (2001 p. 53-94) article on the case.

One can see the sharpening of the boundaries between the author and the "*I"* when the voice of the author overruns the narrator and becomes more defined. All through the text, especially in the beginning, Kardoo assumes a tone of comparison between Christian/American and Hindu/Bengali ways of life. Issues ranging from filial/paternal relationships to architectural flaws/characteristics of houses in Bengal are held up for comparison with America, which makes the reader wonder how a *Purdahnashin* could gain such insights into an American household. This confusion simultaneously and completely topples the very same agenda of authenticity Brittan had in mind while choosing autobiography as a genre. Besides the questionable authority of the narrator, information like "[i]t being considered a sin to disturb a spider" (Brittan 1869, p. 14) or "[B]ut Hindus never eat any animal food except fish" (Brittan 1869, p. 31) or sweeping generalizations like "[T]he children are all spoiled in India" (Brittan 1869, p. 20) are contestable information. The information that Kardoo's father performs hook swinging or that hook-swinging is performed to gain peace of mind, is unverified and contestable as discussed above. While describing certain small episodes or incidents from Kardoo's childhood, the American/European experience and impression overpowers the native customs. For example, one can take into account the episode where Kardoo one day received some flowers from Chundro and she kisses the flowers and talks to them. Just then, her mother who was going to worship Shiva asks her to join the worship and devote the flowers to the deity (Brittan 1869, p. 50). In spite of Kardoo's unwillingness, she is forced to do so. According to the Hindu worship rituals, flowers or any other offerings, when kissed or touched by the mouth or unclean or unwashed hands becomes impure and unfit for worship of or as offering to the gods[285]. In another instance, Kardoo claims that "[G]od Sheve is supposed to be the creator" (Brittan 1869, p. 38). This is dubious information since in the Hindu Trinity, Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the preserver and Shiva is the absorber[286]. However, perhaps Brittan witnesses or is informed that the deity is prayed to for having sons. Also, Shiva is prominently worshipped for the boon of a good husband[287] which Brittan overlooks. Meanwhile, Kardoo, being the Hindu *zenana* girl, with the sole purpose of being married off to a man someday, should have been aware of the purpose of Shiva

[285] Unfortunately, there is nor direct reference available for this information. However general rules of offering to the deity are as follows, "Keeping the food covered until making the offering helps to preserve its purity by not allowing anyone to gaze upon it. […] Hands must be washed with a spoonful of water if they come into contact with sources of impurity, i.e., the lamp, things already offered to the Deity, one's own feet, legs, head, mouth, lips, nose, hair, or the ground" (Amritanandamayi 2004, p. 6).

[286] For details see Gonda (1968/1969, p. 212-226). Alternatively, Shiva is at times (in his nataraj avatar) the destroyer of the ego as well as the transformer.

[287] Mahaśībrātrī and other such rituals are performed by unmarried women to get good husbands.

worship or the boon of Shiva. Kardoo is chosen to perform *sati* when her husband dies, though the reader is informed that her husband had multiple surviving wives and Kardoo was living separately from her husband since many years. There is no clear information if Kardoo is the first wife of her husband. Discrepancies to serve the purpose of the plot are abundant. While Chundro dies, Berash is ordered not to return to her own family but stays forever in the in-laws' house where she is almost tortured and starved to death. But Kardoo, in spite of being married, continues to live with her family and is never called to her in-laws' house. When Kardoo's mother is killed by the father, Kardoo informs the reader that there are no coroner's inquests in India, no law or post mortem to find out the reason of one's death. Nonetheless, when Kardoo is about to perform *sati*, the authorities are informed beforehand and she is saved from the face of death by the missionaries. These and other discrepancies in the writing raise question about the authenticity as well as the motive of narration. Finally, the greatest threat to Brittan's quest towards narrative authenticity lies in the exceptional storyline. The simple fact that so many tragedies happen in the life of a single person confirms the fantastic or bizarre element. The seemingly non-fictional genre of autobiography has been used to write a fictitious narrative thereby reconstructing and subverting its very purpose. However, an overemphasis on the questions of authenticity of the text and its plot structure can make the readers miss the bigger picture: the production of a specific kind of knowledge about the Bengali Hindus by the missionary and its colonial and political significance. Price and Shildrick remarks,

> [E]ven where the issue [justification of colonial rule] was expressed more temperately in terms of the purdah conditions under which many women, both Moslem and Hindu, lived, the import of the prevailing discourses was that women *needed to be rescued*[288]. In other words the putative project of liberating the bodies of these women orchestrated a move in which the British state successively appropriated the remaining political freedoms of the Indian people as a whole. And the missionary societies, whose avowed aim was to reclaim the soul by the rescue of the body, were prime agents in establishing the necessary discursive field (Price, Shildrick 1999, p. 391-392).

5.9 The genre and its use

Kardoo the Hindu Girl can be categorized as a sensational novel simultaneously with its belonging to the genre of fictional autobiography. The author suspends logicality while weaving together different and diverse incidents in the life of a single protagonist in order to sensationalize the narrative. The chain of incidents, at times a mismatch with the provided background information of the characters, transports the narrative to the realm of disbelief.

[288] Author's emphasis.

One wonders as to how so much mishap could be possibly fitted in the life of Kardoo. The series of gory incidents and ample emphasis on blood and violence in the narrative also exaggerates the plot. Indeed, the entire novel is a drift from one bloody and cruel death to another, with no or little space for plot development in between. The readers are as if invited for a sadist and voyeuristic gazing at the thoroughly objectified male and female bodies. The detailed description of physical pain and suffering, all happening in a linear time frame, with protagonists either having no power (like Kardoo, Berash, and the mother) or using their own power to destroy themselves (like Kardoo's father) and ultimately perishing, can be called the right recipe for sadist and voyeuristic story-line. The narrator's constant leading the readers through the dark alleys of memories, which are painful yet, must be told and shared, adds to the sadist element of the gaze. Also there is a cathartic element to the story, whereby readers will observe the blood and gore, at the same time feeling relieved for not being the sufferers themselves. The gaze in *Kardoo* has another interesting element to it—since the protagonist can only be considered as a puppet in the hands of the author, who speaks through her, this particular gaze can be termed as the ventriloquist gaze, which is defined as follows:

> Ventriloquism enables the "projecting" speaker to subvert without appearing to do so, because the transgressive message is disembodied, that is, appears to be coming not from the speaker but from some "figure" out there. That "speaking" figure is, not surprisingly, some inanimate representation of a lifelike form. The ventriloquist can channel the most radical messages through this obviously doll-like and essentially voiceless figure and so permit the audience/reader to "toy" with the subversive idea (Srikanth 2002, p. 86).

Brittan is choosing the counter-image of a morally and religiously degenerate society to bring home her point actually situates the ventriloquist gaze and the act of speaking through the 'other.'

Autobiography as a genre has served multiple purposes. It is known, primarily as an individualistic genre and women's autobiographies have been used to question and deconstruct gender hegemony, criticism, power play between groups, sexes etc. There is much power and authority in the singular voice of an autobiography. Thomas G. Couser comments that "[…] [a]utobiography has a kind of "authority" lacking in most forms of literary discourse—the authority of its grounding in a verifiable relationship between the text and the extratextual referent" (Couser 1989, p. 15). Here, one sees an interesting balance of power between the genre, the author, and the protagonist. Through the individualist and empowering genre of autobiography, the author speaks for the subaltern 'other'—the

protagonist. That the protagonist is speaking for herself is an illusion that the author tries to situate but fails. Hence, it is the empowered speaking for the powerless and deciding what to say and the mode of saying it. This authority of verifiability, which is extended as the authority of truth, is the force behind the narrative tapped by missionary Brittan. This authority is meant to convince while awakening Brittan's readers. The autobiography is also important from the point of the construction of a 'bi-cultural self,' where the consciousness of both the cultures is present in the protagonist (Couser 1989, p. 20), as is the case with *Kardoo* and the cultural transactions involved in the writing of this fake autobiography is conflicting and even incompatible[289]. In the process of constructing the bi-cultural self, the hegemonic attitude of the dominant culture, in this case, America is quite apparent. American culture supplies the value grid of the narrative.

If one solely focuses on Kardoo's life writing, it is mainly a flashback where, after being recovered and restored to life by the missionaries from the burning pyre of her dead husband, she writes down her story. Even though it is a fake autobiography, Brittan makes use of another major aspects of life writing—namely its dependence on memory. However, dependence on memory not only subjects the author's recollection to certain fallibility but also makes it unverifiable—thereby again defeating the missionary motive of authenticity. Couser further substantiates the point: "[r]ecall is not only selective and often unverifiable, it is also subject to continual unconscious revision. Because memory is such an impeachable source, the credibility of autobiography is always problematic" (Couser 1989, p. 71). Smith and Watson argue: "[…] [r]emembering involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present. The process is not a passive one of mere retrieval from a memory bank. Rather, the remembering subject actively creates the meaning of the past in the act of remembering. Thus, narrated memory is an interpretation of a past that can never be fully recovered." (Smith, Watson 2010, p. 22) Moreover, since memories are contextual and contexts are charged politically hence memories are political too—"remembering has a politics" (Smith, Watson 2010, p. 24). In kardoo's narration, recollection is linear, narrow, selective, and definitely political.

Much of the importance of *Kardoo* lies in the reception and interpretation of the narrative by the readers. By choosing autobiography as the genre, Brittan brings Kardoo the

[289] See Couser for details where he talks about the bicultural autobiographies involving hegemonic paradigms and coexistence of incompatible cultural codes (Couser 1989, p. 20). Also refer to the earlier discussion reference to the constant and meticulous comparison between Hindu and American culture, harping on the superiority of the American culture which makes the reader wonder about the narrator's source of knowledge.

protagonist to the forefront, engaging her directly with the readers. One part of the reader reception is practical and more missionary cum charitable aspect: "[t]he book was written with the desire that its proceeds should be devoted to the purchase of Mission-premises in Calcutta […]" (Brittan 1869, p. 6). The other part was to generate awe and awareness as well as pity whereby the western women "think less of the little privations" (Brittan 1869, p. 4). Thus, it can be concluded that Brittan had a specific audience in mind when she penned down *Kardoo* and her choice of English as the language of narration predetermined her readers, who were not the indigenous Hindu population. Kardoo, as an illiterate Hindu girl would not have managed to write in English. And the self of Kardoo has been invented for the consumption of this selective audience. This could in certain extent also explain the fantasy narrative, tailor-made to be consumed as a tear-jerker, thus vindicating what Sidonie Smith comments that the "[m]ultitudinous strategies autobiographers use as they manipulate and are in turn manipulated by an implied reader" (Smith 1987, p. 6). Furthermore, Brittan offers an alternative to the idea of the 'noble savage'[290] portraying Bengalis, irrespective of their caste and class background, as morally depraved and hence in need of Christian salvation.

In the text, the body of Kardoo as well as other members of the family was used to bear cultural meaning and significance. Each body bears the onslaught of a particular cultural and religious practice. Brittan has managed to deal with the bodies and their respective deaths with certain homogeneity in the sense that the individuals are seldom conscious, free-willed, power-yielding, decision-making individuals (and even if they are to certain limited extent, that rarely helps) but just have a receiving body, which is a site of violence. However, it is because of the vivid portrayal of native bodies as passive receptacles of pain and suffering, that the colonial regime attains a justification: sometimes just a savior of bodies. *Kardoo the Hindoo Girl* symbolizes performativity in two major levels. Just as culture 'performs' on these bodies, so does the author 'perform' the narrator-protagonist. Indeed, the entire text is about the performance of Brittan as Kardoo.

The importance of texts like Kardoo cannot be underestimated. It is difficult to find out accurate sales figures of the text and its impact in American society in general and missionary activities in particular. Missionary Brittan was known, well connected, respected

[290] The idea of the 'noble savage', a product of romanticism, is a trope used frequently in discourses to signify the sublime natural instincts to humankind, although it has also been used ambiguously to signify pessimism in primitivism especially by the French philosophers. The idea is vaguely traced back to Rousseau, who imagined primitive men as morally superior to his civilized counterpart. For more details, see Ellingson (2001).

in her circles, and made her contribution towards her vocation. However, from a historical, cultural and proselytizing point of view, this little known text offers a different and alternative framework of information, away from the 'leading' voices in the field. Following Skinner's claim that:

> [T]he appropriate perspective for explaining the politics of an age is thus taken to be the biography of its leading statesman; for explaining the political or scientific or philosophical thinking of an age it is taken to be the linked analysis of the most important and influential texts. The approach is misleading not only for the obvious arguable reason that to use biography as a methodological category is naïve or at least partial without some consideration also of more general social, economic and ideological conditions; it is also misleading simply because it involves an identifiable mistake. The mistake lies in supposing that the history of an idea or event can ever be adequately written in terms of its leading actors (Skinner, p. 212-213).

That *Kardoo* did not enjoy a soaring fame is no reason to ignore it. The text brings out the general yet strong undercurrents in missionary narratives in nineteenth century Europe and America. The undercurrents bring into focus the white missionary woman's reading and perception of non-Christian societies. Though the role of missionaries in subverting or facilitating the imperial project is a topic of debate, it is undeniable that the 'other' culture made a lasting impression on the missionaries whereby civilizing missions were seen as essential. The sub-plots *Kardoo* brings together, form a part of the whole, since "[w]hat unifies these multifarious texts is not simply the reiteration of similar stories but the actual recirculation in many cases of the very same source story" (Price, Shildrick, p. 391). *Kardoo the Hindoo girl* is an outcome of such an impression with its importance not only confined to being a missionary text but as a curious literary experiment of mingling of voices—heathen and Christian, author and protagonist.

6. Gazing for philanthropic inspiration: the concept of *sebā* in nineteenth century Bengali periodicals[291]

6.1 Introduction

Saintly men claim that to serve humans is to serve god. Altruistic service is the basis of the society at large and the principal component of dharma[292]

This chapter discusses the notions of philanthropy and charity[293] and how they were appropriated via western role-models by Bengali women in the nineteenth century. In chapter 5, western missionary Harriette G. Brittan addressed the shortage of humanitarian concerns as the side-effects of religion during nineteenth century Hindu society. This chapter explores how Bengali Hindu women viewed the presence or lack of humanitarian ideals in their society and looked for alternative models and ideals in western women. Charity and philanthropy are based on concrete set of actions, which in a simplified state can be described as caring for the unprivileged, though in colonial Bengal it had a deeper political and social significance as this chapter shall demonstrate. Though primarily unorganized, charitable activities by nineteenth century Bengali women entailed the notions of 'active citizenship'[294] and an amalgamation of western and Hindu concepts connected to serving the society besides a conscious contribution at the public realm.

The focus of this chapter is not the actual tangible results of Bengali women's charitable work in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[295] Instead, it is based more on how model biographies of western women, tracts, stories, life narratives and advice columns in notable Bengali periodicals of the period were constructed to encourage and inspire Bengali women towards the charitable act. These periodicals had substantive reach of and

[291] A revised version of this chapter is published as an article titled, "Women, biographies, and philanthropic inspiration in nineteenth-century Bengali periodicals" in the Journal of Commonwealth Literature. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0021989418784337.
[292] "sādhu byaktirā baliẏā thāken, mānaber sebā karilei īśvarer sebā karā haẏ" *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, 5:4, 72 (July 1902).
[293] The concepts are used and analyzed in the Bengali Hindu sense which at times has *Brahmo* connotations. The periodicals I am dealing with, however claimed to cater equally to the Hindu, Muslim and Brahmo women. But the chapter does not deal with the case of Bengali Muslim women separately.
[294] See Carey Anthony Watt (2005, p. 1). However, according to Dipesh Chakrabarty, the colonial relationship denies the colonized the status of citizen hence there is a definite link between the modernizing ideals of the 'domestic' with nationalizing. Cf., Chakrabarty (1993).
[295] Female charitable work in Bengal was mainly an unorganized sector. This topic is dealt with by Borthwick (1984).

accessibility to the households[296] and were written particularly by and for women.[297] They emerged as outlets of voicing opinions on different aspects of development of the society in the context of colonialism: female education, maintenance of household, health and food, moral behavior, almost everything qualified as topics of discussion. Quite often, parameters of 'ideal' life and behavior were drawn from the 'civilized' European and Western societies. With matters related to women, parallels were drawn with Europe and the condition of European women. Charity and philanthropy were prominent among such ideals that were regularly encouraged through discussions in the Bengali periodicals of the nineteenth century. These discussions often resorted to descriptions of lives of European women with the aim of serving as role models. The present chapter deals with the issue of how charity and philanthropy as noble and indispensable concepts were employed in narratives ostensibly to uplift the Bengali society, and was sieved through a colonial understanding of the subject with European women role models serving as ideals to inspire their Bengali counterparts.

While previous chapters from this research dealt with individual authors gazing at the European women via different narrative genres, this chapter has its own unique contribution in the gaze discourse.[298] Bengali women's gaze at the European women exemplifies the different levels of inspiration and imitation[299] the former experienced in their everyday life as a way of connecting the self to the greater world, while transcending everyday domesticity. This was a kind of gaze with practical implications and efforts of primarily 'elevating' the downtrodden Bengali woman and as an extension, the Bengali society. At the same time, the textual production of the charity discourse familiarized European women and their 'extraordinary feats' to the Bengali household, thus perhaps extracting claims of justification of British rule.[300] An examination of the periodicals of the period will reveal

[296] Circulation details are provided in subsequent sections.

[297] *Antaḥpur patrikā* carried a subheading in English, "[E]dited and contributed to by the ladies only". *Bāmābodhinī* and *Dāsī patrikā* showed prominent inclination towards the female issues and majority of their contributors were women.

[298] Previous chapters of the dissertation have dealt with the traveler's, missionary's and novelist's gaze and brought out the narrative perspective and the corresponding ways of looking at the western women via different narrative genres penned by the Bengali women in nineteenth century Bengal.

[299] Borthwick, however, claims that the *bhadramahilā* was trying to imitate "[t]he bhadralok in setting up organizations among themselves for social and philanthropic purposes. The trend was encouraged by male reformers, who endorsed the values of spending time usefully and helping to uplift the less fortunate" (1984, p. 271). However, inspiration as role models came from the Western women.

[300] "Iṃrāj rājatve e deśer o bhārat'bāsīr puṇargaṭhan haïyāche balile atyukti haẏ nā" [It is not an overstatement that the English rule has reconstituted Indian and Indians] Antaḥpur 4:1, 6 (1901).

certain key features that include the philosophies of the likes of James Mill[301] for purpose of development and appropriating the colonial civilizing ideas by the contributors, thereby formulating one's own ideas tailor-made for the needs of Bengali society. While foreign mission activities were talked about as reference and inspiration, the focus in the Bengali periodicals under analysis were women who lived in their homes and carried out their household duties while being devoted to the greater cause of humanity. Some exceptional characters were mentioned and deified who gave up their domestic lives for a greater involvement to the cause of the poor and the deprived.[302] References to the economic background of the European characters were present in almost all the narratives to stress its irrelevance: empathy for the poor is one of the noblest emotions and a form of ultimate bliss, which is independent of the availability, or accumulation of individual resources. The underlying idea was that resources to help others could be accumulated naturally if one has the right intentions. Hence, with these life narratives, the periodicals gave a call to everyone to engage in the philanthropic mission.

Shobna Nijhawan in her article analyzing Hindi women's periodicals in colonial and nationalist civilizing missions of the late 1910s writes:

> [I]n the 'civilizing' discourses of this time period, the degradation of women in Indian society featured central not only amongst the colonial rulers and missionaries; it also inserted itself into the consciousness of indigenous elites and the emerging middle-classes, including elite and middle-class women (Nijhawan 2011, p. 194).

This holds true for Bengal as well, the contemporary periodicals of which bear a testimony.[303] Self-criticism became quite a preoccupation with the columnists in the Bengali periodicals where a much-required 'awakening' was called for. The glorious past of the

[301] James Mill (1773-1836) was a Utilitarian philosopher who on one hand claimed that India is an inferior civilization compared to the West and central to this inferiority was the condition of women. According to him an advanced civilization has better treatment of women in terms of education, health etc, whereas degradation of women is a precondition to an inferior civilization. Mill's ideas on the poor state of Indian society were shared by many of his contemporaries.

[302] The recurrent motif of narrating the characters was to portray them as exceptional, god-sent, blessed, heavenly personalities.

[303] Such self-criticisms were abundant. This particular extract is from "Sebābrata" *Antaḥpur patrika* 5:2,3 26 (1902): "Āmāder deśe lokerā snān āhār śaẏan upabeśan prabhṛti śārīrik svāsthya o ārām'prada paricaryyār bhāb'i kebal biśeṣ bhābe ramaṇīgaṇer haste nyasta haïẏāche. Se bhār kebal svāmī putra pitā mātā prabhṛti dui cāri janer janya bahan kariẏā thāken. Ei kaẏ'jan byatīta ār prāẏ kāhār'o tāhārā āgraha sahakāre sebā yatna karen na. bādhya haïẏā kichu karāte haïle tāhā nitānta dāẏ ṭhek̃ār mata haiẏā dā̃ṛāẏ" [in our country, the task of looking after bathing, eating, sleeping, sitting and other such healthy and relaxing activities of the family members' rests on the women. However, it is only their husband, son, father, mother and immediate members of their family who the women take care of and no one else. If they are somehow forced to, it becomes more of an obligation] or "Āmāder jībaner kāryaguli kebal svārthasādhan o ātmasukhānvesaṇer janyaï anusṭhiṭa haiteche" [We work only towards selfish motives and in pursuit of personal pleasures.] "Ramaṇīr prabhāb" 6:5, 101 (1903).

Bengali/Hindu women was very often referred to with the aim to delineate the fall from grace and also as an inspiration to regain the former glory. However, when it came to the idea of philanthropy, women were encouraged to break the habit of silence and confinement and become more proactive, following the footsteps of the female European role models.

6.2 Surrounding discourses and the birth of the model biography

The model biographies explored in this chapter, owe their origin to multiple sources. Missionary novels in Bengali and the model biographies of men, in periodicals written and run by men are important predecessors from which the idealistic biographies of women were inspired. However, imitation and inspiration were not the only factors. The social situation in Bengal was ripe enough to make these biographies by women on women fashionable. We shall shortly take a look at the social scenario and relate them to the ensuing discourses of the era. The previous chapters have discussed in detail the changing status of women in Bengal in the nineteenth century. It was the time when not only gender debates occupied a position of centrality in the society but also specific discussions on what the Bengali women wanted.[304] Education and social reforms[305] (Chatterjee 1989, Bannerji 1991, Sarkar 1999) revolved mainly around women's issues to give them some say in their own lives—and this was confined to not only Bengal but also spread in India:

> [T]he nineteenth century was a period in which the rights and wrongs of women became major issues: if early attempts at reforming the conditions under which Indian women lived were largely conducted by men, by the late nineteenth century their wives, sisters, daughters, protégées and others affected by campaigns, such as that for women's education, had themselves joined in movements. By the early twentieth century women's own autonomous organizations began to be formed, and within a couple of decades, by the thirties and forties, a special category of women's activism was constructed (Kumar 1993, p. 1).

A major part of this empowerment is felt through literature as it was also a time when women were slowly breaking the silences and coming out with their experiences via

[304] See Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) foreword.

[305] See Karlekar, "[A]fter the middle of the nineteenth century, the access of Bengali girls' to education and consequent changes in their roles both within the family as well as in the outside world became an area of considerable debate. It involved dyed-in-the-wool conservatives, members of the reformist Brahmo samaj, housewives resistant to change as well as those women exposed to education in some form. By and large, the views set forth were faithful reflections of those prevailing in contemporary Britain where there was growing discussion on suitable kinds of education for girls. The influence of the physical and biological sciences, and in particular, that of Charles Darwin, led to debates on differences of the two sexes. […] [A] second concern was expressed with the ability of women to perform successfully their primary responsibility, namely that of bearing and of rearing children: if too much study resulted in the using up of much-needed energy, it was clearly to be avoided" (Karlekar 1986, p. 25).

narratives in different genres.[306] In fact, both literature and language became a space and tool for activism and sociopolitical thinking in Bengal. Rhetorical strategies of the empire in the colony attempted a "[l]arger synthesis of the British Empire by means of a shared communicative medium" to foster "right understanding between the ruler and the ruled that sovereignty requires" (Schwarz 1997, p. 514). Thus articulation and linguistic intercourse between the colony and metropole became a matter or prime importance.[307] Bengali women too, through their columns on European women, attempted an articulation and intercourse between themselves as well as the European women. Using Bengali to write the biographies of European women served another purpose, which is as important as its aim to reach and appeal to literate Bengali women for their contribution in social transformation. These biographies constructed an image of the 'other', which defined European woman as well as Bengali women with respect to and in relation with their European counterparts. While the model European women remained as an ideal to be achieved yet, she was there to be imitated and hence lingered the possibility of 'becoming like her'. Schwarz succinctly puts it as the construction of:

> [a]n image of alterity for the self-consolidation of Europe, but in the process of identification, these opposites begin to blend into each other, perverting both the image of the other as different and the possibility of a sameness that would allow incorporation. If the other is to be successfully incorporated, it must possess a principle, or at least a possibility of sameness; likewise, within the same must lurk an otherness whose shadow haunts the very possibility of the "I" (Schwarz 1997, p. 515).

Though done primarily with the help of men, these initial endeavors could well be termed as first sparks of feminism in colonial Bengal.[308]Along with the growing consciousness and

[306] This thesis has already examined four of such genres. Further, Bhattacharya & Sen writes, "[W]hat is very striking is that authors did not necessarily emerge from the ranks of public achievers: those with university degrees, even professions, or public and political roles. Many of the early authors were housewives whose printed writings vaulted across the public-private divide. Their writing went in all directions: prose, poetry, drama, polemic and discursive essays, imaginative fiction. From within their secluded homes—for very few were widely-travelled as Krishnabhabini Das or linked to renowned families and public roles as Swarnakumari Devi and Sarala Devi—they observed the world and confidently judged it. Perhaps, what more successful public achievers could express in their working and public lives, housewives would grasp and construct through writing alone: a new identity, a new relationship with the word and the world" (Bhattacharya & Sen eds. 2003, p. xi).

[307] In his article Schwarz talks about the objective, failure and the imperial politics involved in Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *A Grammar of Bengal Language* (1778) which earned its name not only as an instruction book for Europeans about the language of Bengal but also proved useful for Indians themselves. For further details, see Schwarz (1997).

[308] The periodicals mentioned in this chapter can definitely be read as a manifestation of the feminist ideals whereby groups of women created the agency to take care not only of themselves but also the society in general and in the endeavor, reached out to the global womanhood for inspiration. *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, which is also discussed later, initiated educating girls at home via correspondence, which was called *antaḥpur śikṣā*—as early as 1860s.

agency, women also started questioning the exclusionary politics of gender. *Purdah* [pardā] or seclusion of women in the *antarmahal* [antarmahal] of the household became highly debatable. Bengali men of the likes of Keshub Chandra Sen, a member of Brahmo Samaj and otherwise champion of liberal attitudes towards women's empowerment[309] were divided on the question of *purdah*. Sen believed that once out of the *purdah*, women will be "unsexed" and he regarded the female emancipatory ideals of his peers as "fraught with grave danger" (Karlekar 1986, p. 26). Not only the symbolic seclusion, but the veiling of the female body also underwent a transformation with the popularizing of the *Brahmikā śāṛi.*[310] Early feminists like Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain came out with the implications of *purdah* for the Muslim womanhood in Bengal. While Begum Rokeya claimed that almost anything can be done from under a veil[311], and she herself exemplified it, her revolutionary writings included a utopic world for women where men, since incapable of controlling their depraved behavior, besides saving the land from the invasion of enemies, are kept in seclusion and women move around freely in a state run exclusively by women.[312]

> Rokeya, who was born into an orthodox Muslim aristocratic family and grew up observing strict parda, firmly believed that in order to really stand up to male oppression women had to be economically independent, even seek employment outside the household if necessary. Not surprisingly, she faced tremendous criticism for her essays […] (Sarkar 2013, p. 13).

Rokeya was not alone. Swarnakumari, Sarala Debi, Saratkumari are some such figures who articulated their world views freely and celebrated modernity through their writings. These personalities also used different periodicals regularly to express their views[313] on women and allied subjects.

---

[309] Sen's idea of empowering women was however not based on gender uniformity: "Sen was keenly interested in a certain kind of women's education where he strongly advocated separate syllabi. Girls were not to be exposed to science or to mathematics" (Karlekar 1986, p. 26).

[310] Presumably a western influence of wearing the *sari* with petticoats, blouse and shoes, introduced and popularized by Gyanadanandini Tagore, wife of Satyendranath Tagore.

[311] Begum Rokeya's views for and/or against the practice of purdah is somewhat complicated. However, Rokeya scholars describe her abhorrence for the practice in no unmixed terms: [I]n her "Author's Introduction" to *The Zenana Women*, in which Rokeya provided her most outrageous expose of the purdah system as it was practiced by the aristocratic Muslims in India at the time, she again reminds us how she herself was a victim of the system: "[H]aving lived in purdah for a long time, we have grown accustomed to the secluded life. Therefore, we, especially I, have nothing to say against it. If a fishwife is asked, 'rotten fish smells foul or fair,' what would she answer?" (Kadir 1999 cited in Quayum 2013, p. xvii).

[312] *Sultana's Dream* (1905) is a feminist utopia where the author portrays the ideal world for women, where they take part in research and development of science and technology, without the oppression of men.

[313] *Bhāratī o bālak*, *Pradīp*, *Antaḥpur*, *Mahilā* regularly carried writings and columns by Begam Rokeya, Kamini Ray, Kumudini Mitra, Krsnabhabini Das, Girindramohini Dasi etc.

Besides the direct contribution of journal articles by notable authors, another genre of writing which influenced biographies were missionary novels written in Bengali. The image of the benevolent white woman cast in the role of the savior, offering salvation to the poor and suffering was the (narrative) perspective of the first missionary novel *Phulmoṇi o karuṇā*. Besides the presence of a centralized savior protagonist, which is a part of the narrative, the missionary novels also served as the guiding manual with a liberal ideology acknowledging the plurality of beings and offering a way of salvation. This phenomenon is also present in the biographies that often talk about erring or aberrant protagonists slowly inclined to the ways of god and righteous living. The coexistence of spirituality and sentiment[314] is also a theme, which is abundantly found in missionary novels as well as in the biographies. Finally, these model biographies are also clearly influenced by and inspired from male biographies, which were also a regular feature of the periodicals. Historical and mainly inspirational and educational, these biographies resembled their female counterparts in motive. Even though the origin of the biographies can be traced to several sources, the literary endeavor of women writing on women requires introspection and analysis. "[w]omen writing on women in a period of deepening and accelerating growth and feminist consciousness might experience a "psychological intersection" […]" (Chevigny 1983, p. 80). This psychological intersection and its interpretation are well manifested in the biographies that follow.

6.3 The philanthropic woman

The inspiration for humanitarian work that Bengali women sought after mainly came from Britain, with a few notable exceptions from Germany and America. This is apparent from the large number of British feminists and philanthropists who featured in Bengali periodicals. Female participation in charity and philanthropy was gaining a steady ground in Victorian England during the nineteenth century. The 'Female Philanthropist' as a social category has been looked at with certain trepidations by the British society at large, the major reason being, women's participation in the public sphere interfered with the Victorian doctrine of 'separate spheres', whereby women were deemed as best fit for the household. Dorice Williams Elliott's book titled *The Angel out of the House* (2002) talks about the raging public opinion on nineteenth century female philanthropists. Derision and ridicule most often were the accompanying emotions, which gave rise to satires based on female

[314] Typical manifestations of coexistence are found in phrases and expressions like one's heart bleeding at the sight of the poor, distressed, and the diseased; or one not being able to sleep/being restless at the sight/of suffering humanity. All these expressions and ideas come forth in the later discussions.

charity workers.[315] Their gullibility, over-enthusiasm to show generosity and frequent instances of being duped by the poor, was laughed at.[316] Also, it was feared that too much involvement in outside work will finally lead to making women 'unwomanly'[317] thus destabilizing the balance of the private and public sphere. Yet, philanthropy was becoming a necessary activity to revive the British society already plagued by ills of industrial capitalism and also long-standing problems of poverty and misery. Society was not unanimously against the involvement of women in charity work[318] and thus in spite of the derision and anxiety by some, charity started thriving. "Although many men were involved in the direction of charities, visiting systems, and other philanthropic projects, the voluntary efforts of middle-class women were the mainstay of most philanthropic endeavors […]" (Elliot 2002, p. 4). Bengali periodicals of nineteenth century,[319] followed the British domestic ideology by defining women as naturally caring, sympathetic and more capable of being caregivers and nurses than men. Thus, they were more suitable for such work, which required softness, care, empathy, and patience.[320]

In this context, social responsibility and accountability were the main themes of the majority and the most prominent Bengali periodicals of nineteenth century like *Dāsī*, *Antaḥpur*, *Bāmābodhinī*, *Tattvabodhinī* etc. It is interesting to note that the norm of social responsibility was, in a way, 'imported' and justified with examples from across cultures where it varied from the Bengali society. The different role models of charity came from different personal, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Hence, a question might arise about the need of female European role models for inspiration in Bengal, especially when major Bengali periodicals were replete with frequent references to *ārya-bhūmi*,[321] her

[315] An important reason for such satires was also the anxiety and competition male charity workers felt apprehending women's entry and participation in this social sphere.
[316] Cf., Elliott, "*My District Visitors* (1891) represents women who participate in parish charity work as either officious or overbearing or naïve and gullible" (2002, p. 2).
[317] Cf., Elliott "[…] philanthropy was the "sphere of independent labour most accessible to ambitious women," it also gave rise to apprehensions about the defeminization of women and the destruction of the happy home life they were expected to superintend" (2002, p. 4).
[318] Cf., Elliott: "[A]s a number of historians and critics who have studied the history of women and their roles have observed, women's philanthropy seemed to be a natural extension of their domestic work" (2002: 6).
[319] *Antaḥpur*, *Dāsi* and *Bāmābodhinī Patrikā* claimed that *nārī-hṛdaẏ* or women's heart is not meant for the confinement of the household, though she is the reigning deity of the gṛhasthāśram (roughly the household—one of the four stages or *aśram* of Hindu philosophy) and is meant to maintain its smooth running, however for the advancement of the society she should be trained to serve the society.
[320] Famous literature of the period also dealt with the topic of female philanthropist like Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853) or Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762). The latter, though written much earlier, is a feminist utopian fiction offering a charity house as an alternative space for women as well as other groups considered as outcast by the masculine world.
[321] Literally means the land of the *aryans*. Cf., Deshpande, "[I]n the Hindu religious—legal tradition (dharmasastra), the term *arya* came to refer to the three higher social groups—the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and

women and their greatness.[322] In these periodicals, lamentation over the degenerate present resides alongside the narratives of the glorious past. It followed that the way out of the existing sorry state was revising and remodeling the domestic sphere according to the ideals of Victorian society.[323] While the virtues of education, duty, hygiene, punctuality etc. were viewed in a new light, the ideals of charity and philanthropy also received a western reinforcement.

6.4 Periodicals for women: their emergence and importance

Tapti Roy in her article observes "[I]n the second half of the nineteenth century, the publishing industry, comprising the writing, printing, and the distribution of books and periodicals, was perhaps the largest indigenous enterprise in Calcutta" (Roy 1995, p. 30). This enterprise not only made global information accessible to Bengali society but also boosted reading and learning.[324] Carey Anthony Watt talks about the late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century increase and influx of information about international developments:

> From the 1890s onward dramatic increases in telegraphic and postal facilities served to accelerate the flow of information into the subcontinent…[T]he number of journals –indicative of the proliferation of India's associational life (associations tended to start their own journals)—grew seven-fold between 1890 and 1912 […] (Watt 2005, p. 32-33).

This voluminous production of printed literature was used by different social groups to disseminate their ideas in the society.[325] There was a growth of distinct value-systems and ideals that Bengali women propagated through their fair share of the print medium, which was in certain cases different from the aspirations of the elite or middle-class males, though the women themselves sometimes belonged to the elite or middle-class. "Historians have tended to draw on the refined literature of the educated middle classes to inform their understandings, and have ignored the cultural self-expression in print of lesser social groups…[B]ut print did not mirror the aspirations of the dominant classes only" observes Anindita Ghosh (1998, p. 173) in her article on print-cultures in Bengal. Ghosh further states

---

the Vaishyas—but the ancient law-giver Manu also speaks of *arya* languages and modes of behavior (Bronkhorst and Deshpande 1999) (Deshpande 2015, p. 11).

[322] "Mā go! […] tumi ei āryabhūmir upar tomār ek'bindu kṛpā bitaraṇ kara" [Oh Mother! Bestow an iota of kindness on this land of Aryans] Bamabodhini Patrika "Āni besant" 6:4 33 (1869).

[323] Refer to nineteenth century social scenario in Bengal esp. the 'woman question' as discussed in earlier chapters and by writers like Sarkar (2001); Chatterjee (1990) & Borthwick (1984).

[324] See Roy: "[T]he culture of publishing and reading printed texts was, like most other items of everyday modernity, introduced to India by Europeans and, in some sense, grafted to prior indigenous traditions of learning and intellectual activity" (1995, p. 30).

[325] Like *baṭṭalā* literature, female literature, religious writings etc.

that the cheap print culture was "used in important ways by lesser social groups to challenge the standard literary norms during the period" (Ghosh 1998, p. 174). That the periodicals written by women for women, sometimes with the help of men, reclaimed a space of their own in the crowded journalistic literary scenario is not to be denied, taking into consideration the power and voice it gave to women.[326] In a connection to Benedict Anderson's notion of *imagined communities*[327] where the different women writing in or reading those periodicals may not *know* each other, they were tied together with particular feelings of community and even kinship as a close reading of the periodicals reveal. Himani Bannerji in her article on popular magazines and their take on education, talks of a similar communal network. She writes,

> [I]n the pages of these magazines the women writers and their women readers build up an extensive network and a general fund of communicative competence. They work up 'women's issues', 'women's approaches', and invite pieces on new themes or hold essay competitions among the readers (Bannerji 1991, p. 50).

If we look at the paratexts of these periodicals e.g., calling for an overdue subscription, reporting for missed copies[328] and acknowledgment columns for contributions of its readers and other such information, it gives a feeling of reaching out through familiarity and community, of a "horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1996: 7). Meredith Borthwick (1984) confirms this kinship via periodicals:

> [C]irculation figures indicate that they were widely read, and women's keenness to participate in the journals as subscribers or contributors demonstrates that they also provided an important means of communication among women, and performed a mediating function with the outside world (Borthwick 1984, p. xii).

In addition, the use of Bengali as the preferred language in the periodicals not only made the information about European women intelligible, but also accessible to a greater part of the Bengali population. The call for *jāgaraṇ* or awakening to the Bengali women following the footsteps of their European counterpart is exemplified in several passages like this:

---

[326] See Anderson, "The search for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully" was made fruitful by print-capitalism, "which made it possibly for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (Anderson 52, p. 1991).

[327] I am aware of Partha Chatterjee's criticism of the term, of a pre-determined, 'modular' nation-societies propagated by the West (Chatterjee 1996). However, the term is used here to denote a community based on shared ideas and situations.

[328] These periodicals usually came with their set of instructions or *niẏamābalī* printed on the first page of the journal, which clarified its operational ethics, requirements from the contributors, the aims and objectives, cost of subscriptions, rules for advertisement etc. Contact details and addresses of the manager, publishers etc. were also provided in the introductory page.

> A sense of self-respect, courage, and restrained dignity, needed to mingle with the common people, are not a part of our character. Hence we should build our character first for such interactions. To serve all beings we should first inculcate candid, loving zeal, patience in crisis, readiness and determination in work, and then approach the mission[329] *Antaḥpur* 5:2-3 (1902).

Awakening of the national consciousness[330] via character building formed an integral part of the flavor of such discourse. The present chapter seeks to address, namely mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century prominent Bengali periodicals such as *Antaḥpur patrikā* (Calcutta, c. 1901-1903), *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* (1863-1922), and *Dāsī patrikā* (1892-1897). They are chosen for their rich content on philanthropic texts with frequent depiction of the lives of European women as the philanthropic role model.[331]

Periodicals of the nineteenth and twentieth century have attracted attention primarily due to their treatises on female education, which was a heated debate in the colonial period. The value of education for women gained increasing momentum due to the changing role of the women at that time. Krishna Sen writing about the issue of female education as it was dealt with in *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* remarks: "[…] *Bāmābodhinī*, too, opted for a formal Westernized academic culture designed to create a lady fit for companionate marriage, the only indigenous element in this new curriculum being the attributes required to run a conventional household" (Sen 2004, p. 187). It is to be noted that the scenario regarding women's periodicals in Bengal was not much different from for example the Hindi periodicals. Francesca Orsini writes in her book on Hindi public sphere, "[T]hey [Hindi periodicals] were important means of instilling in women public concerns and the sense of common cultural and political sphere" (Orsini 2002, p. 261) and in these periodicals "the religious and moral notions and values of strī-dharma[332]" were combined with "Victorian values and ideas about domesticity and womanhood that were considered necessary for the reformed household" (Orsini 2002, p. 261). This being the general topic of the day, the

[329] Original text: "sādhāraṇer sahit miśibār mata ātmasammān'bodh, satsāhas o saṃyata sambhramer bhāb, āmāder caritre nāi. Sutarāṃ prathame āmāder caritrake sādhāraṇer nikaṭ paricita haïbār upayukta kariẏā laïte haïbe. Sakal prāṇīr sebār janya saral snehamaẏ āgraha, bipader madhye sahiṣṇutā, kājer samaẏ tatparatā o ḍṛṛhaniṣṭhā, sañcaẏ kariẏā pare kāryakṣetre abatīrṇa haïte haïbe."

[330] See Nijhawan, "[…] women's periodicals were essential to establishing a network of feminist-nationalist enunciations in a period of social transition and political emancipation. They became a medium for elite and middle-class women to express themselves in idioms of literary and political discourses and to communicate across familial forms of connectedness. Women's periodicals not only provided a forum for those women writers and readers who were already involved in public activities; they also appealed to an educated, upper-class, Hindu women's community, urging them to invoke themselves in the cause to liberate women from oppressive social customs" (2011, p. 195).

[331] Some other prominent periodicals like *Tattvabodhinī patrikā*, *Bangamahilā*, *Bhāratī* or *Bināpaṇī* mainly focused on the issue of education, religious reformation etc. hence not taken up here.

[332] Commonly translated as duties of women.

coexistence of charitable and noble European women's life-stories in the same journal(s) completely fitted the idea of 'superior metropole culture' as well as the 'Victorian values of domesticity and womanhood.' This brings one to the discussion on indigenous concepts of philanthropy-- *sebā* and *dān*[333] as philanthropy is termed in Bengali. It is worth exploring if certain aspects of charity were western imports or if the indigenous concept of *sebā* was in harmony with the western role models through which it was propagated.

6.5 Concept of *Sebā* in colonial Bengal

The word *sebā*, prevalent in Bengali as well as in other languages, mainly means to serve; whereas *dān* would mean a gift or donation. The idea of philanthropy in Bengal mainly consists of these concepts of *sebā* and *dān*, which have existed both in religious and secular forms.[334] Calling the idea of charity in Hindu religious concepts as 'traditional', inclusive of the concepts of *dān*, *sebā* and *dharma*[335], Carey Anthony Watt points out certain problems inherent in the idea of indigenous charity. Firstly, it is not an organized effort and is mainly individual and unsystematic. Secondly, the idea of *dān* and *sebā* is also associated to the idea of *puṇya*, which could earn one the sublime bliss or *mokṣa*. Thus, charity is driven by self-fulfillment, which is contrary to—

> [t]he idea of *dān* in Hinduism [which] is supposed to represent a 'pure gift' by which the giver does not expect any reciprocal benefit in his or her lifetime. However, the practice of giving in the early twentieth century indicates that even the expectation of reward or salvation in a future life was a significant and widespread incentive for giving (Watt 2005, p. 69).

Nonetheless, *sebā* and *dān* are also intrinsically related to austerity and self-negation in Hindusim,[336] which transports one into a more difficult and serious realm of asceticism and renunciation of the worldly pleasures including the household. This kind of philanthropy was more considered as a man's forte. Carey further mentions,

> Indian 'traditions' related to asceticism were also invoked to encourage greater discipline and austerity among the Indian population, and to encourage Indians to participate selflessly in work for national improvement. […] In the early twentieth century, selfless social service for the national good was often directly equated with being a sannyāsī—one who has renounced his family, the life of the body and the

[333] *Dān* could be a more public event based on the motive of the *dānī,* or the person who performs *dān*.
[334] See Borthwick, "[P]hilanthropy, in the form of assistance to the poor and needy, has always been a traditional obligation of those in the upper echelons of Hindu society. Important family occasions or religious festivities were marked not only by celebrations and feasts, but also by a ritualized feeding of the poor. This was a religious and social obligation rather than the result of personal generosity or a charitable impulse to improve the lot of others" (1984, p. 293).
[335] My translation as one's rightful conduct and duty.
[336] For details, refer to "The relevance of Social Service in Indian History", Watt (2005, p. 1-27).

> material world to be freed from earthly burdens and focus on spiritual matters[337] (Watt; Mann 2011, p. 286).

Doughlas E. Haynes (1987) offers his opinion on the development and nature of Indian charity and philanthropy in the colonial period from the gifting practices of businessmen and merchants. He writes:

> Philanthropic activity clearly did not have any strong roots in precolonial mercantile traditions. True, the historical record before 1800 is filled with evidence of *seths* (great merchants) who engaged in acts of great munificence, such as the building of wells, temples, and resthouses, and the sponsoring of festivals and of Sanskrit learning. Yet these donors most commonly viewed their gifts as acts of propitiation or service to their deities and as deeds by which they could hope to acquire merit. The notion of humanitarian service, so intrinsic to the concept of philanthropy as understood in Western cultures, was at best muted in the conceptual systems of Indian businessmen. Beginning in the nineteenth century, however, a number of merchants did begin to contribute considerable sums of money to schools, colleges, hospitals, and other public works and causes, very much along the lines of their counterparts in England itself. To many British civil servants of the period, this development was clear evidence of the diffusion of an entirely novel ethic from Victorian England among the commercial communities in India. The administrators certainly came to regard the contributors to secular charities as agents of "progress" whose efforts might help to transform what they viewed as a backward society" (Haynes 1987, p. 340).

Haynes' claim focuses on the transformed nature of mercantile philanthropy in nineteenth century, which, on the part of the business class was an effort towards "building stable social relationships with members of their community and with their rulers" (Haynes 1987, p. 340). This sort of gifting also came with a political and economic motive of pleasing overlords, thus staying in power in the society and in business[338]. Hence, this was a conscious effort towards moving away from the religious overtone that used to be usually attached to charitable acts. Also, the act of gaining respectability was the prime motivation for mercantile philanthropy since religious seba or philanthropy involved with worship, pilgrimage, festivals etc., were also carried out with that motive[339]. Malavika Kasturi (2010) talks about dāna "as a significant political and cultural field, replete with opportunities in

[337] Swami Vivekananda was a role-model for this kind of service.

[338] See Haynes, "[g]ifting also played a critical role in the exercise of political influence and the smoothing of relations with rulers whose origins lay outside the city and who differentiated themselves strongly from the merchants. By making the gifts grounded in the ethos of these outsiders, seths could hope to appease members of the ruling group in situations where conflict might otherwise develop, and even to fashionable stable moral bonds with their overlords, this insuring the continuity of their trade, the upholding of their family prestige, and the maintenance of the community's social and religious life. In addition, substantial donors who received honors from officials in return for valued gifts shared in the mystique of the imperial power and thus reinforced their local prestige" (Haynes 1987, p. 341).

[339] See Haynes (1987) for details.

troubled time" (Kasturi 2010, p. 111). Kasturi further claims that the boom in societal service in the colonial period was the major preoccupation of merchant classes, zamindars, political pensioners, and other such well-endowed groups who were "eager to express their desire for a higher status in keeping with their expanding wealth" (Kasturi 2010, p. 111). This was the indigenous model of philanthropy operating in a masculine realm, which was abandoned by Bengali women when they tried to take up philanthropic activities for the benefit of the society. Bengali women transformed and remodeled this preexisting idea of charity according to their newfound 'western consciousness' and indigenous needs in nineteenth century Calcutta. Bengali periodicals played a major role in establishing charity as an initiative to bring women into the public sphere, where besides handling the household they had a proactive role to play in the development of the society. What was so far confined to *pati-sebā* or serving the family and the husband was now being transformed to *samāj-sebā* or serving the society. Also, the awareness and "[i]nstilling in women public concerns and the sense of common cultural and political sphere" (Orsini 2002, p. 260) was done in the periodicals. The new awakening was heralded by juxtaposing duties of women according to Hinduism with Victorian values and ideas about domesticity.[340]

Francesca Orsini further remarks:

> A powerful notion supporting women's access to the public sphere was that of *sevā-dharma*. *Sevā*, service, bestowed moral capital on, and helped legitimize, women's activities outside the home and redefine their role within the household. The notion of *sevā-dharma* was consistently invoked while redefining women's roles, from housewife to *svayaṃsevikā* (volunteer) and to teacher […] [T]his primacy of *sevā* in turn established women as central and active subjects (Orsini 2002, p. 270).

Thus *sebā* brought about a change even to the 'ordinary' Bengali women's peripheral existence and helped her enter the public sphere without the fear of censure. "[I]t was thus the idiom of service that allowed women to step out of traditional roles and places without losing respectability" (Orsini 2002, p. 271).

6.6 Role models

Spanning three major Bengali periodicals exemplifying *sebā* through western role models, this section explores some major characters including the likes of Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale. The three major periodicals, as stated above, are *Antaḥpur patrikā*

[340] See Orsini, "it [literature for women] combined the religious and moral notions and values of stri-dharma with 'new' Victorian values and ideas about domesticity and womanhood that were considered necessary for the reformed household. This involved teaching them virtues like modesty, thrift, pliability, obedience, simplicity, purity, and dedication: making them Indian versions of the Victorian woman" (2002, p. 261).

(Calcutta, c 1901-1903), *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* (Calcutta 1863-1922), and *Dāsī patrikā* (Calcutta 1892-1897). *Antaḥpur patrikā* was the first Bengali journal to be managed, edited and written only by women. Publication of this periodical started from January 1898, with Banalata Debi[341] as its first editor. Hemantakumari Caudhuri[342] and Kumudini Mitra [343] later took the responsibility of publication from 1900 onwards. Kartikchandra Dutta in 211 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta printed the journal[344]. *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* or the Journal for the Enlightenment of Women had a publication span from 1863-1922 and was the longest running periodicals. The tagline of the journal was *Kanyāke pālan karibek o jatner sahit śīkṣā dibek*, which translated, is, "raise and protect girls and educate them with care." The journal was managed by the speakers of the *Brāhmabandhu Sabhā*, which later became *Bāmābodhinī Sabhā*, founded by Keshub Chunder Sen in 1863. This was a monthly publication "with a print run of a hundred copies a month priced at one *ānā*[345] each. For decades, until competitors appeared at the turn of the century, every issue sold out."[346] *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* played an important role in discussing the "woman question."[347] *Dāsī māsik patrikā o samālocanā* "began as an in-house publication of *dāsāśram*, a residential workhouse for poor and hapless women." It was published by Ramananda Chattopadhyay with an aim to help in the campaign for fund raising for the residential house "and to spread the cause of social work in the country" and was printed and published by K.C Dutta, Brahmo Mission Press, 211, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Along with the publication of issues related to family, women and children, stories with morals and messages, biographies and regular updates on activities and annual reports of the rehabilitation center were also published:

> One can serve others in two ways. Altruism with a sense of duty has limited value but one carried out with selfless devotion, in cascading solitude, flowing

[341] Banalata Debi was the daughter of Brahmo reformer and proponent of female education Sasipada Banerjee (śaśīpada bẏānārjī) and his wife Rajkumari (Rājkumārī), who in 1871 had become the first Brahmo woman to travel overseas, staying with Mary Carpenter in Bristol. Mary figured as one of the aspirational female philanthropists in *Antaḥpur patrikā*.
[342] See Borthwick, Hemantakumari was born in 1868 and belonged to a Brahmo family. Her father was a reformer and educationalist Nabin Chandra Ray (Nabīnꞌcandra Rāẏ). Caudhuri served as the editor of *Antaḥpur* from 1901-1904. (1984, p. 366).
[343] Kumudini Mitra was born in 1882, daughter of Brahmo reformers Krishna Kumar (kṛṣṇa kumār) and Lilabati Mitra (Līlābatī Mitra, 1984, p. 369).
[344] Information and content of the periodicals are from Savifa alternatively CrossAsia-Repository (2015).
[345] Belonging to the old Indian currency system Ana is 1/16 of a rupee.
[346] Krishna Sen describes in detail the contribution of *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* to the cause of female education in her paper titled "Lessons in self-Fashioning: *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* and the Education of Women in Colonial Bengal" (2004, p. 176-191).
[347] This term has been explained further in the chapter and well in earlier sections of the thesis.

> spontaneously from the soul and touching upon the society like a soothing, sweet panacea is a genuine service to humanity.[348]

The following statement published in *Antaḥpur* ("sebābrata" 5:4, 73, 1902) was the overarching theme of the columns of European women's life narratives in Bengali periodicals. Almost all the characters who found a place in the periodicals were shown as serving humanity without a thought of return or profit. The only profit one was encouraged to expect in the periodicals was the peace and bliss of mind. *Sebā* was said to bring life to a dying body and revive a decaying soul. Some of the characters portrayed stayed in their families and carried out their philanthropic missions, which the periodicals actually encouraged as pointed out by Elizabeth Fry "[O]f prime importance is the *gṛhasthāśram*[349] *sebā*. Scripture-writers have indicated the household as the prime *aśram* […] and women are the presiding goddesses of this *aśram.*"[350] Though the *gṛhāśram* was emphasized, the journal columnists strove to strike a balance between *gṛhāsram sebā* and the *sāmājik sebā,* between the household and the outer society.

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), a leading Quaker reformer, was a popular character among Bengali columnists at the time. She featured more than once in two different periodicals. Fry was an English prison reformer and philanthropist. Secondary sources on Fry suggest her prison reform ideas as remarkably similar to Jeremy Bentham:

> Bentham's pleasure-pain principle and Mrs. Fry's fervent evangelicalism brought them both to positions supporting classification of prisoners and productive labour in prisons, as well as to a shared concern for the maintenance of healthful prison conditions. […] [b]oth Bentham and Mrs. Fry belonged to a generation of reformers concerned primarily with the salvation (sociological or religious) of the prisoner, while Benthamites and Quakers active in the 1830s were primarily concerned with deterring crime (Cooper 1981, p. 675).

Like all other characters that had featured in the periodicals, Fry is portrayed as kind and faithful to god, finding deep satisfaction in fulfilling her worldly duties of bringing up a family of eleven children along with caring for the poor and the underprivileged. The anonymous writer of *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* talked about the different humanitarian aspects

---

[348] Original text: "Sebā dui bhābe karā yāite pāre. Kebal kartabẏer baśabartī haïẏā erūp sebā karā yāẏ; ei prakār sebār mūlya adhik nahe, kintu hṛdaẏ haïte ye ātmahārā sebār bhāb, nirjan giri pradeśastha nirjharer nyāẏ, svatahi utˑsārita haïẏā saṇsār kṣetre śata sahasra sumiṣṭa dhārāẏ prabāhita haẏ, tāhāi śreṣṭha sebā."

[349] One of the four āśramas or stages described in Hindu philosophy denotes the household life. The other three are brahmacārẏa (the student life), bānaprastha (the life of the hermit) and sannẏāsa (the life of the mendicant).

[350] Original text: "Sarba prathame gṛhasthāśram sebā. Śāstra kārerā gārhasthyake sarbaśreṣṭha āśram baliẏā nirdeś kariẏāchen. […] nārī ei gṛhasthaśramer adhiṣṭhātrī bedī [sic]."

in Fry's character. She undertook the noble job of educating orphans in her ancestral house. The columnist addressed the female readers, telling them not to turn on to their side when their neighbors were in danger and lie down mumbling "how could I leave my little child and go help,"[351] as Fry was able to help the afflicted despite having eleven children. Fry also insisted that parents send their children to free schools and distribute warm clothes and food in the winter. However, her much popular effort was towards prison reform, which granted her the name 'angel of prisons.' Female prisoners were in a sorry state of moral degradation at the time and Fry started counselling them with her entertaining stories on ethics and morality. This yielded quick results that prompted Fry to open an educational institution in the prison of Newgate. The column on Fry describes her as capable to change the prison condition of women for better. Though her success and the applause she received from her success could not make her proud given the nature of 'selfless service,' Cooper reiterates the fact,

> [S]he was much adulated by her contemporaries and clearly enjoyed her reputation as an angel of mercy; she cultivated friendships with the great and powerful and died in 1845 with the reputation of a heroine. Yet Elizabeth Fry's importance as a prison reformer can easily be exaggerated. Her ideas were almost entirely derivative. She was certainly responsible for recruiting fellow Quakers to the banner of prison reform, but her recruits soon rejected the ideas of their mentor. As early as 1825 Mrs. Fry's ideas were outside the mainstream of prison reform sentiment (Cooper 1981, p. 681-682).

This example exposes the reductionist nature of the narratives in the Bengali periodicals, where the characters described were plainly in luminous white and the authors completely did away with the dark or grey areas of their lives and profession. A few of the characters described in the periodicals actually left their household and founded missions and sister-groups, like Sister Dora: these personalities were revered as goddesses and upheld as supreme examples of women's character and contribution to humanity.

Sister Dora or Dorothy Wyndlow Pattinson (1832-1878) featured in one the editions of *Dāsī*. Known as a kind-hearted person from childhood, she was engaged in feeding and clothing the poor villagers. She and her sister were the epitome of the kind of selfless service where they would give their share of food to the poor and stayed hungry themselves without any

[351] "Pāṭhikā bhagni, jakhan tomār pratibeśīr bārīte baṛa bipad upasthit 'koler chele pheliẏā kī kariẏā yāiba' baliẏā āpatti tuliẏā niścinta mane ār kakhano śuiẏā thākio nā! yāhār saṇsāre egāraṭi santān, tāhār ye niśvās phelibār samaẏ nāi" [Dear reader sisters, when your neighbor faces a crisis, don't keep resting peacefully by claiming 'how can I leave my toddler'. One who has eleven children is even busier "Bibi fry" *Bāmābodhinī patrikā* 2:4 135, (1882).

thought or remorse. When Dora heard of Florence Nightingale and her band of sisters who were serving as soldiers in the Crimean war, she also wanted to join them. However, being barred by her father on the pretext that she did not have the necessary training to serve and treat wounded soldiers, she had to stay back home. Later, Dora came to know about other charitable organizations and communities, managed and run by women and finally in spite of her father's unwillingness, she left home at the age of twenty-nine. The intervening commentary of the columnist wishfully stated that people like Dora were blessed because there was no other noble deed than serving others and she wished she could serve like Sister Dora.[352] Dora was said to retain her childhood innocence and hence quite flourished as a teacher for children in a village school. In spite of not earning plenty, she would keep just the amount of money required to survive and give away the rest to the poor. Her efforts towards humanitarian services and a tough life soon claimed a toll on her health; however, soon after recovery she rejoined the sister-community. In 1865, Dora was sent to Walsall to take care of the patients in a hospital and later when the district was afflicted by smallpox Dora worked relentlessly for the victims thereby getting herself affected by it. Later, after reviving from the disease, she went back to Coatham, Middlesbrough and joined the Sisterhood of the Good Samaritans.[353]

Some of the personalities described in the periodicals led an early life of deviance only to be strongly attached and be faithful to god in their later lives. The tale of Sarah Martin, contributed to *Antaḥpur patrikā* by Nalinibala Ray and published in the Bengali year of 1308 (1901-2) forms an example of the last set. The introduction to the description hailed Sarah Martin as *nārī-ratna* or the 'female jewel', who did not have domestic or family fortune. She was not even born in an aristocratic family nor received higher education. Daughter of a poor village leather smith, she was orphaned at a young age and lived with her grandmother. She became a tailor's apprentice at the young age of fourteen and later earned her living by learning the skills of the trade. Sarah did not have any urge to study the bible compared to her liking for novels and other such books meant for light reading and

[352] "Āhā! Ihārā keman maner sādhe kāj karitechen. Jagate parasebā tulya ki ār kāj āche! ihārāi dhanya! Āmār'o icchā haẏ ihāder mata haï" [Wow! How blissfully they keep working. Is there anything better than serving others altruistically? They are blessed! I wish if I could be like them!] "Bhaginī dora" *Dasī patrikā* 1:5 117 (1892).

[353] "Sister Dora, (Dorothy Pattinson), worked for many years in Walsall with the Sisterhood of the Good Samaritan, an Anglican Sisterhood, the members of which took no vows and were free to leave at any time to marry. The order had established the first cottage hospital in England at Middlesbrough, and it was in their hospital in Walsall that she served the rough community of workers in the collieries, blast furnaces, iron works and leather factories. Many stories were told of the way she visited and cared for patients with smallpox, and saved the limbs of men injured in the machinery" (They were Left Out 1994, p. 224).

entertainment. This dislike for religious scriptures continued until the age of nineteen when a sudden realization changed the course of her life. The simple words she heard in a restaurant "We persuade men"[354] changed her contempt for god and she started reading the Bible. Sarah started as a Sunday school teacher along with nursing the ill, poor and the orphan including reading out texts from the Bible to terminally ill patients. But Sarah's greater call came when she started working for the prisons in England. The life of the prison inmates who were locked in dark, damp and airless chambers was miserable to say the least and their miseries were enhanced with their physical and mental illness. She started working on the prison of Great Yarmouth, which was also her home. Reading out gospels from the Bible to the hapless female prison inmates and later educating them increased her involvement with them. In order to rehabilitate ex-convicts, Sarah taught them to tailor clothes and thereby earn a decent living. Sarah continuously toiled for the convicts for twenty-five years with passionate perseverance and *selfless desire to serve others* until she died at the age of fifty-three. Her narrative, well meant as an inspiration, served a dual purpose: first, she stressed the fact that one does not need too much resource to start helping the poor and the deprived. Service could come though something as simple as reading out the Holy Scriptures to troubled and restless minds. Second, her work showed how human character could transform. Thus, it is not far-fetched for the self-immersed, lazy Bengali women[355] to engage in greater service of humanity. The motive behind talking about such examples of philanthropy, like working among prison inmates, which was perhaps almost impossible for the household Bengali women of the nineteenth century, could well be inspiration of what the perceived 'weak' female character was capable of achieving—and how the Bengali women lagged behind in comparison.[356]

Contrary to the theme of transformed and reformed female European protagonists, the ones who were born with nobility and virtue were also present and quite predominant. Nalinibala Ray's (Nalinībālā rāẏ) other contribution to *Antahpura patrikā*, the story of Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz talked about such a character. Dividing one's wealth and fortune with the deprived and unlucky formed the theme of the story. The German princess who was

[354] This quote is reemphasized with a probable further explanation in Bengali, "[I]n spite of our limitations, we can at least console people and counsel them" (ām'rā kichu nā pāri manuṣ'der prabodh dite pāri bā satparāmarśa dite pāri". This could entail the power of the words that brought about a transformation in Martin.
[355] Self-chastisement in the periodicals is talked about earlier.
[356] This particular passage for example highlights the sentiment, "Ei sebā bratadhāriṇī mahilāgaṇer niḥsvārtha bhālabāsā, abhimān bihīn sebānurakti dekhiẏā ām'rā kṣanakāler janyao āp'nāder kṣudratā o svārthapar prabṛttike ghṛṇita mane kari." [Seeing the altruism-initiated women, their selfless love and devotion to care without arrogance, makes us momentarily cringe in shame, feel petty and selfish] Antaḥpur *Patrikā* 5: 2, 3 (1902).

later the queen of Prussia was known for her kindness and feelings for the poor. At a very young age, she was extraordinarily sensitive to the suffering of her people, a sensitivity that stayed through her entire life. On one of her birthdays, she was gifted a castle by her father-in-law and being asked if she had any other wish she requested a handful of gold coins for the poor and the destitute of Berlin. Her great feat, however, was that she went to meet Emperor Napoleon after the latter had conquered Prussia to get back her subjects' freedom. Although it ended in failure and she died in annexed Prussia, she could instill a nationalist feeling in her son who became future German emperor Wilhelm I.

Focus on foreign royalty and royal household formed a faction of the *sebā* narrative, which served as examples of global involvement in charity. An article titled "bilet" published in the September edition of *Antaḥpur patrikā* in 1309 (1902), described in detail how large amounts of food were distributed among the poor during the coronation of Queen Victoria's first son, King Edward. The feast, mainly meant for the poor, destitute and physically impaired, had 4,125 maṇ[357] beef, 3125 maṇ potatoes, 3,500 maṇ sweetmeats, 3,125 maṇ bread, 782 maṇ cheese, 36,000 gallons alcohol, 1, 50,000 (bottles) beer and 75,000 pints lime juice spent on it. Besides, monetary gifts amounted to an estimated 17 lakhs 25 thousand rupees.[358] Bengali periodicals generally maintained a strong focus on and carried news of the British administration on development issues where charity played a major part. A *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*'s edition (3:2, 154) talks about the 'Countess Dufferin Fund' established to promote healthcare available to women in India. Perturbed by the poor state of female healthcare, Queen Victoria set up the fund with initiatives from Countess Dufferin aiming not only at providing healthcare for women and children, but also training women as doctors, nurses and midwives and establishing hospitals and pharmacies. For the smooth working of the fund, a committee was established where membership class depended on the amount of voluntary contribution of the members.[359] Besides taking care of the ailing and the sick, the contributions and subscriptions of the members were used to generate and provide scholarships to help and encourage Indian women towards medical and nursing

[357] Maṇ is a Bengali unit of weight measurement. 20 kilograms make one maṇ

[358] Original, "Tini [Edward] svīẏa byaye bilāte 5 lakṣa daridra naranārī o ek sahasra andha ābāl bṛddhake paritoṣ pūrbak bhojan karāiẏāchen, andhadiger bhojaner samaẏ rājkumārī luisā svaẏaṃ upasthit thākiẏā āhār paridarśan kariẏāchen. Ei biraṭ nimantraṇe 4,125 maṇ gomāṃsha, 3,125 maṇ ālu, 3,500 maṇ miṣṭānna, 3, 125 maṇ ruti, 782 maṇ panir, 36,000 gyālan surā, 1, 50,000 bīẏār o 75 hājār pāiṇṭ lebur ras byaẏ haïẏāche" *Antaḥpur Patrikā* 5: 2, 89-90 (1903).

[359] For a contribution amounting to rupees five thousand and above, one could remain a lifelong counsellor of the Countess Dufferin Fund. For a contribution of rupees 500 and above, one could stay as lifelong member and one could get a general membership for an entry fee of ten rupees and an annual contribution of five rupees.

profession as well as to bring well-trained European and American female doctors to work in India. *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*'s column and the anonymous columnist viewed this initiative as undoubtedly noble and expected help from the rich as well as the poor, including blessings from the almighty for its smooth running.

Though altruistic philanthropy was the overarching theme, the columns also dealt with stories, which served to exemplify the ideal female character. The stories of serving one's religion or attaining enlightenment in the form of realizing god or his absence also came under as serving humanity, as noted in the columns on the life of Annie Besant. Other stories like "Gārphilḍer mā" [Garfield's mother] served as examples of women's agency and its impact on her destiny in the face of adversity.

At times in the narratives, the Christian god became akin to the Hindu ideal of *parameśvar* or *bhagabān*. God was one overarching yet animated being, whose real worship is through serving humanity. It followed that Christianity, or for that matter any religion, cannot thrive in isolation, but is nourished together with love and compassion for humanity. This as a message was carried out in the columns narrating life and works of notable European women. The story of Gwendoline Catherine Talbot,[360] born in 1817, was one of them. Born in Cheltenham, which was erroneously printed as Meltenham in *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, the anonymous author talked about Gwendoline's faith in god and faith in humanity, which worked simultaneously to make her one of the most humanitarian figures of her time, earning her the name 'mother of the poor.' When a cholera epidemic broke out in Rome, she devoted herself to the *sebā* of the afflicted distributing medicines and care in the households. Her effort saved the lives of hundreds of sick people and she opened a hospital and an orphanage to continue her service. She also opened a savings bank for the poor, the old, and a school for the education of the youth. Thus, all her life, she lived with the sole purpose of serving the people, abandoning all material pleasures and utilizing her wealth and resources for her people.

Out of the selection of historical and contemporary characters, space was also reserved for notable female missionaries. Bengali periodicals viewed missionary activities with much compassion and gratefulness. A piece titled "Sebābrata" which was published in *Antaḥpur patrikā* in June/July 1902 claimed that women of civilized countries have realized that the

[360] Gwendoline Catherine Talbot's father John Talbot was the constable of Ireland and the most prominent British Catholic of his time. He became the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford in 1827. She does in 1840 at the age of twenty-two.

fulfilment of woman's life lied in serving humanity.[361] The column also discussed the various facets of the Western/civilized women's affinity to serve. Be it the wounded soldiers in the battlefield, or rearing and educating orphan children or offering moral purification to the misled women, or caring for the animals, civilized women have given themselves to all and every kind of services to humanity. Compared to them, the Bengali women have lagged behind because they lacked self-respect, boldness and the restrained dignity to mix with the masses.[362] The article later asked the rhetorical question: for what wealth these women leaving with great pleasure, their abode of love and happiness and plenitude had come to this country to take care of the uncivilized and penniless.[363]

Dāsī patrikā published the story of Miss Georgiana Dean in 1892. Ms. Dean was attracted to serve Indian women and despite much hurdles mainly related to finances, managed to come to Calcutta and started working in the district of Barishal (Bariśāl) now in Bangladesh. She was working among the Muslim inhabitants, her services included administering medicines to the weak and ill and advising women on hygiene rules, rearing children, maintaining congenial relations among neighbors, and teaching them Bengali textbooks. Dean's efforts met with some opposition from the local Muslim villagers; however, her relentless and selfless services and loving gesture towards the poor and ill finally earned her victory and a band of devoted followers.

Besides Dean, Mary Carpenter who visited India for the first time in 1866 was a champion of women's education. Mary Carpenter's story came out in *Dāsī partikā* in 1893. Carpenter was born in 1807 in Exeter, England. She was inclined towards kindness and religion from her childhood. She started managing her father's Sunday school while growing up and would later herself open a girl's school where she instructed her students on moral duties in the household. In India, she established normal schools to educate female Indian teachers and also established the National Indian Association in 1870. The idea of charity was not just confined to material services but had a moral dimension as well in colonial Bengal. Providing food, shelter and medicines were as important as helping in the moral upliftment

[361] "Sabhya deśer mahilāgaṇ mānab sebāi ye nārī jībaner sārthakatā ekathā biśeṣ'bhābe upalabdhi kariẏāchen" [Women in the civilized world have realized that the purpose and fulfilment of womanhood is nestled in caring for other humans] *Antaḥpur patrikā* 5:2,3 27 (1902).
[362] "Sādhāraṇer sahit miśibār mata ātmasammān'bodh, satsāhas, o sahajāta sambhramer bhāb āmāder caritre nāi" [Humility, self-respect, courage, and simplicity to mingle freely with common people are not present in our character] *Antaḥpur patrikā* 5:2, 3 27 (1902).
[363] Ibid, "Mahilāgaṇ ye mahānande samudaẏ sneha bhālabāsār āśraẏ, samudaẏ sukh sampad, svadeś parityāg kariẏā edeśer asabhya kāṅāl'der paricaryyār janya āsiẏāchen se kī sampader āśaẏ?" [Do these women—who left behind their own country, abodes of love and affection to serve the destitute here—have done so in the expectation of material wealth?] *Antaḥpur Patrikā* 5:2 32 (1902).

of the people. Mary founded the ragged school and reformatories for poor children and juvenile offenders in England. While most missionaries directed their services and reform work to the colonies and other countries, humanitarian workers like Mary Carpenter focused on England. The contemporary English society, which was much plagued with alcoholism, antisocial activities and moral degeneration especially of the youth and children, moved Carpenter and she successfully established the reformatory and school in 1852. She also focused on the poor condition of the convicts and wrote a book titled *Our Convicts* (1864), which delineated the shabby prison condition in England. It is worth noting that she was among the first to start working on the reformation of the prisons.

The column on Florence Nightingale hinted at the horizon of the Bengali women's concept of *sebā*. Serving wounded soldiers in the battle was presented as one of the highest forms of humanitarian activity. It also served as an important contrast to present the story to the *purdahnashins* of Bengal: to help them witness through narration an alternative and bold service in caring for the super masculine soldiers. Nightingale's life story is not much of a contrast to the other role models featured in the periodicals. Born in 1820 in an affluent family in Florence, she was the only child of her parents and was brought up with much care and affection. At the age of twenty-one, she gained inheritance to a large property. However, it failed to keep her confined to the comforts of home and in 1854 when Britain and France declared war against Russia, Nightingale went to Crimea to serve the wounded soldiers. There was a colossal loss of lives in the Crimean war and an overwhelming number of wounded and injured. Nightingale worked relentlessly to revive and relieve the soldiers, sometimes spending sleepless nights with a lamp inspecting the condition of the wounded, which earned her the name 'the lady with the lamp.' After finishing her services in the war, people of England wanted to acknowledge her contribution and arranged for a grand homecoming reception, promptly avoided by Nightingale who went to Derby (East Midlands region of England) instead of London.

If one takes inspiration as the main motive behind these columns, then writing biographies of women whose philanthropic services involved much courage was definitely meant to inspire the 'inactive' and 'self-engrossed' Bengali women. Kate Marsden's story speaks of one such a life, deliberately chosen and full of hardships. Kate Marsden was born in 1859 and was a British missionary and nurse. She did a commendable service to the leaper communities in Siberia. *Dāsī patrikā*'s serialized biography mainly focused on her trial and hardships while working for the reformation of the socially ostracized leapers. A befitting

description of the extreme and unfriendly nature of Russia was present in the narrative to emphasize the determination and courage it took to work in those regions, without the expectation of fame and material benefits. By comparison, to the Siberian nature, Bengal definitely appeared more friendly and accessible, thereby instilling strong credence among Bengali women.

Authenticity and accuracy of the narratives or their source(s) are topics to be raised. The columnists do not describe the sources of the columns and in certain cases, the authors/contributors were anonymous. However, for two of the selected characters it is not clear if the lack of information was genuine or a form of censorship. Kate Marsden, whose vivid description of hardships in Russia in *Dāsī patrikā* went on to be published in a series, was one of the most controversial female travelers of her time.[364] She was called a "commercial traveler with a keen eye to business" (Anderson 2006, p. 171). Her book describing her adventures in Russia, *On Sledge and Horseback* (1892) was also condemned by her critics as exaggerated and meant for self-advertisement.[365] She was alleged to create "disproportionate fuss" over sixty-six lepers, which was deemed to be "thoroughly insulting for Russia" (Anderson 2006, p. 171). However, strongest of all, Marsden was accused of homosexuality and that her charity work was allegedly a penance for her 'deviation' (Anderson 2006, p. 167). It is impossible to know if the Bengali columnist who wrote the column on Marsden had access to this controversy, or if she deliberately skipped it, making it an uncertain case of either censorship, or insufficient information, or selective omission. Since the main aim of these tracts was motivational and inspirational, it can also be maintained that the 'deviant' elements were eliminated. Doubt about reception of contemporary readers to certain ideas might also play a major part in such censorship. In addition, the individual life narratives were written in the form of descriptive stories without a hint at the source(s).

Even though women were encouraged to take part in the public sphere via their role models, who were always spending their lives taking care of the sick and needy, a women's character and morals still featured high in the list of criteria for the perfect sister. In the description of Dorothea Lynde Dix, another character whose achievements were discussed in *Dāsī patrikā*, it is mentioned that one reason why Dorothea had such success in reforms of the lunatic

[364] Marsden's controversial travelogue is thoroughly discussed in Elizabeth Baigent's article "" One Could Never Reckon Up All Her Misstatements!" Lies and Deception in the Life and Texts of Kate Mardsen [sic.], Traveller to Siberia in the 1890s" (Ed. Saunders, 3002, p. 11-29).
[365] For more details, refer to Anderson (2006).

asylum in America was her character and her behavior. She was so polite and vested with positive qualities that whoever met her once would consider her as a goddess.[366] Her character and sweet disposition made such an impact on her countrymen that whatever she desired to achieve was considered favorable for the development for her country. Dorothea was a reformer born in 1802 in America who mainly focused her philanthropic work on reformation of lunatic asylums. She came from a very poor family hence could not receive proper education. *Dāsī patrikā* talks about her poverty-stricken childhood and taking shelter with her wealthy grandmother at the young age of twelve. The grandmother, though quite religious was shorn off love and compassion, which did not prevent Dorothea from showing her compassion and serving her. In the journal, there was almost no mention of Dorothea's parentage: her father's failure in other professions except preaching about "heaven and hell"[367] (Colman 1992, p. 15) and her mother's weak health and temperament[368]. This shows that the article author allowed certain facts to gain precedence over others, making Dorothea's contribution to education, moral and ethical issues to be discussed in details over other facts.

Some of the biographies (in Bamabodhini Patrika) were written anonymously and one cannot do away with the hunch that they might have been written by male writers. Clare Midgley (2013) observes that Brahmo men were at times writing these biographies with the aim to inspire Bengali women:

> This sense of liberal religion as providing an avenue to wider roles for women was reinforced in other articles praising western women's international travel and active participation in organisations and debates. American and European women's intercontinental travel, 'especially for missionary work', was presented as evidence of 'how women were progressing in every aspect of society in America and Europe'. […] In selecting prominent western Unitarian women activists as role models for their wives and daughters, the Brahmo men involved in Bamabodhini thus encouraged Bengali women to envision wider social roles beyond becoming better

[366] This concept of '*debi*' [debī] or the divine female/goddess used by the Bengali female contributors in the periodicals to bring out the perceived divinity in the characters of the European female protagonists is a transcultural translation. It majorly reflects the strong religious overtones attached to charity and philanthropy in nineteenth century Bengal and stands in stark contrast with the western/European constructs of virtuous, pious, noble, or at most a saintly character.
[367] Colman in her biography of Lynde Dix describes her difficult childhood with a physically and mentally unfit mother and a professionally unsuccessful father: "[I]f the family was to survive, Dorothea had to grow up very fast" (Colman 1992: 16) which perhaps shaped her strong character: "Dorothea Lynde Dix was a difficult woman—strong willed, determined, opinionated, and outspoken" (Colman 1992, p. 11).
[368] See Colman (2007, p. 11-18).

educated wives and mothers who could exert good influence within reformed religious households" (Midgley 2013, p. 450).

Simultaneously "[B]y including a section on women's own writings, they opened up a space for women to publish and thus to have a voice in wider society, giving women an opportunity to articulate their own views on marriage and family life and on questions of education" (Midgley 2013, p. 450).

6.7 *Sebā*, god and nationalism

> *"However much anguish and pain be there, one cannot afford to gloat in it if one thinks about the widespread misery and poverty in the country among the desolate and the diseased"*[369]
>
> *Antaḥpur patrikā*, 5:2, 32 (1902)

The message of this extract from *Antaḥpur patrikā* is to rise above individual considerations of pain and misfortune, to attend to the country, the *deś*[370], which requires self-sacrifice. The main points of emphasis in the periodicals were the decadent condition of Bengali society, especially its women but also the physical suffering and poor condition of the people at large including their moral degeneration. As a means to invoke the native women, the journal writers frequently took resort to the examples of contribution of the missionaries and other western women who, in their words, had left their abode of love, peace and plenitude—their own countries, and have come to this country to take care of the 'barbaric destitute' (*Antaḥpur*, 5:2, 32, 1902). Posited against these European caregivers, the periodicals lamented the poor and morally deficient upbringing of the girls in Bengal whose lives were rendered empty and incomplete by their parents' relentless wailing about the material possessions of their daughters.[371] They were never taught noble deeds nor to take satisfaction in their household. These self-chastising discourses in Bengali periodicals were accompanied by the narratives on European women's stories of love for humanity and charity.

[369] Original text: "Yataï kena duḥkha yantraṇā upasthit hok nā, deś byāpi duḥkha dāridrer kathā bhābile, nirāśraẏ pīṛitagaṇer madhye thākiyā keha āp'nār durbhāgya abhāber kathā bhābibār abakāś pāẏ nā."
[370] It should be noted here that *deś* did not always mean the whole country. Undivided Bengal was known as *baṅgadeś*.
[371] Original text: "E deśe mātā pitāgaṇ anāthā kanẏār basan bhūṣaṇ sukh saubhāgẏer janẏa sarbadā bilāp kariẏā tāhār jīban āro duḥkhamay kariẏā tulen" [In this country, parents make lives of orphan girls even more miserable by continually cribbing about their happiness, prosperity and material comforts like clothes and ornaments] *Antaḥpur patrikā* 5:2 32 (1902).

The concept of *sebā-brata* or the vow to serve, as the Bengali periodicals termed philanthropy, was deemed as a noble duty to the country and the volunteers were ultimately answerable to god. "Furthermore, one must remember that the omnipotent, ubiquitous almighty—under whose aegis and ardor one has established this noble mission—is ever vigilant about any endogenous or exogenous errors, laxity or negligence"[372] *Antaḥpur* 5:2 34 (1902). Thus, philanthropy was not a secular act but carried within it strong religious connotation: an act through which one could not only come closer to god and experience connectedness to the creator but could also make one ultimately answerable to him. The Hindu idea of philanthropy and its association to *bhagabān* was akin to the Christian notion of humanitarian service, piety and goodwill. What Carey Anthony Watt talked about as "[a] rising public interest in philanthropic relief and a crucial shift in notions of Christian service from vertical service to God towards horizontal service to man" (Watt 2005, p. 32) became apparent in the Bengali society. The association, among other things also formed a hierarchical picture of the act of nobility—women, serving their country/state and thereby serving the god: However, the idea of 'heavenly surveillance' was conspicuously present as it was also mentioned a little later in the same column that if anyone ignored the sick and the ailing in pain and indulged in the worship of god, her prayers would never reach the feet of the almighty.[373] It is also notable that in these calls for volunteers to serve the nation, the marginalized sections among the women like widows, childless women etc. were also invoked, the idea being that they should seek fulfilment of their lives by serving the nation;[374] if they had been deprived in their individual lives, it was not without a cause. God considered them fit to rise above the family and engage in the greater service of humanity.[375] As Orsini remarks, "[T]hus the entry of women into the public sphere was considered both desirable and necessary for the fate of the nationalist movement" (Orsini 2002, p. 270). However, the nationalism that Bengali periodicals preached was mainly based on caring for

[372] Original text: "Āro smaraṇ rākhite haïbe ye, yāhār caraṇ'tale tāhāder ei mahābrater pratiṣṭhā sei biśvataścakṣu bhagabān antare bāhire brata sādhane kona truṭī, kona ālasẏa abahelā āche kinā, niẏata ananta cakṣe cāhiẏā dekhitechen."

[373] Another passage titled "Sebā" the tone of which is quite threatening, reads: "Je mahilā ei puṇẏa brata pālane udāsīnā tāhār gṛha duhkher āgār haïyā aśāntir jālāmaẏī śikhā bistār pūrbak sakal'ke dagdhībhūta kare o sei sukher saṃsār krame krame ghoratara narak'bat· pratīẏamān haẏ" [A woman who is lackadaisical in carrying out this solemn vow turns the household into a hotbed of unrest that spreads and destroys all concerned and a happy family gradually turns into hell] *Antaḥpur patrikā* 5:4 74 (1902).

[374] Original text: "Ejanya deśer pati putra hīnā mahat'hṛdaẏā mahilāgaṇer jībaner sārthakatā sampādaner janẏa sebābrataï bhagabāner abhipreta baliẏā mane haẏ. Ebaṅ sei mahābrater anusṭhān'kṣetrer prasāratā bṛddhir biṣaẏe tāhāder ekānta manajogī haoẏā uchit" [It seems god's wish that noble and kind-hearted women, who do not have husbands or sons, should devote their lives to altruism, aid, and care. And they must sincerely strive to constantly expand the domain of their noble mission] *Antaḥpur patrikā* 5:2 33 (1902).

[375] Refer to *Antaḥpur* 5:2:3 33 (1902).

the poor and destitute, still somewhat unorganized, primarily based on individual contributions and on a basic level.

6.8 Recreation and representation

The inspirational biographies were unique and distinct in themselves. In periodicals which contained topics as varied as book reviews to Bengali festivities, cooking recipes, scientific articles, household ethics and any other pertinent contemporary issues, the biographies of European women claim attention. Even though columns existed on indigenous historical, contemporary, and mythical[376] characters portraying greatness and virtues, but none were as regularly serialized as the Europeans. Some of the columns carried sketches and illustrations of the figures, primarily to give an idea of the physical appearance and feed the curiosity of the reader. However, as is apparent from the almost direct translation of the columns in the periodicals examined in this chapter, the narratives are usually flat, without any major deviation or narrative twist in them. The stories also consist of frequent textual interference from the authors with commentaries on the divinity of the characters or invocation to god to save Bengali society from its degeneration. Recreating the characters for the suitable consumption of the Bengali women is a prominent phenomenon that the authors of these columns have undertaken. The inculcation of divinity in western protagonists and other such literary manoeuvers clearly reinstates the autonomy of the authors' while writing these biographies. This autonomy or the freedom to alter their texts to suit their purposes is hence an authority and hence a male prerogative.[377] Thus, recreation of these biographies handed a discursive power to the writers. The writings also feature what one could call positive stereotyping: where the dominant theme was a divine protagonist, with manifestations of kindness and virtue in her character from the early childhood and an irrepressible inclination to serve the poor. Any other dimension of the characters was completely missing and hence this left the characters with almost no depth and diversity. *Sādhukārya* [good service], *daẏā* [pity], *sebā* [service], *bhagabān* [god], *āntarik* [hearty], *sebābrata* [vow to serve], *kalyān* [prosperity/blessing], *kleś nibāraṇ* [preclusion of sorrow] were some of the high frequency words which came up again and again in the narratives thus setting a somewhat biased and uni-dimensional tone of the narratives. In addition, continuous reference to the divinity of the characters robbed them of their human entities.

[376] Some of the indigenous philanthropic figures were mentioned in periodicals, notable being Iswarchandra Vidyasagar's (Īśvarʿcandra bidẏāsāgar) mother Bhagabati debi (Bhagabatī debī), queen Ahalya bai (Ahalẏā bāī) etc.

[377] See Chevigny (1983).

It is important to note that the narratives were characterized by highly individualistic yet superficial portrayal of the protagonists. They were plotted as individual vs. the stricken society. Each character single-handedly dealt with society to serve it. This formed an interesting contrast to the concept of welfare of the *jāti* or nation[378] for the purpose of which the characters were read and referred to. In many cases, the characters even continued charity work without the help of their families or with certain kind of oppositions. These narratives emphasizing courage and strength in the lone female protagonist could also herald a newfound confidence in Bengali women: the confidence to take things in their own hands and manage affairs by themselves. Borthwick talks about this confidence, which was manifested in running female organizations and societies:[379]

> By the 1980s, all societies were run by women rather than men. Women had gained enough confidence, and experience in procedural technique, to take over. Apart from women's initiative, the growing lack of interest on the part of men hastened the transition. As men were increasingly drawn into nationalist political associations and activities, their interest in social reform and the "condition of women" issue waned. The ideological force of the Hindu revival tended to deemphasize the advancement of women, identifying it with westernization. No male organizations were still concerned with this issue by the end of the century (Borthwick 1984, p. 290).

This deemphasizing of women's development from the male perspective went hand in hand with the attempt to bring it (i.e. development) into focus by women themselves.[380] Hence, social responsibility was further accelerated by the consciousness of social control and liberation. The characters in the periodicals signified such an ideal liberated life, which is almost an "unrealizable wish"[381] to be gazed at. Nevertheless, in order to strive towards this 'higher' and 'more meaningful' life one should practice self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice formed another major preoccupation of the periodicals, which was manifested through the philanthropic role models as well. Orsini succinctly puts it as:

---

[378] Here denotes the *bāṅāli jāti*.

[379] These organizations and societies, as Brothwich claims, "followed its own momentum, and was only marginally affected by the kinds of activities middle-class women in England were undertaking. British associations provided an overall framework to operate in, but the activities of women within Bengali associations were different" (1984, p. 291). Discussion about these associations does not fall within the scope of this chapter.

[380] See Banerjee "[A] reconstructive contestation resulted between the colonial state and the Bengali male intelligentsia whose object was 'the new Bengali woman'. But from the last decades of the century women themselves sought to contribute to this formative process of their social subjectivities and agencies" (1991, p. 50).

[381] See Nandy, Colonialism is a "state of mind in the colonizers and the colonized, a colonial consciousness which includes the sometimes *unrealizable wish* to make economic and political profits from the colonies, but other elements too." (1983, p. 1-2). Emphasis added.

> Strī-upyogi literature[382] envisaged women as entirely self-sacrificing, and focused exclusively on their duties and never on their needs. True, even in this way a feminine subjectivity was tenuously acknowledged: at first crudely, through dialogues and rigid juxtapositions of the 'good' and the 'bad' daughter-in-law, or sister, this persuasive literature addressed the young female reader and asked her to choose which model to follow, but only so that her character could be trained (Orsini 2002, p. 274).

Lastly, the most palpable theme of the narratives lay in the legitimization of the colonial sense of nobility, superiority, and justice. The portrayal of single, idealized, western, female figures cast in the role of the savior, can be looked as the colonized subject's projection of the 'mother' or the 'queen' figure. Mithi Mukherjee (2010) provides a fitting explanation of the trend of seeing the colonialists as the benevolent provider of justice.

> What needs to be noted about the precise mode in which the categories of justice, equity, and liberty were deployed in post-1857 India is that they were anchored in the figure of the Queen. The relationship of the British monarchy with its Indian subjects was mediated by these principles. It was as subjects to the principles of 'liberty, equity, and justice' that Indians became subjects to the British monarchy. The reverse, however, was as true; it was as subjects of the British imperial monarchy that Indian became subject to the principles of liberty, equity, and justice; this historical relationship came to be mediated through the figure of the Queen (Mukherjee 2010, p. xxiii).

The columns in these periodicals can be seen as a product of that overall atmosphere of idolization prevalent in the colony. In fact, serialized articles titled "Mahārāṇī bhiṭoriẏār daẏā" or "The Kindness of Queen Victoria" featured in contemporary editions of *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*.

6.9 Conclusion

The image of the 'effeminate Bengali'[383] which gained notoriety and reached its zenith in the time of British administration was used by the latter to prove that "[T]here never perhaps existed a people so thoroughly fitted by habit for a foreign yoke."[384] Bengali women, almost simultaneously shaped the image of virtuous, philanthropic white woman, again for the same purpose of justifying the colonial regime. However, while the former was done with

[382] Literally, literature fit for women.

[383] See Mrinalini Sinha, "[M]acaulay's eloquent characterization of the effeminacy of the inhabitants of Bengal not only became more widespread and virulent, but also acquired a more specific meaning in the late nineteenth century stereotype of the 'effeminate Bengali babu'. If in the past effeminacy loosely characterized all the inhabitants of Bengal, in the second half of the century it was used quite specifically to characterize the Indian middle class, or a section of this class identified as babus. […] [O]ver time, effeminacy had evolved from a loosely defined attribute associated with the entire population of Bengal, and sometimes by extension of all of India, to an attribute associated very specifically with Western-educated Indians, a large majority of whom were Bengali Hindus" (Sinha 1995, p. 16).

[384] Macaulay's description of Bengalis as quoted in Sir John Strachey, *India, Its Administration and Progress* (1888) 1911: 449-50).

the motive of suppression, the later carried within it seeds of political and social transformation. Here, in the process of transforming their lives through charity, Bengali women sought to reinvent the western conception of charity as well. What was mainly a middle/lower class preoccupation in the west became a motivation for the upper/elite/middle class women in Bengal. The involvement of secluded sections such as the widows and childless women also redefined a feminist communal solidarity. It is beyond doubt that when Bengali women were widening their horizons, the biographies of the western role models contributed to their awakening and to reach out to the global community while still being bound by the traditional confines of the *saṇsār*.

7. Summing up

Looking back at this thesis, one could take it as an exercise in the exploration of literary agency where, through narrative, the spectators, authors, and narrators have critiqued, praised, fantasized, imitated, experienced, and perceived the 'object(s)' of their gaze. The narratives discussed in the thesis is important as a textual image, a representation of a time, a space. Narratives tell us about incidents and events that happened in the concrete space of the world, the society, but also in the space of the human mind[385]. The temporality of narratives situates the readers in relation to the narratival action: "Narratives introduce physical before-after time relations into what they are "an image of"; at the same time, they also activate subjective past-present-future positioning via indexical terms ("now" "then" etc.) which transcend the realm of the represented and force us to engage ourselves mentally in the representational game" (Meister, Schönert 2009, p. 21-22). Alternatively, the cerebral and perceptual experiences of writers gain greater prominence in fictional narratives. Hence, they offer greater depth of human mind through exploration of the cognitive and phenomenological experiences. This thesis has explored the interaction between the colonial and the colonized woman, and how they overcame this 'divide'. The latter, shows the fluidity of a discursive power structure where subject-object positions are newly renegotiated and or the (re)enforcement of old images is formed as a fresh outcome of the contact. Perception, interpretation, and representation are the three tiers which constitute the feminine, colonized, and Bengali 'gaze' dealt with in the thesis. This 'gaze', which is essentially a gaze reversal at the colonial 'other,' contributes to the discursive knowledge production, which was explored over the previous four chapters. Each chapter has dealt with a particular aspect of colonialism through actors—i.e. the colonized women—whose voices and views have been historically dismissed. As the research points out, perceiving the other is a far more complex and nuanced psychological and cultural act than just dubbing another as the *other*. It is worth reinforcing here that perception of the self either preceded or co-existed with a perception of the 'other.' Hence, this study has simultaneously explored both the colonizer and the colonized in a non-Eurocentric light.

[385] Meister and Schönert describes the representational character of narratives as, "[N]arratives have a specific way of informing us about things that happen(ed), the things that they claim to be "an image of". Particular to the narrative representation of "things that happened" it is strong (though not exclusive) focus on events and their temporal ordering. Events need not be restricted to "things that happen in the world" (so-called "object events"), but can also be mental events ("profcessing events") that take place in the mind of a character, or in that of the narrator, or, if nothing else, in the reader's own mind" (2009, p. 21).

Societal forces also play a major part in shaping the discourse of an era. As such, discussion of each literary genre in this research is preceded by the social description of the period, which, in turn, has helped to situate and support the authorial intentions and the outcome. However, society plays another major role in the texts. All of them, in one way or the other, are essentially about society and social reform as viewed through a counter-image of elsewhere. The protagonists or the authors themselves weave narratives of how things are and how things could be in a society, which is not their present environment. For Krishnabhabini, British society provides both an alternative and a warning; one should approach it with caution while appropriating the manners and customs of the colonizers. Toru's fantasy society is ideal but fatalistic and certainly not free from her own real life experience of loss, as well as her fears and insecurities. Her literary vision is a chunk of time and space outside the real world where destiny and the characters play with each other, with the earlier clearly having an upper hand over the latter. Missionary Brittan and her spokeswoman Kardoo envision a counter-image of a Christian world while trudging through a realistic pagan society. While the narrative exposes readers to the dismay of the Hindu society, it also offers regular glimpses of how life could be in an alternative environment. The final chapter shows the appropriation of philanthropic ideas through idealized life narratives in nineteenth century Bengal periodicals, thus calling its readers to fashion both their lives and their society on imported and acquired principles. This diverse gazing at the other culture, brought together in diverse genres, takes place through direct and indirect encounters between the agents and the 'other' cultures. Thus while Krishnabhabini, Toru, and Missionary Brittan had first-hand experience with both of the cultures they wrote about and compared, the journalistic writers mainly borrowed their subjects of biographic writing from other primary and secondary sources. It is also worth noting, also as is apparent through their narratives that all the authors experience a varying degree of engagement mingled with detachment from the other cultures. In Krishnabhabini and Missionary Brittan's narratives, this strain is the strongest where they both balance their assessment of the other societies with realistic and, at times, preconceived. For Toru and Bengali columnists, however, these critiques are quite subtle and at times imperceptible. It is not easy to trace detachment from the European society in Toru's writings, given the unidimensional adoration and fantasizing one comes across in her writings about Europe. However, a subtle detachment is evident in the fact that death, separation, disillusionment, jealousy and a myriad other starker aspects of life also make their ways into Toru's fantasy domain. Similarly, for practical purposes, Bengali women columnists refrained from

critiquing the philanthropic figures they set as prototypes in their call to Bengali women to serve their society. The result is a host of biographic figures, cursory and peripheral serving the one purpose of inspiring the Bengali women and pointing out their lack in unmixed terms. One can read a certain detachment and deliberate censoring and refraining from providing a more balanced and rounded characterization, so as not to confuse readers or keep them focused on their objective.

The running leitmotif of these texts is that the authors and/or their characters envision freedom and empowerment through the colonizer's culture, except for Krishnabhabini who suffered disillusionment to a certain extent from her idea of England as the land of freedom, during her stay in the metropole. Here, the colonizer's culture is up for review and analysis and is commented on and critiqued by colonized women. It is also an attempt to re-fashion the colonized society with the help of certain colonial ideals. One can include the critique within the framework of a certain colonized feminist awakening whose seeds are inherent in the process of colonialism itself. It can be unanimously agreed upon that the writings this thesis considers would have been impossible without the required realization and subsequent awakening of the female self, and without the social and cultural environment from which they preceded. Another interesting yet debatable facet of the analysis is whether this phenomenon can be called 'cultural feminism,' signifying that "women will be free via an alternate women's culture" (Taylor, Rupp 1993, p. 32), since the colonial cultures the authors envisioned and resorted to in their writings are not exclusively female cultures. However, one can also take into consideration the fact that references to colonial male figures are conspicuously absent in these writings. While Krishnabhabini offered a balanced overview of both the British male and female cultural and behavioral practices, she clearly had a greater inclination towards the condition of British women, due to her feminist standpoint. Her descriptions are clearly divided into descriptions of general characteristics of Britain as a nation and British females. In the topics of education and health, she clearly had a feminist bias in her writings. The protagonists in Toru's novellas are all female. The male figures are not dominant but are essential additions to maintain the romantic plot structures. The male figures display less color and dimension compared to her female protagonists, and masculinity is not shown as a symbol of power so much as complementing femininity. Brittan's missionary novel, which is also spun around a woman's life, highlights the trials and tribulations of women in a non-Christian society and offers the Christian religion as a method of salvation. The fantasy narrative has a major female bias given the fact that the author choses a female protagonist to bring home her point, and there are more

female than male characters enduring the mishaps associated with adhering to a pagan religion. Also, when Brittan falls into some sort of literary reverie while recounting living conditions in America, she always refers to the condition of women. Finally, the charitable and philanthropic texts are written for women, by women, keeping western women as ideals and guiding figures. Hence, in all these texts there are clear feminist inclinations towards and engagements with the feminist side of the colonial culture. Obviously, a part of the inclination is also the inadequacy Bengali women found in their own culture. Thus even though 'eyes which can gaze' change, and colonized women take up that privilege in the works analyzed here, the cultural acclamation of Europe is maintained. While an ideology of difference is maintained between the east and the west, the possibility that the two can meet and give rise to an alternative culture is maintained by the authors in their texts.[386]

The texts, even though they are lesser known and explored compared to other similar commentaries, exercise certain power and authority—both related to their authors and the social contexts that they rewrite and represent. Said (2006) offers a clarification of this aspect by claiming that:

> [t]he constitution of a narrative subject, however abnormal or unusual, is still a social act *par excellence*, and as such has behind or inside it the authority of history and society. There is first the authority of the author—someone writing out the processes of society in an acceptable institutionalized manner, observing conventions, following patterns, and so forth. Then there is the authority of the narrator, whose discourse anchors the narrative in recognizable, and hence existentially referential, circumstances. Last, there is what might be called the authority of the community, whose representative most often is the family but also is the nation, the specific locality, and the concrete historical moment" (Said 2007, p. 697-698).

Thus author, narrator, and the nation all claim their authority over a text. Said's comment also differentiates between the author and the narrator. This differentiation as well as the fusion, has been a major analytical focus of the thesis. The eye which sees and the voice, which speaks, can be clearly deciphered in the texts of Missionary Brittan and Toru's novellas. The translation of gaze into narratives, through the method of differentiating between the author and protagonist, has further added to the complexity in the formation of this perspective. More than one voice in Brittan's text, for example, has added to the co-existence of contradictory voices, thereby emphasizing the narratorial lapses and tension in the texts. Altogether, these texts seem to speak with more than one voice. Different—and at

[386] This is not so easily decipherable in Kardoo because Brittan's focus is on religion. She maintains the idea that once Christianity is embraced, its acceptance will automatically change the societal, gender, and cultural shortcomings of the pagan culture.

times conflicting—voices are interwoven in the complex fabric of a narrative; the author, narrator, and nation speak simultaneously though not always in unison. Through Krishnabhabini Das, Toru Dutt, Harriett Brittan, and the writers featured in the Bengali periodicals analyzed here, this study has taken into consideration the palpable theme of claiming and renegotiating the colonial space though writing from the spectator's gaze. Evaluations, at times biased and judgmental, have also seeped into the writings and have led to distortions, simplifications, and generalizations—all of which have added to the checkered fabric of gaze. Through the varied genres, modes, and facets of evaluation and expression, a unique and diverse picture of the colonial/European women has come into focus.

While analyzing the literary historiography of a time when colonialism and patriarchy were the two major decisive forces in a society, texts written by women carried further weight and importance, since they voice the minority and helps one negotiate the running undercurrents of thoughts in the society, which at times can be quite alternative as well as confirming to the central hegemonic patriarchal discourse. Through their writings women also exercised certain power, which came to them via a trickle-down effect from the colonized patriarchy and colonialism itself as this study shows. Their (Bengali women) power belongs to a greater power nexus. The women writers featured in this study belong mostly to the empowered middle-class category of Bengali society whose texts were constructed in collaboration and in sync with the patriarchal power structures of nineteenth century colonial Bengal. Hence, their writings were checked, revised, encouraged, and validated in the colonized society by colonized Bengali men. A continuous flow of information from the colonized men to their women went on to shape the knowledge of colonial women and, in turn, also shape the power they exercised through their texts. This power flow is undoubtedly asymmetrical and complex based on the relations between the social groups who exercised them. Even if the texts produced are validated by and appropriated within the existing patriarchal structures of colonized Bengali society, the act of writing, for women, is empowering. This is true not only in colonized societies but also in western societies, where the act of writing by women has been subject to much censure, and often leading to the use of such tactics as adopting pseudonyms. It is worth noting that, for women, writing came all too often with the power of gaze and an assertion of a voice

which was at times considered inappropriate and unnecessary by patriarchy.[387] This exercising of the female voice has been seen by scholars (Bhattacharya, Sen, p. 2003) as an act of transgression[388] brought about by the social transitions and transformations that marked nineteenth century Bengali society. This changing scenario, discussed in detail in almost all the chapters preceding the discussion of the texts, acted as a foil to the awakening of the Bengali women. The resultant force is manifested most clearly in their writings and activism for the advancement of gender debates and controversies that forced their home society to reconsider the very structure of gender as well as colonial relations.

In its essence, this thesis has primarily aimed to thematize the act of viewing as a cultural, social, and psychological construct. This gaze is one of the key determinants in the formation of the perspective, which is dependent on a variety of factors that go on to influence the onlooker. The onlooker then transfers and disseminates her gaze in the form of perspectives and notions, which further shapes the discourse on the object. Hence, the onlooker, her gaze, and the object all belong to and take part in the formation of the discourse. Gaze and its translation cater to an audience or readers. This gives rise to not only a relationship between the spectator and the object of her gaze, but also to the possible readers for whom the spectator must translate the gaze in a way she sees fit. Each of the texts can be seen to cater to particular communities and groups of readers, which is exemplified in the thesis. Thus while Krishnabhabini targeted readers who were keen to learn about England or aspire to travel there someday, Toru's desire was not to satisfy the indigenous Hindu/Bengali population; she aimed, instead, to appeal to European readers. Brittan quite openly wanted her story to be heard by the American and missionary audiences and the Bengali columnists featured here wanted to inspire all sections of the Bengali female

[387] Cf., Mills, "[f]or male speakers, this distinction between public and private speech is not so clearly defined. Many women were discouraged from writing since it was considered not only to be of high status but because it was seen to be sexually improper for a woman to enter into the realm of this public, high language" (Mills 1991, p. 40). For details, see Mills (28-41).

[388] Cf., Bhattacharya, Sen, "[W]hat enabled and sustained their transgressive role, and what ensured the transition from the woman who reads to the woman who writes and who is read? If we do not want to replace the Great Men of History model with one about Great Women who transcend all obstacles with sheer individual greatness, we need, perhaps, to attend more closely to the new resources that the emergent public sphere held out. Vidyasagar, as well as missionaries, insisted on vernacularization of primary education, and provided textbooks and primers in a language that was the spoken tongue of women who hardly had the leisure or the environment to master Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian or English in which education was generally conveyed. The simultaneous growth of vernacular prose literature—again with form and syntax that was familiar from everyday use—facilitated learning and especially writing. Print culture cheapened and proliferated reading matter and brought it within easy reach, especially in families, which would not otherwise spend much for their women's reading. Newspapers and journals spread news of women's education and some […] provided not only reading material to the newly literate women, but also encouraged them to write and publish in their pages." (Sarkar eds. Bhattacharya, Sen 2003, p. x)

population to work toward the reformation of their society. Hence the texts are attributed with a set of *performative* characters, where the author performs to her selected audience through her text. This performative act also crosses cultural divides while making connections between the author, reader, and text. While catering to these diverse audiences, the writers also constructed alternative historiographies.

It is always interesting to analyze if the cluster of narratives chosen for this study communicate with each other irrespective of their pre-textual framework. Each chapter of this thesis takes into account the uniqueness of employing specific genres as tools in translating and situating the gaze and subsequent genre-specific variations. Hence, the study adopts a textual as well as a contextual approach. Specifics of the genres and their utilization in the hands of the authors are at the heart of textual analysis, uncovering narrative strategies, characters and their conscious/spontaneous characterization and other such issues. The contextual part looks at the social and political forces at play, the author's intentions in choosing specific narrative strategy, including the genre, and the socio-political contexts that legitimized the presence of these specific genres. The basic doctrines of contextuality states that: "[l]iterary interpretation is a circular process; that texts can be understood only when set against the conventional backgrounds from which they emerge; and that the same texts paradoxically contribute to the backgrounds that determine their meanings" (Schleusener 1980, p. 669). Even though Quentin Skinner urges to exercise caution when indulging in the contextual study of texts, "[T]o move away from the text itself to a consideration of these factors [author's biographical information, motives and intentions] is to commit "the intentional fallacy"; to interpret the text, the critic must focus exclusively on the text itself" (Skinner 1972, p. 395), it is a hotly debatable field. Searle's influential speech-act theory favoring a contextual approach has also been criticized:

> [S]peech-act theory is often called upon to support one of the central claims of contextualism: that works of literature differ from ordinary speech because they are not tied to an immediate social context. The distinction is simple enough. Speakers and hearers meet face-to-face in a world of concrete circumstances that has a good deal to do with what they say. Their use of language is supported by facts that help to clarify their meaning, and they understand one another partly because they share an understanding of their situation. Authors and readers, on the other hand, can hardly be said to meet anywhere at all. Their only common ground is the text, and they share nothing but the words that pass between them. Meanings that might be clear enough in the social context of ordinary speech tend toward ambiguity in this circumstantial void where author and reader must do without a common world of

> reference and make the best of a language that cannot rely on the casual support of facts[389] (Schleusener 1980, p. 670).

Literature has always been a result of social forces and environments working and acting on the minds of authors and influencing their works. Going beyond the form of the narrative is a more pragmatic approach since decontextualized studies of generic form and structures are redundant. Taking into account readers and contexts provides a fuller 'picture' of the narratives and increases their relevance by situating them in their individual contexts. While dealing with colonial texts, the sociohistorical scenario provides a framework for their analysis.

It is important to interrogate if the narratives, as a part of the gaze discourse, communicate with each other independent of their pre-textual framework. The four different narrative genres offer a chequered fabric of Bengali women gazing at their European counterparts. They are not mutually exclusive but complementary, highlighting the perception, mediation, and authority of the authors. The general overview of nineteenth century Bengali society at the beginning of each chapter serves as the common denominator as well as point of departure for the authors. Though belonging to the same period, each author was from a unique familial, cultural and educational background. While Krishnabhabini Das was a housewife from an affluent *bhadralok* family, who lived in England for eight years with her lawyer husband, Toru Dutt remained unmarried. She belonged to a *bhadralok* Christian household having extensive knowledge in foreign languages and literatures which she used for her purpose in the novels discussed here. In the autobiography of *Kardoo the Hindu girl*, Kardoo, the protagonist belonged to a rich Bengali family, and was uneducated and forced to live in great misery and unhappiness. Finally, the backgrounds of the female authors of newspaper columns can be traced back to the progressive middle and upper middle literate *bhadramahilas*, through their liberal take on the social ambience and women's issues. Motive and background of the authors play a crucial part in writing these specific texts. While Krishnabhabini makes it clear in the introduction to her travelogue that her main motive is not only to inform and provide a first-hand experience of *bilet* or England and the English people, but also to advise Bengali men and women by offering a comparative gender assessment between Bengal and England. Her tone is clearly nationalist and feminist in the travelogue. Coordinated with the serious purpose of her travelogue, she, as the author, maintains a distance from her narration by carefully avoiding naming places and persons.

[389] For a more detailed analysis of Searle's speech act refer to Schleusener (1980).

Krishnabhabini's personal losses and separation do not find mention in the travelogue, but her anticipation and trepidation are voiced in her poems, included in the the same, where she laments the loss of freedom of her country and with feverish eagerness waits to see what she terms as the "land of freedom." Compared to Krishnabhabini and her travelogue, Toru Dutt is somewhat closer to her novels. Toru's French and Spanish female protagonists serve to voice her fantasies of romance and love. The concepts of premarital love and courtship are adequately treated by Toru with the help of her European protagonists, which might have raised a few eyebrows had there been Bengali *purdahnashins* replacing them. The question of motive in *Kardoo the Hindu Girl* is starkly transparent. Missionary Brittan chose the genre of autobiography to lend authenticity to her narrative showing the barbarism and paganism in Hinduism and the religion-sponsored corporal cruelty responsible for the horrifying condition of Hindu men and women. Another motive of her writing was to raise funds for mission activities in Calcutta. The female columnists of the periodicals discussed in the last chapter of the thesis had their own agenda: to stake claim in the advancement of the Bengali society and thereby further their own progress by emerging from the anonymity of the *antahpur* (antaḥpur). These motives were majorly based on their backgrounds shaped by their education, awareness of societal issues and blooming nationalistic spirits.

Intertextuality remains a critical element in the analysis, since genres as diverse as travelogue, fiction, fake autobiography, journal articles, and biographies are assembled to offer diverse aspects of the phenomena of looking at the other. Thinking of Roland Barthes' idea of text as 'a tissue, a woven fabric', Graham Allen writes, "[T]he idea of the text, and thus of intertextuality, depends, as Barthes argues, on the figure of the web, the weave, the garment (text) woven from the threads of the 'already written' and the 'already read.' Every text has its meaning, therefore, in relation to other texts" (Allen 2011, p. 5-6). Relationality, interconnectedness, and interdependence are three major aspects of intertextuality and the texts discussed here are in one way or the other dependent on the contemporary literature within or outside their respective genres.[390] In short, they are interconnected in the thesis in

[390] Krishnabhabini Das for example in her introduction and acknowledgment to her travelogue mentions various English books, monthly magazines and newspapers which she used as secondary literature for her information and reference. She mentions Hippolyte Taine's *Notes on England* (1857) to be of special help. Toru Dutt's novels show clear impact of gothic and Jane Austen style of romance. Given the fact that she was a voracious reader of European literature clarifies the influence in her work. Similarly, Harriett Brittan's autobiography shows influence of missionary texts written in her time highlighting the frequently used tropes of widow burning and child sacrifice among others. A contemporary novel by Mrs. Mullens called *Phulmaṇi o karuṇār bibaraṇ* (The story of Phulmani and Karuna) (1852) deals with the similar issue in a similar way. Lastly, the authors of biographical columns in Bengali periodicals and newspapers, definitely had access to

a way that fortifies the abstraction and distillation of *gazing at the other*. The different genres interact with each other in ways that transform the very phenomenon of gazing in the process. Thus, a traveler's gaze based on direct experience complements the fictional gaze. The missionary gaze comprising both direct experience and elements of imagination complements the columnists' gaze, which is formed by information from indirect sources.

Incorporating ideas of textuality, contextuality, and intertextuality not only situates the production but also the reception of these genres: "Intertextual reading encourages us to resist a linear reading of texts from cover to cover. There is never a single or correct way to read a text, since every reader brings with him or her different expectations, interests, viewpoints and prior reading experiences" (Allen 2011, p. 7). Keeping the reader at the center for interpretation of a text has been termed as the reader-response theory or the *Rezeptionsgeschichte:*

> [R]ezeptionsgeschichte, […], stresses the creative role of the reader much more. Here changing receptions are accounted for in terms of the changing horizons of expectations of readers, horizons of expectations which are not generally taken to be conditioned not solely by accumulated literary experience, but by reader's social, economic, and political experiences as well. Hence Wolfgang Iser takes Rezeptionsgechichte to be concerned with the social historical conditions of reading and responding to texts […] (Thompson 1993, p. 255).

However, *rezeptionsgechichte* also displaces authorial intention, which is not complied with in this current study, mainly because of feminist and political purposes[391]: since the thesis has aimed to discover the gaze and the voices of repressed, unexplored and underexplored writers. Moreover, since none of the texts figure out in the canonical domain[392] hence trying to recover the reader's reception is somewhat redundant in this case. It is undeniable that the study of these texts is rooted both simultaneously in history and in literature and how the genres of travelogue, romance fiction, fake autobiography, and fact-based biography came in vogue in Bengal. Some of these have been first-time experiments by the authors.

---

other primary sources and biographies of European women which they then reproduced according to their need; though their writings lack reference to secondary literature.

[391] Borland also expresses a similar concern in her article, "[F]or feminists, the issue of interpretive authority is particularly problematic, for our work often involves a contradiction. On the one hand, we seek to empower the women we work with by revaluing their perspectives, their lives, and their art in a world that has systematically ignored or trivialized women's culture. On the other, we hold an explicitly political vision of the structural conditions that lead to particular social behaviors, a vision that our field collaborates, many of whom do not consider themselves feminists, may not recognize as valid" (Borland 1991, p. 64).

[392] One can argue that Das and Dutt's texts have captured some light, which is a very recent phenomenon. Also, Dutt is not primarily known for her novels, which are treated as non-canonical texts here and Das' autobiography, though can claim some importance as being the first complete travelogue ever written by a Bengali woman, still in terms of competing with male travel writers of the period, her work still lags behind in claiming attention.

Interestingly, Jane Austen's style of writing romantic fiction was never explored by Bengali women before Toru. Similarly, although Krishnabhabini was not the first Bengali woman to travel to Britain, her travelogue was definitely a pioneer in the genre in detailing and documentation. These texts were results of conscious efforts by the authors to reach their target readers. Except for Toru Dutt, who died too young to see a readership of her novels, the rest of the authors interacted with their audience in various ways. While writing a foreword to Krishnabhabini's travelogue, Partha Chatterjee talks about the relevance of another reprint of the travelogue. He mentions that while a travelogue of Europe of the nineteenth century may not whet the present day Bengali reader's appetite, a nineteenth century Bengali woman's travel documentation surely attracts attention. To the contemporary readers, a documentation of English life, customs and people by someone who had actually 'been there' was awe-inspiring and unquestionably authentic. Chatterjee emphasizes that Krishnabhabini's ideas on what should be imitated from the English and what not, is in fact a representation and reflection on her educated middle-class Bengali readers. Chatterjee explains:

> [O]ne aspect of the travelogue might appear somewhat surprising to today's readers. Almost every Indian tourist, who witnessed the poverty in 19th century England, was astonished by it. While experiencing the material and spiritual conditions of the poor city dwellers during the industrial revolution, many would think that poverty in India, despite so many poor in the country, was not as excruciating, abysmal, disdainful, or as consumed by perpetual depression. A faith somehow burgeoned in their nationalist minds that social accountability was far strongly entrenched and bonded in the Indian rural civilization compared to the industrial civilisation of the West.[393]

In fact, for today's standards of political correctness and nuanced representations, Krishnabhabini's travelogue might come across as biased and judgmental given her strict and conpartmentalized assessment of English people' love for material wealth, alcohol, and artificiality. Except as a historical document about a *bhadramahila's* attitude of England, the travelogue has lost its relevance, which is apparent from the fact that it has been revived and translated only recently[394].

[393] Original, "bhramaṇ'kāhinīr ek'ṭi biṣay haẏ'ta āj'ker pāṭhak'ke kichutā bismita kar'te pare. Tā hala iṃlaṇder dāridra, jā dekhe uniś śataker bhāratīya paryaṭak prāẏ'i sthambhita haẏe yeten. Śilpabiplaber yuge iṃlaṇder daridra śahar'bāsīr jāgatik ebaṃ ādhyātmik abasthā dekhe tāder aneker'i mane hata bhārat'barṣeo to kata garib lok āche, kintu tader jīban to eto sahāẏ'sambalˈhīn, eta kaluṣita, eman nirabacchinna hatāśāy dhākā nay? Tāder jātīẏatābādī maner kothao ek'ṭā biśvās sañcārita hata ye, paścātyer śilpasabhyatār tulanāy bhārater grāmīṇ sabhyatāẏ sāmājik dāẏ'baddhatār granthi bodh'haẏ anek śakta kare bā̃dhā" (Chatterjee [Das] 1996, p. 9).

[394] *Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā* was reprinted in 1996 after almost 100 years of its original publication.

"I wish to interest many others who have heretofore known little and cared less about these countless numbers of their own sex, who are living lives of hopeless degradation, and then sinking to eternal death"—thus wrote missionary Brittan in the dedication section of her fake autobiography *Kardoo the Hindu Girl*. However, it is difficult to get circulation statistics of either these books, or a clear understanding about its reception and popularity in India or abroad, it is possible to have an idea of the kind of readers she had in her mind. The book was dedicated "To the Mission bands of the 'Woman's Union Missionary Society of America for Heathen Lands'" to feed the interest of Brittan's "dear young friends" about "the poor secluded women of the Zenanas in India" (Brittan 1869, p. 3). Again, besides feeding their own curiosity, Brittan's idea was to inform her missionary friends about the terrifying condition of Zenana women in India, which should have a cathartic effect on the Christian woman of not being born in a 'heathen land'. Hence, Brittan's ideas about the audience and the reception were quite clear and to achieve her desired purpose, she incorporates a string of incidents, which had come to her knowledge, in one narrative. To a modern day reader, however, the text is bordering on the absurd, not only because of Brittan's way of weaving one mishap after another in the life of a Hindu girl, but also because of subsequent studies on missionary texts, which expose their politics, based on proselytizing missions. Brittan's book offers little deviation from the popular tropes used by the missionaries to justify their conversion activities, paranoiac preoccupation with incidents of widow burnings and child sacrifices, with recurring descriptions of pagan deities blowing out of proportion almost to the point of obsession.

Nothing can be more reader-centric than the newspaper and journal columns since they catered to the audience in an inexorable periodicity. The periodicals of *Dāsī*, *Antaḥpur* and *Bāmābodhinī* and their readers were predominantly women and these magazines were written for and by women as claimed by the editors. The preceding chapters situate how the readers and the contributors (Toru Dutt to a lesser extent) formed 'imagined communities'[395] through which they interacted with each other and had a sense of belonging even without any face-to-face interaction. The newspaper columns gave a call out to inform general household Bengali women about their contributions to society and their participation in the

[395] I have taken two major points of the definition of 'imagined communities' provided by Anderson. First, that the concept of nation is socio-cultural and universal and hence everyone has a nationality. It is as pervasive as gender. In addition, the fact that it is imagined is because, "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 2006, p. 49). This sort of imagined communion was must present in the minds and manifestations of the nineteenth-century Bengali women (and men), leading them to compare, learn, critique, and get inspired from the unknown members of the imagined communities.

public sphere, similar to participation of women in other advanced societies. This 'virtual' community also paved the way for the sharing of opinions, views and ideas about a better and more useful life for housebound Bengali women. However, while referring to the articles and columns on biographies of European women, there has been confusion about authorship and sources. One can borrow Hans Robert Jauss' assumption that the Bengali journal scenario was already used to view European women as role models. Jauss comments:

> The method of the history of reception is essential for the understanding of literary works which lie in the distant past. Whenever the writer of a work in unknown, his intent not recorded, or his relationship to sources and models only indirectly accessible, the philological question of how the text is "properly" to be understood, that is according to its intention and its time, can best be answered if the text is considered in contrast to the background of the works which the author could expect his contemporary public to know either explicitly or implicitly (Jauss 1970, p. 19).

Once a text is created, the readership forms the central part of its reception—

> The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader (Iser 1974, p. 279).

With this in mind, the thesis has delved deeper in presenting a critical analysis of the literary works that forged a new alliance between the *Bhadramahila* spectators and their objects of gaze, which enabled the former to see and speak their perceptions.

Finally, the thesis charts the literary historiography of colonial rule in Bengal, beginning with the earliest text, *Kardoo the Hindu Girl*, written in 1869, and with the latest article belonging to a journal published in 1903. In the span of these thirty-four years, one can hear some distinct notes, which come up in the discussion of the women's writings. A general societal upheaval engendered by the introduction, impact, and intermixing of colonial values in the colonized society and the resultant restructuring of gender relations have already been discussed in the introduction to this thesis. This reordering of the society, in the form of changing gender relations, women's access to education and travel, and the impact of Christianity, brought Bengali women out in the open, thereby exposing them to larger global and multicultural forces at play which contributed to transforming their lives forever. The narratives discussed in this thesis hint at this transformation. Women writers carve a niche of their own, separate from the male-dominated spaces in the literary historiography of Bengal, which, benign as it seems to be, still contain the distinct traces of a counter-hegemonic and revolutionary discourse. However, at the same time, one must not

forget that the narratives discussed here are limited to particular privileged classes of Bengali women and hence fail to voice the deeper, subtler, and perhaps more powerfully subversive voices of the women in the not-so-visible strata of Bengali society. Yet, since this thesis is preoccupied with how the Bengali women viewed their European counterparts, it is assumed that the power to gaze at the seat of the colonial regime or return the Eurocentric gaze, as one may alternatively put it, and to document what they gazed at will be an exclusive privilege of certain sections of the society.

In closing, it should be mentioned that much of the interest the texts generate can be attributed to the authors' cross-cultural interactions. The authors encountered the cultural and colonial 'others' in their contact zones, hence acting as 'cultural mediators' through the representation of another culture while simultaneously representing their own. It should be emphasized that looking at and representing the 'other' via various forms of art and literature is not a phenomenon, which is confined to nineteenth century Bengal or to Bengalis. The urge to gaze and narrate what one has seen is still present in so many ways that it can be called a perpetual condition: after all, cultural codes of evaluating the 'other' might be reformed and transformed from time to time, but can never be done away with. This thesis, in its limited scope, brings together an anthology of narratives focused on the ever-transforming nature and perpetual act of gazing at the 'other,' while recognizing that personas, over time and space, will always devise their individual forms of gazing.

Bibliography

Abbeele, G.V.D., 1992. *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Alexander, M., 1989. Outcaste Power: Ritual displacement and virile maternity in Indian women writers. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *24*(1), pp.12-29.

Ahmad, A., 1991. Between Orientalism and Historicism: Anthropological Knowledge of India. *Studies in History*, 7 (1), pp. 135–163. Available at: http://sih.sagepub.com/content/7/1/135 [Accessed September 1, 2014].

Ahmad, A., 1992a. Orientalism and After: Ambivalence and Cosmopolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27(30), pp. 98–116. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4398691 [Accessed September 1, 2015].

Ahmad, A., 1992b. Orientalism and After: Ambivalence and Cosmopolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27(30), pp. 98–116. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4398691 [Accessed September 21, 2015].

Allen, G., 2011. *Intertextuality*, Routledge, Canada.

Altieri, C., 1983. An Idea and Ideal of a Literary Canon. *Critical Inquiry*, 10 (1), pp. 37–60. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343405 [Accessed August 31, 2014].

Amireh, A. & Majaj, L.S., 2012. *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers*, Routledge, London.

Amritanandamayi, M., 2004. *Puja The Process of Ritualistic Worship*, Amritapuri, Mata Amritanandamayi Mission Trust, Kerala.

Anderson, M., 2006. *Women and the Politics of Travel, 1870-1914*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison.

Anderson, B., 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso Books, London.

Anon, Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society. *Missionary Periodicals Database*. Available at:

http://divdl.library.yale.edu/missionperiodicals/Results.aspx?search=true&region=South+Asia [Accessed August 2, 2013].

Anon, 1994. They Were Left Out. *The Expository Times*, 105(7), pp. 224–224. Available at: http://ext.sagepub.com/content/105/7/224 [Accessed November 9, 2013].

Anon, 1886. *The Home Missionary (May 1886-April 1887)*, Congregational Home Missionary Society, New York.

Arp, S., 2000. *Kalapani: Zum Streit über die Zulässigkeit im kolonialzeitlichen Indien*. F. Steiner, Stuttgart.

Bagchi, B., 2012. *The Politics of the (Im)Possible: Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered*, Sage Publications, India.

Bagchi, B., 2009. Towards Ladyland: Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and the movement for women's education in Bengal, *c*. 1900– *c*. 1932. *Paedagogica Historica*, 45(6), pp.743–755. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00309230903335652 [Accessed August 20, 2015].

Bagchi, J., 1993. Socializing the Girl Child in Colonial Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 (41), pp. 2214–2220.

Bagchi, J. and Gupta, S.D. eds., 2005. *The changing status of women in West Bengal, 1970-2000: The challenge ahead*. Sage.

Bal, M., 1985. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London.

Balakrishnan, G., 2012. *Mapping the Nation*, Verso Books, London.

Banerjee, S., 1989. Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal. In: Sangari, K. & Vaid, S. ed. *Recasting Women: Essays in colonial history*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, pp. 127–177.

Bannerji, H., 1991. Fashioning a Self: Educational Proposals for and by Women in Popular Magazines in Colonial Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26(43), pp.WS50–WS62. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4398213 [Accessed January 27, 2015].

Bannerji, H., 1994. Textile Prison: Discourse on Shame (lajja) in the Attire of the Gentlewoman (bhadramahila) in Colonial Bengal. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens*

de sociologie, 19 (2), pp.169–193. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3341343 [Accessed September 25, 2014].

Barr, P., 1976. *The Memsahibs: In Praise of the Women of Victorian India*, Century Press, London.

Bartlett, S.C., 1867. Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in European Turkey, Asia Minor and and Armenia to 1861. Christian Pamphlets. Vol. 3 Boston. Available at: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/BAC1409.0003.001/76?q1=American+Board+of+Commissioners+for+Foreign+Missions

(Begum.), R., Hossain, R.S. and Bagchi, B., 2005. *Sultana's Dream: And Padmarag: Two Feminist Utopias*, Penguin Books, New Delhi.

Berger, J., 2008. *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin Books, United Kingdom.

Bhattacharya, M. & Sen, A. eds., 2003. *Talking of Power: Early Writings of Bengali Women*, Stree, New Delhi.

Billington, M.F., 1895. *Woman in India*, London, Chapman & Hall. Available at: http://archive.org/details/womaninindia00billrich [Accessed August 28, 2015].

Blackburn, S.H., 2004. *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi.

Borch, M.F., 2004. *Conciliation, Compulsion, Conversion: British Attitudes Towards Indigenous Peoples, 1763-1814*, Rodopi, New York.

Borland, K., 1991. "That's Not What I Said": Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research. In S. B. Gluck & D. Patai, eds. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. Routledge, New York, pp. 63–75.

Borthwick, M., 1984. *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal, 1849-1905*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Brighenti, A., 2007. Visibility: A Category for the Social Sciences. *Current Sociology*, 55(3), pp.323–342. Available at: http://csi.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0011392107076079 [Accessed August 20, 2015].

Brittan, H.G., 1873. *Shoshie: The Hindu Zenana Teacher*, Thomas Whittaker, New York.

Brittan, H.G., 1869. *Kardoo the Hindu Girl*, Religious Tract Society, London.

Buchanan, C., 1805. *Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India Both as the means of Perpetuating the Christian Religion Among our own Countrymen and as a Foundation for the Ultimate Civilization of the Natives*, W. Blumer and Co., London.

Buchanan, C., 1811. *Christian Researches in Asia: With Notices of the Translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental Languages*, Cadell and Davies, London.

Burton, A.M., 1990. The white woman's burden: British feminists and the Indian woman, 1865–1915. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13 (4), pp. 295–308. Available at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/027753959090027U [Accessed August 5, 2015].

Burton, A.M., 1994. *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Butler, J., 1990. Gender trouble feminist theory and psychoanalytic discourse. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge. 324-341.

Cady, S.G. & Webber, C.L., 2006. *Year with American Saints*, Church Publishing, Inc.

Calhoun, C.J., 1992. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Chakrabarty, D., 2009. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Chakrabarty, D., 1993, October. The Difference-Deferral of (a) Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal. In *History Workshop Journal* (Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 1-34). Oxford University Press.

Chakraborty, P., 2001. Science, Morality, and Nationalism: The Multifaceted Project of Mahendra Lal Sircar. *Studies in History*, 17(245).

Chakraborty, A., 2001, January. Professor PS Gupta Prize Essay:" CONSTANT AS THE POLE STAR"? DEBATES ABOUT MARRIAGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BENGAL. In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Vol. 62, pp. 767-780). Indian History Congress.

Chakrabarty, S., 2003. Unabiṃśa śatābdīr bāṅāli jībane bhik'ṭoriẏān' prabhāb. In S. Basu & I. Chaudhury, eds. *Unis sataker bamalijiban o sanskriti*. Pustak Bipani, Calcutta.

Chandra, B., 1991. Colonial India: British versus Indian Views of Development. *Research Foundation of SUNY for and on Behalf of the Fernand Braudel Center*, 14(1), pp. 81–167.

Chattopadhyay, D., 2014. Of Myths and Modernities: Literature by the Christian Converts of Nineteenth-Century Bengal (Doctoral dissertation). Available at: http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/17454/ [Accessed July 3, 2015].

Chatterjee, P., 1989. Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India. *American Ethnologist*, 16(4), pp. 622–633. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/645113 [Accessed February 20, 2013].

Chatterjee, P., 2010. *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Chatterjee, P., 1993. *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories* (Vol. 11). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chatterjee, P., 1990. The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question. In K. Sangari & S. Vaid, eds. *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian colonial history*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, pp. 233–253.

Chatterjee, S., 2014. Breaking the Cage: Traveling, Freedom, and English Society in Imlande Bangamahila C. Brandt & K. Hackenbroch, eds. *ASIEN The German Journal on Contemporary Asia*, Nr. 130.

Chattopadhyay, S., 2000. Blurring Boundaries: The Limits of "White Town" in Colonial Calcutta. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 59(2), pp. 154–179. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/991588 [Accessed August 21, 2013].

Chaudhuri, N.C., 1968. *Bāṅāli jībane ramaṇī*, Mitra-Ghosh. Calcutta.

Cheng, C.-C., 2004. Frances Trollope's America and Anna Leonow ens's Siam. Questioning Travel and Problematic Writing. In K. Siegel, ed. *Gender, Genre and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*. Peter Lang, New York, pp. 123–165.

Chevigny, B.G., 1983. Daughters Writing: Toward a Theory of Women's Biography. *Feminist Studies*, 9 (1), pp.79–102. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3177684 [Accessed August 27, 2013].

Clifford, J., 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, London.

Codell, J.F., 2007. Reversing the Grand Tour: Guest Discourse in Indian Travel Narratives. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70(1), pp.173–189. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/hlq.2007.70.1.173 [Accessed March 5, 2014].

Collingham, E.M., 2001. *Imperial Bodies*. Cambridge: Polity.

Colman, P., 2007. *Breaking the Chains: The Crusade of Dorothea Lynde Dix*, iUniverse.

Cooper, E., 1915. *The Harim and the Purdah: Studies of Oriental Women*. The Century Company, New York.

Cooper, R.A., 1981. Jeremy Bentham, Elizabeth Fry, and English Prison Reform. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 42(4), pp. 675–690. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2709127 [Accessed August 27, 2015].

Cott, N.F., 1996. *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women*, Northeastern University Press, Boston.

Couser, G.T., 1989. *Altered Egos: Authority in American Autobiography*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Couser, G.T., 2012. *Memoir: An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, USA.

Das, H., 1921. *Life and Letters of Toru Dutt*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Das, K., 1996 (1885). *Kṛṣṇabhābinī Dāser Iṃlaṇḍe baṅgamahilā*. Sampādanā o bhūmikā Sīmantī Sen; mukhabandha Pārtha caṭṭopādhyāẏ. [Krisnabhabini Das' *A Bengali Woman in England*. Editor and introduction Simanti Sen; Preface Partha Chatterjee. First Edition Stri, Calcutta.

Das, S.K., 1991. *History of Indian Literature: 1911-1956, struggle for freedom: triumph and tragedy*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

Dalmiya, V., 2000. Loving Paradoxes: A Feminist Reclamation of the Goddess Kali. *Hypatia*, 15(1), pp. 125–150. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2000.tb01082.x/abstract [Accessed October 26, 2013].

Dasgupta S., 2010. *Awakening: the Story of the Bengal Renaissance*, Random House Publishers India, Noida.

Debi, R., *Amar Jiban* (My Life), in Nareshchandra Jana et al. (eds), *Atmakatha*, vol. 1 Ananya Prakashan, Calcutta, 1981.

Dengel-Janic, E. & Reinfandt, C., 2013. Voice and Perception in Transcultural Realities: The Case of India. *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 61(1). Available at: https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/handle/10900/39561 [Accessed February 20, 2014].

Dengel-Janic, E., 2013. Voice and perception in transcultural realities: focus on India. C. Reinfandt, ed. *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 61(1), pp.1–4.

Deshpande M. M. 2015. Aryan Eds. Dharampal-Frick, Dwyer, Rachel; Kirloskar-Steinbach, Monika; Phalkey, Jahnavi, *Key Concepts in Modern Indian Studies*, New York University Press, New York. Pp. 11-12.

Dubois, J.A., 1823. *Letters on the State of Christianity in India: In which the Conversion of the Hindoos is Considered as Impracticable*, Longman, London.

Duff, A., 1840. *India, and India Missions: Including Sketches of the Gigantic System of Hinduism, Both in Theory and Practice; Also, Notices of Some of the Principal Agencies Employed in Conducting the Process of Indian Evangelization, &c. &c*, J. Johnstone.

Dutt, T., 2006. *Toru Dutt: Collected Prose and Poetry*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Eakin, P.J., 1985. *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Eden, E., 1930. *Up the Country: Letters Written to her Sister from the Upper provinces in India*, Oxford University Press, London.

Edmiston, W.F., 1989. Focalization and the First-Person Narrator: A Revision of the Theory. *Poetics Today*, 10(4), pp.729–744. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772808 [Accessed January 25, 2014].

Elliott, D.W., 2002. *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville and London.

Elwood, A.K.C., 1830. *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England, by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India: Including a Residence There, and Voyage Home, in the Years 1825, 26, 27, and 28*, H. Colburn and R. Bentley, London.

Engels, D., 1989. The limits of gender ideology: Bengali women, the colonial state, and the private sphere, 1890–1930. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 12(4), pp.425–437. Available at: http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/0277539589900381 [Accessed August 2, 2013].

Foster, S., 2004. Colonialism and Gender in the East: Representations of the Harem in the Writings of Women Travellers. *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 34, pp. 6–17. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3509480 [Accessed August 2, 2012].

Foucault, M., 2012. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, New York.

Foucault, M., 2012. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, New York.

Foucault, M., 2003. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, Psychology Press, New York.

Fowler, M., 1987. *Below the Peacock Fan: First Ladies of the Raj*, Viking Adult, New York.

Fuller, M.B., Mrs, 1900. *The Wrongs of Indian Womanhood*, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York.

George, R.M., 1999. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-century Fiction*, University of California Press, San Diego.

Ghosh, A., 2006. *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society, 1778-1905*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ghosh, A., 1998. Cheap Books, 'Bad' Books: Contesting Print-Cultures in Colonial Bengal. *South Asia Research*, *18*(2), 173-194

Gonda, J., 1968. The Hindu Trinity. *Anthropos*, 63/64(1/2), pp.212–226. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40457085 [Accessed October 26, 2015].

Gorak, J., 1991. *The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea*, Athlone Press, London.

Guillory, J., 1987. Canonical and Non-Canonical: A Critique of the Current Debate. *ELH*, 54(3), pp. 483–527. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873219 [Accessed July 20, 2013].

Gupta, S.D., *Awakening*, Random House, India.

Habermas, J., 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

Hall, C. & Rose, S.O., 2006. *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Hall, S., 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Sage Publications, London.

Hall, S., 1992. The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power. In: Maaka, R. C.A, Anderson C. ed. *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*. Canadian Scholar's Press, Toronto, pp. 165–173.

Harder, H., 2001. *Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's Srimadbhagabadgita: Translation and Analysis*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi (South Asian Studies, 37).

Harder, H. & Eschment, B. eds., 2004. *Looking at the Coloniser: Exploring Cross-Cultural Perceptions in Middle Asia, the Caucasus and Bengal*, Ergon, Würzburg.

Harder, H., 2004. The Modern Babu and the Metropolis: Reassessing Early Bengali Narrative Prose (1821-1862). In S. H. Blackburn & V. Dalmiya, eds. *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*. Permanent Black, New Delhi, pp. 358–410.

Hartley, C., 2004. *A Historical Dictionary of British Women*, Taylor & Francis, London.

Haynes, D.E., 1987. From Tribute to Philanthropy: The Politics of Gift Giving in a Western Indian City. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 46(2), pp. 339–360. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2056018 [Accessed November 3, 2015].

Herman, D., Jahn, M. & Ryan, M.-L., 2010. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, Routledge, New York.

Hibbert, C., 1980. *The Great Mutiny: India, 1857*, Penguin Books, London.

Hook, D., 2001. Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History: Foucault and Discourse Analysis. *Sage Publications*, 11(4), pp. 521–547. Available at: http://tap.sagepub.com/content/11/4/521.full.pdf+html [Accessed November 2, 2015].

Howells, C.A., 1978. *Love, mystery, and misery: feeling in Gothic fiction*, Athlone Press London.

Hühn, P., Schmid, W. & Schönert, J. (Eds.), 2009. *Point of View, Perspective, and Focalization. Modeling Mediation in Narrative*, De Gruyter, Berlin, Boston.

Iser, W., 1974. *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Iser, W., 1972. The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach. *New Literary History*, 3(2), pp. 279–299. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/468316 [Accessed August 20, 2013].

Jackson, R., 1981. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, Routledge, New York.

Jagannathan, M., 2011. The Enigma of Toru Dutt. *Dalhousie French Studies*, *94*, pp.13-25.

James Hastings, A.W.H., *The Expository Times*, Available at: http://archive.org/details/expositorytimes00unkngoog [Accessed August 21, 2014].

Jay, M., 1993. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought*, University of California Press, California.

Jauss, H.R. & Benzinger, E., 1970. Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory. *New Literary History*, 2(1), pp. 7–37. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/468585 [Accessed August 20, 2014].

Jnanendra Nath, G., 1911. *Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt, CIE*, JM Dent, EP Dutton, London, New York.

Joshi, P., 2005. *In another country: colonialism, culture, and the English novel in India*. Columbia University Press.

Joshi, P., 1998. Culture and Consumption: Fiction, the Reading Public, and the British Novel in Colonial India. *Book History*, 1, pp. 196–220. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/3576 [Accessed March 25, 2015].

Karlekar, M., 1986. Kadambini and the Bhadralok: Early Debates over Women's Education in Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21(17), pp. 25–31. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4375594 [Accessed January 17, 2015].

Kasturi, M., 2010. 'All gifting is sacred' The Sanatana Dharma sabha movement, the reform of dana and civil society in late colonial India. *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, *47*(1), 107-139.

Kaviraj, S., 2015. *The Invention of Private Life: Literature and Ideas*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Kaviraj, S., 2007. Tagore and Transformations in the Ideals of Love. In F. Orsini, ed. *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press, New Dehli, pp. 161–182.

Kermode, F., 1979. Institutional Control of Interpretation. *Salmagundi*, (43), pp. 72–86. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40547202 [Accessed August 31, 2015].

Khare, R.S., 1960. The Kānya-Kubja Brahmins and Their Caste Organization. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 16(3), pp. 348–367. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3629037 [Accessed September 5, 2014].

Kiehnle, C., 2006. *An Indian Tartuffe: P.K. Atre's Comedy "Where There is a Guru There are Women"*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden.

Knippling, A.S., 2000. Sharp contrasts of all colours: The Legacy of Toru Dutt. *Going global: The transnational reception of Third World women writers*, *2194*, pp.209-228.

Koikkalainen, P. & Syrjämäki, S., 2002. Interview with Quentin Skinner. *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, pp. 32–63.

Kumar, R., 1993. *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990*, Kali for Women, New Delhi.

Lewis, R., 2013. *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, Routledge, New York.

Lincoln, B., 2014. *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Lloyd, T., 2006. Acting in the theatre of anarchy: the “anti-thug campaign” and elaborations of colonial rule in early ninetteenth-century India. *Edinburgh Papers in South Asian Studies*, 19, pp. 1–50.

Lokuge, C., 2006. Toru Dutt: Collected Prose and Poetry. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Loomba, A., 1993. Dead Women Tell No Tales: Issues of Female Subjectivity, Subaltern Agency and Tradition in Colonial and Post-Colonial Writings on Widow Immolation in India. *History Workshop*, 36 (Colonial and Post-Colonial History), pp. 209–227.

Lootens, T., 2006. Bengal, Britain, France: The Locations and Translations of Toru Dutt. *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 34(02), pp. 573–590. Available at: http://jounrals.cambridge.org/article_S1060150306051321 [Accessed March 25, 2015].

Low, G.C.-L., 2003. *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism*, Routledge, New York.

Maaka, R. & Andersen, C., 2006. *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*, Canadian Scholars’ Press, Toronto.

Macaulay, T.B.M. & Trevelyan, H.M.M., 1897. *The works of Lord Macaulay complete*, New York, London Bombay, Longmans, Green, and co. Available at: http://archive.org/details/workslordmacaul12macagoog [Accessed August 31, 2012].

MacMillan, M., 2007. *Women of the Raj: The Mothers, Wives, and Daughters of the British Empire in India*, Random House Trade Paperbacks, New York.

Maitland, J., 1846. *Letters from Madras, during the years 1836-39, by a Lady*, John Murray, London.

Mani, L., 1987. Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India. *Cultural Critique*, (7), pp.119–156. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354153 [Accessed April 25, 2012].

Mani, L., 1986. Production of an Official Discourse on “Sati” in Early Nineteenth Century Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21(17), pp. WS32–WS40. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4375595 [Accessed February 25, 2015].

Mcclintock, A., 2013. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Routledge, London & New York.

Meister, J.C. and Schönert, J., 2009. The DNS of mediacy. *HÜNH, Peter et al. Point of view, perspective and focalization. Berlin/New York: Walter de Ruyter*, pp.11-40.

Midgley, C., 2013. Liberal Religion and the "Woman Question" between East and West: Perspectives from a Nineteenth-Century Bengali women's Journal., 25(3), pp. 445–460.

Midgley, C., 2007. *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790–1865*, Routledge, London.

Midgley, C., 2006. Bringing the Empire Home: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790s–1930s. In *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*. pp. 230–250.

Mills, S., 1993. *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, Psychology Press, London & New York.

Mitter, P., 1994. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Mitter, P., 1977. *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Moglen, H., 1984. *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin.

Mohanty, C.T., 1988. Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, (30), pp. 61–88. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1395054 [Accessed July 25, 2015].

Morris, M., 1992. Women and Journeys. Inner and Outer. In M. Kowalewski, ed. *Temperamental Journeys. Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*. University of Georgia Press, Athens, pp. 25–34.

Mukherjee, M., 2010. *India in the Shadows of Empire: A Legal and Political History (1774-1950)*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Mukhopadhyay, B., 2002. Writing Home, Writing Travel: The Poetics and Politics of Dwelling in Bengali Modernity. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44(2), pp.293–318. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3879448 [Accessed August 5, 2012].

Mukharji, T., 1889. *A Visit to Europe*, W. Newman & Co., Calcutta.

Mullens, H.C., 1885. *Faith and Victory: A Story of the Progress of Christianity in Bengal*, J. Nisbet & Co., London.

Mullens, H.C., 1852. *Phulmoni O Korunar Biboron*, Calcutta.

Murdoch, L., 2013. *Daily Life of Victorian Women*, ABC-CLIO, United States.

Nair, J., 1990. Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813-1940. *Journal of Women's History*, 2(1), pp. 8–34. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/v002/2.1.nair.html [Accessed March 2, 2012].

Nandy, A., 1983. *The intimate enemy: loss and recovery of self under colonialism*, Oxford University Press, London.

Nelles, W., 1990. Getting Focalization into Focus. *Poetics Today*, 11 (2), pp. 365–382. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772622 [Accessed March 5, 2015].

Neunning, V. & Neunning, A., 2004. *An Introduction to the Study of English and American Literature.*, Ernst Klett Sprachen GmbH, Stuttgart.

Newman, B., 1990. "The Situation of the Looker-On": Gender, Narration, and Gaze in Wuthering Heights. *PMLA*, 105(5), pp.1029–1041. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/462732 [Accessed August 20, 2013].

Nicholson, L., 2013. *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, London & New York.

Nijhawan, S., 2011. "Civilizing Sisters": Writings on How to Save Women, Men, Society and the Nation in Late Colonial India. In C. A. Watt & M. Mann, eds. *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia*. Anthem Press, London.

Niranjana, T., 1990. Translation, Colonialism and Rise of English. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 25(15), pp. 773–779. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4396163 [Accessed November 8, 2012].

Oddie, G.A., 2006. *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793-1900*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Ogden, D., 2005. *Language of the Eyes*, SUNY Press, New York.

Orsini, F., 2006. *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Orsini, F., 2002. *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Parlby, F. (Parks), 1850. *Wanderings of a pilgrim, in search of the picturesque, during four-and-twenty years in the East; with revelations of life in the Zenana*, London, P. Richardson. Available at: http://archive.org/details/wanderingsofpilg01parluoft [Accessed August 23, 2015].

Patel, S., 2007. Sociological Study of Religion: Colonial Modernity and 19th Century Majoritarianism. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42 (13), pp. 1089–1094. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4419405 [Accessed August 27, 2015].

Peer, W. van & Chatman, S.B., 2001. *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, SUNY Press, New York.

Pemble, J., 1987. *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South*, Clarendon Press, Oxford & New York.

Perkin, M. J., 1995. *Victorian Women*, New York University Press, New York.

Perkin, M.J., 1989. *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-century England*, Lyceum Books, Chicago.

Postans, M., 1857. *The Moslem noble: his land and people, with some notices of the Parsees, or ancient Persians*, Saunders and Otley, London. Available at: https://ia902607.us.archive.org/9/items/moslemnoblehisla00postrich/moslemnoblehisla00postrich.pdf [Accessed March 25, 2012].

Postans, M., 1839. *Western India in 1838*, Saunders and Otley, London.

Pratt, M.L., 2007. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Routledge, London & New York.

Pratt, M.L., 1991. Arts of the Contact Zone. *Profession*, pp. 33–40. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469 [Accessed January 5, 2015].

Price, J. & Shildrick, M., 1999. *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, Taylor & Francis, New York.

Pruitt, L.J., 2005. *A Looking-glass for Ladies: American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century*, Mercer University Press, Macon.

Pushpa, S., 1996. Women and philanthropy in India. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *7*(4), pp.412-427.

Quayum, M., 2013. *The Essential Rokeya: Selected Works of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932)*, Brill, Boston.

Ramusack, B.N., 1990. Cultural missionaries, maternal imperialists, feminist allies: British women activists in India, 1865–1945. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13(4), pp. 309–321. Available at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/027753959090028V [Accessed August 21, 2015].

Raychaudhuri, T., 2000. Love in a Colonial Climate: Marriage, Sex and Romance in Nineteenth-Century Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 34 (02), pp. 349–378. Available at: http://journals.cambridge.org/article_S0026749X00003309 [Accessed August 5, 2014].

Raychaudhuri, T., 1988. *Europe reconsidered: perceptions of the West in nineteenth century Bengal*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Roberts, E., 1835. *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*, W. H Allen, London.

Robinson, L.S., 1997. *In the Canon's Mouth: Dispatches from the Culture Wars*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, Indiana.

Robinson, L.S., 1983. Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 2(1), pp. 83–98. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/464208 [Accessed September 1, 2012].

Rose, A., 2009. *Gender and Victorian Reform*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge.

Roy, P., 1998. *Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Roy, S., 2012. Inside the royal zenanas in colonial India: Avadhi and other begums in the travel accounts of Fanny Parkes. *Studies in Travel Writing*, 16 (1), pp. 47–63. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2012.641810 [Accessed August 25, 2012].

Roy, S., 2010. “A Miserable Sham”: Flora Annie Steel’s short fictions and the question of Indian women's reform. *Feminist Review*, (94), pp. 55–74.

Roy, T., 1995. Disciplining the printed text: Colonial and nationalist surveillance of Bengali literature. *Texts of Power: Emerging Disciplines in Colonial Bengal*, pp.30-62.

Sarkar, S. & Sarkar, T., 2008. *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: A Reader*, Indiana University Press, Indiana.

Said, E., 1978. *Orientalism*, Vintage, New York.

Sarkar, T., 2012. Something like rights? Faith, law and widow immolation debates in colonial Bengal. *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 49 (3), pp. 295–320. Available at: http://ier.sagepub.com/content/49/3/295 [Accessed March 25, 2015].

Sarkar, T., 2001. Enfranchised Selves: Women, Culture and Rights in Nineteenth-Century Bengal. *Gender & History*, 13(3), pp. 546–565. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-0424.00243/abstract [Accessed July 25, 2015].

Sarkar, T., 2001. *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*, Indiana University Press, Indiana.

Sarkar, T. & Debi, R., 1999. *Words to Win: The Making of Rashsundari Debi’s “Amar Jiban,”* Kali for Women, New Delhi.

Sarkar, T., 1993. Rhetoric against Age of Consent: Resisting Colonial Reason and Death of a Child-Wife. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 (36), pp. 1869–1878. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4400113 [Accessed July 25, 2015].

Sánchez-Eppler, K., 1996. Raising Empires Like Children: Race, Nation, and Religious Education. *American Literary History*, 8 (3), pp. 399–425.

Sangari, K. & Vaid, S., 1990. *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ.

Saunders, C.B., 2014. *Women, Travel Writing, and Truth*, Routledge, London & New York.

Schiesari, J., 1992. *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*, Cornell University Press, New York.

Schleusener, J., 1980. Convention and the Context of Reading. *Critical Inquiry*, 6(4), pp.669–680. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343226 [Accessed September 11, 2012].

Schwarz, H., 1997. Laissez-Faire Linguistics: Grammar and the Codes of Empire. *Critical Inquiry*, *23*(3), pp.509-535.

Sen, I., 2002. *Woman and Empire: Representations in the Writings of British India, 1858-1900*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi.

Sen, I., 2001. Devoted Wife/Sensuous Bibi: Colonial Constructions of the Indian Woman, 1860-1900. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 8(1), pp. 1–22. Available at: http://ijg.sagepub.com/content/8/1/1 [Accessed August 23, 2011].

Sen, I., 1997. Between power and'purdah': The white woman in British India, 1858-1900. *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, *34*(3), pp.355-376.

Sen, K., 2004. Lessons in Self-Fashioning: "Bamabodhini Patrika" and the Education of Women in Colonial Bengal. *Victorian Journals Review*, 37(2), pp. 176–191. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20084005 [Accessed July 27, 2014].

Sen, S., 2005. *Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives, 1870-1910*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi.

Sengupta, J., 2010. Nation on a Platter: The Culture and Politics of Food and Cuisine in Colonial Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 44(Special Issue 01), pp. 81–98. Available at: http://journals.cambridge.org/article_S0026749X09990072 [Accessed September 21, 2013].

Sengupta, P.S., 1968. *Toru Dutt*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

Shen, D., 2005. Why Contextual and Formal Narratologies Need Each Other. *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 35(2), pp.141–171. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_narrative_theory/v035/35.2shen.html [Accessed September 11, 2015].

Sherwood, M.M., 1910. *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood (chiefly autobiographical) with Extracts from Mr. Sherwood's Journal during his Imprisonment in France and Residence in India* S. Kelly, ed., Darton & Co. Ltd, London.

Showalter, E., 1977. *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Bronte to Lessing*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Siegel, K., 2004. *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, Peter Lang, New York.

Sinclair, M., 2008. *The Creators*, Wildside Press, New York.

Singh, M.C. 2000. Gender, Religion and the Heathen Lands. *American Missionary Women in South Asia 1860s-1940s*, Garland, New York.

Sinha, M., 1995. *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and The 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Skinner, Q., 1972. Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts. *New Literary History*, 3 (2), pp. 393–408. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/468322 [Accessed August 20, 2015].

Sleeman, S.W.H., 1836. *Ramaseeana: Or, A Vocabulary of the Peculiar Language Used by the Thugs*, G. H. Huttmann, Military Orphan Press, Calcutta.

Smith, S. & Watson, J., 2010. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Spivak, G.C., 2008. *Can the subaltern speak? Postkolonialität und subalterne Artikulation*, Wien; Turia & Kant, Berlin.

Srikanth, R., 2002. Ventriloquism in the Captivity Narrative: White Women Challenge European American Patriarchy. In S. Najmi, ed. *White Women in Racialized Spaces: Imaginative Transformation and Ethical Action in Literature*. State University of New York Press, Albany.

Strachey, S.J., 1911. *India: Its Administration & Progress*, Macmillan & Company limited, London.

Tan, T.-Y., 2007. Port cities and hinterlands: A comparative study of Singapore and Calcutta. *Political Geography*, 26 (7), pp. 851–865. Available at: http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0962629807000893 [Accessed July 20, 2014].

Taylor, V. & Rupp, L.J., 1993. Women's Culture and Lesbian Feminist Activism: A Reconsideration of Cultural Feminism. *Signs*, 19 (1), pp. 32–61. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174744 [Accessed October 28, 2015].

Tharu, S.J. & Lalita, K., 1991. *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the early twentieth century*, Feminist Press at CUNY, New York.

Tharu, S., 1989. Tracing Savitri's Pedigree: Victorian racism and the image of women in Indo-Anglian literature. *Recasting Women: essays in colonial history*, *254-68*.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education*, Available at: http://archive.org/details/Minutes_201311 [Accessed November 2, 2013].

Thompson, M.P., 1993. Reception Theory and the Interpretation of Historical Meaning. *History and Theory*, 32 (3), pp. 248–272. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505525 [Accessed August 20, 2015].

Thompson, N.D., 1999. *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Travers, M., 2006. *European Literature from Romanticism to Postmodernism: A Reader in Aesthetic Practice*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London.

Urry, J., 2002. *The Tourist Gaze*, Sage Publications, London.

Van Tassel-Baska, J., 1995. Study of life themes in Charlotte Bronte and Virginia Woolf. *Roeper Review*, 18 (1), pp. 14–19. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02783199509553690 [Accessed January 28, 2015].

Veer, P. van der, 2009. Spirituality in Modern Society. *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 76 (4), pp. 1097–1120. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/social_research/v076/76.4.van-der-veer.html [Accessed March 2, 2015].

Vivekananda, S., 1919. *Complete Works Of The Swami Vivekananda Part V*, Swami Madhavananda,Advaita Ashrama. Available at: https://archive.org/details/completeworksoft029662mbp [Accessed August 25, 2015].

Walsh, J.E., 1997. What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice: Rewriting Patriarchy in Late-Nineteenth-Century Bengal. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 56(3), pp.641–677. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2659604 [Accessed August 20, 2012].

Warner, S. E., 1886. *A Retrospect prepared for the 25th Anniversary of Women's Union Missionary Society of America for the Heathen Lands*. Available at:

http://images.library.yale.edu/divinitycontent/dayrep/Woman's%20Union%20Missionary%20Society%20of%20America%20for%20Heathen%20Lands%201885%20v25.pdf

Watt, C.A. & Mann, M., 2011. *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development*, Anthem Press, London.

Watt, C.A., 2005. *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Watt, I.P., 2001. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, University of California Press, California.

Welter, B., 1978. She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth-Century America. *American Quarterly*, 3 0(5), pp. 624–638.

White, H., 2009. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.

White, H. & Richardson, B., 2002. The Historical Text as Literary Artifact. In *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*. Ohio State University Press, Ohio.

William Rathbone Greg, 1869. *Why are Women Redundant?* Trübner. Available at: http://archive.org/details/whyarewomenredu00greggoog [Accessed August 23, 2015].

Woerkens, M. van & Tihanyi, C., 2002. *The Strangled Traveler: Colonial Imaginings and the Thugs of India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Wollstonecraft, M., 2002. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, Available at: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3420 [Accessed March 21, 2012].

Woolf, V., 1967. *Women and Fiction* L. Woolf, ed., Chatto and Windus, London.

Young, S., 1843. *Missionary Narrative of the Triumphs of Grace; As Seen in the Conversion of Kafirs, Hottentots, Fingos and Other Natives of South Africa.*, G. Lande and P. P. Stanford, New York.

Youngs, T. ed., 2006. *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, Anthem Press, London & New York.

Youngs, T. & Hulme, P. eds., 2002. *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Nineteenth Century Bengali Periodicals:

Rāẏ, N., 1901. ‘Serāmārtin’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 4, no. 8, pp. 177-179. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1902. ‘Sebābrata’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 2&3, pp. 25-34. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Ghos, B., 1902. ‘Sebā’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 2&3, pp. 72-77. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1902. ‘Bilāte’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 2&3, pp. 89-91. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 05, 2013].

Ray, N., 1903. ‘Prusiẏār rāṇī luisā’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 237-239. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 05, 2013].

Anon, 1903. ‘Kāunṭes' daf'rin' fand'’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 154-156. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1903. ‘Gārfild'er mātā’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 175-181. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 08, 2013].

Anon, 1903. ‘Goẏendelāin’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 197-199. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 05, 2013].

Anon, 1903. ‘Bibī phrāI’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 132-136. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 04, 2013].

Anon, 1903. ‘Ānā ekin bārbald'’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 8, pp. 232-235. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1903. ‘Āni besānṭ'’, *Bāmābodhinī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 30-33. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 02, 2013].

Anon, 1892. ‘Gres' dārliṃ’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 59-62. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 02, 2013].

Anon, 1892. ‘Kumarī ḍīn'’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 83-85. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1892. ‘Bhaginī ḍorā’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 115-118. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1892. ‘Phlorens' nāitiṃgel’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 118-121. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 08, 2013].

Anon, 1893. ‘Keṭ' mārs'ḍen’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 5-10. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2013].

Anon, 1893. ‘Merī kār'pentār’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 79-83. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 05, 2013].

Anon, 1893. ‘Ḍorothī liṇḍ' ḍiks'’, *Dāsī patrikā*, CrossAsia, Vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 97-101. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 06, 2013].

Anon, 1902. ‘Sebābrata’, *Antaḥpur patrikā,* CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 2 & 3, pp. 25-34. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2017].

Ghos, B., 1902. Sebā, *Antaḥpur patrikā,* CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 72-77. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2017].

Anon, 1902. ‘Bilāte’, *Antaḥpur patrikā,* CrossAsia, Vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 89-91. Available at: http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ [Accessed June 03, 2017].