

**Homelands and the Representation of Cultural and Political Identity
in Selected South-Asian Texts, 1857 to the Present.**

Gawain Francis Henry Tickell

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

The University of Leeds

School of English

September 1998

**The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that
appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made
to the work of others.**

Abstract

This thesis is a study of representations of cultural and political identity in a selection of literary and cinematic texts (in English and in regional South-Asian languages in translation), all of which situate South-Asian cultural and political subjectivity in relation to specific narrative constructions of space. I suggest that through these successive depictions it is possible to plot narratives of belonging. Furthermore, in each chapter I explore these constructions of homeland at different nodal points in the history of colonial and independent South-Asia, and trace out their aesthetic and geopolitical implications.

In my first chapter I address a wide variety of nineteenth century colonial and indigenous writings, including William Lambton's and George Everest's records of the cartographic surveying of India, Honoria Lawrence's and Harriet Tytler's personal journals, and Mirza Ghalib's poetry and prose written during the 1857 rebellion. These contemporary narratives are framed against Satyajit Ray's cinematic adaptation of Premchand's historical short story, *The Chess-Players* (1977). My second chapter investigates constructions of national and cultural belonging which develop out of representations of village-life in novels written during the struggle for Indo-Pakistani independence, namely; Bibhutibhushan Banerji's *Pather Panchali* (1928) in translation, Mulk Raj Anand's *The Village* (1940) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938). Again, I examine South-Asian cinema, in this case Satyajit Ray's post-colonial filmic reworking of Banerji's novel.

In my third chapter I analyse representations of Partition in Sadat Hasan Manto's Urdu short-stories (published in the aftermath of Partition) and in Intizar Husain's historical novel, *Basti* (1979)— in both cases working from translations of the original texts. Also covering Partition-writings in English, I examine Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1988). My final chapter deals with metropolitan post-colonial identities and the Indian Emergency of 1975, in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* (1985)

Throughout the thesis, whilst underlining the political salience of cultural constructions such as identity and belonging, I also maintain a theoretical perspective which attempts to show how these narratives are continually shadowed by the fact of cross-cultural transaction and slippage. In discourses which are constructed upon a more or less ambivalent implementation of difference, such as colonialism and certain forms of nationalism, I focus on the way in which these narratives are modified, negotiated, or transgressed across their own borders. In contemporary post-colonial writings I argue that homeland has become a more flexible concept, and underline the way cross-cultural negotiation has developed as a means of identity and belonging in itself.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my parents, Lance and Willow Tickell, who supported me both emotionally and financially during this project, and to whom I owe its completion.

I would especially like to thank Shirley Chew, my supervisor, whose guidance, encouragement, and inspiration has been invaluable throughout my graduate and post-graduate studies, and whose enthusiasm for literature is unflagging. Thanks also to the other 'post-colonials', David Richards and Elleke Boehmer, who have always been generous with their help, and to Martin Butler. I am also indebted to Peter Morey, Bodh Prakash and Sucheta Mahajan for their encouragement and advice.

Thanks to James Procter for many coffees, conversations, and company on Indian trains. Thanks to Jaspal Nakhwal, who showed (with his usual style) that Ph.D.s could be survived, and Simon Walsh and Anita Ball for their support. I also want to thank Monica Mookherjee for her philosophical input, Ian Wilson, Neil Bernard, Karen Tiedtke, Amanda Platts, Jessica Gardner, and Vee.

Finally I would like to thank Rachel Goodyear who has made an immense contribution to this work, in her constant good-humoured support and encouragement, her perceptive editing, and her valued friendship.

This thesis was funded by a grant from the British Academy.

Contents

Abstract - i

Acknowledgements - ii

Table of Contents - iii

*

Introduction - 1

Chapter 1: Landscapes and Palaces: Negotiating the
Geography of Colonial Rule in Mid-Nineteenth Century - 24

Chapter 2: Village India: Nationalist Writings of the 1920s and 1930s - 67

Chapter 3: Borders, Boundaries, and Crossings:
The Experience of Partition in South-Asian Writing - 136

Chapter 4: City Fictions: Independence, the Emergency,
and Post-colonial Identity - 189

Conclusion - 242

Bibliography - 246

Introduction

I

Two texts inaugurate this introduction, each dealing in its own way with the process of beginning, and it is through these writings that I will make a preliminary sketch of the aims and methods of my thesis. The first of these is Gayatri Spivak's 'Translator's Preface' to Jacques Derrida's formative work, *Of Grammatology*. Here, Spivak stresses the paradoxical nature of the textual introduction or preface as a piece of writing which is defined as a passage 'before-hand', 'Prae-fatio', or 'before the text'.¹ Spivak goes on to argue that the literary convention of the 'preface' thus 'harbours a lie',² since it is usually an expository passage inserted retrospectively into the text. For Spivak this conventional falsehood opens up other pertinent Derridean questions about the text: the provisional nature of discourse, the unrepeatable identity of the text in each of its readings, and the impossibility of a stable origin of the text's meaning.

Writing this introduction after the event, so to speak, and imagining it always already (being) read, and 'prefaced' anew, these deconstructive concerns are very germane, particularly when I think of my role as author. At the start of their critical work *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari make the enigmatic claim that in writing an earlier text in collaboration, 'since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd'.³ Spivak points towards the same fracturing of the text's authorising subject in the magisterial prose of Proust's narrator: 'I was not one man only ... but the steady advance hour after hour of an army in close formation, in which there appeared, according to the moment, impassioned men, indifferent men, jealous men'.⁴ Although scarcely a Proustian undertaking, this thesis has been written, nevertheless, by 'several' people across several years, and editorial work at the end has been a process of monitoring and correcting these earlier selves.

As I will show in the following chapters, the theoretical points to which I have alluded in Spivak's preface have more than an incidental

¹ Gayatri Spivak, see 'Translator's Preface', Derrida 1976: xi.

² Ibid.

³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 1988: 3.

⁴ Marcel Proust, see Derrida 1976: xi.

bearing on my critical project. The issue of fixing or reinscribing nominally stable origins is crucial in the confluence of culture, historical narration, and political expression in South-Asian literatures. Similarly, personal, political, and cultural identity, as modified by the transaction and rereading of signs across cultures, can be located at varying points on a spectrum which ranges between, on one hand, a logocentric and often quasi-mystical 'negative denial' of difference, and, on the other, an affirmation of the continual decentring 'play' of the world. Moreover, as a *translation* of Derrida, Spivak's work also draws attention to another important aspect of this thesis: my use of primary texts translated from regional South-Asian languages, particularly where this editorial choice coincides with current notions of migrancy and post-colonial identity 'in translation'.

While Spivak's 'Translator's Preface' gestures towards some of the theoretical concerns of my work, the second text which informs this introduction, although it broaches some of the same issues, is important for methodological reasons as well. Published in 1975, just a year before Spivak's translation, Edward Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method* represents an extended enquiry into causality, origin, and authorship and traces out the intriguing possibilities of the act of making a textual beginning. By 'beginning' with Spivak's and Said's texts I am effectively reinforcing one of Said's points in *Beginnings*, namely, that it is difficult in any cultural endeavour to make a 'wholly new start' since 'too many old habits, loyalties, and pressures inhibit the substitution of a novel enterprise for an established one'.⁵

Here we come across a statement which seems to anticipate Derrida's proposition that 'the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper systems, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely'. For Derrida the writer uses language 'only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system'.⁶ However, even in a work such as *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1982) Said is always careful to distance himself from radical deconstructive practice, and qualifies his point by stating that, even if it is difficult to begin, in order to start an enterprise the idea of a beginning as radical discontinuity must be

⁵ Said 1975: 34.

⁶ Derrida 1976: 158.

posited, and the freedom of a 'beginning must ... *be taken to be possible*'.⁷

For my purposes, one of the most salient (related) aspects of Said's 'possibility of beginnings' depends upon the fact that as a beginning 'authorises' what follows it, this authority 'limits as much as it enables ... [as] one beginning is permissible; another one like it, at a different time or place is not permissible'.⁸ This is an issue which foreshadowed the choice of 'beginnings' for me in the early stages of this thesis, when I attempted to establish a historical point of inception for a more or less located notion of identity and 'homeland' in South-Asian literature (I will define these terms more clearly in the following pages). My provisional point of beginning was the early decades of the twentieth-century but I soon found that during the rise of popular nationalism in the period, other earlier political beginnings were being cited. A case in point is the revisionary attitude taken by some nationalists to the events of 1857.⁹

Thus, in keeping with one of the recurrent critical metaphors which inform this thesis, that of the palimpsest, I found that each time I fixed upon an 'arbitrary' point of origin, my primary texts would reveal traces of themselves in earlier writings and over-inscribed narratives and histories. My first two chapters stand as an attempt to both exemplify and engage with the problems of this initial critical delimiting. I will go into greater detail about the various temporal and cross-cultural exchanges which work against closed or unitary models of identity later in this introduction, but now I want to 'preface' my own title in order to justify some of the terms I have used. I will then talk about the structure of my thesis, issues of translation, and some of the main themes of my analysis.

*

Returning to the title of my thesis, the use of the word 'homelands' as a nodal term should be seen as an attempt to maintain a continuous engagement with the notion of 'emplacement', and of the location of identity in my primary texts. The concept of 'home' is particularly interesting in any work that seeks to engage critically with post-colonial literatures in English for, as Rosemary George has noted, it immediately

⁷ Said 1975: 34.

⁸ Ibid: 43.

⁹ Here, I am thinking of texts such as V. D. Sarvarkar's historical reinterpretation of the rebellion: *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*.

makes us rethink a sense of 'belonging' in 'the English language, as much as in spaces we call home'.¹⁰ In this thesis, as in George's study, the term 'home-country' infers, very generally, 'a complex yoking of ideological apparatuses considered necessary for the existence of subjects: the notion of belonging, of having a home, and a place of one's own'.¹¹ By looking at the various articulations of 'homeland' in this thesis, I mean to interrogate the notion of belonging in both the geopolitical locations from which difference is articulated (such as a kingdom, region or nation), and more flexible, personal states of being which strategically mix locations, or locate a sense of self in migratory states of 'belonging' between locations.

Whatever the personal, literary agenda informing a depiction of homeland, a relationship with space remains axiomatic. Indeed, in order to show how ideas of 'homeland' have evolved spatially within South-Asian literature, each of my chapters, whilst engaging with a different historical node in South-Asian history, also focuses on a specific, often overdetermined space — around which narrative and discursive layerings of place and/or identity can be plotted. By structuring my work thus, I hope to make my analysis responsive to discontinuities, negotiations, and slippages between hegemonic and critical definitions of homeland, and their compromised production on a day-to-day basis. As Said states, the legacy of European Orientalism makes it imperative that a new mode of knowledge be produced, one that redresses the West's 'homogenizing and incorporating world historical scheme that assimilated non-synchronous developments, histories, cultures, and peoples to it'.¹²

Therefore, in my first chapter I investigate the textual production of homeland during the mid-nineteenth century, focussing on the connected, narrativised spaces of landscape and the diplomatic space of the princely court. In particular, I concentrate on colonial cartographic and journalistic constructions of landscape as exemplified in the survey-reports of William Lambton and George Everest, and the personal diaries of Honoria Lawrence and Harriet Tytler. Against these texts I contrast examples of indigenous 're-narrations of the colonial', in the discourses of insurgent rumour, and in the classical Urdu poetry of Ghalib, produced in

¹⁰ George 1996: 1.

¹¹ *Ibid*: 2.

¹² Moore-Gilbert 1997: 35.

response to the events of 1857.

In Chapter Two, which deals with South-Asian novels of the 1920s and 1930s, I will examine the space of the rural village within emergent nationalist discourses. In this section I focus on Bibhutibhushan Banerji's 1928 Bengali novel *Pather Panchali* (in the 'Unesco' translation), Mulk Raj Anand's *The Village* (1940) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938). Because of my specific critical interest in the rural village as a site around which a new national imagining is deployed and contested, I have not included any of R. K. Narayan's narratives of small-town South-India in my thesis, although, in a more comprehensive study, Narayan's prolific contribution to contemporary Indian literature would have to be addressed.

Chapter Three deals with the literary response to Indo-Pakistani Partition, and thus concentrates on border-spaces, crossings, and the communal division of homeland. My primary texts in this section include translated Urdu short-stories by writers such as Sadat Hasan Manto and Rahi Masoom Reza, and Khushwant Singh's 1956 novel *Train to Pakistan* (written in English). I also examine retrospective depictions of Partition in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1988) and Intizar Husain's Urdu novel *Basti* (1979). In my final chapter I concentrate on post-colonial texts of the 1970s and 1980s, written in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's Emergency; notably, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* (1985), and locate the city-setting in both these works as the site of more contemporary expressions of South-Asian identity.

In order to distance my own work from the synoptic textual strategies of other and earlier European writings about South-Asia, and in order to preserve an analytical flexibility, I have approached the primary texts in each of my chapters from a distinct critical angle. In some cases I have addressed each text consecutively, as in my writings on nationalist literature. In other chapters I have preferred a more thematic approach, particularly where this has seemed to coincide with the representation of specific events in contemporary literature, such as the rebellion of 1857, or Indo-Pakistani Partition.

*

In choosing to speak of 'representations' of cultural and political modes of self-definition in this thesis, I must emphasise, in the first place, that I

am not attempting to efface the 'representative' biases of this work, immured as it is in the ideological values and assumptions of a specific intellectual and cultural background. Here, I have in mind Spivak's emphasis on the double session of the term representation, as she locates it in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. In Marx's formulation, the term splits itself between 'proxy and portrait': representation (*vertreten*) meaning 'speaking for', as in politics, and representation (*darstellen*) meaning 're-presentation, as in art or philosophy'.¹³ As she reveals the problematic 'running together' of these terms in Deleuze and Guattari's work, Spivak warns against a (metropolitan) critical practice which 'overlook[s] the way in which 'the staging of the world in representation — its scene of writing ... dissimulates the choice of and need for "heroes", paternal proxies, agents of power'.¹⁴

Taking it out of the theoretical context in which it appears,¹⁵ Spivak's distinction between the two senses of 'represent' can be used to prise open the post-colonial fictions addressed here. In short, by attending to the double meaning of representation in the production of both post-colonial literature, and metropolitan criticism/theory, we can trace out the way in which these texts 'stand for' or solicit, as agents of potential power, the allegiance of specific cultural, economic, or gendered groups in (or connected with) South-Asia, at the same time as they re-present or reinvent the world aesthetically. This is most obviously the case in a constellation of texts which overshadow much of the literature covered in the last three chapters of this thesis. I am referring here to political and personal histories such as Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*, and Mohandas Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*. Although I will not analyse any of these works directly, their formal and exemplary influence will be traced out carefully in considering my primary texts.

*

Perhaps the most important conceptual term in this study is identity. I have already touched on the critical problem of how, as a 'Western' critic, my own work faces the problem of how to accommodate the place and

¹³ Gayatri Spivak, 1988b: 276.

¹⁴ *Ibid*: 275.

¹⁵ *Ibid*: 271.

identity of the South-Asian 'other', without repeating the assimilative epistemological manoeuvres of the colonial text. And as I have already mentioned, I will try to deal with this problem methodologically, through a critical focus on specific locations and transitional events in South-Asian history. Additionally, I will also seek to resolve this problem of 'respecting the other without absorbing it into the same'¹⁶ in my theoretical approach by interrogating cultural syncretism as the potential basis for an accommodation of identity and alterity between cultures. In order to foreground these ideas at greater length, it is exigent to provide a clearer definition of what I mean by identity.

If we relate identity to a notion of subjectivity, or the 'subject-within language', we immediately run into an interesting set of problems. This is because, in the intellectual aftermath of what has become rather too readily known as the 'crisis in [traditional New Critical] literary studies', the positing of a unitary or coherent subject has become untenable. The theoretical contributions of 'post-Marxists', such as Althusser and Macherey, and post-structuralists such as Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida, to an interrogation of 'the mythical site par excellence ... the subject',¹⁷ have been well documented elsewhere. Their importance in this analysis stems from the fact that they show how language, with its concurrent instabilities, slippages, and logocentric assumptions manages to inform the innermost place of the subject.

In terms of Lacan's work, the subject is thus reproduced as 'a construction in language'.¹⁸ This means that the subject can never exist 'outside [the normative instabilities of] language'. For post-colonial writers and critics, especially those concerned with issues of migrancy, these theoretical assertions have led to a challenging of both the Enlightenment subject, 'as ... an originating consciousness, authority for meaning and truth',¹⁹ and the sociological idea of the subject as a social role-playing actor, in favour of a model of identification based on a more enabling plural subjectivity. Much of my work in this thesis has involved teasing out the contradictions and micro-politics of plural (translated) subjective negotiations in language, in narratives of history and territory, and in the

¹⁶ Young 1990: 10.

¹⁷ Stephen Heath, see Young 1981: 12

¹⁸ Ibid: 13.

¹⁹ Ibid: 12.

inconsistencies of textual production. In general accord with the theoretical points outlined above, I have adopted a view of subject-identity which is a continuous effect 'in process', a fluid switching between different aspects of the self.²⁰

This said, we must remember that the colonial subject may be staged differently in different languages, and it is important not to overestimate the reach of language or discourse in the exercise of colonial power. Indeed, this is something which Homi Bhabha warns against when he states that 'the rule of Empire must not be allegorised in the misrule of writing'.²¹ Consequently, I am wary of a theoretical frame for thinking about post-colonial issues which concentrates on the politics of the subject, or subject-in-discourse to the exclusion of wider social formations. Spivak also problematises this kind of over-emphasis on the operation of power through discourse when she concurs with Said's critique of power in Foucault as 'a captivating and mystifying category that allows him "to obliterate the role of classes, the role of economics, the role of insurgency and rebellion"'.²²

By including collective forms of identity such as regional culture, class, and caste in my thesis I am proposing a model of the subject that, although not unitary in terms of origin or identity, is still to some extent self-directing and selective in terms of macrological ethnic and political allegiances. This is not a claim for a 'metaphysics of [subjective] presence', but is instead a pragmatic attempt to retain an awareness of the liberating possibilities of organised political action, however constructing these collective discourses may be. In some ways I hope to reconcile these divergent theoretical definitions of identity by showing how, even in appropriated, anti-imperialist discourses such as nationalism, political power is not a uniform category which 'captivates', but rather devolves to /through the subject.

In its chronological scope, my thesis takes in the growth and fulfilment of nationalism in South-Asia, although I do not engage with what could be termed 'nationalist' fictions until my second chapter. Accordingly, the first part of this study will concern itself largely with identity as distinct

²⁰ For this model of identity I am indebted to Stuart Hall's work, particularly his essay 'New Ethnicities'. See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995: 223.

²¹ Homi Bhabha 1994: 129.

²² Gayatri Spivak 1988b: 275.

religious, linguistic, and regional modes of collective self-expression. The middle two chapters will look at how these integrated (and what some nationalist theorists would term 'primordial') identifications are negotiated within the literary orders of a 'national [civic] imagining',²³ and how this is challenged by the rise of exclusivist communal and militant nationalist movements during Indo-Pakistani Partition. My last chapter will mark out a retrospective literary problematising of the unitary and monocentric nature of nationalism, epitomised in more contemporary literary representations of totalitarian rule.

*

I have already drawn attention to my use of literature in translation, and now I want to discuss the issues surrounding my rather unorthodox choice of primary texts in more detail. In the first three chapters of this thesis I will systematically contrast South-Asian writings in English with literature translated from regional languages. In Chapter One I will work on classical Urdu and Persian poetry of the nineteenth century, in Chapter Two I will examine an early example of the Bengali novel, and in my third chapter I will look at short-stories translated from Hindi and Urdu. By including these texts in my thesis I am traversing potentially difficult ground, not least because of the unspoken assumption that, at a doctoral level, working from translation is something of a critical compromise.

In British and American universities (although not in South-Asian institutions) this sensitivity to the translated text is due, in part, to the maintenance of a disciplinary separation between linguistic, 'area-studies' specialists, and 'post-colonial' commentators. In the former group, the production of rigorous analyses and translations of indigenous literature is accompanied, on the whole, by a marked lack of interest in cultural theory; specifically where this seems to call into question the historical provenance and ideological assumptions which append to their work. The heated exchange in *The Times Literary Supplement* between Edward Said and the then professor of social anthropology at Cambridge, Ernest Gellner, after the publication of Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, stands as a case in point.²⁴

²³ This term is taken from Benedict Anderson's influential work *Imagined Communities*. Anderson 1991.

²⁴ See *The Times Literary Supplement* 1993: April 9th.

In the latter 'post-colonial' group, in which Said's enduring influence must be recognised, a sensitivity to theoretical issues, and in particular to the role of European translations in the historical project of colonialism, has meant that academics in these fields are often unwilling to engage with post-colonial literatures in translation. When translation from Arabic or South-Asian languages is seriously countenanced, it is often only in the work of 'migrant' intellectuals such as Said and Spivak, and then primarily as part of a theoretical manoeuvring. Spivak's translations of the work of the Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi prove the exception here, and sadly, have not led to any noticeable widening of interest in regional South-Asian literatures in translation, subaltern or otherwise.

Because of these combined factors, South-Asian literatures in translation remain the province of those who can lay claim to a 'native' or mother-tongue proficiency in them, absolving European academics from the difficult task of either learning a language or pressing for good translated texts. As Aijaz Ahmad states in his famous reply to Fredric Jameson:

Rare would be a modern intellectual in Asia and Africa who does not know at least one major European language; equally rare would be, on the other side, a major literary theorist in Europe or the United States who has ever bothered with an Asian or African language; and the enormous industry of translation which circulates texts among the advanced capitalist countries grinds erratically and slowly when it comes to translation from [these] languages.²⁵

Admittedly, one could argue that literatures *in English* should be the sole concern of academics involved in English literature, but this kind of drawing of cultural-linguistic borders goes against the tide of an English discipline which has, in recent years, confronted its own role in the ideological construction of political and gender difference, and which has become increasingly open to continental theoretical texts in translation, especially French philosophy.

One of the most pressing problems here, and one which Ahmad's attack on Jameson picks up, is the frequent connection between a 'sanctioned ignorance' of vernacular writings, and the making of

²⁵ Ahmad 1994: 97.

reductive generalisations about these writings. An example of this kind of generalising approach can be found in Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West's recent anthology of post-independence 'Indian Writing', in which the selection of only one translated text is justified by the assertion that 'both fiction and non-fiction ... created by Indian writers *working in English*, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 'official languages' of India'.²⁶ Of course, Rushdie is not 'ignorant' of vernacular literatures in the sub-continent, and takes time to qualify his choices. However, having become a mouthpiece for cultural liberty and a defender of the right to construct a hybrid sense of self, it is a pity that Rushdie has to be exclusive about the language through which his 'mongrel love-songs' can be articulated.

Like Rushdie, who has had to choose the 'Indian English' texts which define 'Indian writing' after 1947, I have been faced with problems of selection in this thesis. Because roughly half my work has concentrated on pre-Independence writing (which, as Rushdie grudgingly points out, is marked by some very important regional texts), the absence of exemplary regional-language works such as *Pather Panchali* would have led to a less comprehensive analysis. Unlike Rushdie, I am convinced that vernacular literature written after Indo-Pakistani Independence is equally worthy of study, and I have selected a translation of a novel by one of the most important Urdu writers of this period, Intizar Husain, as a primary text in my third chapter in order to justify this conviction.

*

Whilst the institutional and literary assumptions which surround the issue of post-colonial writing in translation point toward a thorny entanglement of disciplinary prejudice and post-colonial canon-formations, the theoretical implications of ignoring work in translation are equally paradoxical. In her incisive text *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context*, Tejaswini Niranjana looks at the historical role of translation during colonisation, and the contributions made by post-structuralists such as de Man and Derrida to a viable post-colonial theorising of translation. For Niranjana, the post-

²⁶ Rushdie and West 1997: introduction.

colonial translator must work 'to rethink a practice of translation regulating and regulated by a horizon of metaphysics', and this reconceptualising 'involves a use of translation that shatters the coherence of the "original" and the "invariable identity of sense"'.²⁷

It is in this deconstructive approach that the influence of Walter Benjamin's work on translation can be clearly felt in Niranjana's text. In 'The Task of the Translator', Benjamin overturns the orthodox view that translation should involve a linguistically 'accurate' or 'faithful' mediation between original and secondary texts. Instead, the translator's task is to invoke a quasi-mystical realm of 'pure' transcendent signification, and 'to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another'.²⁸ Spivak seems to make similarly revolutionary claims, in her essay on 'The Politics of Translation', when she talks of capturing the 'rhetoricity' of the target text. However, for Spivak the linguistic 'surrender' enacted by the translator should produce not a 'pure' reproduction of the target text, but a heightened sensitivity to cultural alterity, and to the 'dynamic staging' of the subject in another language. This is why Spivak talks of 'earning the right' to translate, because, as 'the most intimate act of reading',²⁹ translation is also potentially the most violent way of reading the post-colonial narrative:

Paradoxically, it is not possible for us as ethical agents to imagine otherness or alterity maximally. We have to turn the other into something like the self in order to be ethical. To surrender in translation is more erotic than ethical [it is a knowledge that] ... the rhetoric of the text indicates the limits of language for you as long as you are with the text.³⁰

Echoing Ahmad's pronouncement on translation, Spivak is also concerned with the pedagogical milieu into which translated texts are received, and is quick to point out the pitfalls of translating to a (Western) monolingual audience who cannot make value judgments about the original work: 'The person who is translating must have a tough sense of the specific terrain of the original, so that she can fight the racist

²⁷ Niranjana 1992: 170.

²⁸ Benjamin 1992: 80.

²⁹ Spivak 1993: 183.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

assumption that all third world women's writing is good'.³¹ What I find particularly reassuring in Spivak's methodological account is her sensitivity to the 'dynamic staging of language' and the 'strategic selective accessibility of the translated language'.³²

The issue of translation takes on an added significance in this thesis when we think of its use as a term descriptive of cultural and geographical, as well as linguistic, exchanges. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives a definition of translation as a 'move from one person, place, or condition to another', and it is this more general idea of translation which evokes, in Rushdie's terminology, the 'metaphoricity' of the migrant condition: 'Migrants — borne-across humans — are metaphorical beings in their very essence ... we all cross frontiers; in that sense we are all migrant peoples'.³³

Although this vision of human history and identity as a web of continual crossings and hybrid mixings informs my own work, it is important to remember that Rushdie's idea of hybridity, as a universal tendency towards pervasive idiomatic and cultural mixings, leaves little space for an otherness which might exist at the limits of our translations, and which Spivak shows us is the most important lesson to be learnt by the translator. In short, Rushdie's universalising cosmopolitan aesthetic, which transforms 'translation' into a quotidian process of cultural syncretism, must only be accepted if it is contrasted with the type of careful signalling of cultural alterity epitomised by Spivak's translations of Mahasweta Devi's work. For Spivak, it is only through a sensitivity to the way in which 'third-world' cultures are differently articulated that commentators in the West can claim any meaningful solidarity with these cultures. Making this point about women's writing, Spivak states: 'I am uncomfortable with notions of feminist solidarity which are celebrated when everybody is similarly produced'.³⁴

In order that my own intellectual claim to solidarity is not made from a wholly mono-cultural basis, or circumscribed by an assimilative linguistic agenda, and to show that I want to explore forms of transaction in both language and literary form, I have not dispensed with primary texts in

³¹ Ibid: 188.

³² Ibid.

³³ Rushdie 1991: 278-79.

³⁴ Spivak 1993: 192.

translation. As I cannot boast a 'tough sense' of the linguistic terrain of these works, I have, wherever possible, compared different translations of the same text, and reinforced my choices with reference to translators commentaries. In only one case, that of Intizar Husain's novel, *Basti*, have I been unable to find much secondary material on the translation of the vernacular text. Even so, the innovative formal techniques and time-structures which Husain uses made me unwilling to abandon the novel, and I must accept full responsibility for any omissions or mistakes in Frances Pritchett's translation which may have escaped me.

II

In his work *On Deconstruction*, Jonathan Culler makes the interesting point that the more a work of criticism or philosophy seeks to produce a definitive, conclusive analysis of a subject, the more texts proliferate around it, and 'the more writing it generates'.³⁵ It is thus a mark of the intellectual standing of Edward Said's classic text, *Orientalism*, that it has played a significant part in 'enabling' and accelerating the growth of writing on post-colonial theory and criticism in the last two decades. Furthermore, as Bart Moore-Gilbert states, it is a measure of the enduring impact of *Orientalism* that, for at least five years after its publication, none of these secondary writings actively contested Said's text.

However, as a number of critics have since pointed out, Said's work does enshrine certain problems and contradictions. Without carrying out an extended critique of Said's text, I want to focus here on some of the objections which have been made to *Orientalism*, and thereby enlarge on the hypothetical bases of my own work. The issues I will sketch out here are important in terms of my first chapter, which contrasts colonial and indigenous texts from the mid-nineteenth century, but, given the authority of *Orientalism* in the post-colonial field, they are also pertinent to the following chapters.

In his review of critical responses to *Orientalism*, Bart Moore-Gilbert points up fundamental tensions in the theoretical bases of Said's work; which show an often 'contradictory' debt to scholars as diverse as Erich Auerbach, Antonio Gramsci, and French post-structuralists such as

³⁵ Culler 1994: 90.

Foucault. As Moore-Gilbert states,

deep-rooted contradictions [occur in] ... Said's attempt to combine aspects of the Marxist tradition of cultural theory with its ... vision of power as repressive and working on behalf of certain material interests, together with Foucauldian theory ... which sees power as 'decentred', 'impersonal' and arbitrary in terms of its 'social interests'.³⁶

James Clifford describes these contradictions as 'a persistent hermeneutical short-circuit at the very centre of [Said's] thesis'.³⁷ As Moore-Gilbert stresses, the seemingly disabling problem in this instance is whether colonial (and neo-colonial) power should be seen as operating through 'what Foucault would call the repressive hypothesis', or whether it is mediated through more 'pastoral' discursive strategies.³⁸

In his approach to these problems, Robert Young has emphasised that the contradictions between power and agency in *Orientalism*, between Foucault on one hand, and humanism and/or the Gramscian notion of the organic intellectual on the other, enact a return to the 'age-old philosophical conundrum of the relation of the particular to the universal and thus of free will to necessity'.³⁹ This is repeated in Said's desire to 'hang on to the individual as agent and instigator whilst retaining a certain notion of system and historical determination'.⁴⁰ Thus, because Said is unwilling to concede his model of European colonial culture as anything but monologic and totalising, the space of his own critical consciousness as the intervening 'outsider critic' becomes questionable.

This brings me to another objection levelled at *Orientalism*, the fact that Said's totalising model of colonial discourse seems to discount or gloss-over 'differentials in the political rationalities through which colonial projects were constructed'.⁴¹ This, in turn, implies a worrying acquiescence and lack of resistance on the part of the colonised. For critics working from the subcontinent, the uniform or 'monologic' image of colonial power posited in Said's text is something which is intrinsically

³⁶ Moore-Gilbert 1997: 41.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid: 160.

³⁹ Young 1990: 134.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ David Scott 1995: 214.

problematic. As Aijaz Ahmad states in *'Orientalism and After'*, 'with the exception of Said's own voice, the only voices we encounter in the book are precisely those of the very Western canon which, Said complains, has always silenced the Orient'.⁴² On a similar note, Harish Trivedi, in the introduction to his *Colonial Transactions*, decries colonial discourse analyses such as *Orientalism* as an 'ideological need of the Western academy rather than an Eastern one'. For Trivedi, post-colonial Indian academics would be better employed in 'looking at the assimilative or subversive strategies through which we coped with their orientalism' than in worrying about 'Western/imperialist ideology and [its] projection'. He goes on to suggest that South-Asian scholars 'could perhaps similarly parade some choice examples of our own *occidentalism*, which was a kind of comparable (mis-)knowledge with which we empowered ourselves to resist the west'.⁴³

That said, criticisms of Said's work based on what he 'leaves out' of his text are not particularly compelling. Said states that his aim, in *Orientalism*, is an archaeology of the cultural foundations of Western imperialism, and it is therefore unfair to insist that 'other voices' should, necessarily, be present in his work. Similarly, even as Trivedi's argument privileges instances of 'occidental (mis-) knowledge' as a theoretical counterbalance to colonial discourse analyses, his position reveals, as a reversal of the discursive patterns of *Orientalism*, a certain indebtedness to Said's theoretical framework.

However, both Ahmad's and Trivedi's comments on *Orientalism* are provocative when we think again of the problem of Said's contradictory account of power as a range of discourses which bear little or no relation to the political negotiations of colonial rule. If Said does not seek to speculate on the reaction of the Arab/Islamic subjects to their own discursive and material objectification, we should at least be aware of these reactions in the changing, developing representations of Orientalism. Said does try to account for this contradictory movement by modifying his argument and positing two distinct forms of Orientalist discourse, which exist on 'latent and manifest levels' (across which latent orientalism is a sustained note underlying the melodic changes of its manifest counterpart).

⁴² Ahmad 1994: 172.

⁴³ Trivedi 1993: 20.

Even so, this fails to solve the 'theoretical problem of how a representation it is claimed bears no relation to its putative object could nevertheless be put in the service of the control and domination of that object'.⁴⁴ For later critics such as Bhabha and Spivak, who have both been influenced by Said's work, the contradictions and short-circuits in Said's model of discursive colonial power have, to some extent, been resolved by a greater willingness to apply the partisan tactics of deconstruction to the inherently ambivalent (to use Bhabha's term) compositions of colonial discourse.

Taking as self-evident the proposition that colonial cultural production is related in certain executive ways to the administration of Empire, I will address the colonial texts examined in this thesis as a limited and inherently unstable set of inscriptions. As we have seen, for critics such as Ahmad, *Orientalism* is notable because it 'examines the history of Western textualities about the non-West quite in isolation from how these textualities might have been received, modified, challenged, [or] overthrown'.⁴⁵ And in this thesis it is precisely on these points of reception, modification, and challenge that I will concentrate.

In accordance with the broad deconstructive agenda of my critical approach, I will not read colonial (or indigenous) texts as synoptic or totalising economies of meaning. In this respect I am partly echoing Said's insistence on an analytical recognition of the 'worldly circumstances' of the text in 'The World, the Text, and the Critic'.⁴⁶ However, as I will show in this thesis, far from enclosing the text within 'a hermetic, Alexandrian textual universe, which has no connection with actuality' (a criticism which Said makes of 'recent critical theory'),⁴⁷ a deployment of deconstructive post-colonial critical strategies can reveal both the 'cognitive failures' of the colonial text, and, more generally, the syncretic, 'transacted' makeup of all cultural productions generated out of the colonial encounter.⁴⁸

*

In their use of the English language, and also in their appropriation of

⁴⁴ Young 1990: 130.

⁴⁵ Ahmad 1994: 172.

⁴⁶ Said 1991: 35.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 36.

⁴⁸ Moore-Gilbert 1997: 85.

European forms such as the novel, South-Asian writers working in the last hundred years have carried out an almost continuous process of 'transacting', reshaping, and domesticating alien literary structures. As the Indian novelist Raja Rao states:

The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language.⁴⁹

The importance of a statement such as Rao's is that it proclaims a revolutionary moment of disavowal, and articulates a reaction against an unmediated use of a language and/or literary form which has worked to 'other' the colonised. In some very significant ways this echoes the feminist attention to a 'crucial link between language and patriarchy, and of the linguistic constitution of the patriarchal regime',⁵⁰ in particular, Julia Kristeva's work on the construction of women within the symbolic orders of a phallogocentric linguistics.

For post-colonial writers working in English, the problem of self-expression in the language of the coloniser has sometimes led to its outright rejection: a theoretical manoeuvre which prompted the Gikuyu writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, to exhort Kenyan writers to 'return to the sources of their being in the rhythms of life and speech and languages of the Kenyan masses'.⁵¹ Where a return to a separate, less dislocating regional language is impossible, as it is for women, or simply not chosen, as is the case with writers such as Rao, a more subversive stance is adopted. This involves the search for ways of speaking which will resist the binary orders of ethnocentric or phallogocentric language and which can then be inserted in place of, but also within, the textual space of the dominant language.

Clear affinities can be found between this approach and Derridean deconstruction. As Derrida states,

The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can

⁴⁹ Rao 1993: Foreword.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ngugi 1986: 73.

they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing ... strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure.⁵²

Obviously, the degree to which this 'borrowing of resources' occurs varies widely across the respective theoretical constellations of post-colonial⁵³ and feminist theory. In each chapter of this thesis, I will address the specific intersections and borrowings which become the practical working out of a struggle to achieve self-representation in the coloniser's tongue.

However, if we attend too closely to these literary acts of reclamation, we are in danger of seeing cross-cultural negotiation as an isolated and invariably conscious literary strategy. Thus, what I will also call attention to here is a less actively partisan process of 'transaction' which can be seen to operate before, alongside, and around the space of post-colonial literary appropriation. In relation to the covert, fluidal nature of the cross-cultural exchanges I will highlight shortly, Trivedi's term 'transaction', with its implications of recognised mutual concession or negotiation, starts to become misleading. More clearly, these discursive exchanges must be read as an almost unnoticeable 'seepage' between the discourses of coloniser and colonised.

Dennis Porter broaches similar issues when he argues for the critical consideration of textual dialogue as part of an analysis of colonial and neo-colonial relations. In this dialogue the alternation of 'subject-object relations' might enable us to 'read ourselves as the others of our others and replace the notion of a place of truth with that of a knowledge which is always relative and provisional'.⁵⁴ As Porter states, even the concept of dialogue is put into partial suspension here, as we suddenly find ourselves in a cultural situation in which oppositional forces continually melt into, collude with, and reinterpret each other. The crucial point to be made here is that by reading around the margins of discourse, and concentrating on points of contradiction and cultural slippage, we can theorise different

⁵² Derrida 1976: 24.

⁵³ For Ngugi, the 'resource' to be borrowed and inhabited becomes the novel form itself, restructured around a formerly oral Gikuyu idiom; for Kristeva on the other hand, the potential 'resource' can be described as the liberating potential of certain preexisting avant-garde literary forms.

⁵⁴ Dennis Porter see Williams and Chrisman 1993: 153.

levels and modes of negotiation, both in colonial texts, and in later 'appropriated' hegemonic narratives such as nationalism.

*

In order to demonstrate the way these concepts of transactional cultural 'seepage' can be used as reading strategies, I will now discuss their relevance in relation to specific extracts taken from two contemporary post-colonial texts. The first passage is taken from Vikram Seth's novel *A Suitable Boy*. In an early scene Seth foregrounds the character of one of his principal figures, Mrs Rupa Mehra, by describing her habit of sending recycled birthday cards to her extensive network of friends and relatives (because this passage provides such a clear example of the theoretical issues I am discussing, I quote extensively):

It was very rarely that Mrs Rupa Mehra bought a card for anyone, no matter how close or dear that person was. The habit of necessary thrift had sunk deep into her mind...She could not afford cards so she made them. In fact she enjoyed the creative challenge of making them. Postponing the decision of illustration Mrs Rupa Mehra looked for assistance in building up a rhyming text [from the rhymes in the cards] ... Now came the heartbreaking point, not the mere transcription of a stanza but the actual sacrifice of an old card. Which of the [pictorial] roses would have to be transplanted? ... The sheep perhaps—yes, they would do. They were fluffy and unemotional. She did not mind parting with them. Mrs Rupa Mehra was a vegetarian, whereas both her father and Parvati were avid meat-eaters. The roses in the foreground of the old card were preserved for future use, and the three sheared sheep were driven carefully towards new pastures.⁵⁵

As a socially-orientated 'creative' activity, Mrs Rupa Mehra's birthday card reconstruction produces, in miniature, an allegory of the 'transacted', newly post-colonial world in which she lives. It is important to notice that the images on the greetings-cards she receives from 'all over India, and even... from abroad',⁵⁶ are recognisably Eurocentric: pictures of roses, apples, grapes, strawberries, and fluffy sheep. However, unlike her son Arun, who figures as the Naipaulian 'mimic-man' of Seth's novel, Mrs

⁵⁵ Seth 1994: 42-44

⁵⁶ Ibid: 41.

Rupa Mehra's cultural identity is not threatened by this incursion of alien signs. Neither is her response to these images a conscious act of counter-discourse (as we are told, she finds the sacrifice of the cards 'heartbreaking'). Rather, what occurs here is a kind of covert, cross-cultural bricolage.

For Derrida, interrogating what he sees as Lévi-Strauss's false dichotomy of 'Bricoleur' and 'Engineer', the act of bricolage is redefined as an integral part of all discursive production: 'If one calls *bricolage* the necessity of borrowing one's concepts from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is *Bricoleur*.'⁵⁷ Both Derrida and Lévi-Strauss ground their perception of bricolage in a single 'coherent or ruined' economy of signs. And in Seth's text the post-colonial cross-cultural borrowings of Mrs Rupa Mehra's literal act of cut-and-paste bricolage readily become apparent.

Detaching and 'rewriting' the fragmented units of a formerly, 'more or less' structured cultural discourse, Mrs Rupa Mehra reconstitutes both image and text, shaping them in the light of her predominantly Hindu world-view. Thus the pieces of trite verse on the cards (in this instance voiced by anthropomorphic sheep) are fashioned around Rupa Mehra's philosophical/religious conceptualisation, and her cultural sensitivity to the subtleties of familial relationships:

The sheep [on the card] bleated in rhymes...

It's not a standard greeting
For just one joyful day
But a wish that's meant to cover
Life's bright and shining way...

Yes! Life's shining way, a concept dear to Mrs Rupa Mehra, was here polished to an even finer lustre. Nor did the lines commit her to any deep protestation of affection for her father's second wife.⁵⁸

As an example of cross-cultural discursive transfer and exchange, Mrs Rupa Mehra's actions take on a further significance when we realise that they involve a kind of secondary dissemination. In other words, by

⁵⁷ Jacques Derrida 1978: 285.

⁵⁸ Seth 1993: 43.

culturally recycling the image/text at her disposal, Seth's character liberates its earlier function as a simple enunciatory message, and recirculates it as an 'Indian-English *avatar*',⁵⁹ a reborn compound text floating within her own, indigenous sphere of influence. The importance of Mrs Rupa Mehra's quiet act of discursive recycling now becomes evident in relation to this analysis, because it articulates a subtler form of the cultural 'dialogue' which Trivedi sees as an integral part of the 'strategies through which we coped with their orientalism'. Furthermore, whilst we delineate these strategies within contemporary South-Asian culture, we must be aware of their existence long before the chronological span of European colonial interventions in South-Asia.

This brings me to my second theoretical metaphor, that of the medieval document store in Amitav Ghosh's brilliant work of historical and cultural reclamation, *In an Antique Land*. Based on Ghosh's experiences as a social anthropologist in Egypt, the narrative follows his search for documentary information about a slave from Southern India named Bomma in the business-correspondence of twelfth-century Arab-Jewish traders based in Cairo and Aden. The tale of Bomma is a remarkable example of pre-modern migrancy, but, in terms of my theoretical argument in this introduction, it is the archaeological source of the documents upon which Bomma's story is traced out which is really telling.

According to Ghosh, the documents were found in a synagogue in Cairo in a special chamber known as the Geniza, which was used as a depository of personal papers and manuscripts: 'Since most writings in that epoch included at least one sacred evocation ... they had to be disposed of with special rites ... to prevent the accidental desecration of any written form of God's name'.⁶⁰ In the Ben Ezra synagogue the documents were never destroyed, but simply accumulated over seven hundred years until they were located and removed by European orientalists in the late nineteenth century.

The cultural eclecticism of the Geniza documents, deposited, as they were, by wave after wave of Jewish immigrants to Cairo — the last document to be stored was a divorce settlement from Bombay — evokes

⁵⁹ Trivedi 1993: 16.

⁶⁰ Ghosh 1994: 56.

the kind of cross-cultural bricolage which is so effectively depicted in Mrs Rupa Mehra's act of textual reconstruction. However, filled to a height of 'two and a half stories',⁶¹ the Geniza chamber also produces a sense of historical depth. Impacted and layered in their well-like tomb, the massed papers of the Geniza can be seen to symbolise an overwritten, stratified column of syncretic or transacted Arab-Jewish-Indian histories which are not easily moulded to orientalist or nationalist notions of difference.

In *Culture and Imperialism* Said highlights the way in which imperialism worked to 'consolidate the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale'. As he goes on to say, 'its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white or black or western or oriental'.⁶² In the proliferating textual mass of notes, rewritings, contracts, receipts, and cross-cultural personal and mercantile correspondence that make up the Geniza, we find both a counter to Said's imperial cultural consolidation, and a kind of textual slippage, a 'spilling over', beyond boundaries.

Thus we find ourselves contemplating, once again, some of the issues which informed the start of this introduction. In particular, the invariably political nature of narrative boundaries which declare geopolitical, historical, or cultural difference, and work, paradoxically, to 'designate the constant of a presence — *eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject)'.⁶³ Throughout this thesis we will encounter these necessary fictions in the discourses of colonialism, and in the founding narratives of nationalist and communalist movements. And, because 'human beings [discursively] make their cultural and ethnic identities',⁶⁴ we shall also see how, like the maintaining of textual boundaries, or the demarcation of a critical 'beginning', these 'constants of presence' are invariably threatened by the erasures and partial absences upon which they are constructed.

⁶¹ Ibid: 83.

⁶² Said 1993: 408.

⁶³ Derrida 1979: xxi.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Chapter One

Landscapes and Palaces: Negotiating the Geography of Colonial Rule in Mid-Nineteenth Century.

Look at the hands of the mighty generals ... deploying their forces on the battle-field ... But this is not a real battle where blood is shed and the fate of empires is decided. Mr Mir and Mr Mirza are only playing at warfare. Their armies are pieces of ivory, their battle-field is a piece of cloth ... [and] While the great-grandsons of Burhan-al-Mulk's officers [fight] bloodlessly another game is being played elsewhere.¹

In the opening scene of his 1977 film, *The Chess Players*, Satyajit Ray skilfully juxtaposes the obsessive, introverted chess-playing of Mr Mir and Mr Mirza, two wealthy Lucknow landowners, with the wider political strategies of the Marquess of Dalhousie's annexation of the kingdom of Oudh, a year before the rebellion of 1857. For Ray, the chess game thus becomes the linking device between the two main narratives in his film, and the formalised, mathematical nature of the microcosmic 'battle' in which Mir and Mirza engage gradually serves to highlight the tragic, shifting, and decidedly unsymmetrical 'game' in which the king of Oudh is forced to participate, as he hands over his state to the British. The short story by Dhanpat Rai (commonly known by his pen-name, Premchand), which furnished Ray with the screenplay of his film, revolves more simply around the single narrative of Mir and Mirza's chess game, and my interest in the representation of the chess game in both fictional and filmic texts is directly linked to the wider critical and contextual possibilities which are opened up in an analysis of this leitmotif.

Twenty years before Premchand's short story was first published,² Lord Curzon, the British viceroy who presided over the disastrous partition of Bengal in 1905, used a similar chess metaphor to describe the continuing importance of India as a colonial possession: 'It was, as ... [he] had tactfully remarked, "the Queen on the English chessboard" [of Empire]'.³ Indeed, India had been Britain's most important colony ever since the East India Company had consolidated its trade monopoly there, in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In order to preserve their hold on such a precious

¹ Ray: 1977.

² David Rubin, the translator of the Penguin collection of Premchand's stories, gives the publication date of the Hindi version of the text, *Satranj Ke Khilari*, as 1924, although there is some controversy over the dates of a version of the story in Urdu. See David Rubin's 'Notes to the Stories' in Premchand 1988: 261.

³ Ali: 1991: 19.

imperial acquisition, the officials of the Company had operated a scheme of treaties, engagements, and annexations in their dealings with the mosaic of feudatory states which covered most of the subcontinent. This policy of gradual annexation was stopped when control of India was acceded directly to the British government after the so-called Mutiny of 1857-8.⁴

Curzon's description of colonial territories as (red) chess pieces of different value owes a great deal to the global power-politics of the late nineteenth century, a period during which the British were defending themselves (in Kipling's 'Great Game') against the perceived threat of Russian Imperialist expansion into South Asia. However, only a few years later, British interests were not being threatened internationally, by other imperial powers, but internally, by an energetic nationalist movement calling for home-rule. Curzon's self-styled imperial chess game had shrunk to a subcontinental level in which the valued pieces were not colonies themselves, but loyal areas within the colony. As Rushbrook Williams, a London journalist, wrote in 1930:

The situations of these feudatory states, chequerboarding all India as they do, are a great safeguard. It is like establishing a vast network of friendly fortresses in debatable territory.⁵

Unlike Curzon's usage, Rushbrook Williams's metaphorical 'chequerboard' reflects the political setting in which both Premchand and Ray situate their narratives (that of the princely states). However, I am not attempting to argue that there is any detailed connection between these catchy pieces of political rhetoric and the subtleties of Ray's use of this metaphor. Indeed, my aim in drawing attention to these figures of speech is to emphasise the more general way in which administrators such as Curzon saw their own work in terms of clear, rationalised patterns of controlled and managed colonial spaces.

Returning to Williams's 'Indian chequerboard', what it is also important to stress is the integral part which the nominally independent princely states played in the political systems of colonial rule throughout the history of the British in India. In the first half of the nineteenth

⁴ The East India Company acceded the India administration to the direct control of the Crown in 1858.

⁵ Rushbrook Williams, see Fisher 1991: 29.

century the most important feudatory state in terms of the East India Company's interests in India was Oudh, since it provided both extensive revenues and most of the indigenous soldiers in the Company's army. Oudh was also geographically important as it made up a central section of the corridor of directly ruled territory which the British had carved from Calcutta through to the Punjab by 1847. As Michael Fisher explains: 'The relationship between the Awadh [Oudh] Ruler and the Company determined to a large measure the shape of North Indian history over the entire 1764-1857 period'.⁶

Even though, as Ray suggests in his film, the *nawabs* or landed aristocracy in mid-nineteenth century Lucknow, and in other royal capitals such as Delhi, were ambivalent to the notion of 'proto-national' rebellion, we must retain an awareness that *The Chess Players* is an historical depiction of a people on the brink of cataclysmic domestic war against the British. With historical hindsight, the intense calm of Ray's Lucknow develops as a constant note of foreboding: the oppressive stillness before a political storm which will inevitably engulf Oudh and the rest of Northern India.

Perhaps more than anything it was the annexation of Oudh which prompted Indian sections of the colonial army to rise against their British officers during the dry-season of 1857. For these soldiers, annexation meant a direct threat to family land-holdings in Oudh. 'Almost every agricultural family in Oudh had a representative in the army ... after the annexation ... 14000 petitions were received from the sepoys about the hardships of the new revenue system [imposed by the British]'.⁷ In this, the soldier's interests coincided directly with those of the rural peasant-farmers and indentured labourers. Hence, it was this economic threat, allied with a sense of common religious persecution, which lent the rebellion its collective aspect, not simply as a military 'mutiny', but as a popular movement against British rule.

Analysed with the complexity of these cultural and economic factors in mind, the way in which Curzon's and Williams's metaphorical usages simultaneously construct and simplify the work of empire becomes clearer. Indeed, for these commentators the trope of the colonial chess

⁶ Ibid: 377.

⁷ Chandra 1989: 35.

game lifts a conception of colonialism out of the unpleasant realm of what Conrad termed 'robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale',⁸ and onto the level of the abstract, rational war-game. Here, the colonies become colourful table-top dioramas, across which British openings, strategies and end-games can be plotted accordingly.

It is the disjunction between abstract colonial representation and political/cultural actuality which Ray interrogates so successfully in his historical reinterpretation of the annexation of Oudh. As the viewer is already aware at the start of the film, Mir and Mirza's game of chess (or rather *Shatranj*, the original Indian version of the game) is played within a recognised cultural framework of rules and strategic projections of movement between equal, oppositional forces. Contrasted with the formal certainties of Mir and Mirza's game, the colonial 'capture' of Oudh becomes more obviously a diplomatic game in which a common conception of cultural values, and forms of power over space are dislocated in the interaction between Wajid Ali Shah and the Marquess of Dalhousie's resident at Lucknow, General Outram. As I will argue, this dislocation was primarily a British strategy, and was exploited to good effect in diplomatic dealings with all the princely states, serving to undercut any real agency they might have had on the political 'chequerboard' of colonial India.

In *The Chess Players*, Ray delineates cultural alterity through the observations of Mr Nandlal, one of the two additional secondary characters that he brought to Premchand's original text. Mr Nandlal's only appearance is at the start of the film when he comes to visit Mir and Mirza, interrupting their interminable chess playing. Introduced by Ray in order to hint at the wider relevance of the chess metaphor, which has already been foregrounded in the opening sequence,⁹ Nandlal explains the differences between *shatranj* and (European) chess to the two aristocrats (*shatranj* is slower, and labels the second most important piece the 'minister' rather than the 'queen'). Ray, to reinforce the connections which he builds up between the dual chess narratives, follows Mr Nandlal's explanation of cultural differences in chess with his fearful comments on the impending British takeover:

⁸ Conrad 1989: 31.

⁹ See the quotation from *The Chess Players* at the start of this chapter.

- Mirza: I must say, the British are clever, but why change the rules [of chess]?
- Nandlal: It's a faster game.
- Mirza: So they find our game too slow?
- Mir: Like our transport, now we're to have railway trains and the telegraph.
- Nandlal: Bad news travels faster ... the East India Company plans to take over Oudh.¹⁰

The implications of this subtle narrative conjunction are contained in the question it seems to pose to the audience of Ray's film; namely, by which set of rules is the larger 'game' of annexation being played? By this kind of internal cross-referencing the viewer comes to realise that even though this wider 'game' may be taking place in the classical Mughal setting of the Lucknow court (and therefore takes on all the lineaments of an equal cross-cultural confrontation over which set of 'rules' Oudh will be governed by) in reality the power-struggle taking place is a colonial game in which King Wajid Ali Shah is actually a political pawn, soon to be replaced by the direct, symbolic authority of the British Queen.

Ray reflects the political transition from indirect to direct rule in the microsocial level of the Mir/Mirza narrative in the last game that the two men play, after they have watched the Company's army entering Oudh. In this final scene Mirza holds up his 'queen' and, speaking of Victoria's triumph, proposes that he and Mir play a 'quick', and therefore 'English' game. Ben Nyce, in his critique of *The Chess Players*, sees this scene as representative of the fact that 'The British have indeed taught the Indians to play by new rules'.¹¹ We can develop this interpretation by noting, in a political reading of Ray's film, that the aristocracies of the princely states were covertly forced to 'play by new rules' all along. The tragedy of Ray's final scene comes with the realisation that now even the aesthetic externals of the old order, which stretch back in a rich dynastic line to Akbar, Tamburlaine, and the brilliant courtly cultures of Bokhara and Samarkand, are doomed.

¹⁰ Ray 1977.

¹¹ Nyce 1988: 170.

Mapping the Landscapes of Empire.

In his work on the hegemonic construction of South-Asia during the colonial period, Ronald Inden has drawn attention to the way in which Indologists such as Max Müller sought to 'emulate the [objective, authorising] classical discourses of the natural sciences'.¹² Predicated on a metaphysics of 'essence' or 'essential characteristics', these forms of knowledge invariably worked to classify India, producing accurate taxonomies and hierarchically ordered models of the grammar, religion, and history of the colonised. It is within this systematic project to categorise the South-Asian Other within a western episteme that we must read the metaphor of the colonial chess game. Here, as well as invoking an image of control or jurisdiction over space, the mathematically coded space of the chess-game becomes an archetypal image of the enclosed, sectional field of knowledge which can be 'mastered' by the colonial.

However, if we look more closely we find that as we formulate a deconstructive strategy in which we 'follow the paths by which [these texts] set up and transgress [their] own terms',¹³ we can also trace the points at which discursive exchanges and repetitions work themselves into the colonial narrative. By adopting this perspective I hope to interrogate implied closure in Colonial Discourse Analyses which have often been criticised for repeating the very colonial effect of erasure or silencing which they seek to examine.

In few colonial projects was the notion of descriptive totality implied by the semiotic limits of the chess game more rigorously asserted than in the cartographic surveying of empire. In this instance, again, space is framed, codified and rationalised upon mathematic principles. And, as in the essentialising dictionaries and grammars of William Jones or Max Müller, the accuracy of abstracted representation becomes of prime importance. A sense of apprehension over mathematical accuracy is particularly evident in the following report written by one of the most famous colonial surveyor-generals, George Everest:

A complete topographical survey of the whole of India ... is perhaps of itself the most herculean undertaking ... [we must

¹² Inden 1992: 16.

¹³ Young 1981: 18.

be sure that] it is as free from error as instrumental means and human care can make it ... one of the greatest [and most common] evils is the liability to make mistakes ... The utmost that can be attained ... is only an approximation to perfect accuracy ... All else is but patchwork ... which will never satisfy expectation or promote the national respectability.¹⁴

As this passage makes clear, Everest's concern over the fidelity of his geographical description is such that 'error' is regarded not simply as an epistemological liability, but as a moral and 'national' shortcoming.

Again, if we analyse these totalising cartographies in more detail, points of interdiction immediately appear, obliging us to reassess our ideas of these cultural constructions as all-effacing coverings and reinscriptions on the geo-cultural landscape. And thus, as we recognise the impure or contradictory aspects of structuralist systems, such as the map, we must also acknowledge, by a kind of allegorical reflection, that the act of colonial overlay and inscription, in total, can never be seen to wipe the existing territorial 'slate' completely clean.

Keeping in mind the theoretical notions of discursive transaction or 'seepage' which I have already touched upon in my introduction, we find interesting fluid cultural minglings starting to appear in the colonial map-making process. In other words the rigid geometrical processes of the colonial geographic survey develop not wholly as a description and construction of culturally 'blank' spaces but instead as a textual illustration which is informed and shaped by the cultural topography of the land it seeks to describe.

The earliest systematic geographical survey of India, using the (comparatively) new method of geometric triangulation, was carried out by a brigade-major named William Lambton in the countryside around Tanjore in 1802. Initiated as a 'general survey of the ... territories conquered ... during the late glorious campaign [against the local ruler Tipu Sultan]',¹⁵ Lambton's cartographic project eventually grew to encompass the whole of the subcontinent. Completed nearly half a century later by George Everest, the 'Great Trigonometrical Survey' seems, initially, a perfect example of the palimpsestic nature of colonial cartography: a totalised mathematical table which would, in Everest's

¹⁴ George Everest, see Phillimore 1958: 18-19.

¹⁵ William Lambton, see Phillimore 1950: 234.

words 'cover' and 'reticulate ... the continent of India in triangulation'.¹⁶ Once this had been achieved, India would be irrevocably linked to an imperial cartographic grid thrown across the world which had its meridian at Greenwich. As such, the subcontinent would become a 'de-culturated'¹⁷ systematised field of play (like Rushbrook Williams's chequerboard) upon which soldiers, collectors, and other technicians of empire could locate themselves both spatially and psychologically.¹⁸

However, almost as soon as Lambton commences his survey, preexisting religio-cultural inscriptions on the indigenous landscape start leaking into, and covertly informing, his cartographic text. This is demonstrated in Lambton's journal of the survey, where he describes the way in which, in his desire to find elevated geographical points from which to take geographical readings, he uses the tops of local temples as trig-points:

The network of triangles is not so entire as I could have wished owing to the difficulty we met from the flatness of the Tanjore and Marwa countries ... we were reduced to ... selecting the highest pagodas for stations [and] hoisting up the heavy [theodolite].¹⁹

Although invisible on the actual cartographic text, the proliferation of these points of geo-cultural synthesis reshapes our critical perception of Lambton's map not as a totalised overlay but more accurately as a kind of porous interface. This periodic cultural osmosis between indigenous and colonial 'landscape narratives' continues under George Everest's management of the colonial survey of India, and wherever sightings are taken, potential nodes of conflict, interdiction and synthesis occur between the mathematical cultural cartography under construction and the cultural geography it seeks to efface.

Like Lambton, Everest encountered the problem of a lack of elevated sighting points, and solved it by constructing expensive stone observation

¹⁶ Ibid: 13.

¹⁷ Stevenson 1992: 122.

¹⁸ J.B. Harley emphasises this psychological cartographic function in his essay 'Maps, Knowledge, and Power,' in which he states 'Maps ... tend to 'desocialise' the territory they represent ... lessen[ing] the burden of conscience about people in the landscape'. See Cosgove 1988: 303.

¹⁹ William Lambton, see Phillimore 1950: 244.

towers across parts of central India. However, in an ironic inversion of Lambton's colonial appropriation, and desecration, of temples in Southern India, Everest's specially built towers soon sink back, after the survey team has left, into the mythico-religious landscape of indigenous local culture. For Everest, the manifestation of these architectural reversals is the cause of much frustration. In some parts of the country, he notes, the towers are regarded with:

Idolatrous veneration, the most preposterous stories are propagated regarding the incantations and ceremonies gone through in achieving this magic mark [the geometrical engravings on the sighting-base]. My harmless platforms are looked on as the cause of every ill which [afflicts] the country.²⁰

As Raja Rao reminds us in his foreword to *Kanthapura*, every village in the subcontinent has 'a rich sthala-purana' or 'legendary history of its own' where the '[mythologies of] the past mingle ... with the present, and the gods with men to make the repertory of your grandmother always bright'.²¹ For Everest, whose project rests on the assumption of an 'uninscribed earth', this rural 'Kanthapurian' type mingling; the indigenous reinvention of his towers as religio-spiritual constructs, is seen as a 'return to the nothing that they were'.²²

In reality it is not the human systematising of the landscape that is threatened but Everest's ethnocentric realisation of this landscape. Unseen by Everest, his cartographic anchoring-points do not return to nothing, but instead, are absorbed into the syncretic geographies of indigenous rural culture. Everest's passage through the landscape becomes, therefore, just another mythical journey to be structured, embellished, and normalised in the narratives of the grandmothers and *harikatha* narrators of the Indian village.

Clearly, in most cases, indigenous rural people were not aware that cartographers such as Everest were producing an actual text, and I do not want to suggest here that practices such as oral re-narration sheltered indigenous South-Asians from the dislocative force of what Spivak terms

²⁰ George Everest, see Phillimore 1958: 86.

²¹ Raja Rao, Foreword to *Kanthapura* : 1993.

²² Ibid.

the 'epistemic violence' of colonisation. However, what these documents and colonial reports do evince is the extent to which abstract, discursive inscriptions such as the map depended on the complicity of the colonised to maintain their function as mimetic instruments of location and control.

Instances of negotiative impasse thus return to haunt the colonial subject at the site of cartographic production. Matthew Edney finds an example of this kind of representational caesura in the comments of a regional surveyor, Francis Buchanan, on the problems of mapping the waterways of Bengal. As Edney points out: 'the rivers of Bengal constantly change their course, opening new channels ... the problem [for the colonial surveyor] was that local inhabitants continued to call the old channels by their original names'. Buchanan described the problem thus:

The geographers of Europe are apt to be enraged, when in tracing a river they find that an inconsiderable stream falling into their grand channel changes its name, and that the source of this smaller stream is obstinately considered by the natives as the source of the river, either having been the first to which they had access, or having at one time been the largest.²³

Unwilling to concede the complex past of their landscape to the 'alien agent of "true" history' the villagers of rural Bengal refuse the cartographic conventions of the coloniser, and the colonial map comes adrift, reflecting nothing more than European intent.

In the cartographic inscription of the emergent empire, therefore, a distinctly miscible discursive relationship starts to occur in the production and negotiation of text and representation in the development of colonial control. Here colonial cartographic texts not only 'embarrass their own ruling systems of logic',²⁴ but also betray fragments and scraps of negotiation, visible through what José Rabasa calls the 'imperfect erasures' of the cartographic palimpsest. It is these points of interaction which I will now examine in two more recognisably literary colonial texts.

²³ Edney 1997: 331.

²⁴ Eagleton 1994: 133.

Landscape and the Feminine Picturesque.

By the mid-1830s the 'Great Arc' (the central chain of triangulated survey lines which Lambton had started at Kanya Kumari, on the southernmost tip of India) had reached its end-point at Dehra Dun in the foothills of the Himalayas. The backbone of an imperial cartography of India was complete, and now the survey teams started out on a longitudinal axis in order to cover Bengal and Gujerat. In territories under direct British rule, such as Behar,²⁵ these larger surveys were complemented by detailed *khusrau* revenue surveys of all cultivated and uncultivated fields held by indigenous farmers and landowners.

In 1836, the farmlands and villages around Gorakhpur, west of Oudh, were thus mapped by Henry Lawrence, 'one of the most experienced and zealous officers on the survey'.²⁶ Lawrence's *khusrau* mapping of Gorakhpur is of interest here because in 1838 he was joined in the field by his wife Honoria, who, like many of her contemporaries, kept a journal of her life in India. Honoria's journal of her 'life in camp' gives us a second narrative which works alongside the more empirical, topographic discourse which her husband produces.

As Philip Mason has argued, in this period colonials such as Henry Lawrence approached their work of administration on a similar level to that of the guardians of a Platonic republic. And for Henry himself the work of administration becomes fundamentally linked with a sense of disinterested professional arbitration. This is particularly plain in his description of the tenets of colonial rule, which he lists as: 'firmness, promptness, conciliation and prudence ... In revenue ... very light assessments, ... in judicial matters, to do as much justice as possible ... in front of the people'.²⁷

In both Henry's and Honoria's texts, discourses are being created which, in Spivak's words, 'cathect' the indigenous landscape, as a 'site of imperial desire'. Thus, as Henry Lawrence becomes Spivak's European figure walking through the villages of Bihar, reinscribing himself from 'stranger to Master'²⁸ and inserting the region into the colonial administrative

²⁵ Present-day Bihar.

²⁶ Board of Surveyors report, see Phillimore 1958: 453.

²⁷ Mason 1953: 337.

²⁸ Gayatri Spivak, see Barker 1985: 254.

history, Honoria's amateur ethnography works contrapuntally to insert the (previously alien) landscape within the 'truth-values' of a colonial aesthetic. For Sara Suleri, this form of writing stands out as a set of '[picturesque] representations of India that could alleviate the more shattering aspects of its difference, romanticising its difficulty into the greater tolerability of mystery'.²⁹

In some ways Honoria's aestheticising narrative works to buttress the authority of Henry Lawrence's colonial presence in the landscape. Indeed, this kind of discursive reinforcement is most evident, in my opinion, in Honoria's stylistic replication of earlier orientalist texts as a legitimised means of alleviating or normalising indigenous difference. Thus, we find Honoria Lawrence's account echoing William Jones's work and locating itself in a botanically enumerated environment: '[we moved] ... through a whole wilderness of *datura* ... [and] beautiful creepers ... some of the convolvulus family'. More often, however, these details are passed over in preference to the perceived romantic-aesthetic qualities of the Indian landscape, and 'relieved against the red eastern sky' the boats on the Ganges remind Honoria Lawrence of 'the spectre-ship seen by the "Ancient Mariner"'.³⁰ Lawrence's status as a female writer comes to the fore at this point, in the uneasy shifting that occurs between the genres in her narrative, as she enters the political domain of discursive production about India, but is careful not to transgress her own gendered authorial imperative — to produce a palliative rather than a diagnostic commentary on cultural difference.

Interestingly, the tropes in which Honoria Lawrence feels most able to base her narrative are those concerning the surer ideological grounds of Christian duty and morality. Thus, the aesthetic colonial description of India develops in Lawrence's narrative (via reference to Miltonic and biblical texts) into a type of Christian-spiritual picturesque; a narrative form in which Lawrence's immediate surroundings, the Ganges and the night sky above it, materialise in a kind negative comparison as the pastoral set of Milton's *Comus*: 'One feature however, I miss, the dark masses of cloud which at home we so often see at night. Nor do we here

²⁹ Suleri 1992: 75.

³⁰ Lawrence and Woodiwiss 1980: 56.

see "a sable cloud turn forth her silver lining on the night" '.³¹

Most importantly, Honoria's reference to Milton's drama, with its associated Protestant didacticism, facilitates a smooth crossover within her text from the eighteenth century picturesque to the biblical narratives with which she informs most of her descriptions of indigenous people, and the cultural practices by which their 'difference' is fixed. Of particular relevance is the way in which she incorporates her husband's revenue mappings into this Judeo-Christian framework:

I wish I could vividly bring before you the increased interest with which I have read the Bible since I have been in the East, and seen daily exemplifications of expressions which before conveyed only a vague meaning ... The importance of fixing village boundaries is ... well-known ... In Deuteronomy xxvii 17, the offence [of transgressing them] comes next to murder and manslaughter.³²

In Honoria's text, therefore, India exemplifies the Bible, and the British coloniser's life in India thus becomes an exemplum of Christian duty. India ceases to threaten and is pared down as a scene upon which the Christian can meditate. Furthermore, the arbitrating tenor of colonial rule is rendered God-given, and sanctioned by the moral authority of religion.

As Honoria's writing works to complement the administrative village-revenue charts which her husband draws up, an important aspect of Henry Lawrence's *Khusrau* mapping also becomes apparent. This is because in the focussing of both the Lawrences' texts on village life we see important indications of a wider development within the contemporary discourses of empire. In other words, as Henry Lawrence's cartography defines and delineates the village as the 'basic unit of [colonial] data collection and administration',³³ Honoria's text works to construct a body of secondary evidence suggesting the notion of the Indian village as a 'timeless' unit of indigenous social life. Significantly, the difference between map and text represents here the conversion of colonially inscribed Indian revenue configurations, which had remained largely unchanged since the Mughals, into unquestionable icons of orientalist

³¹ Ibid: 55.

³² Lawrence and Woodiwiss 1980: 75.

³³ David Ludden, see Breckenridge and Van der Veer 1993: 266.

social theory.³⁴ Here, Honoria's biblical referencing serves not only to normalise indigenous culture but also to neutralise the threat of its history, by welding time and place to the village setting.

More pressing in relation to the critical concerns of this analysis are the subtle disjunctions and dislocations which start to appear between Honoria's systematically theologised cultural perceptions and her abiding awareness that indigenous culture (especially Hindu aspects of it) does not fit easily into the representation which she produces. Yet again, deforming cultural seepages start to deny the coherence of a colonial subject-other construction, this time in the form of indigenous discourses which momentarily re-figure the colonial subject as 'other' within her own text.

In Honoria Lawrence's journal this characteristic intermingling, which almost imperceptibly displaces her colonial descriptive authority, occurs in an account of a meeting with a local Rajput chief, Dokhul Singh. Here, in the course of discussion, the chief reveals an alternative cultural reference-frame to that of the narrator, in his anthropomorphised, hybrid notion of the East India Company. Astonished that Britain is governed by an unmarried woman, he suggests that 'her majesty better marry "Coompanee," a person whom he [perceived] ... as some mighty individual'.³⁵ Similar perspectives, in which the subject-other configuration within the colonial text becomes momentarily reversed, occur on a more quotidian level in Indian translations of English names or objects. In his essay 'Parables and Commonplaces' A.K. Ramanujan specifically addresses this issue when he states:

Cultures have recognised ways of coping with, containing, appropriating and domesticating the bizarre, often terrifying, alien. A common device is by translation, which by its nature is mis-translation.³⁶

In Honoria Lawrence's text these indigenous 'translations' are really phonetic transliterations, but in the act of transliteration they become

³⁴ This kind of colonial construction of the Indian village finds its most famous formulation in a minute read by Charles Metcalfe to the House of Commons in 1830: 'The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles ... but the village communities remain the same'. Ibid: 263.

³⁵ Lawrence and Woodiwiss 1980: 93.

³⁶ A.K. Ramanujan, see Amirthanayagam 1982: 139.

absorbed, like Everest's map, into a world-view which normalises and domesticates them as variants of what Trivedi terms acts of indigenous 'mis-knowledge'. In a passage in Honoria's journal which describes her experiences of buying English dress-material from indigenous traders, these cultural translations appear as Indianised conceptual labels on the products she is offered:

when we reached Berhampore ... we were visited by ... cloth merchants bringing silks for sale. Each opened his bundle praising his own goods and disparaging his neighbours, thrusting a piece of silk towards us and recommending it as *Scatch plat* (Scotch Plaid) or *Bailatee* (English) ... Mrs Hutchinson took up some stockings, saying, 'These are English?' The man spoke a little of our tongue, and immediately said 'It's, Mem Sahib, not Anglees. Liverpool, Mem Sahib, Liverpool'. I hate buying from the natives.³⁷

The most interesting aspect of this passage is the local trader's semantic confusion of the (colonial) origins of the cloth he is selling. Indeed, we do not know whether 'Liverpool' has even retained its meaning as a place-name, or whether, during translation it has come simply to signify a type of 'foreign' cloth.³⁸ The underlying irony of this kind of cultural/lingual negotiation is that it unconsciously echoes (in this case) the exploitative material 'translations' of colonial trade, in which raw cotton and silk was exported to Britain to be imported back to India as ready-made articles of clothing.

In view of my general critical concerns, these two 'glimpses' of an indigenous subject position in the colonial text are highly compelling, since they hint at the multitudinous 'translations' and instances of indigenous 'counter-representation' which must have been occurring (on an infinite number of socio-cultural levels in bazaars, villages, cantonments, and barracks) beyond the perspective of the European text. As instances of indigenous othering, the 'native' narratives which

³⁷ Honoria Lawrence, see Lawrence and Woodiwiss 1980: 55.

³⁸ Buchi Emecheta, in her autobiography *Head Above Water*, relates a more colourful version of this kind of cross-cultural mis-translation, when she describes the story of 'Lorlu' and his friend 'Burma'. Told as a children's tale, the story related to Nigerian soldiers and their involvement in Lord Mountbatten's Burmese campaign in the Second World War. Translated into West African narratives 'Lord Louis' became the monster 'Lorlu,' and the place, Burma, was transformed into another monster who 'kidnapped husbands'.

infiltrate Honoria Lawrence's journal can be defined as fairly unselfconscious cultural normalisations of an alien European presence.

Spaces of Diplomacy: Indirect Rule and the Royal Court.

The last of the pre-rebellion texts which I will examine here brings us back into the familiar surroundings of the late Mughal court of Oudh. I have already highlighted the political importance of Oudh in this period, and, as such, its annexation proved to be a decisive test-case of the British colonial policy of direct rule. As a political experiment it was an obvious failure, and after the rebellion of 1857, the British effectively froze their map of India and ceased any further annexation of the remaining 'independent' states.

William Knighton's sensational work *The Private Life of an Eastern King* is significant in terms of the ongoing 'experiment' of annexation because it centred on the character of 'Native rule' in Oudh during the early 1830s, and (published in 1855) furnished political proof for the takeover which Dalhousie was planning. Knighton was wholly convinced of the necessity of direct-rule, but had little real experience of the court at Oudh. Therefore, he built his narrative, to a large extent, on the anecdotal reminiscences of an anonymous European who had served at the court,³⁹ and filled it out with pre-existing literary tropes of the profligacy and despotism of 'Eastern Kings.'

Regardless of the specific policy-positions with which Knighton's account aligned itself, the paradoxical nature of colonial discourse descriptive of the native states meant that a certain margin of ambivalence operated in these depictions anyway. To be more precise, allegations of misrule (unless that misrule threatened to spread to other, directly held territories) could furnish the political proof for the maintenance of indirect intervention:

We have never seized a whole country at once, but always left an independent state remaining ... We must have some sink to receive all the corrupt matter that abounds in India, unless we are willing to taint our own system by stopping the

³⁹ Knighton also borrowed from other contemporary works on Oudh such as Sleeman's *Journey Through the Kingdom of Oudh*, and Mrs Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*. See S.B. Smith's introduction to Knighton 1921.

discharge of it.⁴⁰

And conversely, they could become the evidence for the moral obligation of annexation: 'When misrule occurs it is the right and duty of the Company to intervene'.⁴¹ Conveniently justifying both these ideological positions, the political subtext of Knighton's work becomes fully apparent, and throughout the narrative the character of Nasir ud Din, the king of Oudh develops within a discursive reference-frame which reinforces Knighton's ideological project.

Recalling the romantic narrative forms with which Honoria Lawrence colours her descriptions of the Indian landscape, we find similar culturally-relative literary genres being brought into play in Knighton's text. In fact, Knighton's reliance on these literary structures gives his work an almost novelistic quality, although this is denied full expression by his claims to represent the political truth of the court. Knighton makes these claims via authorial asides and brief political theses on the desirability of direct rule: 'it is my honest conviction that the people of Oudh would be a thousand times better off under a European', and through narrative accounts of the king's behaviour.

In Knighton's literary structuring of Nasir ud Din's 'private life' we find in a chapter entitled 'The Caprice of Despotism' a focus on the tyrannical aspects of the Nasir ud Din's rule, which stand out as a decided insertion of 'orientalist-gothic' tropes within a supposedly factual colonial representation. This gothic narrativisation had already occurred in strongly autobiographical fictions such as William Delafield Arnold's *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*. Even so, Arnold's Indian-gothic is couched within a more general conceptualisation of the landscape, while in Knighton's *Private life of an Eastern King* the narrative centres, like William Beckford's *Vathek*, on the figure of the oriental monarch, and thus transforms aesthetic mode into political critique.

Here Nasir ud Din figures successively as 'capricious',⁴² a man 'governed by foolish whims',⁴³ and an 'irritated despot'.⁴⁴ Also, in an

⁴⁰ Mountstuart Elphinstone, see Thompson 1943: 20.

⁴¹ Meadows-Taylor 1873: 20.

⁴² Knighton 1921: 30.

⁴³ *Ibid*: 33.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*: 56.

almost direct stylistic reflection of the European gothic genre, the manifestation of despotism or horror is often articulated by, and displaced onto, the sexualised site of the female body. Certainly, in Knighton's text what Nilufer Barucha terms the 'colonial sexual fascination for the oriental woman'⁴⁵ often threatens to unbalance the metonymy of local misrule which the indigenous female body is meant to articulate. This occurs most obviously in a description of the family of a disgraced courtier, imprisoned by the king.

I have witnessed many heart-rending spectacles ... but I have no recollection of any other which affected me more deeply ... [the women] stripped of their fine clothes and ... given only ... scanty covering ... Young delicately moulded women ... [one of whom] sat in silent misery ... a Hindu Niobe. No sculptor could have imagined forms of more exquisite mould.⁴⁶

What is perhaps the most significant feature of this scene is the way in which Knighton describes one of the women as a 'Hindu Niobe' and thus transfigures her as a classical allegory of the misery engendered by the king. Elsewhere in his text we come across other descriptions of the 'statuesque' quality of the king's female attendants, who resemble, in their 'delicately shaped arms and hands ... models [of] ... Venus'.⁴⁷ Importantly, what we notice here is an economy of classical allegory usually reserved for more abstract colonial self-description being used to interpret indigenous, and potentially threatening, female sexuality. As we shall see later in this analysis, the 'classical emblemisation' of the female (colonial) body became, in later accounts of the 'Mutiny', an important ideological mode of counter-insurgency, just as in Knighton's text it serves as a reference-frame through which worrying aspects of indigenous female sexuality can be filtered.

As we have already seen in colonial cartography and journalistic description, instances of cross-cultural mixing and seepage start to present themselves in certain scenes within Knighton's text. Threatening the authority of the subject-object relationship between the European narrator and the indigenous focus of his/her narration, these scenes foreground

⁴⁵ Nilufer Barucha : 'Literature of the Raj: Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Readers', (Personal copy)

⁴⁶ William Knighton 1921: 117-18.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 22.

the appropriation of European artifacts and clothing by the 'native'. A prime example of this form of indigenous borrowing occurs in Honoria Lawrence's journal when, during a visit to a local rajah, the colonial narrator is confronted by a bewildering display of her own culture:

There were wardrobes and chests of drawers of every description ... crammed with fineries of English chintz, often with Indian muslin. There were a great many tables with raised glass lids ... filled with kaleidoscopes, ... curtain pins, ... steel pens ... Mathematical instruments, clocks, toys, carts, ... French and English books in abundance.⁴⁸

Within colonial writing, descriptions of this indigenous archiving of the colonial are common, and are invariably converted into symbols of greed, or tastelessness on the part of their indigenous curators. However, on closer reading these displays can be seen not as mimicry, but as acts of collating and fixing the culture of the other, and very strong indigenous reflections of the energetic zeal with which colonial commentators delineated the Indian environment. Indeed, here we experience a blurring of the distinctions between subject and other; an interpretive seizure, where the question who possesses whom is difficult to ignore. As Greg Dening argues in his study of colonial encounter in Tahiti, 'Native and Stranger each possessed the other in their interpretation of the other' because 'They each made a cargo of the things they collected from one another, put the cargo in their respective museums, remade the things they collected into new cultural artifacts'.⁴⁹

As in Lawrence's account, the recognition of this cultural intermingling between colonial and 'native', what Dening calls the building of cultural 'self-possession' out of 'possessing the other',⁵⁰ is accompanied by a sense of dismay, which betrays the fear of cultural and racial miscegenation latent in the colonial text. A scene which comes readily to mind is one in which Nasir ud Din commands his favourite 'female attendant' to dress in European clothes. At once, Knighton's eroticising, statuesque construction of the indigenous woman is thrown into confusion, since, in European costume, she becomes an indigenous

⁴⁸ Lawrence and Woodiwiss 1980: 20.

⁴⁹ Greg Dening, see Gregory 1994: 178.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

construct of sexual 'otherness' and 'exoticism' within the 'licentious' social sphere of King's court. For the colonial narrator, the inferences are multiple and unspeakable, and in an attempt to deny them he must deny their representative:

A more wretched transformation it is hardly possible to conceive. The clothes hung loosely about her in an eminently dowdyish way. She ... was ridiculous. All grace was gone; all beauty was hidden.⁵¹

Returning to Satyajit Ray's film *The Chess Players*, which formed the first part of this analysis, we recognise the influence of texts such as Knighton's in the dialogues which Outram (Dalhousie's Resident at Lucknow) has with his ADC over Wajid Ali Shah's ability to rule. What becomes obvious at this point is the ideological flexibility of these colonial myths of misrule, since they can be superimposed upon any native prince whose territory is under debate.

As Ray delineates both sides of the ideological confrontation between Outram and the King, these myths start to be revealed for what they really are, the discursive rules of the European chess game which Wajid Ali Shah is forced to play. The patterns of cross-cultural collusion and misinterpretation between 'royal' court and 'Resident' colonial become almost too complex to follow here, as the king is encouraged to appropriate the trappings of European monarchy,⁵² whilst simultaneously being constructed by colonial ideology as archetypally 'Eastern.' Thus, in a contradictory move the king is never encouraged to become *too* Europeanised,⁵³ since this would invalidate a colonial focus on the specifically 'Eastern' quality of his inability to rule.

More than anything else, Ray's cinematic vision of the court at Oudh emphasises the way that the cultural expressions of the late Mughal era became implicated in the ideologies of the 'chess game' which the British had set up in their dealings with the king. Until now I have concentrated on colonial texts of this period, a critical bias which belies the brilliance of

⁵¹ Knighton 1921: 75.

⁵² Ray tells us in the historical prologue to his film that an earlier ruler of Oudh was 'awarded' kingship by the British, and encouraged to have a European-style crown made. This crown was later displayed in the Great Exhibition of 1851.

⁵³ Homi Bhabha has theorised this type of cultural double-bind in his essay 'Of Mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse'. Bhabha 1994: 89.

Persian/Urdu classical culture in this period. By the 1850s the only other Mughal court which compared with the decaying and politically disempowered splendour of Lucknow was Bahadur Shah's Delhi, and in both centres poets and writers congregated at *mushairas* (poetic gatherings) held by the respective ruler. Ralph Russell emphasises this when he writes:

Long after Delhi had ceased to be the Paris of power it continued as the Versailles of good manners ... Calligraphy, that most distinctive of Islamic arts, flourished, and so did painting...The most favoured, however, was poetry. It was the major intellectual occupation of the Delhi classes.⁵⁴

Both Wajid Ali Shah and the Emperor Bahadur Shah wrote poetry themselves, and the cultural accomplishments of the king of Oudh are transformed in Outram's speech in *The Chess Players* into unhealthy indications of the political malaise into which his court has sunk:

Outram: Tell me, Weston, you know the language ... what kind of a poet is the king?

Weston: I think he's rather good, Sir ... He's also fond of dancing ... [and] composes his own operas.

Outram: Doesn't leave him much time for his concubines, not to speak of the affairs of state.⁵⁵

Here Ray's script delineates the colonial political mind-set, in which 'culture' is thus inseparably fused with a pre-existing 'orientalised' threat of perverse sexual licentiousness. As in Knighton's text, the discourses of Victorian sexual morality start to waver, and the male colonial narrator is caught between covert fascination (Outram's interest in the King's concubines) and horror, at the 'uncontrollable' sexual 'otherness' which the King represents. Outram goes on to muse upon the idea that the king 'dresses up ... like [a] nautch girl', and resolves his revulsion by gendering the king in terms of 'feminine' stereotypes.

The paradox which Ray touches on here concerns the fact that some of the cultural forms of Wajid Ali Shah's court acted to reify these structures of colonial othering. This seems to be proven by the Urdu poetry produced

⁵⁴ Russell 1972: 20.

⁵⁵ Robinson 1989: 20.

in Lucknow during this period. Headed by poets such as Atish, the 'Fleshly school' concentrated on what Ali disparagingly terms 'conceit, ... innuendo, ... and open vulgarity',⁵⁶ and celebrated the decadence which later colonial commentators were so willing to uncover at the princely court. However, here we are faced with a vicious circle, since the politically disempowered condition of Oudh may well have contributed to the growth of this form of bohemian aestheticism. Michael Fisher makes this point when he stresses that although 'several rulers became notorious for their devotion to poetry ... and/or sensual pleasure' these indulgences may have been brought about by 'an effort to find refuge from the frustrations inherent in their condition of indirect rule'.⁵⁷

Fisher's point is reinforced in contemporary tracts written by members of the Muslim aristocracy in Oudh directly after the rebellion. In a text entitled *Oude: Its Princes, and its Government, Vindicated* (published in 1857), a 'hereditary resident' of Oudh, Moulvee Mohummud Mussehood-Deen, quotes the words of a civil-servant of the East India Company thus: 'How is it possible that native princes, who are kept in a state of pupilage and almost treated like school-boys, should have any self-respect or proper independence of feeling?'⁵⁸

In spite of the varied and multivalent spaces of negotiation and re-narration to which I have drawn attention so far, we must keep in mind that the articulation of discursive regimes of power operated in conjunction with the material, geo-political, and military aims of colonialism. Moreover, whilst we recognise that within the unequal material relationship of imperial domination 'discourse [in Foucault's formulation] transmits and produces power ... but also [potentially] undermines and exposes it'.⁵⁹ The narrative economy which grows up around the issue of native misrule shows that discursive ambivalences were also incorporated into colonial ideological strategies. Indeed, we must look to the momentous political and military challenge which the colonial administration faced in the rebellion of 1857 to find indigenous narratives which publicly countered, for a time, the discursive agendas of imperialism.

⁵⁶ Ali 1992: 205.

⁵⁷ Fisher 1991: 385.

⁵⁸ Frederick Shore, see Mussehood-Deen 1857: 101.

⁵⁹ Moore-Gilbert 1997: 224.

Re-Narrated Landscapes: Rumour and Rebellion.

Focussing now on the 1857 rebellion, we find that just as the people of South-Asia had re-narrated their own subject-positions under pre-rebellion Company rule through a range of indigenous narrative repetitions and translations of the colonial, these strategies carried through into the discourses of indigenous insurgency. Indeed, variants of these predominantly non-scripted narratives proved particularly effective as forms of anti-colonial rumour; their widespread transmission at the start of the great rebellion of 1857 re-articulating the relationship between coloniser and colonised as completely as colonial surveyors and commentators had re-inscribed the sub-continent according to their own cultural agendas.

Having said this, it is important not to overdetermine, as colonial readings of the 'Mutiny' have often done, the role of oral discourses such as rumour in relation to peasant and military insurgency. As I will argue, fear and resentment had been building up in the indigenous sections of the colonial Indian army long before any specific, pre-rebellion rumours had been disseminated, and we should read these rumours as discursive catalysts, not as causes of insurgency in themselves.

The most well-documented rumour which prefigured the rebellion involved cartridges for the new Enfield rifle which the British were introducing into indigenous sections of the army. Suspicion grew among the *sipahis*, or indigenous soldiers, that the tallow used to grease the paper cartridges was composed of a mixture of pork and beef fat, and was therefore polluting to both Hindus and Muslims, specially since the loading procedure involved biting off the top of the cartridge. Indigenous soldiers had already been made to contravene their religious beliefs on expeditions such as the disastrous 1842 Afghan campaign, where they had been forced to eat polluted food in order to stay alive. Additionally, Hindu proscriptions about travelling overseas meant that many soldiers lost caste-status automatically after their return from campaigns to places such as Burma, and in 1856 Lord Canning's General Service Enlistment Act exacerbated the problem by denying high-caste Hindu soldiers the right to refuse overseas service on religious grounds. Thus, the cartridge rumour

marked the peak of a concern about the infringement of religious codes which had been growing in the army for some time.

Because it originated in high-density military populations such as the barracks at Meerut, and because soldiers were continually going on leave, the cartridge rumour quickly covered most of Northern India. Just before the outbreak of the rebellion, a European officer stationed near Calcutta reported to his divisional commander that 'Some of the depot men ... said that the [cartridge rumour] had spread throughout India, and that when they [went] to their homes, their friends ... refuse[d] to eat with them'.⁶⁰

Another important indigenous narrative which heralded the start of the rebellion also focussed, like the cartridge rumour, on a formerly innocuous sign and then overlaid it with surplus meanings. Here I am referring to pieces of bread; home-made chapattis, which were distributed as mysterious tokens throughout Northern and central India. In contemporary accounts such as Kaye and Malleson's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, the phenomenon is described in relative detail:

All that was known about it was that a messenger appeared, gave the cake to the headman of one village and requested him to dispatch it onwards to the next; and that in this way it travelled from place to place; no one refusing no one doubting, few even questioning in blind obedience to the necessity felt rather than understood ... the greater number looked upon it as a signal of warning and preparation designed to tell people that something great and portentous was about to happen.⁶¹

The political effectiveness of these types of non-literate symbol have been seen by some historians and cultural theorists to depend on the very difficulty of their interpretation. Indeed, we find a variance of reported opinion as to what, exactly, the pieces of bread did signify. Some saw them as a metaphor for the hold the colonial authorities had achieved over the very means of subsistence in the sub-continent. Others related them to indigenous cultural practices in which items such as *peepul* leaves, flowers, or pieces of meat were passed from village to village in an attempt to rid a region of an epidemic disease such as plague. Other commentators interpreted the bread-tokens in the same terms as the religious

⁶⁰ Hibbert 1978: 63.

⁶¹ Sir John Kaye, see Bhabha 1994: 201.

contamination fears which underscored the cartridge rumour, and saw the bread as the manifestation of a popular anxiety that the British had been adulterating flour with ground cow-bones.

For Homi Bhabha, who examines the distribution of chapattis in his essay 'By Bread Alone: Signs of violence in the mid-nineteenth century',⁶² the ambivalence of the 'bread as symbol' provides the core of a thesis in which the 'absence of the validity of interpretation [for both indigenous soldier/villager, and colonial administrator]', opens up a discourse of 'panic'. In Bhabha's argument this (mutual) panic, 'as psychic effect and social fantasy', can be read as a 'potent form of [indigenous] political identification and guerilla warfare'.⁶³

Bhabha's thesis is persuasive, but perhaps relies too heavily on the idea of a common cross-cultural confusion over the exact meaning of bread distribution. Recalling Walter Ong's excellent monograph, *Orality and Literacy*, and in particular his work on pre-literate iconographic symbols, we must beware of attempting to perceive symbolic, non-textual 'labels' such as *peepul* leaves or pieces of bread in terms of a scripted semiotic. As Ong argues, within a pre-literate or (in the case of nineteenth-century India) a largely non-literate society, 'these tags or labels do not at all name what they refer to ... these quiescent, unspoken symbols [are] something else again. They [are] "signs" as words are not'.⁶⁴

Thus, for the militant *sipahi* and the insurgent villager, the most important aspect of this non-literate, 'symbolic' communication is not, as Bhabha would have us believe, its scope for confusion and panic since a margin of ambivalent interpretation is built into the symbol anyway. Rather, in relation to this analysis, the most salient aspect of these tokens must be their use in donating and mobilising rebellion across a wide, often culturally diverse, area. Whatever these symbols represent locally, they work in a wider more uniform sense to provide an idea of collective oppression from which insurgency can arise. George Lefebvre stresses a similar form of collectivised insurgent identity when, talking of peasant uprisings during the 'Great Fear' of the French Revolution, he states: 'it is the subjugation of the peasant masses to a common source of exploitation

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ong 1982: 76.

and oppression that makes them rebel even before they learn how to combine in peasant associations'.⁶⁵

Because of their collectivising function and, more importantly, because of their intrinsic movement across the South-Asian landscape, these rumoured discourses operate concurrently to refigure sociopolitical space (in an almost cartographic way) as they mobilise the rural population into rebellion. This idea can be clarified if we take into account concepts of spatial textualisation made by theorists such as Michel de Certeau, and Henrietta Moore. For Moore, 'the truth of the [spatial] text resides in practice',⁶⁶ and therefore, by definition, movement across space can represent, in the subaltern instance, the 'practice' of an alternative text. Hence, the fact that symbolic tokens such as pieces of bread had to be carried from village to village across colonial regional and political boundaries may be defined as a type of political pilgrimage and remapping, in which the authority of colonial territorial orders is largely ignored.

As the only instance (before the construction of a subcontinental national identity by the Congress party) in which most of Northern and central India was ideologically collectivised in resistance to the colonial presence, these rumoured discourses exist on an epistemic plane which contradicts the rationalised, binary, and hierarchical models of space enshrined in colonial texts. In short, insurgent rumour and the exchange of symbolic tokens operate within the characteristic form of what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have termed the rhizome: 'an acentred, non hierarchical nonsignifying system ... defined solely by a circulation of states'.⁶⁷ In relation to this analysis Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of the rhizome as a root system, with its multiple connections, its ruptures, evasions, and chaotic stabilities is particularly interesting. This is because, as improvised narrative description of colonial 'nature' and intent, indigenous cartridge and bread rumours can be seen to infiltrate and undermine more obviously structured expressions of colonial or territorial authority.

This proliferating process of challenge is most evident in the way that insurgent rumour, and the rapid process of anti-colonial insurgency

⁶⁵ George Lefebvre, see Guha 1983: 256.

⁶⁶ Moore 1986: 89.

⁶⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 1988: 11.

which follows it, serves to undercut the authority of representational structures such as the colonial ethnographic or cartographic text. Here the allegorical function of the colonial map becomes redundant, as charted itineraries of direct and indirect rule are undermined and refigured in another, more improvised, dynastic imagining in which royal centres such as Delhi and Lucknow are the primary loci, and towards which insurgent groups gravitated independently.

Turning now to more formally narrative aspects of insurgent discourse we are confronted, once again, with socio-religious modes of talking about the colonial other, although here religious narratives work to provide more specific, detailed constructions of the colonial. In the following passage, taken from a speech made by Maulvi Ahmadhullah Shah (a Sufi demagogue from Agra, who had called for a *jihad* against the British), we find a permutation of the religious 'pollution' fear which informed the cartridge rumour.

Before the quarrel regarding the cartridges took place ... these accursed English had written to the impure Victoria thus: If your majesty will permit us to kill 15 Moulvies out of every hundred Pundits, as well as five hundred thousand of Hindu and Mohammedan sepahis ... we will in a short time make all the people of India 'Christians'. Then that ill-starred polluted bitch gave her consent to the spilling of innocent blood.⁶⁸

As Ranajit Guha points out, in this case the fear of contamination is built into a full-scale 'campaign of genocide authorised by the Queen of England', and develops as a narrative which addresses itself to the complete hierarchy of colonial control. This narrativisation of rumour is developed in a later proclamation by the Maulvi, in which he exhorts every able-bodied person to fight back against Company rule: 'all the people whether men, women or children ... ought to ... stone to death the English in the same manner as the swallows stoned to death the king of the elephants'.⁶⁹

In the Maulvi's rhetoric, we find a direct reference to Qur'anic allegory, in this instance the early Meccan surah 'Al-Fil' or 'The Elephant'. In

⁶⁸ Guha and Spivak 1988: 171.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 173.

secular interpretations of this surah, the 'owner[s] of the elephant' are believed to be the rulers of Al-Yaman, who attacked Mecca in the year of the prophet's birth, and who had a war-elephant in their army which much impressed the Arabs. Their attack was thwarted, in Krenkow's⁷⁰ opinion, by swarms of insects carrying a contagious disease, which depleted the invaders and forced them to retreat. Again, subtexts of contamination provide, coincidentally this time, the reference frame through which the relationship between coloniser and colonised could be articulated — in Ahmadhullah Shah's speech, the metaphorical 'contagion' of invasion being counteracted by a divine plague directed against the attackers.

Obviously, any correlations between qur'anic allegory and the popular narratives of nineteenth-century peasant-insurgency are open to a wide range of permutations, and I am not trying to argue for some specific, causal relationship. What is more salient in terms of indigenous identity and the narrative re-presentation of 'homeland' during the rebellion is the marked sense of solidarity between Hindus and Muslims. Even where Ahmadhullah Shah's call to arms depends upon an Islamic concept such as *jihad*, this is balanced by statements of cross-religious solidarity, couched in nostalgic references to the spiritually tolerant rule of the first Mughal kings: 'formely the Mohammedan kings protected the lives and property of the Hindoos as [they] protected [their own]'.⁷¹

Colonial 'Mutiny' Narratives.

Compared with the fragments and reported narratives through which historians such as Ranajit Guha and Guatam Badrah have excavated a subaltern account of 1857, colonial documentation of the rebellion stands as an incredibly massed and diverse textual stock. Locating broad themes in these colonial accounts, we become aware of nothing less than a crisis occurring in the journalistic, 'picturesque' genre, exemplified by Honoria Lawrence's writing. Here, as the authority of texts such as the colonial map start to break down, so too do these associated, aestheticised modes of political and cultural representation.

Because, as I have already asserted, texts such as Honoria Lawrence's

⁷⁰ Pickthall 1992: 669.

⁷¹ Guha and Spivak 1988: 173.

journal provide a representative economy which acts to normalise the colonised, the moment the native fails to validate this representation through his/her 'passive' acquiescence, the authority of the colonial text becomes increasingly fragile. The words of the Bombay correspondent for *The Times*, written at the start of the rebellion, give a clear picture of the nature of this ideological breakdown:

It is under such circumstances, however, that the sepoy's have not only mutinied, but have done what they have done to the *bodies* of English people ... they have *broken the spell of inviolability* that seemed to attach to an Englishman as such and have plunged headlong into this horrible abyss of cruelty [My Italics].⁷²

As we will see shortly in the journals of Harriet Tytler, who lived through the blockade at Delhi, and Mrs Harris, who survived the siege of the Lucknow residency, the breaking of the 'spell of inviolability' causes the colonial narrative to collapse in on itself. Dislocated from its former narrative construction of the indigenous other, the colonial narrative re-locates itself in the lowest common denominator of imperial authority, namely, the 'bodies of English people'. Thus, the landscape of empire ceases to be an area across which colonial writers can refigure the romantic or biblical imagination, and in Tytler's and Harris's narratives corporeal violation or dismemberment become the gruesome focal points of the text. The following passage is a typical example from Harriet Tytler's journal:

Many ... poor unprotected women [were killed] amongst whom was a beautiful young girl, the wife of an officer of the 11th. When the husband returned to the bungalow, what did he behold but his poor young wife lying dead in the compound, perfectly nude, with her unborn babe lying on her chest.⁷³

Although European women and children were killed at places which were later memorialised in the imperial imagination, such as Jhansi and Cawnpore (now Kanpur), there is little evidence to show that these killings were accompanied by widescale instances of rape or mutilation.

⁷² *The Times* 1857: August 31st.

⁷³ Harriet Tytler, see Sattin 1986: 113.

However, unlike the indigenous rumoured narratives of despoilment which, in some ways, they resembled, these stories of mutilation were quickly lifted out of the fluid, anonymous medium of rumour and set in the authorising type-faces of colonial and metropolitan presses.

In his essay 'What is an Author', Michel Foucault highlights the change in status which accompanies a discourse sanctioned by the name of an author: 'an [authorised] speech ... must be received in a certain mode and ... in a certain culture must receive a certain status'. And in addition to being legitimised by authorship, the exigencies of colonial counter-insurgency ensured the status of these narratives because, as Jenny Sharpe points out, they preserved the agency of colonial masculinity, whilst simultaneously refiguring popular rebellion as a crime against women:

once a European man is struck down ... his mortality is exposed and sovereign status bought low. A discourse of rape ... helped manage the crisis in authority so crucial to colonial self-representation at the time.⁷⁴

We have already seen how commentators such as Honoria Lawrence used biblical frames of reference to normalise the South-Asian landscape within the generic limits of what Sara Suleri has termed the 'Feminine Picturesque'. And during the rebellion itself we see a return to biblical narrative as a means by which colonial women writers normalise, and reconcile themselves to, the violence of their environment. Thus Mrs Harris, during the protracted seige at Lucknow, writes

how intensely applicable to us are those petitions in the Litany. From plague, pestilence and famine, from battle, murder, and from sudden death, Good Lord deliver us! It seems as if they never came home to one's heart before.⁷⁵

For Suleri this re-appropriation of biblical narratives marks a development of the picturesque, in which the 'pilgrim is transformed into penitent'.⁷⁶

The transformation which Suleri locates can be seen to occur in contiguity with the increasing use of the raped/mutilated body of the

⁷⁴ Sharpe 1993: 67.

⁷⁵ Harris 1858: 61.

⁷⁶ Suleri 1992: 99.

colonial woman as the archetypal symbol in general accounts of the rebellion. Indeed, some female commentators articulated their own experiences by co-opting their bodies as central signs within their own narratives, and transforming themselves into literal icons of penitence. This trope finds its most extreme form in Tytler's narrative, where she relates how she entertained her daughter for 'hours' during the monotony of the conflict by making herself bleed:

At last a bright idea entered my head ... which was to scratch holes in my feet and tell her she must be my doctor and stop their bleeding ... No sooner did my wounds heal, when she used to make them bleed again for the simple pleasure of stopping the blood.⁷⁷

Here, in direct response to grotesque violence of her surroundings, Tytler turns the nurturing orders of Victorian motherhood into a grotesque scratched self-inscription, which echoes the classic 'penitential' sign of Christianity, the stigmata.

In these instances it is not so much the complicity of colonial women's writing within the project of counter-insurgency which is at issue. Instead, borrowing a phrase from Spivak out of context, it is 'the crucial instrumentality of women as symbolic objects' in colonial discourses which makes itself evident. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, this symbolic appropriation of both an idealised figure of Woman and the female body as discursive site recurs again and again in the ideological construction of national and communal identities during the struggle for independence.

*

Apart from reinforcing certain hegemonic narratives of indigenous sexuality and violent miscegenation, the colonial representation of rebellion set up other important resonances in the way South-Asians would represent themselves politically in the coming years. To be more specific, after 1857 the colonial perception of the sub-continent exhibited an increased reliance on models of primordial communal antagonism. By 1888, the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, could observe that 'the most patent characteristic of our Indian cosmos ... is its division into two mighty

⁷⁷ Suleri 1992: 102.

political communities, as distinct from each other as the poles asunder'.⁷⁸

Returning to Tytler's narrative we find that the relative solidarity which existed between Hindu and Muslim *sipahis* during the rebellion is thus redefined as an anomaly, precisely because it confounds hegemonic ideas of a communally divided indigenous society: '[during the rebellion] the Mohammedans and the Hindus were one, their bitter antagonism to each other, which had always been our safeguard so far, was for a time overcome'.⁷⁹

Both the speed with which the rebellion started (the 'illusion of simultaneity' which Guha finds in cases of peasant insurgency), and the 'anomalous' solidarity which bound Hindu and Muslim insurgents together in a common cause, were seen by colonial commentators as proof of an elite Muslim conspiracy. This view was reinforced by the rebel attempt to reinstate the Mughal ruler of Delhi, Bahadur Shah, during the conflict. Again, we find Tytler's narrative working within these specious communal and political paradigms as she reduces anti-colonial insurgency to the work of a manipulative, religiously-militant Muslim aristocracy: 'The gullible Hindus ... would soon find their mistake for the Mohammedan meant to rule by the edge of his sword, which would also be used to proselytise the poor idol-worshippers'.⁸⁰

In counterpoint to the political agendas of the divide and rule policy, this particular British construction of communal division proved, as Bipan Chandra points out, one of the most 'servicable' ideological narratives of later British Imperialism in India. Indeed, 'as theories of civilising mission, white man's burden [and] welfare of the ruled were increasingly discredited', the maintenance of harmonious communal co-existence, and the protection of minority groups 'was increasingly offered as the main justification for ... British rule'.⁸¹

Elite Mughal Responses to the 1857 Rebellion.

Whilst the the oral narratives of rumour and religious militancy became effective ideological vehicles for indigenous *sipahi* and peasant

⁷⁸ Harris 1992: 169.

⁷⁹ Sattin 1986: 112.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 109.

⁸¹ Chandra 1989: 408.

insurgency, the scripted poetic and narrative forms of the Mughal elite did not shape themselves quite as flexibly to the political environment of 1857. If we look at contemporary courtly poetic forms such as the Urdu/Persian *ghazal*, we find little ideological contiguity with the subaltern narratives already discussed here. Instead, Mughal literature tends to operate in a more self-orientated and passive way. Indeed, these discourses, when they do act to displace and counter the hegemonic stock of colonialism, do so not by locating a threatening colonial other, but by focussing on their own (changed) subject-position in relation to the colonial.

The reasons for this political divergence, as I shall argue here, were partly socio-cultural, and partly due to the rigid formal aesthetics of Urdu poetry and prose forms. In the work of the most famous Urdu poet of this period, Mirza Asadullah Khan (known traditionally as Ghalib), the tension between courtly poetic and prose forms and the effective liquidation of the Mughal court at Delhi at the end of the rebellion gives rise to works which often exist in the interstices of insurgent and anti-insurgent discourses. It is this strikingly ambivalent position which I want to draw out now.

Initially, the most obvious difference between popular subaltern narratives such as rumour, and the elite art-forms of the Mughal oligarchy can be seen to lie in the economic and material contexts of their production. Because of their inherently oral, anonymous nature, rumoured narratives could be disseminated, repeated, and modified in bazaars and villages with comparatively little risk of colonial reprisal. For the intellectuals and poets of the Mughal courts, however, whose works were invariably recorded, the fact that politically 'charged' material might lead to incrimination in changed political circumstances proved a very real threat.

Personal discretion in political matters was also a product of the fact that Mughal poets normally survived through a complex system of aristocratic patronage. Whilst the British indirectly controlled, and continued to annex regional princely states (not to mention the emperor's court at Delhi), this system of patronage was dependent, to a large extent, on the whims of the British administration. The fact of this financial

dependency is clearly evident in Ghalib's correspondence before the rebellion, a great deal of which involves his attempt to secure a pension which had been refused by the British in 1831.⁸² Hence, the position of Mughal poets at the courts of Delhi and Lucknow in the early 1850s must be seen as irrevocably linked to the Mughal status quo, and via this to the British, who covertly controlled the Mughal courts. Here, insurgency represented not a clear-cut issue of popular rebellion against colonial domination, but instead a threatening personal gamble for those who chose to proclaim definite political allegiances.

Taking these factors into account we can define in Ghalib's writing a world-view in which cross-cultural differences between coloniser and colonised are elided in favour of a hierarchical perspective in which insurgency represents a threat to Muslim elite and British colonial alike. In this sense Ghalib's work echoes the class-based colonial reaction to rebellion that Guha locates, in which subaltern insurgents were labelled as irrational mobs who disseminated 'the lies of the bazaar'.⁸³ For Ghalib, peasant insurgency represented a dangerous subversion of natural order. In the following passage from one of his ghazals this comes across clearly.

Hidden in my constructions are ways of ruin [ing] :
The warm blood of a [peasant/farmer] has in it the
potential [of revolt] as there is potential electricity
hidden in unthreshed corn.⁸⁴

When Ghalib actually mentions the coming rebellion his poetic stance is politically distanced and cynical, drawing attention to the personal misery which will result:

Some feeling souls are waiting
For revolution
Making those who have found happiness
Unhappy again.⁸⁵

There is not the space here to do critical justice to the examples of verse quoted above, or to draw out the subtleties of the punning,

⁸² Ghalib even went so far as to travel to Calcutta to appeal to the British authorities. Russell and Islam 1969: 45.

⁸³ Guha 1983: 259.

⁸⁴ Ghalib, see Ahmad 1971: 27.

⁸⁵ Ghalib, see Ali 1992: 56.

aphoristic poetic style which became Ghalib's trademark. Suffice to say that in a line such as 'Hidden in my construction are ways of ruin[ing]', the oxymoron of 'construction/ruining' hints at the esoteric pronouncements of Sufi metaphysics, and ensures that we read the social comment on the peasants as part of a dual, social and natural metaphor for spiritual fallibility.

The difficulties in defining Ghalib's political reaction to the rebellion become more pronounced in the prose he produces during 1857-8. His writing of this period splits into two broad strands. Of primary importance here is Ghalib's *distanbu*, or diary, which has been read by most critics as stridently public in its intended readership. As a narrative record of events it would effectively prove Ghalib's non-participation in the rebellion. The second strand of writing is made up of Ghalib's private correspondence, which forms itself as a more candid reaction to the conflict in Delhi.

Ghalib's *distanbu* is of particular relevance to this analysis because it can be read as a cross-cultural petition directed at the colonial forces. Because of this, the *distanbu* represents a reaction to the British which is slyly counter-discursive, refiguring indigenous literary convention in a strategy of self-representation which intervenes and rearticulates colonial notions of loyalty and service. Proof that the text was aimed at the British can be gleaned from Ghalib's correspondence with Har Gopal Taftah, who was supervising the publication. In a letter concerning the *distanbu* Ghalib wrote 'When you see the manuscript you will understand ... I shall present one copy to the Governor ... and through him one copy to Her Royal Highness the Queen ... Now you can guess what the style of writing is going to be'.⁸⁶

As Ghalib clearly asserts, the text he produces is 'styled' specifically with the subject-position of the coloniser in mind. By maintaining this as his central agenda, Ghalib simply emphasises the points at which, as we have already seen, his own notions of class, social order, and rebellion echo those of the British. Here, colonial narratives of discipline and racial categorisation — tropes which are normally absent from Ghalib's writing — are reworked into a narrative which enacts the same rhetorical manouvres as contemporary colonial discourses. As Gopi Chand Narang states, Ghalib

⁸⁶ Narang 1991: 6.

eloquently 'memorialis[ed]' ... those of his countrymen who had fought against the British call[ing] them 'traitors', 'filthy vagabonds, undisciplined people', [and] 'black-faced thieves'.⁸⁷

Similarly, expressions of the poet's own loyalty to the British only involve a change of names in the flowery epanepithetic addresses which were traditionally included in commissioned works, and Ghalib eulogises his intended audience with terms as ambitious as 'Lion-hearted conquerors' and 'Shining stars in the sky of leadership'.⁸⁸

However, the balance of this kind of cultural intermingling of colonial discourse and indigenous form is upset in the *distanbu* by Ghalib's desire to objectify both insurgent and colonial violence. Thus, in his documentation of events, we find that Ghalib cannot resist mourning the plight of rulers (and patrons) such as Bahadur Shah, and the general 'destruction' caused by the rebellion: 'The heart is not a piece of stone ... one must grieve over the deaths of rulers, and weep for the destruction of India'.⁸⁹ Here Ghalib's position departs quite noticeably from a categorical denunciation of the rebellion to a perspective more akin to his poetry, in which the narrator stands back and distances himself from 'orthodox' values and opinions. In the latter position, the Sufi tenets of Urdu poetry again become more evident, and explicit ideological biases are played down.

As examples of a commentary which is less obviously directed at the coloniser, and therefore perhaps more indicative of his true political sympathies, Ghalib's private correspondence gives us an unambiguous picture of his horror at the conflict, and his fears for his family and dependent brother. In a poem appended to a personal letter written in 1858, the terrible reprisals which the British carried out in Delhi come sharply into focus.

Now every soldier that bears arms
Is sovereign, and free to work his will ...

And in the street the victors hang and kill

⁸⁷ Ibid: 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid: 10.

The city is athirst for Muslim blood
And every grain must drink its fill.⁹⁰

Ghalib may well have expressed more overtly anti-colonial views in other correspondence of this period. Indeed, the fact that some of his closest friends were directed to burn any letters they received, during and directly after the rebellion, points to this conclusion. Even so, the greater part of Ghalib's writing exhibits a decidedly ambivalent stance towards the conflict of 1857, and reflects the despair of a man in late middle age for whom the destruction of courtly society meant a loss of livelihood and the disappearance of the socio-cultural environment which affirmed his poetic identity. The nearest that Ghalib comes to any clear political standpoint is when he laments the passing of Mughal culture, and I will return to this theme in Urdu and Persian poetics shortly.

**Endgames on the Courtly Chess-board:
Retrieving Histories of Anti-Colonial Insurgency.**

In the introduction to this thesis I highlighted the critical difficulty inherent in trying to plot the beginnings of a popular concept of homeland, and I now want to explore this issue further by returning to *The Chess Players*. As I have already stated, Ray's film is an adaptation of Premchand's Hindi short-story of the same name, *Satranj Ke Khilari*, published in 1924. As historical retrievals of the same event, Premchand's and Ray's versions of the annexation of Oudh highlight the respective cultural and political assumptions which they both bring to their awareness of the past. Thus, read comparatively, both texts echo the discontinuities and shifts in cultural self-narration which will occur in successive literary and cinematic representations of a South-Asian homeland throughout this thesis.

The differences between Premchand's and Ray's texts is most evident in their divergent treatments of the narratives of decadence and sensuality which I have already located in colonial descriptions of 'native rulers'. In his short-story, Premchand exaggerates this tone of decadence to what seems like an almost fairy-tale degree, plunging 'every sphere' of Lucknow

⁹⁰ Ghalib, see Russell and Islam 1969: 149.

society 'deep in luxurious living' and 'indulgence in the intoxication of luxury'.⁹¹ In this initial scene-setting, Premchand pins his colours firmly to the text, signalling political sentiments similar to those which caused Jawaharlal Nehru to condemn the last vestiges of this aristocratic culture (in the form of the princely rulers who sought to retain their political power after independence) as 'backward, ... feudal', and a 'fifth column' of colonialism.⁹² To ensure that the revolutionary nationalist message of his text is not overlooked, Premchand includes an authorial aside at the close of his narrative in which he stresses that Mir and Mirza's decadent apathy is 'not that [Gandhian] non-violence which delights the gods, but rather the sort of cowardice which makes even great cowards shed tears'.⁹³

Essentially, Premchand's short-story bears the hallmark of a set of attitudes which replicate the contemporary political ideals of a revolutionary Indian nationalist movement. Nowhere can this politicising of indigenous literature be seen more clearly than in the aims of the left-wing⁹⁴ All India Progressive Writer's Association, which was founded in London in 1935 by a group of radical Indian students and intellectuals. Published in the *Left Review* in February 1936, the AIPWA manifesto stated that in view of the struggle for home-rule taking place in India, it was 'the duty of Indian writers to give expression to the changes taking place ... and to assist the progress of the country'.⁹⁵ In accordance with this revolutionary approach, Indian literature of the past was condemned as 'irrational ... furtive and sentimental' and denounced because of its 'mystical-devotional obsession ... and emotional exhibitionism'.⁹⁶

Particularly towards the end of his life Premchand became a prominent figure in the AIPWA, and, placed in this context, his short stories can be read as indictments of bourgeois or reactionary feudal aspects of Indian society. Consequently, Premchand's *The Chess Players* can also be analysed in terms of this political bias, and this throws some light on his

⁹¹ Premchand 1988: 182.

⁹² Nehru 1960: 306.

⁹³ Premchand 1988: 189.

⁹⁴ Although many of the founding members of the AIPWA sympathised with communism, the organisation drew support from a broad political spectrum of writers and thinkers, including Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore.

⁹⁵ Russell 1992: 204-05.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

comparatively meagre treatment of the wider implications of the chess-metaphor, or the political details of the power struggle which Ray explores so carefully. Because Premchand's narrative is, above all, a political allegory, Mir and Mirza figure as little more than targets: comic exempla of the rottenness of the old order.

Turning to Premchand's Portrayal of the King of Oudh, the most obvious inference is that Wajid Ali Shah is as corrupt as his subjects, and his presence in the narrative is only really significant in terms of a Marxist critique of feudal waste and oppression: 'All the wealth of the countryside had been drawn into Lucknow to be squandered ... day by day the general misery was getting harder to bear ... wretched conditions [prevailed] throughout the land'.⁹⁷ Hence, Premchand's historical revision of the annexation of Oudh selectively filters out any potential cultural-political credibility or value in his portrayal of the King's rule. This perspective becomes most problematic when it starts to exhibit an ideological alignment with the myths of oriental degeneracy which form such a salient part of texts such as Knighton's *The Private Life of an Eastern King*.

Indeed, Premchand is so involved with the niceties of his Indianised Marxist perspective that he completely glosses over the economic facts of colonial indirect rule, and its contribution to the 'wretched' living conditions in Oudh. Even so, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect such a degree of detail in the short-story form, which Premchand otherwise handles so deftly, and which is more suited to abrupt emotive statements than to the filigree-work of cultural and political inflection which Ray brings to his narrative.

Produced in 1977, Ray's cinematic adaptation of Premchand's short story exhibits a more detailed engagement with the subtle ambivalences and loyalties which an analysis of Ghalib's work reveals as a fundamental part of the declining Mughal court. Compared with Premchand's allegorical standpoint, Ray's perspective is relatively free from the central cultural paradox inherent in nationalist literature, which Sudhir Chandra has located as 'alienation from tradition — from one's own culture — which [lies] in the consciousness of a need to belong to a newly constructed tradition'.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Premchand 1988: 187.

⁹⁸ Chandra 1992: 5.

Thus, if Premchand's nationalist historical re-vision passes a judgement on late Mughal society, Ray's cultural retrieval offers us a more ambivalent picture of the past. To make this point clearer we must remember that Ray's inclusion of the second diplomatic chess-game, played by the British administration during their annexation of the kingdom of Oudh, represents a 'balancing' of both aspects of Ray's identity as 'Indian/Bengali' and as 'post-colonial'. By retaining Premchand's framing narrative of Mir and Mirza intact, Ray keeps a sense of the mannered decadence of Lucknow society. However, by opening up the contrapuntal political narrative of annexation alongside the main narrative, he goes beyond the manichean orders of 'tradition' and 'modernity', upon which nationalist writers such as Premchand structured their work. My reading is reinforced by Ray's description of his work:

Easy targets don't interest me very much ... I didn't see *Shatranj* as a story where one could openly take sides and take a stand. I saw it more as a contemplative ... view of the clash of two cultures ... I also took into account the many half-shades that lie in between these two extremes.⁹⁹

Outlining the cultural legitimacy of the court as a political counter to colonial rule, Ray's depiction of Wajid Ali Shah emphasises these 'half-shades' as the king 'struts and frets' his last political hours on the courtly stage; a stage which, as Nandlal has inadvertently prophesied, has been reduced (in chess terms) to the last 'eighth rank' where (in English chess) 'a pawn can be exchanged for a queen'.¹⁰⁰

In these last 'palace' scenes, Ray uses the cultural accomplishments of the late Mughal aristocracy as a creative reply to previous depictions of the court environment. In Ray's film the studied poetic anguish with which Wajid Ali Shah reacts to his own imminent demise becomes an articulation of his cultural subject-position in relation to the colonial. Exemplifying this point, one particular scene in Ray's film comes to mind. It depicts Wajid Ali Shah's minister, who has just returned from his final, informal meeting with the colonial resident, Outram, waiting to deliver news of the planned annexation whilst the king watches a graceful

⁹⁹ Satyajit Ray, see Robinson 1989: 251.

¹⁰⁰ Ray: 1977.

*kathak*¹⁰¹ performance. Drawing the tension of the scene out to near breaking point, Ray focuses on the performance for almost six minutes, before the music and dance slow to a stop, followed almost imperceptibly by the chimes of a clock in the background, softly striking an English sequence of notes.

This is the exact moment at which the colonially-constructed 'performance' of Wajid Ali Shah's 'independent' kingship comes to a close. Indeed, to refer to the much-quoted passage from Donne's 'Meditation XVII', it is the point at which the illusion of Oudh as a political island, 'intire of itselfe', can no longer be maintained. The state is now part of the directly-ruled colony: a 'peece of the [British sub-] continent',¹⁰² and at the end of the *kathak* dance the bell 'tolls' for both the king and the death of the courtly culture fostered under his rule.

Seeing his chief minister in tears, the king forestalls his announcement by stating grimly that Outram must have been singing *ghazals* to him, 'for nothing but poetry and music should make a man weep'.¹⁰³ This is a beautiful piece of period detail on the part of Ray, and stands as a comment which could have been voiced in any Urdu *ghazal* of the time. It is also a statement which draws our attention to the cultural tenor of Wajid Ali Shah's self-perception and the aesthetic mode in which he will, increasingly, frame his loss of state.

To understand how this 'framing' occurs we must refer again to the Urdu and Persian poetic traditions in which Ghalib worked, and to the elegant, controlled verse of the most admired Urdu poet of the eighteenth century, Mir. Born in 1724, Mir grew up in a political world which, like Ghalib's, was far from secure. The last great Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, had died in 1707 and the political vacuum left by his death meant that Afghan leaders such as Nadir Shah were able to invade central India and take Delhi in 1740, massacring its inhabitants and looting the Red Fort of its greatest treasures. After living for most his life in Delhi, Mir gained patronage at the court of Lucknow in 1782, but his verse remained deeply infused with nostalgia for Delhi, and the 'golden age' before its ruin.

As a cultural predecessor of Ghalib, Mir's poetry exhibits a similar debt

¹⁰¹ A type of dance which developed in Lucknow during Wajid Ali Shah's reign.

¹⁰² Donne 1987: 126.

¹⁰³ Ray 1977.

to Sufi metaphysics, and Mir could not help but see reflections of his own mutable human condition in the political-cultural decline of the Mughal capital. In Mir's poetry, the motif of the ruined city develops as a metaphor for themes such as the illusory nature of earthly happiness, and the destruction (in love) of the 'kingdom of the heart':

The kingdom of the heart, where you had ruled supreme
An age, now lies alas, deserted and in ruins ...
My heart, like Delhi lies in ruins now.¹⁰⁴

In this verse Mir's poetic symbolism prefigures, in a very striking way, the lament for a ruined Delhi which echoes so strongly through Ghalib's writing after 1857. By making this thematic connection we must not doubt the sincerity of Ghalib's reaction to the destruction of late Mughal Delhi, but rather recognise that in his lament for the city he is using a trope which has already become part of a poetic tradition in Mir's work. In his informative essay, 'The Muslims of Upper India and the Shock of the Mutiny', Francis Robinson actually locates this poetic form — as practiced by Ghalib — as a genre of Urdu verse known as *Shahr-e-Ashub*,¹⁰⁵ or 'elegy on the death of the city'.¹⁰⁶

Although, historically, Wajid Ali Shah's poetry was less influenced by Islamic mystical themes and more concerned with the formalities of a light poetic style, it is the tradition of the poetic lament-for-homeland which Ray exploits in his depiction of the king's approaching loss of state. Developing this theme in a later scene in which the king rails against his courtiers as he realises the inevitability of the British takeover, Ray emphasises the king's political resignation through his recitation of one of his own poems:

Jab chhorh chaley Lakhnau negari
Kaho hal adam par kya guzeri ...
When we left our beloved Lucknow,
See what [tragic fate] befell us¹⁰⁷

The poetic influences of Mir and Ghalib seem very apparent in these lines. Furthermore, in Wajid Ali Shah's increasing reliance on the forms

¹⁰⁴ Mir, see Schimmel 1975: 181.

¹⁰⁵ A literal translation would be 'city-of-tumult' or 'city-of-upheaval'.

¹⁰⁶ Francis Robinson, see Hasan and Gupta 1993: 192.

¹⁰⁷ Ray: 1977.

of an indigenous poetic heritage to convey his predicament we realise that the king is 'exchanging' the political part which he has been encouraged to play under the British, for the self-dramatising cultural expressions of Urdu poetics: a last, more self-affirming role, which allows him some degree of cultural pride in Ray's historical revision.

This rather subtle process of 'performative' crossover reaches a conclusion (in Ray's film) when Wajid Ali Shah, in his final diplomatic confrontation with Outram, states: 'Company *Bahadur*, you can take away my crown, but you cannot take away my dignity'. The king then declines to sign the treaty of abdication, saying to Outram: 'I can bare my head for you but I cannot sign'. His actions at this point can again be analysed most clearly in relation to the *ghazal* tradition. Indeed, to conclude this chapter, an analogue of the cultural political strategy he employs in denying the validity of the diplomatic 'game' of annexation which the British have played presents itself in 'Ghazal 28' of Ahmad's translation of Ghalib's work (here I quote from William Stafford's poetic version of the literal translation).

You sensual novices, you are caught on a [chess] board
[this evening] you stagger and pour away your lives ...

But in the cold morning, abandoned by revellers -
No heaven, none of that old ardour.

A candle, ravaged from the carousing,
Has guttered out; it too is silent, without any flame.¹⁰⁸

The *ghazal* quoted above is very telling because it echoes so consistently the central motif of Ray's film, where Mir and Mirza become the archetypal 'sensual novices' caught in a *paan* chewing, hookah smoking stupor over their (literal) chess game, whilst the political world around them starts to 'gutter out'. However, if we read this poem in relation to Wajid Ali Shah's moving poetic self-characterisation, a slightly different pattern emerges. Here indigenous cultural value is achieved through a recognition and denial of the games of the world, and in the last instant, unlike Mir and Mirza, the king steps back from the colonial check-mate and bravely faces the 'cold morning' of direct imperial rule on his own terms.

¹⁰⁸ Ahmad 1971: 127.

Chapter Two**Village-India:
Nationalist Writings of the 1920s and 1930s.**

I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom ... then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns ... we can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life ... My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free to hold their own against any one in the world. There will be neither plague, not cholera nor smallpox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury.

(Mohandas K. Gandhi: Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5th, 1945)¹

As we have already seen in Chapter One, resistance to colonial rule, and cross-cultural negotiation over the shape and meaning of a notion of homeland in South Asia, did not start with the foundation of nationalist bodies such as the Congress. However, in terms of scope, organisation, political and cultural make-up, and leadership, the differences between the rebellion of 1857 and the nationalist struggle for home-rule in the first half of this century are striking. Perhaps the most important difference lies in the fact that the Congress, along with subsequent indigenous communal and political movements, conducted its struggle for national liberation according to the political idioms of the coloniser. Indeed, in their ideological makeup, nationalist movements such as the Congress were essentially 'alien' political structures.

National feeling did not germinate of its own accord in the soil of India; rather, it was an exotic growth implanted by foreign hands and influences. Without the existence of the British regime ... [and the element of foreign domination implicit in this system] the beginnings of Indian nationalism would be difficult to envisage.²

In the first fifteen years of its existence the Congress party remained very much a vehicle for the propagation of 'national feeling' and a 'western'-style secular, democratic political vision. As Bipan Chandra points out, 'the politics of popular participation ... was new to India. The

¹ Gandhi 1997: 150-51.

² Amirthanayagam 1982: 70.

notion that [party] politics was not the preserve of the few but the domain of everyone was not yet familiar to the people. No modern political movement was possible till people realised this'.³ Responding to this problem the early Congress operated initially under the sanction of British liberals such as A. O. Hume to create a nationally unified foundation for itself, and took care not to antagonise the colonial administration until this popular base had been well established.

Hence, in political terms the early Congress leaders, far from denying or partially 're-inscribing' the colonial hold on the subcontinent according to their own political-cultural agendas (as the rebels of 1857 had done), tacitly accepted a European, or a North American national-political framework as a model for their own movement. Needless to say, this framework was soon adapted and Indianised by leaders such as Gandhi who sought to mobilise wider support for home-rule. Existing alongside the older structure of colonial government, the Congress also rapidly appropriated the technological resources of the West, in the form of the printing press, the map, and the rapidly expanding rail-network.⁴ Defending the appropriation of Western political forms within South-Asian nationalist movements, Mulk Raj Anand, writing in 1942, stated:

It is not that men borrow each other's ideas ... but that one fact of history begets another... it is not British ideas of this, that or the other thing, which have created the Indian national movement, but the British Government ... which, by introducing a system of railways, post and telegraphs and establishing a central bureaucracy, created the conditions for a movement of protest against this machine.⁵

It is important, however, not to let Anand's dialectic model of nationalist development eclipse the individual contributions of various national leaders. Indeed, if the national movement (and the means by which it could be implanted) was largely the effect of 'foreign influences', or systems, then its early technicians were no less the culturally hybrid heirs of late British colonialism in South-Asia. Even when their political

³ Chandra 1989: 76.

⁴ For Gandhi, however, the railways symbolised one of the evils of western-style modernisation, and a waste of government funds compared to irrigation and agricultural development. See Gandhi 1997: 46.

⁵ Anand 1963: 116.

rhetoric shaped itself along popular 'indigenised' lines, politicians such as Tilak remained more the offspring of Macaulay's vision of 'a class of interpreters' than Nana Sahib or the Rani of Jhansi had ever been.

This was particularly the case for nationalist leaders who rose to prominence in the 1920s and 1930s, such as Nehru, Gandhi, and Jinnah, who had all been through some form of higher education in Britain. For them, education in the colonial centre provided formal training in legislation, oratory, and debate. More importantly, it exposed them to the influence of contemporary liberal and radical anti-imperialist movements, and to a canon of Euro-American political and humanist philosophies. It was from this wider environment that cultural-political ideas and examples could be actively selected, reprocessed, and emulated. As Anand states, the ideological form of the national movements 'owed as much ... to the French Revolution, to the American Declaration of Independence, to the Irish struggle for Independence, and to ... the Russian Revolution as to British Liberalism'.⁶ Importantly, education within the colonial system also meant that future national leaders became acutely aware of the contradictions of political philosophy which underpinned imperial domination in South-Asia, and which allowed Britain to champion political and economic freedom as a fundamental right at home, while disallowing this freedom to their colonial subjects.

The fact that Nehru, Gandhi and Jinnah all received highly cosmopolitan educations meant that they faced inherent difficulties in formulating a sense of identity, in terms of both self and nation, during the struggle for decolonisation. Elleke Boehmer draws attention to the latent paradoxes of this position when she describes the experience of decolonisation and national self-definition as a 'double process of cleaving':

cleaving in both senses of the word: cleaving from, moving away from colonial definitions, transgressing the boundaries of colonialist discourse, and, in order to effect this, cleaving to, borrowing, taking over.⁷

Although Boehmer is speaking specifically about strategies of national

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Boehmer 1995: 105-06.

cultural liberation (a point I will address shortly) her formulation applies with almost equal relevance to the political and philosophical aspects of South-Asian nation-formation in this period. As Boehmer succinctly puts it, 'to be true to oneself in borrowed robes, that was the core dilemma of the colonial nationalist'.⁸

By wearing the 'borrowed robes' of the West, the new nationalists immediately invited the scepticism and suspicion of less culturally hybrid groups in South-Asia. In rural areas and among members of the religious elite, it was feared that the Western-educated political leaders would, in the course of national liberation, destroy the traditional cultural structures of their people. Among Muslim communities these fears had already been partially realised when Sayyid Ahmed Khan (the reforming founder of the 'Anglo Oriental' college at Aligarh) revised parts of the Qur'an to fit his philosophy of Western style modernisation. The satirical Urdu poet Illahabadi was quick to capitalise on the conflict between the 'reformers' and the 'traditionalists', and stated in his characteristically ribald way:

I wear a loincloth- and am looked at with suspicion and contempt.
I put on trousers- and arouse men's anger and hostility.
Perhaps I'd better drop them both and go around with nothing on
Then maybe men will feel my charm and I shall feel their sympathy.⁹

The fact that the metaphor of clothes or clothing recurs so frequently in descriptions of the situation of the metropolitan colonial subject is very pertinent, because it draws our attention to the dramatic philosophical and cultural self-reinventions which nationalist leaders had to effect on their eventual return to India. Gandhi's entrance onto the Indian political stage after his triumphs in South Africa is perhaps the most striking example of this. The young man who, years earlier, had stepped off the boat at Southampton in an incongruous white flannel suit had managed to remake himself by returning to India as a messianic figure dressed in a 'Kathiawadi cloak, turban and dhoti'.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid: 115.

⁹ Russell 1992: 201.

¹⁰ Gandhi 1982: 339.

Gandhi's reincarnation as a rural villager clad in homespun allegorised his simultaneous transformation of the methods of national protest, that is, his use of the implements and rituals of Hindu rural culture to politicise the masses. Comparatively early on in the national movement, words and ideas lifted from Hindu philosophy and mythology had been used to signify new nationalist issues. As Bipan Chandra Pal pointed out, the key notion of *Swaraj* (the struggle for self-rule) was 'borrowed by politics from the ... Vedanta'.¹¹ However, in Gandhi's more integrated programme of *Hind Swaraj* the cause of national liberation became, more simply, a natural offshoot of personal ethical spirituality. And as part of this process, Gandhi paradoxically retained (and developed) certain cultural and historical notions which had formed an inherent part of the colonial hegemonic construction of India.

What must be made clear at this point is that because colonial discourses about India had effectively replaced the colonised with the colonial as the true subject of history, equating India with stasis and the West with linear progress in works such as Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, any cultural choices made by the national leaders became inherently historicist in their implications. In other words, reclaiming India from the colonial also meant attempting to renarrate a past that had already been heavily overdetermined by English commentators. A singularly enduring vision of India's past was produced in the late eighteenth century by orientalist and Sanskrit scholars such as William Jones. Foreshadowing Gandhi's politicised notion of a pre-modern *Ram Rajya* or the Age of Rama, Jones argued for the existence of a forgotten Vedic golden age in the subcontinent, worthy of European study in the manner of the classics. The orientalist interest in the early history of India developed on a more popular level in the nineteenth century through the work of commentators such as Edwin Arnold, whose translations of sacred texts Gandhi read whilst studying in London.¹²

For Nehru, who, in his personal political re-invention, favoured the more aristocratic uniform of *shervani* coat and Congress hat, the issue was not one of rejecting the technological and political forms of the West,

¹¹ Bipan Chandra Pal, see Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 206.

¹² Anthony J. Parel notes in his introduction to *Hind Swaraj* that Gandhi read Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, and his translation of the Gita in 1888. See Gandhi 1997: xlviii.

but of balancing them against the cultural and historical legacy of India. Thus, in Nehru's vision, the Indian village, although symbolising the massed poor of the subcontinent, could never be used as a model for India's political future. In a reply to the letter quoted at the start of this chapter, Nehru questioned Gandhi's assumption that 'a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence', and decried rural communities as 'backward'.¹³

In this sense (and in his personal history of the subcontinent, *The Discovery of India*) Nehru worked in the shadow of colonial historians such as James Mill who had vigorously challenged the Golden Age theses of conservative orientalists such as Jones. Although Mill was arrogantly convinced of the inherent inferiority of all things Indian, his 'anglicist' work did 'portray India as susceptible to change and reform ... reinsert[ing it] into a single historical narrative of progress'.¹⁴ Unwilling to translate himself as completely as Gandhi had done, Nehru thus sought to formulate a secular concept of India's national-cultural unity, while at the same time planning a centralised command-economy to ensure rapid industrial growth. Again, the metaphor of clothing is employed, this time in Nehru's description of his modernising aspirations for the new nation:

India was in my blood ... and yet ... To some extent I came to her via the West and looked at her as a friendly westerner might have done. I was eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity.¹⁵

The ideological differences and paradoxes which mark out Gandhi's and Nehru's respective visions of post-independent India are no less apparent in the political views of other national leaders of this period. In a speech to the All-India Youth Congress in 1928, the famous Bengali leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, attempted to unify divergent strains in the Congress party by calling for ideological reconciliation between 'the schools at Sabermati and Pondicherry' (respectively, the locations of Gandhi's and Aurobindo's ashrams) who favoured a political regression

¹³ Jawaharlal Nehru: letter to Gandhi, October 9th, 1945. See Gandhi 1997: 152.

¹⁴ Inden 1992: 158.

¹⁵ Nehru 1960: 37.

to 'the days of the bullock cart',¹⁶ and those politicians who blindly emulated the 'meaningless crazes' of European-style modernity :

I am not one of those who in their zeal for modernism [modernisation] forgot the glories of the past. We must take our stand on our past. India has a culture of her own which she must continue to develop ... In a word, we must arrive at a synthesis between our ancient culture and modern science ... We must resist the cry of 'Back to the Vedas' on the one side, and on the other the meaningless craze for fashion and change in modern Europe.¹⁷

In his speech, Bose represents the national liberation movement as a polarised entity. However, as the provenances of both Gandhi's and Nehru's national programmes testify, Bose's talk of a divided Congress overlooks the subtle cross-cultural ambivalences and syntheses which operated across the whole spectrum of nationalist opinion. Clearly, outward differences between members of the political elite who methodologically favoured or rejected the West masked a deeper and more extensive pattern of ideological negotiations, re-inscriptions, and political self-expressions which all necessarily operated in relation to the hegemonic construction of India by the West.

*

Turning now to indigenous literature, we find that the growth of nationalism before independence and, underlying it, the problems of reclaiming a cultural and historical sense of homeland are reflected in the predicaments faced by Indian writers as they tried to re-narrate the ideological space of the nation. For South-Asians writing in English, such as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao, foremost among these problems was the task of appropriating and transforming the linguistic and literary forms of the coloniser in order to express a uniquely different subject-position.

As we have already seen in Boehmer's description of the cosmopolitan-nationalist's dilemma of 'cleaving from', whilst 'cleaving to' colonial definitions, nationalist writers often expressed their identity in

¹⁶ Subhas Chandra Bose, see Hay 1988: 307.

¹⁷ Ibid.

'an inversion of imperial values if not of structures'.¹⁸ In post-colonial writing this strategy is perhaps most clearly apparent in the aesthetic agendas of the Francophone *Négritude* poets, who reworked negative colonial stereotypes of Africans into celebratory paeans to an authentic Black culture. Similarly, in South-Asia, invariably gendered stereotypes of eastern mysticism were sustained in the work of figures such as Tagore and reinforced in the complex network of borrowings which occurred between European Modernism and an orientalist economy of Asian and South-Asian religious mythology.¹⁹

Not only were writers such as Anand and Rao obliged to locate themselves in relation to the hegemonic constructions and discourses of colonialism. Like the future leaders who re-imagined 'national' India as they shivered in the university colleges and rented rooms of the metropolitan centre, they were constrained to work with a setting which was not a tangible presence, but a fiction constructed from the past and — in their cases — shaped by their political hopes for the future. And like the autobiographical and historical texts which leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru produced before Independence, the majority of novels of this period attempt to define and speak for a specific national or political group in India. Furthermore, in a manner which marks them out radically from later post-Independence narratives about South-Asia, theorised as 'migrant' literatures, the writers of the 1920s and 1930s sought, in various ways, to promote an essentialised idea of Indian identity which was firmly placed in the rural landscape of the subcontinent.

Because of this tendency to ratify national-cultural essences, literary attempts to reclaim the subcontinent were highly selective. Ernest Gellner, in his political reinterpretation of Emile Durkheim's work on religious faith as a form of social self-worship, points up this designating aspect in the social narratives of nationalism:

The community may no longer be seen through the prism of the divine, but nationalism has its own amnesias and selections which, even when they may be severely secular, can be profoundly distorting and deceptive.²⁰

¹⁸ Boehmer 1995: 100.

¹⁹ See Nandy 1988.

²⁰ Ernest Gellner 1983: 57.

To some extent, Gellner's thesis passes over interdependent linkages between religion and nationalism (which are particularly noticeable in a South-Asian context) in favour of a more ethnocentric model of linear progression from the sacred to the secular. However, his description of nationalism as a selective 'prism' throws certain generic or thematic elements in South-Asian literature into relief.

In these selective discourses the village develops as an archetypal space in which the nationalist (literary) elite can invoke a putative idea of 'the healthy, pristine, vigorous life of folk culture'.²¹ As Gellner makes clear in his work, nationalism does not come *from* these spaces but is instead imposed upon them from the metropolis: 'If nationalism prospers ... it revives, or invents, a local high (literate, specialist-transmitted) culture of its own, though admittedly one which will have links with the earlier folk-styles and dialects'.²² I will look more closely at the village as a literary setting shortly, but first I want to sketch out some of the other defining aspects of nationalist fictions.

Talking of the literary-cultural aspects of anti-colonial struggle in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon locates three consecutive phases in 'native writing'. The first stage is characterised by a form of cultural dependence and mimicry, during which the native 'gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power'. The second and third stages mark out a growing investment in the culture and then the politics of 'the people', as the indigenous writer 'remember[s] what he is', and then joins the political struggle and becomes an 'awakener of the people ... [producing] a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature'.²³

Although the development of forms such as the South-Asian novel can be plotted out according to Fanon's schema, a cursory glance over the prose of the 'twenties and 'thirties shows a certain degree of overlap between the last two stages of cultural 'remembrance' and 'combat'. In terms of this analysis, the most interesting aspect of Fanon's schema is that it adumbrates more clearly the generic choices made by nationalist writers. In the following passage, Fanon describes the second phase of cultural reclamation thus:

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid: 66.

²³ Fanon 1967: 179.

[Here] the native ... decides to remember what he is ... his childhood will be brought up out of the depths of memory; old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of borrowed aestheticism and a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies.²⁴

In South-Asian literature, this process of re-envisaging personal cultural connections gives rise to associated literary themes and genres. These include forms such as autobiography or *bildungsroman*, narratives of cultural return, nostalgic stories of childhood and/or rural life, and writing which recreates both the patterns and socio-cultural contexts of folk mythology.

As I have already hinted, these literary forms tend to share village-settings. The reasons for this are several, and perhaps the most obvious is the fact that the space of the village embodies not only a kind of (folk)cultural starting point — in the terminology of gendering nationalist discourse a ‘primordial womb’ — but also exists as a physically uncolonised space. Even though the villages of the sub-continent had been mapped and imaginatively ‘worlded’ in the texts of the coloniser they were places which saw little actual colonial intervention, save for the sporadic visits of the solitary, low-ranking district administrator so beloved of Kipling. Since most villages were only really touched by colonialism in secondary, economic ways, nationalist writers could use them as settings which conjured up both a pre-(British) colonial past, and post-(British) colonial, national future. They could also made to represent the worst, collectively-felt evils of colonialism: the zamindari system, and the economic exploitation of the colonised *en masse*.

In the difficult task of filtering out difference in the search for a collective national signifier, India’s myriad constellations of villages were also important because they provided a truly universal mean. Scattered across the subcontinent from Ladakh to the Malabar coast, from the Khyber pass to Assam, any one of them could stand, within contemporary fictional and political texts, as a tiny but recognisable metonym of the national whole. In the organicist vision of Gandhian nationalism, and its later manifestations, the villages became socio-religious ‘limbs’, essential component parts of the national ‘organism’: ‘If every village prospers, the

²⁴ Ibid.

country prospers and attains to glory. If every limb were to function smoothly, the whole body would function properly'.²⁵

Reading the village as a shared motif in nationalist fiction, I have structured this chapter around three primary texts which deal with rural communities in very culturally differentiated regions of South-Asia. In the first of the three novels which make up Mulk Raj Anand's 'Trilogy'; *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle* we find the main protagonist growing up in a village in the Punjab, coming into conflict with the traditions of his community, and eventually leaving to fight in the First World War. Bhibutibhushan Banerjee's novel *Pather Panchali* (translated from the Bengali) deals, similarly, with childhood in a rural village in Bengal, and Raja Roa's classic novel of the freedom struggle, *Kanthapura*, has as its main focus the Gandhian politicisation of a village community near Puttur in southern India.

²⁵ Bhave 1964: 45.

***Pather Panchali* : Translations and Film Adaptations.**

The first pre-Independence novel I want to address here is Bibhutibhushan Banerji's *Pather Panchali*. Unlike the other primary texts I have selected, Banerji's novel is the only indigenous-language work discussed in this chapter, and therefore requires a few cautious contextualising notes before it can be analysed. As a young novelist in the 1920s, Bibhutibhushan Banerji was part of a competitive circle of aspiring writers and intellectuals in Calcutta which included Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Satyendranath Datta and Kazi Nazrul Islam, all of whom wrote in the lengthening literary shadows cast by two of Bengal's most influential authors: Bankim Chandra Chatterji, and Rabindranath Tagore.²⁶ These writers found a receptive audience for their work in the well-educated and wealthy Calcutta *bhadralok* (middle-classes), and to cater for this market, large numbers of small-press periodicals and magazines such as Tagore's *Sadhana* and *Bharati* circulated the latest poetry and prose. Indeed, Banerji's novel, which only later appeared in book form, was first serialised, to much acclaim, between 1928-29 in the Bengali journal *Vichita*.

As well as being so profoundly part of an historical and regional-cultural moment, Banerji's text is also noteworthy when we juxtapose it with other nationalist texts written in English, such as Anand's *The Village*. Like Anand, Banerji employs a *bildungsroman* or *kunstlerroman* form, and both texts depict an eventual adolescent departure from the village-space, thus setting up strong, evocative associations between a political homeland, childhood, and the pastoral setting of the (regional) rural Indian community.

However, whilst Banerji, Anand, and Rao are all implicated in the ideological construction of nation, Banerji's novel is notable precisely in its avoidance of conspicuous political statement or content. Instead, Banerji prefers to address political issues more obliquely, by creating a less didactic vision of pastoral belonging. We must also remember that this is a text written for, about, and from within Bengali culture. In other words,

²⁶ Bankim's influence was posthumous - he had died in 1894. Tagore produced his best-known works in the early decades of the twentieth century, and died in 1941.

Banerji's literary strategy is not informed by the deracinating experience of metropolitan displacement (although he does write from an 'urban' exile in Calcutta), but by a more localised articulation of pre-independent regional identity.

Comparing Banerji's novel with Anand's *The Village*, which I will examine shortly, these different political and cultural agendas become clearer. Hence, as Anand's adolescent protagonist, Lal Chand, tries to escape from the nightmare of history, Banerji's Opu immerses himself in it; as Anand attempts to delineate the boundaries between superstitious myth and the concrete representation of the real, Banerji blurs these boundaries; and as Lal Chand's political individuality can only be sustained in exile, Opu's cultural identity draws directly from a constant, almost spiritual awareness of the past in Nishchindipur.

It is perhaps this absence of prescriptive political comment in Banerji's novel which has led to its historical malleability: as a work which becomes a representative narrative in later periods of Bengali history. It was partly the pastoral appeal of the village setting which attracted the Calcutta-born filmmaker Satyajit Ray to adapt Banerji's book into a full-length film in 1956. In the following passage Ray's choice of rural location is conveyed with a characteristic awareness of tone and atmospheric nuance.

To one born and bred in the city ... these explorations into the village ... opened up a new and fascinating world ... You wanted to fathom the mysteries of 'atmosphere'. Does it consist in the sights, or in the sounds? How to catch the subtle difference between dawn and dusk, or convey the grey humid stillness that precedes the first monsoon shower?²⁷

The film is such an effective re-working of Banerji's text, and is so widely acclaimed outside India as a formative example of Ray's oeuvre, that in western critical circles it is difficult to discuss Banerji's novel without calling attention to its cinematic counterpart. It is also highly probable that, had it not been for Ray's cinematic adaptation, Banerji would have suffered the same lack of acknowledgement outside the subcontinent as other major indigenous-language novelists such as Bankim.

In this chapter I shall work from T.W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji's 1968 UNESCO translation of *Pather Panchali*. In an excellent critical

²⁷ Ray 1992: 33-34.

summary of the various translations of Banerji's novel, Sujit Mukherjee points out that the Clark and Mukherji text suffers from a major flaw; namely, that the translators 'exceed their brief' in only translating 'the first two parts of the *Bangla* original'.²⁸ Thus, Clark and Mukherji, like Ray, choose to end the novel with Opu's departure from the village of Nishchindipur, and argue in their introduction (rather unconvincingly, in Sujit Mukherjee's view) that the following section, which describes the family's life in Benares, is 'something of an anti-climax', and that Banerji 'achieved ... coherence and dramatic unity without fully realising he had done so'.²⁹

As Sujit Mukherjee points out, on literary (-critical) grounds this is presumptuous, and changes the structure and overall tone of the text irrevocably, imposing a false sense of closure around the Nishchindipur sections. Unfortunately, the only other full-length translation is Monika Verma's 'remodelled' *rifacimento* text, which, in Mukherjee's opinion, 'departs too far from the original for [this] version to be regarded as reasonably representative'.³⁰ In Clark and Mukherji's text, the truncation of the original is only 'creative' inasmuch as it produces a novel more obviously shaped by the literary-cultural expectations of a Europe-based publishing market.

In comparison, Ray's film, influenced by the cinematic work of Jean Renoir and the photography of Henri Cartier-Bresson could be labelled a hybrid 'translation' itself. If so, it is a cultural adaptation rather than a linguistic re-interpretation, and to draw attention to this difference, and to the fact that my selection of the Clark and Mukherjee text is a scholarly compromise, I will refer henceforth to the latter by its English sub-title: *Song of the Road*, and to Ray's cinematic adaptation as *Pather Panchali*.

The Influence of Regional Nationalism, Folk Narratives, and Devotional Forms in *Song of the Road*.

In 1905, Lord Curzon's viceregalty was coming to a disastrous close with his decision to partition Bengal into communally-defined eastern and western sections. The colonial policy of partition was justified at the

²⁸ Mukherjee 1981: 89.

²⁹ Ibid: 88.

³⁰ Ibid: 89.

time by claims that it would facilitate administration in the region. Even so, Curzon's act of localised political surgery was more clearly in keeping with divisive British strategies which sought to disable nationalist *Swadeshi* opposition to the colonial presence in Bengal. Indeed, Andrew Fraser (a civil servant in Curzon's administration) points towards exactly this political objective when he concludes, in his memoirs, that the policy was a response to 'a conspiracy for the promotion of sedition and anarchy' which had been going on 'in Bengal ... for years'.³¹

The regional solidarity and consequent widespread protests against Curzon's plans for Bengal's partition provided a political impulse which moved the famous writer, philosopher, and educationalist, Rabindranath Tagore, to compose twenty-three 'rousing patriotic songs', over a month from mid-September 1905, which 'caught on instantly in Calcutta and many other parts of Bengal'.³² As Andrew Robinson and Krishna Dutta state in their excellent biography of Tagore, the songs composed during this period avoided antagonistic jingoism, emphasising instead 'the beauties of Bengal, the revival of her greatness, and the need for inner strength rather than hatred of the British'.³³ For example *Banglar Mati Banglar Jal* (translated as 'The Soil and Water of Bengal') sought to generate a sense of devotional reverence for the very elements of the Bengali landscape: 'Let the soil and the waters and the air and the fruit of Bengal be holy, my Lord! ... Let the minds and the hearts of all the brothers and sisters of Bengal be one, my Lord'.

Recollecting his childhood during the same eventful year of 1905 (which roughly coincides with the historical setting of Banerji's novel), Nirad C. Chaudhuri emphasises the impact of 'regional-nationalistic' poetry on the collective consciousness of Bengal thus:

Even now I cannot read the words of these songs, far less whistle the tunes, without instantly bringing back to my ears and eyes all the sounds from the soft rumble of the rain on our corrugated-iron roofs to the bamboo pipe of the cowherd, ... all the ... sights and sounds which embody for me the idea of Bengal.³⁴

³¹ Fraser 1911: 213.

³² Dutta and Robinson 1995: 144.

³³ Ibid: 145.

³⁴ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, see Dutta and Robinson 1995: 144.

Because of their popularity at the time (and their subsequent incorporation, like Bankim's anthem, *Vande Mataram*, into the rhetoric of nationalism), it is hardly surprising that songs such as *Banglar Mati Banglar Jal* proved so evocative for Bengalis of Chaudhuri's generation. However, their transcendent force in Chaudhuri's recollections, 'instantly' embodying 'the idea of Bengal', hints at something more than simply their ability to signpost a particular time.

I refer here to the folk-quality of these poems which must have contributed to their memorability for Chaudhuri. From the late nineteenth century, a poetic focus on folk-narrative forms had become a defining, and, for the Calcutta readership, an often disturbing feature of Tagore's verse. In essence, what Tagore carried out in this period, developing on literary changes already made by writers such as Bankim, was a revolutionary democratisation of traditional Bengali literary language. This took the form of a shift from Sadhu *bhasa* or 'pure [literary] speech',³⁵ to a much more flexible poetic language, which emulated the colloquial forms and ancient folk-metres of oral composition.

Kristine M. Rogers³⁶ dates the start of this linguistic-poetic experimentation to 1900, when Tagore published a volume of poems entitled *Kshanika* or 'Fleeting Moments'. Commenting on this period of his poetic career, Tagore wrote:

In *Kshanika* I first used in a continuous manner natural Bengali language and natural Bengali metre. At that time, the energy, force, and beauty of that language became clear ... its power of movement and power to convey are much greater than the artificial language of books.³⁷

Throughout this period Tagore's writings exhibit an increasingly disillusioned ambivalence towards radical nationalism, which comes across clearly in his novel *The Home and the World*, and, more categorically, in his later lectures on nationalism. For Tagore, spiritual integrity was as important as political self-determination, and he saw

³⁵ Based on an archaic Sanskritised Middle Bengali of the sixteenth century, written in *Payar* metre.

³⁶ Kristine M. Rogers, see Lago and Warwick 1989: 26.

³⁷ Ibid: 42.

nationalism as a dangerously unethical, alienating force. As he stated in his lectures, in the nation 'man's power ... is diverted from his ultimate object which is moral to the maintenance of this organisation, which is mechanical'.³⁸

Even so, Tagore's concentration on the colloquial forms and metres of folk-literature, and thus his creation of a new 'high-culture' in Bengal, reproduces an archetypally nationalist process which I have already discussed at the start of this chapter in relation to Gellner's work.³⁹ Indeed, it is in relation to these literary experiments that Ezra Pound's statement that Tagore had 'sung Bengal into a nation'⁴⁰ seems most pertinent, since Tagore's work not only provided an aesthetic (and often contentious) counterpoint for Bengal's emergence into the nationalist struggle but also shaped the cultural register in which regional nationalism could be asserted.

I have deliberately drawn attention to Tagore's poetic innovations in works such as *Kshanika* because their literary impact can also be clearly felt in Banerji's text. Not only do both writers focus on folk-settings, they both exhibit a creative sensitivity to the heightened 'mythical' consciousness of childhood. To illustrate the latter point I want to cite a passage from *My Reminiscences* in which Tagore recalls an episode from his own childhood:

Our days were spent in the servants' quarters ... One of our servants was Shyam, a dark chubby boy ... from the district of Khulna. He would place me in a selected spot, trace a chalk line around me, and warn me with a solemn and uplifted finger of the perils of transgressing this circle. Whether the danger was physical or mental I never fully understood, but fear certainly possessed me. I had read in the *Ramayana* of the tribulations of Sita after she left the ring drawn by Lakshman, so I never for a moment doubted my ring's potency.⁴¹

To a large degree, Opu's 'naive' perspective at the centre of Banerji's text reproduces the magical, bounded space which Tagore describes. Throughout *Song of the Road* Opu's consciousness expands, creating new

³⁸ Tagore 1985b: 66.

³⁹ Ernest Gellner 1983.

⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, see Tagore 1985a: 8.

⁴¹ Tagore 1991: 23.

peripheries, while containing the formative aspects and events of his childhood. In her reading of the Bengali text, Meenakshi Mukherjee describes this inclusive growth as 'a series of concentric circles, each expanding into the next ... in the manner of ripples caused by a pebble thrown into water'.⁴²

Furthermore, the investment in folk-forms which characterises Tagore's work in *Kshanika*, is echoed in an interesting allusion to folk-narrative in the title of Banerji's work. This derives from what Sukumar Sen calls 'devotional ... Indo-Aryan ... [narrative] songs' called *Pancali* or *Pancalika*, which originally meant 'doll' or 'puppet'. Sen goes on to propose that

The name suggests [that these early] devotional songs ... and poems ... were supported by a puppet show ... An abridged [pictorial] version of such [a] puppet show is the painted scroll [*Pata*] depicting the same stories as in the devotional narratives. The man showing the scroll tells the story in crude (often *extempore*) verse as he unrolls it. This scroll show was once very popular in west Bengal.⁴³

The image of the *Pata* scroll is even more telling when we come to look at certain key aspects of the structure and form of *Song of the Road* and *Pather Panchali*. Unlike the stacked linearity of the bound text, which is counted out, and the volume of which diminishes visibly in the process of reading, the scroll-show, specially if the scroll is on a loop, evokes a narrative which is episodic, extemporised, and circular rather than progressive. As Sen points out, scrolls were traditionally the textual format of devotional narratives, and Banerji manages to retain a sense of this original, sacred form in the frequent slippages which occur between the everyday world and myth, in the consciousness of his main child-protagonist.

Throughout my analysis of *Song of the Road* I will come back repeatedly to these two structural metaphors of the 'chalk' circle of childhood, and the form of the *Pata* scroll-show. I want to start my examination of *Song of the Road* by looking at its central point, that of Opu's child-perspective. I will then go on to examine other salient aspects

⁴² Mukherjee 1985: 128-29.

⁴³ Sen 1979: 21-22.

of Banerji's characterisation, and his representation of the village setting in order to interrogate how far *Song of the Road* can be said to reproduce the paradigmatic orders of a contemporary nationalist aesthetic.

Childhood, Time, and the Space of Home in *Song of the Road* and *Pather Panchali*.

Returning to the structural device of Opu's burgeoning consciousness we find an evocative example of the centralisation of Opu within the home fairly early in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, during a scene in which the children's ancient 'auntie' narrates a fairy-story to them by candlelight (in Banerji's text this scene takes place before Opu's birth). As Gaston Bachelard points out, the poetic power of an image such as this lies in its primacy, its ability as a 'simple engraving' to invite self-reinvention:

[These images] are ... so many invitations to start imagining again. They give us back areas of being, houses in which the human being's certainty of being is concentrated, and we have the impression that, by living in such images as these are, we could start a new life, a life that would be our own.⁴⁴

In the pool of flickering light which contains Opu and Durga within the range of their aunt's fairy tale, we recognise a space of childhood containment very similar to that of Tagore's myth-bound chalk circle.

Indeed, in relation to the cultural identity of Opu and his sister Durga and to the time structures of Ray's and Banerji's texts, the representation of their 'auntie' is highly interesting. This is because in both works Opu's narrative centrality is conveyed through a certain amount of preparatory stage-setting, which takes the shape of the story of his 'auntie', Indir Thakrun. In a linking device which we shall see again in Anand's novel, the death of an older member of the family (in this case Indir's lonely death in *Song of the Road*) inaugurates a new cycle of growth and development as the narrative focusses on Opu and Durga.

Significantly, Banerji describes the death of Indir (in exact congruence with a Hindu Shivaite cosmology) both as the renewal of a generational cycle, and as the 'ending' of a way of life for the community: 'The death of

⁴⁴ Bachelard 1994: 33.

Indir Thakrun brought the old days to an end in Nishchindipur village'.⁴⁵ Culturally, then, Indir's death can be read in some ways as the death of an experiential link with history in Opu's childhood imagining. Banerji's description of Indir's life, which takes on a kind of mythical, temporal depth within the historical memory of the village, illustrates this point well:

Many generations of water-lilies had grown and died in the Shankari pond ... [the] mango trees in what had been the Chokroborti's garden ... had become old and died ... and the clear waters of the Ichamoti, in the endless tide of time, had swept away like a straw or a fleck of foam all the Johnsons and Thompsons of the indigo factory, and all the Mojumdars. Only Indir Thakrun was still alive.⁴⁶

Here, Indir seems to represent the eternal quality of the rural village and we can review her role as one which re-presents the village, in Bachelard's words, as a 'space of being' within time; her reminiscences acting as a kind of cultural mantra; a continual reaffirmation of the presence of Nishchindipur's past invoked every few days when Durga demands her favourite story, 'the one about the robbery at the house in the village fifty years ago!'⁴⁷

Thus, the earliest moments of Opu's childhood are lived out in the 'cradle of the house', where 'thoughts, memories and dreams ... integrate',⁴⁸ surrounded by female figures who become, in subtly different ways, the gendered guardians of this childhood space. To be more specific, both Indir and Durga become inexorably linked in this part of the text, not simply because of the intimacy of their relationship, but also because Banerji weaves them symbolically into the historical, natural and cultural fabric of the village. As such, they are realised in the text as avatars of (their 'representative' spiritual counterpart) Bisalaksi, the 'forgotten' goddess of the village, whom Opu imagines wandering through the forest 'in the last hours of the moon-lit night'.⁴⁹ In Opu's dreams, Bisalaksi becomes a supernatural counterpart to Durga, who 'haunts' the 'secret

⁴⁵ Banerji 1968: 58.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 25.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 28.

⁴⁸ Bachelard 1994: 33.

⁴⁹ Banerji 1968: 160.

recesses of the forest' by day, and is also the natural proprietor of 'the bushes where the *bashok* flowers [lie] hidden', and the secluded places where 'the *chatim* blossoms [sleep] in the shade of their trees'.⁵⁰

In the subtle resonances called up between Bisilaksi, Indir, and Durga, Banerji's treatment of time comes to the fore, recalling the structures of the Hindu oral epic in which 'narrating the previous incarnations of various persons was a way of playing with time'.⁵¹ Here, Romila Thapar's definition brings us back to the image of the *Pata* -show as it delineates the histories of different characters within the slow cosmic revolutions of life, death, and rebirth, to the point that a form of transubstantiation occurs between the natural world of the village and its inhabitants.

In this instance, Banerji's depiction of the village-space through representative figures such as Durga seems to reproduce techniques employed by earlier Bengali nationalists such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. The following passage comes from Sri Aurobindo's translation of Bankim's anthem, *Vande Mataram*.

Mother, I bow to thee!
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,
 Bright with thy orchard gleams ...
 Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen ...
 Loveliest of all earthly lands,
 Showering wealth from well-stored hands!⁵²

Similar symbolic correspondences between character and place occur in Banerji's representation of Durga who seems to rise, elementally, out of the 'earth, water and air of the village',⁵³ who habitually collects the wind-fall wealth of the forest, and whose death returns her to the soil (during the festival of *Durga- Puja*) like the clay images worshipped in rural Bengal.

In *Song of the Road*, Opu's imaginative child-viewpoint transforms the 'deserted compound' next to his home into the holy place pierced by Arjun's arrow, an act which brings forth 'the sacred river Bhogavati' that 'moisten[s] the lips of the the mighty Bishima'.⁵⁴ Again, Opu's mythical

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Romila Thapar, see Gopal 1991: 145.

⁵² Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, see Hay 1988: 135.

⁵³ Mukherjee 1985: 138.

⁵⁴ Banerji 1968: 155.

encoding of landscape is playfully referred to by Banerji, when he describes the children's picnic excursion to 'an old overgrown pool' on the periphery of the village: 'Nobody knew that this little pool, now surrounded by the jungle, was the Dvaipayana of the Mahabarat, and that near it, alone and sorely wounded lay that hero with the broken thigh'.⁵⁵

Through Opu's consciousness the narrative becomes self-referential, evoking the dramatic title of Banerji's novel, as the child-protagonists change places with, or play alongside, the gods and warriors of the Hindu pantheon. The continual slippage between life as *Theatre joue* and *Theatre vecu* is most clearly apparent in the episode in which a group of *Jatra*⁵⁶ performers come to Nishchindipur. Opu is so entranced by the play that as he watches it, a Shakespearian transformation takes place, in which 'the stage [becomes] all his world and the players its entire population'. Furthermore, after the play has ended, it is retained as a sort of retinal image, superimposed on the everyday world: 'The women of the village chattered as they went past the house ... one spoke like Dhirabati, another like the Queen of Kalinga'.⁵⁷

***Song of the Road* as National-Cultural Narrative.**

Faced with such a successful blending of narrative form and cultural content it is not surprising that Edwin Gerow and Meenakshi Mukherjee, who have both commented on Banerji's text, should have found in the novel a sense of rooted 'organic' coherence. In Gerow's argument, this is achieved through the reproduction of classical aesthetic modes in Banerji's writing, derived from the *rasa* theory of the eleventh century Kashmiri Saivite, Abhinavagupta. For Mukherjee, whose reading is informed by Gerow's work, the novel is remarkable because of its 'securely [culturally] rooted' protagonist,⁵⁸ whose childhood Mukherjee nostalgically contrasts against the implied alienation of the adult/contemporary world.

The strength of the novel is its wholly unselfconscious

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Travelling players who perform dramas based on well-known mythico-religious narratives.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 226.

⁵⁸ Mukherjee 1985: 133.

evocation of a world ... where objective reality and the subjective world of imagination can still be part of an organic whole. The choice of a child as the central consciousness is crucial to [this] effect.⁵⁹

Both Gerow's and Mukherjee's readings are informative, and Gerow's use of *rasa* theory and Hindu metaphysics does seem to lend itself to the meditative wonder of Opu's narrative perspective. However, in both cases a stress on the rootedness and cultural organicism of Opu's world seems to evoke certain nativist assumptions about cultural authenticity. Here I am thinking in particular of Spivak's warning, in her early work, against a 'reverse ethnocentrism', which is encapsulated in the nostalgic idea that post-colonial criticism or historiography could restore a 'single underlying consciousness'⁶⁰ to the 'lost self' of the colonised.

What interests me in particular about critical strategies predicated on 'nativist' assumptions, even when carried out by Western metropolitan critics such as Gerow, is their comparative similarity to the political historicising of certain national-cultural programmes sketched out in the opening section of this chapter. The salient question here is whether Banerji's literary depiction of rural homeland, overwritten by what Derrida would call a critical 'ethic of presence, an ethic of nostalgia for origins, an ethic of archaic and natural innocence',⁶¹ can be located squarely within contemporary discourses of national culture.

We have seen how the focus on pastoral settings, on folk-narratives, and colloquial forms provided the means by which Tagore revolutionised his own writing at the turn of the century. What we must also remember, however, is the way in which writers such as Tagore and Banerji simultaneously disassociated themselves from a wholesale investment in the political ideologies of the home-rule movement. The most conspicuous fictional example of this must be Tagore's novel *The Home and the World*, which (uncannily, in the light of Banerji's novel) was described by William Rothenstein as a 'masterpiece ... done with a simple box of figures — not more than a Punch and Judy showman uses for his own little drama'.⁶² Hence, in the last part of this section I want to try to

⁵⁹ Ibid: 144.

⁶⁰ Spivak 1988: 202.

⁶¹ Derrida 1976: xix.

⁶² William Rothenstein see Tagore 1985a: 2.

develop a reading which allows for both the intrinsic reflection of a degree of nationalist symbolism in Banerji's novel (as already apparent in my discussion of Banerji's use of form, setting, and 'allegorical' characterisation) and a comprehension of the text as a 'point of hybrid emergence', a negotiation between 'self and the nation' and 'self as nation'.

Negotiating the Narrative Limits of Nationhood.

Far from representing a contained microcosm, tinted, to use one of Desai's phrases, in 'tones of unalloyed gold',⁶³ Banerji's text is painted in subtler shades which delineate the outlines of a community already in transition. The way in which Banerji complicates the transcendent priorities of a national-cultural aesthetic is particularly evident when we reexamine the Indir-Durga dyad which, although it is invested with considerable symbolic value, carries none of the valorising which we find in writers such as Bankim, or in the jingoism of popular Bengali-Hindu nationalism which Elie Kedourie locates in the rhetoric of activists such as Bipan Chandra Pal.⁶⁴

Thus, even as 'auntie' Indir provides a sense of 'centred' rootedness, or stable generational identity, her economic and relational marginality is also clearly apparent. This comes across well in Ray's film where her low status as both 'widow', and 'distantly-related dependent' in Horihor and Shorbojya's house is covertly expressed by her positioning in the frame of each shot. Invariably, in family scenes, focal attention is never upon Indir, and although the camera may follow Opu or his mother in a tracking shot, Indir's presence is only registered by her unsteady entries and exits on and off the scenic background. In socio-cultural terms, Ray thus comments on the plight of older, widowed female dependents in many South-Asian families, particularly in subsistence-level rural communities.

However, it is a representation that goes against the grain of both contemporary (Gandhian) nationalism, which stressed 'National coherence ... through the "mutual regard" of an 'extended ... family law'⁶⁵ and later, more 'progressive' nationalist vehicles. Here I am thinking of popular films such as Mehboob Khan's 1955 *masala* classic, *Mother India*,

⁶³ Ibid: 10.

⁶⁴ Elie Kedourie 1971.

⁶⁵ Mohandas K. Gandhi, see Hay 1988: 260.

which celebrated India's industrial achievements at the same time as it reinforced a gendered figure of nation in Nargis Dutt's portrayal of dutiful village motherhood.⁶⁶ On the surface, the pastoral world of Ray's *Pather Panchali*, released a year later, seems to contrast directly with Mehboob Khan's vision of modern rural India complete with tractors and hydroelectric schemes. However, it could be argued that Opu's father's inability to support his family, although partly due to his own reliance on 'dreams and fond imaginings', is also indicative of the fact that Nishchindipur is already, circa 1905, part of 'Modern India'; an India where the certainties of caste-status and family are being modified in relation to nationalism and the rise of capitalism.

This idea gains credence from the cultural incongruity of the size of Opu's family. After the death of Indir, who is only a partially accepted family-member anyway, the household takes on a decidedly 'nuclear' configuration. As Sudhir Kakar makes clear: 'most people in India spend at least their childhood [and old age] in an extended family'.⁶⁷ In Banerji's text, the relatively limited size of the family thus serves to emphasise the economic precariousness of the 'integrated' cultural world in which Opu grows up. In earlier periods of Bengali history, the limiting occupational scope of Horihor Ray's Brahminical caste-position might have been offset by a greater degree of status and patronage in the village, and this comes across in the desperate wranglings which he undertakes over his legal dues on certain land-posessions: 'Horihor exploded. "That man. He's a swindler. The ground rent for that orchard used to be twenty-five rupees a year ... he's written it down as five"'.⁶⁸ Furthermore, in a prophetic conversation between Horihor and Shorbojoya early in the text, the idea of moving to another village is put forward as a solution to the fact that 'the goddess of wealth has taken up her abode with the farming people nowadays, whilst [Brahmins] have to live from hand to mouth'.⁶⁹

A brief glance at Prafulla Mohanti's anthropological study of the village of Nanpur in Orissa reiterates these changes as a continuing process of Brahminical disempowerment. Recounting their childhoods, older members of the community emphasise caste-fixity: '[In the old days]

⁶⁶ Nargis Dutt, see Rushdie 1991: 108-09.

⁶⁷ Kakar 1994: 115.

⁶⁸ Banerji 1968: 102.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 27.

people from different castes did their jobs according to the caste system and earned their livelihood. The Brahmins performed religious rituals, the washer men washed clothes, the barbers cut hair'. Contrary to this, caste mobility was cited as a comparatively new phenomenon: 'Now the Brahmins have become traders and the barber goes to town to work as a clerk'.⁷⁰ These personal reminiscences are, to a certain extent, coloured by the universal tendency to idealise childhood: 'Crops grew like magic ... The rice these days has no taste'.⁷¹ However, as indicators of social history, they do point towards general decline in Brahminical status which must have already been noticeable during the 1920s.

Thus even in the midst of Opu and Durga's earliest childhood, the outside world reaches quietly into the village, preventing us from reading Nishchindipur as a culturally bounded, hermetic space. The expanding Tagorean 'circle' of Opu and Durga's consciousness may be limited, but it does include things: stories, toys, pieces of text, which filter in from the outside world. Here, spaces which create a sense of nested intimacy such as Durga's precious toy-chest, in which seeds, 'a bird's nest ... her doll ... some pieces of printed cloth [and a] mirror' are collected, take on an added resonance as sites of 'gathering' which 'valorise' contents by the fact of their containment.⁷² However, Durga's toy chest also acts as a symbol of the precariousness of her own premarital status within the boundaries of the domestic space, and as Mukherjee rightly points out, when 'Durga's mother throws away the toy-chest ... in a fit of anger, it is like the ritual ending of [Durga's] childhood'.⁷³

It is revealing to compare Durga's childhood toy-chest with another larger tin box bought to the village by a stranger, an 'old Muslim from East Bengal' who allows Durga to peer into what the reader imagines must be a stereoscopic photo-viewing device, of the type used in late Victorian households:

'Pick up that tube and look down it,' said the man ... What she saw she could never describe or even understand. How did those real men get inside that box? There were lots of sahibs and memsahibs; there were houses, and battles ... what

⁷⁰ Mohanti 1990: 101-14.

⁷¹ Ibid: 114.

⁷² Bachelard 1994: 86.

⁷³ Mukherjee 1985: 137.

an astonishing box it was!⁷⁴

Here we have an example of what Homi Bhabha, talking of his reconstellation of the Freudian *unheimlich*, calls the 'cultural logic of reversal'.⁷⁵ Within the organic locus of nation, the rural village, 'the borders between home and world become confused'.⁷⁶ And in the text this 'disturbing reversal' comes about as an almost literal inversion of 'things that should be hidden and things that should be shown', as Durga's subaltern gaze 'commands', for a few unpaid moments, the panoptical position of the Imperial eye (or 'I'), scanning an albumen-printed record of famous people, public events, and military conflicts. In terms of Bhabha's theorising, the two boxes (Durga's doll's-house and the photo-viewer), offer up an example of the *unheimlich*, as the 'astonishing' and 'uncanny' 'ambivalences of a personal psychic history [superimpose themselves upon] the wider disjunctions of political existence'.⁷⁷ Durga's death, in the concluding section of the novel, partakes of the unhomely in a similar way, since within the allegorising discourse of nationalism, she is symbolically — and therefore mortally — bound to the space of the village.

The ambivalent cultural findings and appropriations which work their way into the children's home-life are reproduced as a series of negotiated appropriations of colonial culture within the limits of the village space. Recalling the temporal repetitions and mythical-slippages of the *Pata* text, we find that in Opu's spatial awareness of Nishchindipur, the most salient symbols of this outer world take the form of the ruined indigo factory, and the railway, which at different points in the children's development mark off the 'frontiers' of the 'real': 'anything further away ... he imagined could only be the land of the fairy tales ... the country called Black Lanka ... the factory was the world's last frontier'.⁷⁸

Banerji's depiction of the old Lermor factory is particularly telling because it presents the Bengali countryside not as a culturally exclusive space of personal-historical communion, a trope which other

⁷⁴ Ibid: 235.

⁷⁵ Bhabha 1994: 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 10.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 11.

⁷⁸ Banerji 1968: 66.

contemporary writers, such as Anand, employ. Instead, the Lermor indigo factory evokes a rural past already deeply coloured by the historical fact of colonial trade. More importantly we recognise, in the ruins of the factory, architectural signs similar to Everest's 'cartographic' observation towers which have seeped back into local oral/historical narratives.

There had been fourteen factories in the area, and John Lermor, the manager of the Nishchindipur factory, held sway over them all like an emperor ... There was a time when the name of the mighty John Lermor had such power that at the mere mention of it, tigers and cows went down to same watering place to drink.⁷⁹

Here, instances of cultural syncretism persist through time, linking the six year old Opu with Edwin Lermor (who died, aged six, and) whose body lies in the 'deserted and overgrown' factory compound. In this case, rather than representing 'some corner of a foreign field that is forever England',⁸⁰ the European grave is folded back into the natural and 'naturalising' landscape to such an extent that it is mourned by a local *shondal* tree, which covers the tomb in a pall of yellow flowers. Once more, the cultural signs of empire are annulled, and 'domesticated', a form of resistance which encloses (and remakes) these alien colonial particles in a pearl-like patina of domestic myth, forgetting, and re-composition.

If the overgrown indigo factory marks out Opu's cultural past, then the railway line which skirts Nishchindipur becomes, in many ways, an omen of the future. Like the Lermor factory, the railway can be seen as another point of scroll-like temporal circularity, and Opu's final departure from the village is unconsciously anticipated in the childrens' interest in the railway throughout the text. In the last part of *The Song of the Road* Opu does experience train travel, and here we find another reversal taking place, as the inner world of 'Nishchindipur as childhood space' is suddenly displaced, 'externalised' (like Durga's ghost) from within the compartment of the train carriage: 'The trees on either side [of the train] were running past the windows ... he saw the earth track from the village ... and the rose-apple tree he knew so well ... and standing under it ... his

⁷⁹ Ibid: 63.

⁸⁰ Brooke 1987: 133.

sister, pale-faced and sad'.⁸¹

In this final scene Banerji's narrative does seem to become self-conscious, as the *Pata* structure of the text is realised in the scrolling, objectified panorama of the village sweeping past the windows of the train carriage. Michel de Certeau's work on the carceral aspect of the railway carriage as a space of enforced interiority provides a useful way of thinking about this scene: 'the railway car ... is a perfect actualisation of the rational utopia [as a] bubble of panoptic and classifying power'.⁸² From within the carriage Opu's relationship with his former home changes as the village becomes an objectified site of identity. At the same time however, the inclusiveness of Opu's identity renders curtailment impossible, just as it is impossible for Opu not to 'see' Durga as part of the village-childhood he is leaving, and interpreted on another level, the railway becomes simply another 'bend' in the developmental 'road' (*Pather*) to which the title of Banerji's work alludes.

⁸¹ Banerji 1968: 302-03.

⁸² de Certeau 1988: 111.

The Village: Realism and Revolutionary Nationalism.

One of the founders of the Indian novel in English, Mulk Raj Anand, also chose to make a creative return to a village-childhood in his writings of the 1930s. In Anand's case, this involved 'recreat[ing] life through the memories of the India in which [he] grew up', while living in the colonial metropolis. Moreover, Anand's writing shaped itself much more closely to European forms, especially politicised variants of nineteenth century realism. As Margaret Berry points out, Anand's writing is, fundamentally, an act of realist social documentation and assessment: 'an interpret[ation] of the truth from the realities of [everyday] life'.⁸³

By using an appropriated, culturally reinscribed social-realism as his working form, Anand makes a generic choice repeated in other early nationalist writing, most notably, I feel, in the work of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, and the early novels of the Nobel-prize-winning Egyptian author, Naguib Mahfouz. For both Achebe and Mahfouz, the realist novel, in its intricate mass of detail, creates a sense of cultural plenitude, preserving the vibrancy of each writer's indigenous social community as if in textual amber. Furthermore, in their work the emotive force of this realist documentation comes with the reader's acceptance that these are catalogues of threatened cultures, in both cases, the threat is that of inexorable change and encroaching modernity as a corollary to colonialism.

Like Anand, these writers also attempt to grasp specific 'truths' from everyday life. However, in the case of Achebe, Mahfouz, and also, to a differing degree, in the mythical-realism of a text such as *Song of the Road*, these 'truths' are primarily cultural and historical. In other words, even as these fictions complicate a simplistic reading of homeland, as Banerji's novel does, they interrogate what Toni Morrison has described as 'rootedness', and deal with places and figures that are culturally 'parental' and 'whose relationship to the younger characters [is] benevolent, instructive, ... protective, and ... provide[s] a certain kind of wisdom'.⁸⁴

However, in Anand's *The Village* (1939), these symbols of rootedness are rendered strangely ambivalent. Unlike the other writings addressed in

⁸³ Mulk Raj Anand, see Berry 1971: 43.

⁸⁴ Toni Morrison, see Walder 1993: 330.

this chapter, Anand, because of his Marxist affiliations, is prevented from reworking the traditional rural village into a positive symbol of national culture. Margaret Berry touches on this paradox when she describes Anand's writing not as unmediated 'mimesis', but as a 'literature of criticism [of social reality] and prophecy [with intent to effect sociopolitical change]'.⁸⁵

Anand's committed literary-political position can be traced back to the earliest part of his career and his first novel, *Untouchable* (1935), which was written in response to Gandhi's championing of India's untouchables. In the following passage Anand recalls a conversation with Gandhi on the merits of political fiction:

[Gandhi said] 'Why write a novel? Why not a tract on untouchability?' I answered that a novel was more human and could produce contrary emotions and shades of feeling, whereas a tract could become biased, and that I liked a 'concrete' as against a 'general' statement. The Mahatma said: 'The straight book is truthful and you can reform people by saying things frankly ... as far as I know novels are generally about love and tell lies and make them gullible with fine words'. I said: 'Novels are not only about love, but about anything on earth, if you value the thing and go behind it'. This amused the old man.⁸⁶

Here Anand's argument about the persuasive subtlety of the novel form, as opposed to the tract, brings us back to Berry's description of his writing as a means of political engagement.

More explicitly, Anand's talk of concrete and general statements in his conversation with Gandhi evokes the work of Marxist critic, Georg Lukács. According to the 'reflection' model of literature which Lukács proposes in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, 'abstract potentiality belongs wholly to the realm of subjectivity; whereas concrete potentiality is concerned with the dialectic between the individual's subjectivity and objective reality'.⁸⁷ Certainly, in all Anand's pre-Independence fiction, the idea of the concrete statement comes interestingly close to Lukács's formulation of 'concrete potentiality'; as a form in which 'subjective'

⁸⁵ Mulk Raj Anand, see Berry 1971: 14.

⁸⁶ Ibid: 40.

⁸⁷ Georg Lukács, see Brooker 1992: 40.

political values align themselves within a literary representation of 'objective', predominantly economic, realities.

The political and theoretical commonality which we find between Anand and early Marxist theorists such as Lukács can be explained, in part, by examining Anand's links with the All India Progressive Writers Association — a group to which I have already referred in connection with Premchand. On questions of literary form the AIPWA took its cue from the Union of Soviet Writers, which had officially described and sanctioned socialist realism as the required form of Soviet state literature in 1934. As Andre Shdanov (the 'Grand Inquisitor' of Soviet art) had put it:

Social realism is the fundamental method of Soviet literature and criticism: it demands of the artist a true, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development. Further, it ought to contribute to the ideological transformation and education of the worker in the spirit of socialism.⁸⁸

Although Lukács's view of literature is more sophisticated than that put forward by the socialist realists, both critical perspectives prioritise literature which gives a 'true', dialectical-materialist depiction of historical development.

In accepting a Marxist (and by extension a Hegelian) model of historical development as part of his world-view, Anand inadvertently faces a problem which divides post-colonial writers and theorists to this day; namely whether Marxism is commensurate with or disables a theorising of post-colonial issues. As I have already pointed out, for critics such as Said or Bhabha, Marxist historicism is seen irredeemably as part of the broad discursive project of orientalism, although both critics owe a debt to post-Marxists such as Pierre Macherey. For others such as Aijaz Ahmad, or, very differently, Gayatri Spivak, Marxism provides a liberating means of thinking about post-colonial issues. I will go into more detail on the coincidence of Marx's views on Asia and orientalist constructions of the sub-continent shortly, and it is perhaps sufficient to state here that the acute dislocation which characterises Anand's protagonist in *The Village* is born out of his (Marxist) disdain for local socio-religious cultural forms.

⁸⁸ See Berry 1971: 30.

Thus, even as Anand gives a textual voice to a 'representative' male figure in his text, his literary representation of the historical, religio-cultural bases of indigenous subaltern identity starts to become unstable and contradictory.

Autobiographical and Historical Sources.

In *The Village* we follow Anand's adolescent hero, Lal Chand, through various stages of rebellion against his family and the rural Sikh culture they represent, until he is drafted into the army and leaves India to fight in the First World War. Lal's cultural transgressions develop successively throughout the text, taking the form of minor infractions, such as eating from a Muslim food-stall, to serious cultural betrayals such as having his hair cut during a visit to the local town.

In its setting, characterisation, and cultural trajectory (away from a rural childhood home) *The Village* is, arguably, Anand's most autobiographical work of fiction before *Seven Summers* and *Morning Face*. He dedicated its sequel, *Across the Black Waters*, to his father, and borrowed both his father's and grandfather's names (Lal Chand and 'Baba' Nihalu) for the protagonist and his parent in the novel. However, when we read Anand's volume of political essays, *Letters on India*, another more obviously historical source for the Trilogy presents itself in Anand's account of a peasant uprising in 1918, led by an ex-soldier called Ram Chandra, 'who had served in Mesopotamia and been to South Africa [and] ... organise[d] the peasants in Oudh into Peasant Unions in order to protest against illegal dues and tenant evictions'. Here, in an interesting act of biographical and historical synchrony, *The Village* shapes Anand's childhood memories according to historical event, grafting individual and political recollection together in a scripted, imaginative moment of return: a process which Anand described as 'The struggle of any responsible individual embracing both the struggle to integrate himself in the community and to recreate himself and his community'.⁸⁹

As I emphasised in the introductory section of this chapter, the interconnection between the personal and the political is something which recurs throughout the nationalist period, and which is exemplified

⁸⁹ Mulk Raj Anand, see Sharma 1978: 57.

in political autobiographies such as Nehru's *Autobiography* and Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*. Barbara Harlow makes an incisive comment on texts such as these when she describes them as narratives in which 'the formal identity of author/narrator/main character ... is rewritten ... as a political analysis of a larger social body'.⁹⁰

In Anand's case, the nostalgic personal/political celebration of the childhood homeland can only be carried out on the most selective level. Indeed, in Lalu's words, certain forms of socio-religious culture represent 'the dark, unknown forces of [the] old world that weighed heavily on everything, even on him who had seen the new things'.⁹¹ It is in this kind of statement that Anand's politicising return to his cultural roots diverges so significantly (as a creative or redemptive 'making good') from the political returns of other nationalists such as Gandhi. Hence, in this section I will examine *The Village* in terms of an ambivalence which grows out of Anand's relationship to a community recreated in memory (and therefore to his own cultural identity) and, perhaps more importantly, the selective dislocations of a revolutionary ideological intent.

Marx, Orientalism and Cultural Displacement in *The Village*.

E.M.Forster, in his preface to Anand's second novel, *Coolie*, lauded the 'directness of Anand's attack', and recommended the book to Anand's British publisher by praising 'the rare mixture of insight and detachment'⁹² in Anand's characterisation. Indeed, a sense of cultural detachment informs Anand's depiction of Lal Chand or 'Lalu' in *The Village*, who becomes a type of Europeanised cultural commentator within the text, a device which must have facilitated an acceptance of Anand's work in the metropolitan market.

In an early scene in *The Village*, Anand's protagonist 'contemplates himself ... in a steel-framed looking glass ... one of the few modern objects in the old world of the barn',⁹³ and in some ways this image can be seen as a metaphor for Lalu's speculative self-displacement from a community

⁹⁰ Harlow 1987: 121.

⁹¹ Anand: *The Village* : 234.

⁹² Cowasjee 1977: 46.

⁹³ Anand *The Village* : 42.

framed within the orders of revolutionary Marxism. Thus, as he inscribes a literary return to his Punjabi homeland, Anand's own displaced position as a cosmopolitan nationalist makes itself apparent in Lalu's narrative viewpoint on the physical margins of the village space, from where he looks in as a sort of cultural voyeur: 'Occasionally he found himself peeping through the open doors of peoples' houses ... the heaps of mud and cow dung and urine on the uneven floors of the courtyards disgusted him'.⁹⁴ In this passage Lalu's 'voyeurism' is accompanied by a strange sensitisation to the squalor and poverty which has surrounded him from birth. Only a few pages later Anand confronts us again with a distanced, but casually brutal description of village poverty:

In the dirty courtyard of the cowherd's lightless, lousy, pest-ridden houses ... some children were dragging the life out of a calf, pushing her, pulling her, and mauling her about ... Cruel, twisted, stunted brats! Where did they get their strength?⁹⁵

Very early in a reading of *The Village* we realise that Lalu's cultural displacement is largely due to the colonial schooling he has received, an educational background which he shares with Opu and the character of Moorthy in Rao's *Kanthapura*. However, as I have already hinted, Lalu's cultural displacement is significantly more than this. Throughout *The Village*, Anand's protagonist is continually pulled away from home in a centrifugal motion, first to the fair in Manabad, then to the army cantonment at Ferozepur, and finally to Europe.

This spatial trajectory out of the village can be read as the expression of a specifically European philosophical schema of political evolution. As Ronald Inden points out, in Marxist historiography the Indian village was rationalised on a global index of social and economic relations. In Marx's writing the 'Asiatic' communal village group developed as a variant of the first tribal form of property ownership and 'because the structure of [this] social formation lacked certain fundamental distinctions found in western forms [it] was condemned to perpetuate itself without change'.⁹⁶

Although the main points of Marx's theoretical formulation on history

⁹⁴ Ibid: 43.

⁹⁵ Ibid: 46.

⁹⁶ Inden 1992: 136.

derived from Hegel, Inden is quick to make connections between Marx's ideas and the work of Indologists such as Henry Sumner Maine, who saw the Indian village as an ancient social form of life which could be contrasted against the urban individualism of industrial Europe.⁹⁷ The hegemonic force of these orientalist notions was such that older narrative tropes, such as the 'despotism' of oriental government (which I addressed in my first chapter), also percolated into Marx's texts on India. It is because of the influence of Marxism on Anand's political vision that I quote extensively:

[the village economy] had always been a solid foundation of oriental despotism ... [the village] restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition ... We must not forget that this undignified, stagnatory and vegetative life ... rendered murder itself a religious rite ... we must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into never-changing natural destiny.⁹⁸

Tones of claustrophobic 'restraint' and unchanging sociopolitical 'stagnation' provide the background colouration to Anand's vision of rural life throughout *The Village*. Even Lalu's consideration of his own family shapes itself around this idea of entrenched passivity: 'They did not want to think, to feel, to do anything, but relegated the responsibilities for all their misfortunes, as well as their blessings on karma'.⁹⁹

Hence, just as Marx emphasises the coercive aspects of his vision of village society, 'which restrains the human mind within the smallest possible compass', Anand's hero, musing on the repressive aspects of his own cultural background, sees ironic similarities between himself and his father's unresisting cattle, tethered to the plough or the worn compass-path of the irrigation pump:

[The cattle] had been flogged into perfect obedience ... He too had been flogged into obedience ... they had begun to break

⁹⁷ I will return to Maine's work on the South-Asian village in my analysis of Raja Rao's depiction of Kanthapura village in *Kanthapura*.

⁹⁸ Karl Marx, see Fernbach 1973: 306.

⁹⁹ Mulk Raj Anand, see Cowasjee 1977: 101.

his will in childhood ... and the feelings of respect to the wishes of the elders which his mother had inculcated in him had made him incapable of hitting back.¹⁰⁰

Lalu's continual displacement from the village must, therefore, be read not so much as a specific attraction to Manabad, or Europe, but as an urge to 'run away ... [and] escape'¹⁰¹ from the crushing cultural-conservatism of the rural *gemeinschaft*.

To explore further Anand's political reasons for structuring his text in this way, it is necessary to return to the foundations of Marxist historiography, Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Here, Hegel explains 'national' global development in terms of cultural and, again, highly ethnocentric hierarchies of historical progress represented as stages 'in the conquering march of the world spirit as it wins its way to consciousness and freedom'.¹⁰² For Hegel the 'duty' of the individual is to 'reflect and represent' the national spirit subjectively, and to take up an occupation 'not laid down in advance by any kind of caste system'.¹⁰³

In terms of this analysis Hegel's *Lectures* are even more telling in their assertion that the 'heroes' of 'world history' are those who 'do not find their aims and vocation in the calm and regular system of the present, in the hallowed order of things as they are'. Instead the 'national hero' draws his 'inspiration from another source, from that hidden spirit whose hour is near but which still lies beneath the surface and seeks to break out without having attained an existence in the present'.¹⁰⁴ In the light of Hegel's argument, Lahu's successful political 'return' to his homeland (as a prototypical revolutionary leader in the last volume of the Trilogy, *The Sword and the Sickle*) can only be enacted after he has broken out of the socio-cultural milieu and drawn inspiration from 'another source'.

In *The Village*, Lahu's decision to cut his hair forms, in my estimation, the central symbol of this heroic 'breaking out/off'. Cultural transgression is represented here in a strikingly physical way, compounded in Anand's imagery, in which Lal Chand's hair forms a corporeal 'part' of him, but is

¹⁰⁰ Anand: *The Village* : 117.

¹⁰¹ Ibid: 119.

¹⁰² Dahbour and Ishay 1995: 84.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid: 81-84.

also what ties or entangles him (as one of the five 'K's of the Sikh faith) to the conservative rural community. Hence, for Lalu its uncomfortable weight becomes synonymous with the weight of restrictive rural superstition; a 'greybeard deadness' which masquerades as received wisdom, and which echoes Marx's dictum on the traditions of 'dead generations [which] weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living'.¹⁰⁵

Periodically in the first hundred pages of *The Village*, Lalu's plans to rid himself of the affliction of his symbolic cultural identity are hinted at and, in keeping with Anand's literary structure, it is during Lalu's first 'escape' from the village that the haircut takes place. Indeed the process is invested with a subtle cultural irony since it takes place in the 'King George V Haircutting Salon'. If we take into account J. P. S. Uberoi's sociological essay 'Five Symbols of Sikh Identity', then Lalu's visit to the haircutting salon actually becomes a self-initiation into the colonial outside world, an inverting parody of the initiation he has already undergone into the Sikh faith. As Uberoi states, during initiation 'one must ritually abandon the previous course or phase of social existence in order to properly enter the new ... the element of renunciation or divestiture is always present to some degree'.¹⁰⁶

If Lalu's role in Anand's text is to provide, semi-allegorically, an example of a new form of revolutionary political consciousness, then as a cultural-political sign his act of divestiture is read in a totally unintended way by the villagers. He is assaulted by his father and then demonised by the whole community, who reinterpret him as threateningly 'other' and stigmatise him as a religious, and sexual, deviant.

Arjan Singh, ... the priest ... brought forward a donkey, shouting 'look, ohe, people. This rogue has spoiled our religion, disgraced the village' ... 'look at the black face'... the children cried ... Yes, look at the lecher! ... He had forgotten his religion and had no sense of shame left! Why, he used to wink at us ... as we sat in undress washing clothes by the pond! ... the women spoke in chorus.¹⁰⁷

The problem of cultural transgression as part of political change was

¹⁰⁵ Karl Marx see Hawkes 1996: 92.

¹⁰⁶ J. P. S. Uberoi, see Madan: 1991: 323.

¹⁰⁷ Anand *The Village*: 112.

something which faced many of the nationalist leaders, and in his autobiography Gandhi relates an act of cultural infraction which echoes, in its seriousness, Lal Chand's symbolic gesture.

In Gandhi's text, this occurs when the guilt-wracked, adolescent Mohandas breaks the orders of his caste by deciding to take the boat to England against the advice of a local *seth*.¹⁰⁸ Gandhi's act of caste transgression is significant in this analysis because it represents a conscious decision to reject certain traditional forms within Gujarati Hindu society, and thus prefigures the religious 'selections' which he makes in *Hind Swaraj*. In his mature political vision, the concept of caste-stratification, which is integral to the creation myths of texts such as the *Rg Veda*, is dismissed, both because it opposes his spiritual humanism and because it forms an obvious cultural obstacle to proto-national unity. However, we must not forget that Gandhi, returning to India, reworked his political identity in the very fabric of the cultural terms he had disavowed. In Lal's return to India, in the last volume of Anand's Trilogy, there is little scope for even a partial cultural reconciliation. Here, the hegemonic orientalist terms of a village India frozen beyond the reach of progress are the same, but Anand, working from a Marxist basis, cannot reverse them strategically as Gandhi does.

If we take into consideration Raja Rao's comment on Anand's work that, above all, his writing delineates the tragic consequences of a conflict 'between the individual will and the social facts of life'¹⁰⁹ then the hair-cutting scene can be interpreted as part of the process by which Lal invests himself with a perceived political autonomy. And in these dramatic, transformative acts we realise that political 'individuality' cannot be used as an unproblematic term, but must be recognised as involving, by definition, a degree of personal cultural rupture. I now propose to follow these lines of rupture in Anand's depiction of the secondary characters in his text and examine his attempted recuperation of a sense of cultural belonging, and homeland, in his use of motifs such as the dignity of labour, and pastoral forms derived from Punjabi literature.

¹⁰⁸ The leader of a local religious community.

¹⁰⁹ Raja Rao, see Cowasjee 1977: 98.

Secondary Characters.

Margaret Berry makes an interesting comment on Anand's secondary characters when she collates them into several rough categories: approved figures, such as 'wisdom characters' and 'revolutionaries', and, opposing them, comprador figures, such as indigenous traders, landlords, religious leaders, and exploitative colonial factory and plantation managers.¹¹⁰ Anna Rutherford makes a similar categorisation in her criticism,¹¹¹ and both commentators thus show up the curious double-bind of a literature which proposes a political didacticism as rigid as that of Anand's pre-Independence novels. In this, his characters must bear the weight of both social realism and political allegory.

This representational paradox is particularly apparent in Anand's depiction of 'closed' social and ideological arenas, such as the village or (in *Two Leaves and a Bud*) the tea-plantation, in which character derives, by a sort of circularity, from social role. In accordance with Anand's political vision, what these characters cannot, or must not, do is transcend the political binarisms of the 'concrete representation' of reality, which his fiction undertakes.

The mechanics of this secondary characterisation are readily apparent in Anand's vituperative depiction of stock figures, such as Mahant Nandgir, the lazy, libidinous, and often intoxicated village priest, who exploits the piety of the peasants by demanding expensive religious offerings.

The Mahant laid aside the chilm from which he was smoking ...and, evading the question, continued in a casual voice ... 'Life has to end , and you will find just reward for the service you have rendered to the saints. For nothing else counts' ... Lalu felt a violent revulsion against Nandgir now ... Why couldn't the family learn better than to waste money on these charlatans? ¹¹²

In this passage the Mahant is saved from a political two-dimensionality by Anand's sensitivity to language. The Mahant's speech, realistically

¹¹⁰ Berry 1971: 73.

¹¹¹ Walsh 1990: 64.

¹¹² Anand *The Village* : 54.

rendered, not only signposts his power in the community, but also highlights his ability to exploit Nihalu through reference to a shared discursive register of religious order: 'do not set yourself in the same place as other folk [said the Mahant] ... you should not envy your superiors, for if you did so there would be no order in the world'.¹¹³

Following this line of inquiry, we find other stock secondary characters in Anand's text employing the same strategies of discursive reinforcement, in this case the money-lender's use of cultural etiquette, which binds the economic community of the village within a strict network of appropriate language:

It was part of [the money-lender's] technique to involve his clients in talk of all kinds, to hold them tightly in the invisible grasp of polite conversation and thus catch them in a pervasive net of goodwill. In this atmosphere he could persuade the dull-witted peasants to say it was night when it was day.¹¹⁴

Of course, the politically didactic aspect of Anand's work comes through clearly in these passages but, importantly, the reader is also presented with a sense of the individual relationship to, or enactment of their socio-cultural and economic roles within the text.

An interesting way of reading these figures is provided by Anand himself, when, in one of his essays, he defends this symbolic characterisation on the basis of its centrality to certain indigenous literary forms. In his critical work, Anand makes various statements on his 'realist' fiction as 'Indian expressionism' — a writing which reasserts the binary relationship between body and soul, or *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, underlying Hindu metaphysics. As Anand states in *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilisation?* 'As soon as a story, picture or novel becomes prismatic by making the individual character into individual type, it lifts the particular to the universal, almost as in a folk tale or symbolic story'.¹¹⁵

However, where a writer such as Banerji manages to use folk-narrative forms such as the *pata* to produce seamlessly hybrid prose works, Anand's

¹¹³ Ibid: 52.

¹¹⁴ Ibid:129.

¹¹⁵ Mulk Raj Anand, see Berry 1971: 36.

attempts to deploy indigenous forms within the social-realist genre often seem gesturing and problematic. Their inclusion creates points of aporia in which characters (such as the Mahant) are made both to fulfil a didactic political function and to sustain the 'universal typology' of a religious and cultural aesthetic which Anand's politics condemns.

Labour and Landscape in the Narration of Homeland.

Because the village-space proves such a politically ambivalent site in Anand's novel, we find that scenes of cultural identification occur more often outside its boundaries, in open fields and pastures. In these places the romantic resonance of physical labour connects Lalu in an unproblematic way to his cultural heritage:

He smiled again happy in the confidence in his own capacity ... not every son of a city Lalla could [dig] a straight line on the map of mother earth, however pretty the map he might draw in the classroom ... he felt an admiration for the energy that flowed with the laughter of the sun like a tingling warmth in his body. He cast his eyes across the fields ... What was the land like in the time of his forefathers? It must have been the same. For the earth couldn't have changed that much.¹¹⁶

These scenes of 'earthy' communion are crucial in *The Village* because they outline Anand's struggle to reorientate his protagonist in a local context. Here, hybridity becomes a sort of extension instead of a dislocation, epitomised in Lalu's ability to 'inscribe inherited earth' (the only real 'textual' inscription that the villagers can make) whilst also being able to draw a straight line on a 'classroom' map. It is possible to read this scene in terms of what Anand describes as his 'desire-image[s]': politically romanticised moments in which the physical potential of the peasant underclass/caste, their cultural-spatial loyalties, and the appropriated power of printed texts, such as maps, all combine in an integrated reverie of revolutionary national self-determination.

The inscription of a new alien consciousness, such as Hercules Long's militaristic scout movement, may be doomed because of the fear of the village elders that 'European habits' will simply promote 'organised

¹¹⁶ Anand *The Village*: 34.

mischievous¹¹⁷ among the local youths. However, the political implications of labour and the inferred political iconography of the 'slashing blade of the scythe reaping the crop' can be maintained as nodes of cultural alignment, without disrupting the form of the political changes of which Lalu dreams. Indeed, as Dieter Riemenschneider argues, the fulfilment which Lalu finds in physical and intellectual work can be interpreted as a comment on the possibilities of a world free from the alienating effects of a capitalist division of labour.¹¹⁸

In episodes such as the 'departure' scene in which Lalu leaves for the army after his father's death and is seen off by the whole village, where we would expect a degree of nostalgia on the part of Lalu, Anand articulates the loss of community on a natural, rather than a human level: 'The rolling fields of sugar-cane burnt brown and gold and ripe red by the summer sun flashed past his eyes ... He felt as if he would break down with the sadness of leaving *this land*' (my italics).¹¹⁹ Here, Lalu's ambivalent perception of the double-standards of the villagers, who are bound by 'convention' and 'vanity', as well as 'generosity' and 'nobleness',¹²⁰ is once again qualified by reference to a romantic agricultural landscape.

In counterpoint to this investment of national value in the natural landscape rather than the village, Anand elides domestic signifiers of rural belonging in favour of a more physiological connection between the indigenous body and the land upon which it exists. In Anand's earlier novel, *Untouchable*, the central protagonist exhibits a striking physical charisma, and in *The Village*, Lalu's physical fitness, allied with 'mother Earth',¹²¹ develops as a muscular allegorising of national legitimacy. Again, Anand's vision of labour underlines this imagery, although we can also detect the influence of 1930s European political propaganda in the faintly eugenicist slant which Anand's writing takes in these passages.

This characteristic politicisation of the indigenous body, textually relocated in the home-land(scape), occurs again in *The Village* when Lalu and two of his friends steal a ride to the nearby town of Manabad on one of

¹¹⁷ Ibid: 165.

¹¹⁸ Dieter Riemenschneider, see Nagarajan: 1991.

¹¹⁹ Anand *The Village* : 254.

¹²⁰ Ibid: 253.

¹²¹ Anand *The Village* : 34.

the landlord's bullock carts. The sound of a folk-song, played in the late evening, and echoed by the other peasants travelling to the fair, develops in this scene as a kind of cultural catalyst:

The atmosphere throbbed and melted with the piercing melody, with the jerky words and the shrill laughter of the chorus, and the whole earth was filled with a sudden happiness, a shrill rapture of bucolic joy. He felt this earth had got into his blood.¹²²

As Anand makes clear in this scene, it is only those who share in labouring on the earth who can partake in this communion: '[Churanji] was ... not inured to the ... natural manners of the village ... he had not inherited its kind of phosphorous which could kindle into life through a breath of the elements'.¹²³

I have already mentioned Anand's (problematic) claim to reconcile realist form with indigenous content by arguing for structural similarities between his work and the universalising symbolism of the folk tale. However, there is one aspect of *The Village* — Lalu's romantic infatuation with Maya, the daughter of the village landlord — which does seem successfully to reinscribe the text with recognisably indigenous narrative topoi. Here again, aspects of the rural landscape are employed by Anand, not so obviously as part of a nationalist communion with the soil, but on a more abstract level as a stock of codified cultural metaphors through which the beauty of the lover can be invoked. An example of this kind of textual strategy occurs in a scene in which Anand connects Punjabi landscape, poetry, and Lalu's romantic inclinations in a single interdependent literary succession.

The fast-closing doors of winter days were opening to the spring, and the sun looked long and lingeringly on the wavering green skirts of the earth like the lover in Waris Shah's *Hir and Ranjah*. It was said that this poet had lived near Sherkot ... the thoughts of love remained.¹²⁴

In this scene, the allusion to Waris Shah's poetry constructs the

¹²² Ibid: 72.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid: 168.

landscape in a very specific cultural register. It is perhaps no coincidence that Anand situates Lalu's romantic reverie within the natural surroundings of springtime, since this season (along with the monsoon which occurs in late summer) is traditionally associated with romance in Punjabi literature.¹²⁵ This connection is clearly apparent in Guru Nanak's *Bara Mah* (a religio-poetic 'Book of Hours', in which each season is described in terms of human moods).

It is the month of Chet
It is spring. All is seemly ...
The woodlands [are] in flower
But there is sorrow in my soul

If the husband comes not home, how can a wife
Find peace of mind?
Sorrows of separation waste her [away]¹²⁶

As Guru Nanak's poem implies, the fecund 'fulfilment' of spring only serves to emphasise the solitude of the abandoned or separated lover — who has been converted, in Nanak's religious poetics, into the figure of the dutiful wife, waiting for her husband.

Like Durga in *Song of the Road*, Maya can be read in relation to gendered political narratives of homeland, and Lalu's romantic longing substitutes itself here as another means of invoking a sense of belonging whilst circumventing an affirmation of reactionary cultural forms. However, unlike Durga, Maya never develops into anything more than a cipher in Anand's text. The symbolic aspect of Lalu's desire for Maya becomes more apparent as their elopement, on Lalu's return from Germany in the last volume of the trilogy, develops both as a violation of 'tradition' (which the uneducated Maya could also be said to symbolise) and an aggressive act against her landlord father. Needless to say, after they leave the Punjab and Lalu becomes involved in revolutionary activity in Oudh, Maya takes little part in politics and features rarely in the main narrative.

Again Maya's symbolic function becomes evident as the ambivalences inherent in Lalu's relationship with his homeland are reproduced in the

¹²⁵ For the basis of this poetic schema in Sanskrit lyrics, see Dimock 1974: 173.

¹²⁶ Singh 1993: 184.

instabilities of their relationship. Maya's name, which literally translates from Hindi as '(worldly) fiction/illusion',¹²⁷ seems to underline this paradox. In both relationships, Lalu is trapped in an economy of desire and self-loathing; between images of ideal pastoral love and a violent revulsion towards his community which refuses to transform itself. 'He wanted to hurt himself, to hurt someone ... he wanted to violate all their sacred rules and superstitions, to uproot all his own feelings'.¹²⁸ A passage from Anand's essay 'Why I Write' reasserts this ambivalence at the level of the post-colonial writer, and provides a concluding note to the comparative 'uncertainties' of Anand's particular vision of homeland:

I immersed myself in the subworld of the poor ... I had to become uncertain as my anti - heroes ... I had to build up parallel worlds, to reflect, in my somewhat crooked mirror ... [the struggle] to change life [and] ... along with other people, to be [an] integral human being.

¹²⁷ Klostermaier 1994: 603.

¹²⁸ Anand *The Village* : 168.

***Kanthapura* : A Return to Village-Politics.**

So far in this chapter I have drawn attention to two regionally, linguistically, and politically differentiated South-Asian novels, both of which re-present the rural village as an integral, if problematic, part of an emergent national imagining. In terms of post-colonial criticism produced in the West, both these texts have remained in a state of comparative obscurity. Conversely, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, the last 'village' novel to be examined here, occupies a prominent position in Western academic chronologies of the Indian novel in English. As commentators such as William Walsh have pointed out, Rao's current status is due both to his use of syncretic, 'abrogated'¹²⁹ structures of language/narrative (which prefigure so clearly the literary-cultural agendas of later generations of post-Independence writers) and to his inclusion in the 1938 edition of a short, and very quotable foreword, outlining his particular strategy of reappropriation. Interestingly, the critical attention received by *Kanthapura* must be recognised as a particularly Western phenomenon; the South-Asian academy preferring to concentrate its attention on the more philosophical issues raised in Rao's second novel, *The Serpent and the Rope*.

My aim in selecting *Kanthapura* as the concluding text in this chapter is to attempt a critical analysis in which it can be read as a cultural reworking of the novel form and, additionally, as a text which depicts the rural village as an agonistic site of selective historical and cultural remaking. In order to point out Rao's distinctiveness, I want to return momentarily to the literary representations of the village which have already been addressed in this chapter.

In both Banerji and Anand the pre-Independence village is established, in strikingly different ways, as a site of almost apolitical fixity. In Anand's case, as we have seen, this fixity derives from the suspicion that rural village culture will never provide a receptive enough basis for socialist-style revolution. In short, for Anand the village, as political unit, can only operate effectively if it is constructed anew (according to a collectivised European/Russian model). In *Song of the Road* Banerji's part-reliance on

¹²⁹ I use this term in the sense which Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin describe it: as an act of cultural and literary 'repealing'. See Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989: 75.

the narrative perspectives of children and his focus on the natural world of Nishchindipur also serves to overwrite the village as a curiously apolitical zone. The social world of Nishchindipur is culturally dynamic inasmuch as it constructs itself within the resilient, regenerative memory of the community. However, the fact that it becomes, in Opu's mind, a place of innocent beginnings means that actual political development is impossible.

I have already emphasised how European models of Indian history and rural society influenced the political visions of nationalist leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru, and shaped the literary-political agendas of contemporary writers. In his monograph *Imagining India*, Ronald Inden argues that by the time British colonialism entered the expansionist phase of high empire, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, administrators such as Henry Baden-Powell were countering earlier, Aryanist models of the village by arguing that, as Dravidian social formations, the villages of India no longer 'mirrored [the European's] origins back at them'. Instead,

Those villages were truly the powerless opposites of [Europe], abiding in natural communities that had only a natural history ... the villages ... constituted the lowest 'level' of the Indian polity. The British, on the other hand, had as their points of purchase ... the presidency towns, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.¹³⁰

As a sympathetic rendering of the rural impact of Gandhian nationalism, Rao's *Kanthapura* both affirms and re-articulates the polarised way in which, as Inden has stressed, the 'indigenous' village is constructed in colonial discourses — Gandhi himself had recommended Maine's *Village Communities* as an authoritative text in *Hind Swaraj*. What marks out Rao's depiction of Gandhian politics very clearly from the other village-narratives already addressed here is a growing confidence in the political potential of the village community.

***Kanthapura* as National Folk-Narrative.**

In Rao's novel this shift in political perspective is most evident in his

¹³⁰ Inden 1992: 148.

choice of narrative style, which replaces the third-person *bildungsroman* or *kunstlerroman* form, so characteristic of Anand's and Banerji's work, with a type of extended first-person narrative sustained entirely as reported speech. In other words, a politicised *Harikatha* recital which focusses on the character of a whole rural settlement rather than on any single protagonist. In some ways, the activist *Satyagrahi*, Moorthy, shares a great deal with central characters such as Lal Chand in *The Village* (both are representative figures of 'returning' revolutionary intent, and embody forces of political change). Even so, Rao never allows *Kanthapura* to become wholly Moorthy's story, but retains, like the political practice which Moorthy advocates, a primary awareness of integrated collective potential and group presence.

Moreover, Rao's narrative technique echoes the cultural reinventions of nationalist figures, such as Gandhi, as it seems to rise directly out of the oral and material history of its subject-matter. With authorial presence subsumed into cultural setting in this way, the narrative is collected together out of scattered pieces of local gossip, legend, history, newspaper reports, and political news in the same manner in which the inhabitants of *Kanthapura* collect their harvest or participate in religious observances. Rao captures the stylistic idiosyncrasies of this oral-type narration beautifully, not only in the constantly shifting tempo of the language, which he signposts in his foreword, but also in the curious tension between the rhetorical formality of performed religious orature: 'Kenchamma is our goddess. Great and bounteous is she',¹³¹ — and the digressive intimacy of a narrative which always assumes the possibility of direct address and dialogue — 'She has never failed us, I assure you, our Kenchamma ... tell me, who has ever been taken away by smallpox [in *Kanthapura*]?'¹³²

An even more significant aspect of this narrative abundance (the 'rush and tumble'¹³³ of voices and stories in Rao's text) is the layered sense of investment in place and local history which it produces. Indeed, in Rao's textualised, updated *sthala-purana*, inevitably, 'place is language, something in constant flux, a discourse in progress'.¹³⁴ Whereas the

¹³¹ Rao 1993: 1.

¹³² *Ibid*: 2.

¹³³ *Ibid*.

¹³⁴ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995: 391.

secondary characters in *Anand* are colourful extensions of their socio-economic roles, in *Kanthapura*, character is also more explicitly an expression of locality and genealogy. Moorthy is initially introduced to us as 'Corner-House Moorthy' and as 'Narsamma's son', and a cast of other characters, such as 'Front House Akamma', 'Temple Lakshamma', and 'Waterfall Venkamma' carry a similar spatialised or idiosyncratic nominative prefix with them as part of their social identity in the community.

Because of the cardinal position occupied by interacting notions of both place and time in the cultural self-narration of the community in *Kanthapura*, we find that a critical approach which seeks to address these issues separately is untenable, if not impossible. In this sense, and in direct contrast to Anand's 'progressivist', Hegelian conceptualisation of political development, Rao's treatment of time and space in *Kanthapura* recalls the repetitive and cyclical structure of Banerji's text. Investigating 'Indian' perceptions of time in terms of Gandhi's politics, Ashis Nandy stresses the way in which Hindu cosmology denies an irreversible, linear model of time: 'The Indian's past is always open, whereas his future is so only to the extent that it is a redicoverry or renewal'.¹³⁵ In *Kanthapura*, then, a collective negotiation between domestic and public/political spheres must be read as an extension of this cyclical 'renewal' of the past.

To continue this line of argument I wish to highlight the introductory section of the narrative, in which Achakka, with the lyrical formality of a storyteller, sets the scene of her village-*purana*. The most intriguing aspect of this opening passage is the way in which Kanthapura village is presented from several different perspectives. Unlike the gradual disclosure of known space which accompanies Opu's expanding world-view in *Song of the Road*, or Lalu's uneasy, voyeuristic view of his village from its peripheries, Achakka's narrative reflects an already complex and politically modified notion of Kanthapura in terms of 'home' and 'the world'.

In the first few pages the reader's viewpoint is literally hitched to the 'groaning', slow-moving carts which pass through Kanthapura. Loaded with coffee and cardamom, the carts pull out of the tiny village 'high on the ghats' and connect it, via the slow process of imperial export, to the

¹³⁵ Nandy 1998: 58.

country 'across the seven oceans where our rulers live'.¹³⁶ Thus, even as Achakka expounds a contemporary (nationalist) village thesis on colonial economics, her global awareness still depends on an essentially puranic cosmography, comprising seven concentric lands and oceans, the centre of which is Mount Meru (the mountain of the gods) in the land of *Bharata - varsa*.¹³⁷

Just as Achakka's narrative situates *Kanthapura* concurrently on the economic margins of empire and at the centre of a Hindu world-view, she also describes the village as the hub of local faith: the worship of Kenchamma, 'who makes everything meaningful. Marriage, funeral, sickness, death, ploughing, harvesting — all are watched over by Kenchamma'.¹³⁸ Even subtle differences in local geography are rationalised according to the story of Kenchamma's fight with a demon, for 'why should [the earth] be red only from Tippur stream upwards ... if it were not for Kenchamma and her battle?'¹³⁹ Thus, in the space of only a few paragraphs we are presented with several culturally-differentiated aspects of *Kanthapura*.

A Return to Village-India.

Following on from Achakka's opening narrative in *Kanthapura*, it is fundamental to understand Moorthy's implantation of Gandhism in the community as a reinventive process which resonates through these layered, interdependent spatial-temporal narratives. In thinking about the form this political re-narration takes, I am reminded of Moorthy's political 'conversion' to Gandhism as a college student, and his subsequent return to *Kanthapura* at the start of the novel:

One day [Moorthy] had seen a vision, a vision of the Mahatma, mighty and God-beaming ... and when he came back to the College that evening, he threw his foreign clothes and his foreign books onto the bonfire, and walked out a Gandhi's man.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid: 1.

¹³⁷ Klostermaier 1994: 118.

¹³⁸ Narasimhaiah 1983: 41.

¹³⁹ Rao 1993: 2.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid: 35-36.

As this passage shows so clearly, Moorthy's political awakening takes on all the attributes of Hindu renunciation — and the fourth stage of *ashramadharmā* — that of the reborn wandering *sanyasi*. Hence, in some ways Moorthy's political conversion can be analysed as an analogous rite of passage to that which Lal Chand takes in his ironic divestiture at the 'King George Hair-Cutting Salon' in Manabad. However, the fundamental difference between Moorthy and Lal Chand lies in the direction of Moorthy's renunciation, which, far from being a pilgrimage away from his cultural habitus, actually re-replaces him in the village, 'trembling ... with one foot to the back and one to the front'¹⁴¹ at the entrance to one of the most proscribed *inner* spaces of the community.

Moorthy, who had always spoken to the pariahs from the gutter-slab ... stands trembling and undecided, and then suddenly hurries up the steps and crosses the threshold and squats on the earthen floor ... he looks this side and that and thinks surely there is a carcass in the backyard ... he smells the stench of hide ... and the roof seems to shake, and all the manes of heaven seem to cry out against him.¹⁴²

As I have already shown, in Banerji's and Anand's writing the village invariably becomes, for the main protagonist, a personally 'limiting' or 'sustaining' cultural starting-point. However, in the early part of *Kanthapura*, we find Moorthy involved in a completely circular return, and a reinvestment in indigenous cultural structures and places which have been left behind in the process of colonial education. Here we encounter the 'Janus-faced' aspect of what Mary Matossian has described as the struggle of the indigenous intellectual ('assaulted' by the challenge of the industrial west) who must 'reorientate himself ... in his relationship to the west, in his relationship to his people's past, and in relationship to the masses'.¹⁴³ Finding himself under an untouchable's roof, the trauma that Moorthy experiences, as the 'manes of heaven cry out', is the trauma of relocation on all three counts.

Rao reinforces this process of spiritual and political reorientation in Moorthy's name, which can be read as a phonetic transliteration of the

¹⁴¹ Ibid: 75.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Mary Matossian, see Kautsky 1962: 253.

Hindi/Sanskrit word '*murti*'. As Klaus Klostermaier explains: 'For the Hindu, the most important of all the spatial-temporal manifestations of the Divine is the *murti* or image. *Murti* means literally 'embodiment'.¹⁴⁴ In Hindu names, '*murti*' is usually a suffix, as in the name of Annie Besant's contemporary, Jiddu Krishnamurti. However, in *Kanthapura* we are not told exactly who Moorthy is the image of, and this lack of designation implies, perhaps, that Moorthy's chief attribute, as well as his ultimate weakness, is his ability to become the '*murti*' of his devotion, first as a Westernised student, then as a 'Gandhi-man', and finally at the end of the text as a follower of Nehru and an 'equal distributionist'.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, read in the light of Gandhi's own reinventive return to India and his subsequent drive to involve the rural masses in their own political destiny, Moorthy's return to Kanthapura can be interpreted as a kind of political-cultural intercession: an act in which Moorthy, like Gandhi, becomes an *avatar* of those he represents. Nehru describes this aspect of Gandhi's political reincarnation particularly well:

And then Gandhi came. He was like a powerful current of fresh air ... like a beam of light ... he did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language ... Political freedom took new shape then and acquired a new content.¹⁴⁶

In a similar manner Moorthy's return and his introduction of Gandhism to Kanthapura involves a concomitant archaeologising of the past. This combined spatial and temporal trajectory is symbolised in an 'unearthing' of older (and often discarded) cultural symbols such as the 'half-sunken' and forgotten 'linga' buried in the narrator's backyard. In this scene Moorthy and his followers literally excavate a 'fragment' of the village past, remaking it as a religio-political locus: 'the little Kanthapurishwari's temple ... became the centre of our life ... to tell you the truth that's where all the trouble began'.¹⁴⁷ Thus, paradoxically, the implementation of Gandhian nationalism, in other words, the movement of rural South Asia into a 'national global consciousness', must be seen as

¹⁴⁴ Klostermaier 1994: 312.

¹⁴⁵ Raja Rao 199: 189.

¹⁴⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, see Swaminath and Patel 1988: vi.

¹⁴⁷ Rao 1993: 7.

a *de facto* movement backwards/downwards into a 'create[d] ... ancient past beyond effective historical continuity'.¹⁴⁸

This process of selective cultural-historical 'excavation' can be seen most clearly in the political symbols of Gandhi's programme for national *Hind Swaraj*, which were taken from the oldest, most 'domestic' spaces of rural India: the *charka* or spinning wheel, the wearing of *khadi*, the pilgrimage to make salt. For Gandhi, these things carried an implicit moral significance:

We [in rural India] have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times ... It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre.¹⁴⁹

Clearly, the symbolism of these dusty rural implements, the plough and the *charka*, which were of little interest initially to the transculturated elite of the Indian National Congress, can be theorised in terms of Gellner's notion of the 'cultural shreds and patches'¹⁵⁰ of nationalism. As Timothy Brennan has pointed out 'the 'nation' has often lurked behind terms such as 'tradition', folklore', community',¹⁵¹ and the significance of Gandhi's selection of these particular symbols was not simply because they evoked a certain kind of 'traditional', 'indigenous' mass culture but because, in a largely non-literate society, they could be invested with dynamic political meaning.

Here I am thinking in particular of the political potential of older forms of 'non-semiotic' symbolism such as the rurally produced chapattis, wild flowers and leaves discussed in Chapter One. Unlike those earlier symbols, the agenda behind Gandhi's creation of rural political icons were very specific: as 'an outward symbol of truth and non-violence',¹⁵² as a practical answer to rural unemployment and exploitation under colonialism, and as a political activity which produced a sense of collective, self-reliant action across the geographical and cultural diversity

¹⁴⁸ Timothy Brennan, see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995: 173.

¹⁴⁹ M.K. Gandhi, Swaminathan and Patel 1988: 13.

¹⁵⁰ Ernest Gellner, see Bhabha 1994: 142.

¹⁵¹ Timothy Brennan, see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995: 172.

¹⁵² Gandhi 1961: 305.

of the emergent nation: 'Sister' ... says Moorthy, 'To wear cloth spun with your own God-given hands is sacred ... it gives work to the workless ... our country is being bled to death by foreigners'.¹⁵³

In this way, the village can be seen, within the limits of a sense of self-conscious pastoral nostalgia, to excavate and 'perform its own politics'.¹⁵⁴ This is particularly obvious in the way Rao punctuates Achakka's narrative with evocative descriptive sequences which mark seasonal change in Kanthapura. In Rao's writing we encounter a much more complex, and more collective, regulated sense of the pastoral than in comparative representations in Banerji and Anand, as each seasonal brings about a different stage in the collective life of the community. Even when the season described is *Kartik* (the lunar cycle which falls within October-November), when the festival lights of *Diwali* turn the muddy streets of Kanthapura into magical paths for 'the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods', the mythical-realism of Achakka's prose is conveyed in a tone of collective awe:

Kartik has come to Kanthapura, sisters ... a night curls through the shadowed streets ... and many a child in Kanthapura sits late into the night to see the crown of this god or that god ... Kartik is the month of the gods, and as the gods pass by the Potters' Street and the Weavers' street, lights are lit to see them pass by ... Oh! have you seen the gods, sister?¹⁵⁵

Here, Rao's description of the celebrations prepares the way for a fusing together of older pastoral narratives with an awareness of the old as well as the new national pantheon. Achakka's rhetorical interrogation 'have you seen the gods?' anticipates the way in which Moorthy and the Mahatma will join the legions of 'blue gods and quiet gods and bright eyed gods'¹⁵⁶ which march through the village.

The Impact of Gandhian Nationalism in Kanthapura.

The excavation of indigenous religio-cultural symbols and social

¹⁵³ Rao 1993: 17.

¹⁵⁴ Boehmer 1995: 312.

¹⁵⁵ Rao 1993: 85.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

structures continues in *Kanthapura* as Moorthy's political evangelism starts to take hold in the village. Thus, when a meeting is called to elect candidates for the village Congress Committee, it is only after a 'god's procession and then a bhajan'¹⁵⁷ have been performed that the actual election of the committee members occurs. Furthermore, the meeting is convened in the village temple, and, in an echo of Moorthy's own political conversion, the election of the committee members is culturally indistinguishable from a religious *puja*: 'One here and one there went up before the sanctum, rang the bell ... fell prostrate and asked for the blessings of the Mahatma and the gods'.¹⁵⁸

Perhaps even more significant, in a political sense, is the characteristic way in which the village Congress Committee takes as its structural template the older 'traditional' village *Panchayat* (or 'assembly' of five elders). Pointing up the importance of the *Panchayat* as a conservative socio-cultural symbol, L.I. and S.H. Rudolph stress that

When the council of five, the panchayat, spoke as one, it was said to be the voice of God; it gave expression to the consensus of a traditional moral order. If the consensus was often merely ... rhetorical ... it was nonetheless valued.¹⁵⁹

In *Kanthapura*, the revolutionary character of the new Congress *Panchayat* is signalled by the fact that a woman (Rangamma) and an untouchable (Rachanna) are among its numbers because 'Congress is for the weak and lowly'.¹⁶⁰ Otherwise, it is presented in a singularly Hindu way, the leaders of the *Panchayat* gaining their authority from their metaphorical association with different deities: 'And then Moorthy says, "Senu is our fifth member", and Range Gowda says, "Every Rama needs his Anjanayya, and he's your fire-tailed Hanuman", and they all laugh'.¹⁶¹

Just as the villagers' induction into the Congress *Panchayat* draws from the ritual expressions of rural Hinduism, so the actual campaigns carried out by the volunteer force are also articulated within a framework of devotional *Bhakti*-faith. This connection is most obvious in the rhetoric

¹⁵⁷ Ibid: 75.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid: 79.

¹⁵⁹ Rudolph and Rudolph 1967: 187.

¹⁶⁰ Rao 1993: 80.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

used by Rangamma to boost the morale of the women *satyagrahis* before they face the aggression of the police. In this passage, Rangamma likens the coming campaign to local ecstatic-devotional practices such as the painless 'walking [on] the holy fire' or personal 'spirit-possession':

[And] Rangamma says ... 'When That-house Srikanta was graced by the goddess every Tuesday and fell flat on the ground in adoration, did you ever see a bruise on his skin sisters?', and we say, 'No, no, Rangamma'-'Well, we shall fight the police for Kenchamma's sake, and if the rapture of devotion is in you, the lathi will grow as soft as butter and as supple as silken thread, and you will hymn out the name of the Mahatma'.¹⁶²

As self-assertive political practice draws from the contemporary cultural experience of what I. M. Lewis terms 'ecstatic religion',¹⁶³ it also becomes historically meaningful by a kind of superimposition of older historical events which (within the metaphorical, mythical imagination of the village) develop into other ways of talking about the movement.

An interesting critical angle on this process is provided by Viney Kirpal, who describes Rao's representation of village-life in *Kanthapura* as a 'rich glimpse into the world-view of a people whose anchorage in the past and present is *co-simultaneous* ... and cyclical' (my italics).¹⁶⁴ For the women *satyagrahis* of Kanthapura, the emotive symbol of the Rani of Jhansi provides just such a point of simultaneity. A picture of Rani Lakshmi Bai hangs on Rangamma's verandah, and connects her to her mythico-historical counterpart, in the same way in which Moorthy is metaphorically linked to both Gandhi and the 'blue god'. More pertinently, the repeated re-narration of the 1857 rebellion (and Rani Lakshmi Bai's part in it) naturalises the political and historical novelty of Gandhism, recreating the rebellion as a contemporary 'symbol of [collective] struggle'.¹⁶⁵ Emphasising the 'created traditions' of European nationalism, Eric Hobsbawm states: 'Even revolutionary movements backed their innovations by reference to a "people's past" ... to traditions of

¹⁶² Ibid: 111.

¹⁶³ Lewis: 1968.

¹⁶⁴ Viney Kirpal, see Rutherford 1992: 310.

¹⁶⁵ Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 12-13.

revolution ... and to [their] own heroes and martyrs'.¹⁶⁶

In *Kanthapura*, the historical re-narration of 1857 gains such cultural currency that it is even transformed into the basis of games played by local children (games which can be regarded as a politicised variation of the mythical narratives which Opu plays out in Banerji's text).

And what do you think? - one day, Sata's Rangi came running to us and said, 'Aunt I was playing with Nanju. And I said to him, you shall be the British army, and Ramu will be the Kashi Maharaj ... and I will be Rani Lakshmi Bai'.¹⁶⁷

The fact that the source of these nationalist, historical reclamations is 'city-literature' which Rangamma has read during her stay with Advocate Sankar alerts us to the processes by which indigenous print-media contributed to a sense of contemporary national 'belonging', as well as creating an historical background for home-rule. In relation to the former point, Rangamma's subscription to the 'Tai-Nadu ... Deshabandhu and Jayabharata'¹⁶⁸ introduces the village women to a wider world of astronomy, Darwinism, air-travel, and radio.

Moreover, it is on the pages of these papers that the villagers' own concerns, the story of their part in the struggle and the adored image (or *murti*) of their representative appears.

One morning everybody was told that in Rangamma's blue paper was a picture of Moorthy ... and when Rangamma gave them the paper, they looked this side and that, and when they came to the picture, they all exclaimed, 'Oh here he is - and so much like him too!' And then they all said 'Our Moorthy is a great man, and they speak of him in the city and we shall work for him'.¹⁶⁹

Hugo Blanco, in his study of Amerindian 'peasant struggle' in Peru, outlines the psychological importance of texts that 'speak on behalf of the peasant'. Because of the pertinence of Blanco's thesis, I quote extensively:

Papers become a fetish ... The peasant sees papers in the offices of the governor, the parish priest, the judge ...

¹⁶⁶ Ibid: 13.

¹⁶⁷ Rao 1993: 110.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid: 31.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid: 80.

wherever there is power; the landowner too, keeps his accounts on paper ... [We must] show the peasant that, just as the enemy has his papers, so we have our papers. To the paper that contradicts the reason and logic of the peasant, we counterpose the paper that bears that reason and logic. This by itself is a marvel for the illiterate peasant. The existence of papers that speak on his behalf, that speak his truth, is already the beginning of his triumph. He views them with respect and affection.¹⁷⁰

Blanco's notion of the 'fetishising' authority of script is even more telling when we remember the means by which literate village characters such as Bhatta reinforce their power within the community, through the use of 'oily calendars',¹⁷¹ and the esoteric ciphers on mortgage bonds. Faced with these 'papers' and 'books', the villagers can do little to question Bhatta's authority: 'You will say ... learned Bhattare, whatever you like ... I shall put my thumb-mark on [the bond]'.¹⁷² In direct contrast to Bhatta's cipher-filled texts, which tie the material and astrological fortunes of the villagers into unknowable increments and cycles of time, the papers to which Rangamma subscribes become the intellectual property of the women-volunteers and are disseminated to the group (in 'traditional' *harikatha* style) by those literate enough to understand them.

Whilst Blanco's psychological perspective on peasant literature gives us an interesting angle on the scripted instigation of a national imagining in *Kanthapura*, we must remember that, as with other nationalist rituals such as *Khadi-spinning* or the *padyatta*, the dispersal of nationalist pamphlets and newspapers through the villages of the sub-continent represented both territory and history along national lines. To be more precise, the symbolic 'dissemination' of political organs such as *Young India* was important because it fostered the specifically nationalist illusion of a sub-continental community of readers, at the same time as its contents redefined (and homogenised) a proto-national identity.

Although in *Kanthapura* village the paper is obviously not consumed as a mass ceremony of 'silent privacy',¹⁷³ it still gives the rural reader/listener a sense that (as 'narration') 'the ceremony performed is

¹⁷⁰ Hugo Blanco, see Harlow 1987: 84-85.

¹⁷¹ Rao 1993: 23.

¹⁷² Ibid: 24.

¹⁷³ Anderson 1991: 35.

being replicated simultaneously by thousands [or millions] of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion'.¹⁷⁴ Contrasted against the poignant image of Opu's solitary reading of outdated copies of the '*Bangabashi*', the consumption of news-media in Kanthapura is thus a collective act, which reinforces a notion of nation-wide community. Rao gives us an interesting example of this in his depiction of Sankara's father, who manages to synthesise his *Khadi*-selling and his knowledge of *Young India* into a dual symbol of nation:

[Sankara's father] looked after the shop, measuring out yard after yard of Khadi and saying, 'This is from the Badanaval centre, and that is from the pariahs of Siddapura, and this ... from ... Sabermati itself! ... and when a young man came [in] ... he would say ... 'have you read the latest *Young India*?' and if he should say 'Nay', he would tell them they were a set of buffaloes fit to be driven with a kick ... and thrusting the paper into the young man's hands, he would offer him a chair and say, 'Read this, it is useful'.¹⁷⁵

Re-inventing the Narratives of Nationalism.

So far, I have concentrated on the various means by which the village community in *Kanthapura* re-narrates itself as a collective political entity within its own understanding of time and space. However, in recognising the new cultural-political solidarities brought about by Gandhian nationalism in Rao's novel, we must remain aware that *Kanthapura*, as both narrative and representative space, is simultaneously a site of compound fractures which demarcate the contradictions and exclusions of the national project. As Rupert Emerson suggests:

The emergence of nationalism brings with it the emergence of national minorities as well. When the focal point of loyalty is the nation ... there is an inevitable tendency to sort out the national sheep from the alien goats. Under a pre-national authoritarian rule the question of membership in a national community may be largely irrelevant; in an age of nationalism it is likely to become the central question.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Anderson 1991: 35.

¹⁷⁵ Rao 1993: 100.

¹⁷⁶ Emerson 1954: 141.

In his emphasis on the double-edged nature of national identification, Emerson touches on a central concern of this thesis: the fundamental change in ideas of identity and place brought about by the struggle for independence, and its aftermath in South-Asia.

Indeed, in the post-Independence era, especially in relation to the growth of ethnic and communal nationalisms, and the experience of diaspora and migration, theoretical attention has focussed on what Bhabha calls 'counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalising boundaries', and 'disturb the ideological manoeuvres through which "imagined communities" are given essentialist identities'.¹⁷⁷ What is particularly significant in Rao's text is the way these disturbances in the national-imagining can be plotted out at the same time as the nation is actually being narrated into existence.

The digressive, polyphonic style of Achakka's narrative is worth reconsidering in this respect because at the same time as it evokes a sense of collective group presence, it excludes nothing. Unlike Anand's *The Village*, where our appreciation of the rural community as a cultural or political site is filtered through Lalu's alienated consciousness, the less prescriptive, polyphonic quality of the voices and digressive sub-narratives of *Kanthapura* immediately undermines the emergence of any single, monolithic thesis on national-cultural identity. In other words, the magpie accumulation of narrative in *Kanthapura*, which can be compared with the more selective cultural assemblages of Gandhian 'renarration', allows contradictory sub-narratives to crop up in the text: derisory voices which condemn 'this Gandhi business' and predict civil chaos instead of *Rama Rajya* as the product of Independence; 'Brothers, all this is very good, but if the white man shall leave us tomorrow it will not be Rama Rajya we shall have but the rule of the ten-headed Ravana'.¹⁷⁸

Thus the comments of both the older, more conservative villagers and those who dislike Moorthy's politics for more personal reasons provide a recurrent chorus to the growing call for Swaraj. Even Achakka, before her co-option into the movement, fatalistically rejects the caste-polluting aspects of Gandhism by asking 'Well ... how does it affect us? We shall be

¹⁷⁷ Bhabha 1994: 149.

¹⁷⁸ Rao 1993: 92.

dead before the world is polluted. We shall have closed our eyes'.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, for characters such as 'Waterfall Venkamma', the performative aspect of Moorthy's transformation from Westernised college student to meditating ascetic provides rich material for satire: 'Ah, the cat has begun to take to asceticism ... only to commit more sins ... As though it were not enough to have polluted our village with your pariahs'.¹⁸⁰ However, it is not only the presence of these contestatory voices which complicate a reading of emergent 'national' identity in *Kanthapura*.

Returning briefly to some of the spatial-cultural issues examined in my discussion of Moorthy's political conversion and self-renarration as a *satyagrahi*, it is necessary to qualify the unificatory appeal of Gandhian nationalism which Rao depicts as making 'the pariahs and the weavers and the potters all ... feel they were of one caste, one breath'.¹⁸¹ This may be the case when the temple conch is heard 'trailing its ('universal', exhaling) OM through the winkless night',¹⁸² girdling the volunteers under one sound throughout the village, but it also belies the fact that other spaces in the village start to close off as a direct reaction to this unificatory movement.

Hence, even before Moorthy has crossed what M.K. Naik terms the 'rubicon' (the threshold of pariah Rachanna's house) he forfeits his access to certain spaces in his own house, and has to 'sit awkwardly by the kitchen threshold and eat like a servant'.¹⁸³ In turn, the news of Moorthy's excommunication by the Swami, which is carried eagerly back to *Kanthapura* by Bhatta, is recognised by Narsamma as a grim set of spatial-cultural prohibitions: "What! Never to go to the temple or to an obsequial dinner? Never to a marriage party, or a hair-cutting ceremony? ... Oh!" moaned Narsamma'.¹⁸⁴

Similarly, the formal as well as the multi-vocal quality of the frame-narration in *Kanthapura* throws up interesting paradoxes when we think of its effect on a spatial awareness of nation. As I have already stressed in my discussion of Achakka's narrative introduction, the *sthala-puranic*

¹⁷⁹ Ibid: 10.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid: 66.

¹⁸¹ Ibid: 130.

¹⁸² Ibid: 126.

¹⁸³ Ibid: 45.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid: 46.

form of her story converts religious idiom into political rhetoric by incorporating Gandhian nationalism, as a political sign, into the orature and iconography of popular Hindu faith. In this way, the *purana*, (like all oral literature) remains vulnerable to the vicissitudes of translation at a local level. For Roland Barthes, 'The repetition of the concept through different forms'¹⁸⁵ is an important aspect of myth, and as this 'repetition' occurs across South-Asia, different regional 'forms' start to dictate the shape of local 'Gandhism'.

Hence, although the British, and perhaps also the members of the central Congress, perceived Gandhi's civil disobedience movements as 'magical' acts of mass-mobilisation, what often occurred at village level was a local mis-translation of Gandhi's political message. As Judith Brown's historical reading of Gandhi's political career makes plain,¹⁸⁶ regional reports of the 1920-22 civil disobedience movement point towards a national awakening which drew its strength as much from local issues as it did from the agenda of Gandhian Swaraj. As such, 'Non-cooperation became a chameleon campaign taking colour from its surroundings as it was shaped in each locality by the stresses and strains of the local power structure.'¹⁸⁷

The non-literate masses of rural India thus engaged in a dialogue with Gandhi's version of nationalism, and reacted to him 'with a mixture of religious adulation and ... anticipation ... [believing] that if he came to power all distress and hardship would end'.¹⁸⁸ It is in this assessment of the mass reaction to Gandhism that Brown's work helps to highlight another paradoxical aspect of the narration of Gandhian nationalism in *Kanthapura*, namely that whilst Gandhi is continually referred to, invoked, and re-narrated in the text, his political reality is never really an issue. C.D. Narasimhaiah makes the point thus: 'Gandhi and his work is [in *Kanthapura*] by report, more in dream and vision than in fact'.¹⁸⁹ Rao brings this to our notice in the humorous exchange between Rangamma and Moorthy's cynical contemporary, Dore, after news of Gandhi's famous salt *padyatta* (which initiated Gandhi's second mass civil disobedience

¹⁸⁵ Roland Barthes, see Sontag 1993: 105.

¹⁸⁶ Brown 1972.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*: 324.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*: 345.

¹⁸⁹ Narasimhaiah 1983: 54.

movement early in 1930) reaches Kanthapura:

Then Rangamma says, 'Oh no, the Mahatma need not go as far as the sea. Like Harishchandra before he finished his vow, the gods will come down and dissolve his vow, and the Britishers will leave India, and we shall be free, and we shall pay less taxes, and there will be no policemen'. But Dore, who hears this, laughs and says 'This is all Ramayana and Mahabarata; such things never happen in our times'.¹⁹⁰

We can detect a subtle, self-referential humour in Rao's depiction of the exchange between Rangamma and Dore; and here the joke is on Dore, since the spiritualised, self-narrating rural politics in which he is involved have already become a kind of contemporary *Mahabarata*, complete with gods, (non) martial 'troops', and local battlefields.

This local form of political rendering involves not only a constant transfusion of ideas about Gandhi, but also a degree of self-generated politics which arise independently of centralised Congress direction. A very clear example occurs in the first real campaign which the Kanthapura *satyagrahis* embark upon, when, spiritually 'adorned with lotuses and champaks, and mango twigs' they attempt to picket Boranna's toddy (palm-wine) grove. Once again, the idiom which dictates political activism is clearly that of devotional religion; and the picketing becomes a local replication of Gandhi's pilgrimage to Dandi beach, itself a mimicry of the pilgrimage to holy sites such as Kashi. For the women of Kanthapura the connection is obvious: 'They [say] in Kashi, when the night [falls] ... gods seem to rise from the caverns of the Ganges ... and peep into the hearts of pilgrim men. May our hearts be touched by their light!'¹⁹¹

Even so, if we refer again to Brown's reading of the earlier 1920-22 civil-disobedience movement, the fact that the Kanthapura *satyagrahis* pick a toddy grove as their political target — 'for toddy trees are government trees, and toddy booths are there to exploit the poor and unhappy'¹⁹²— re-emphasises the relative lack of centralised control (or political homogeneity) which characterised civil disobedience on a sub-continental scale. Brown argues thus:

¹⁹⁰ Rao 1993: 125.

¹⁹¹ Ibid: 138.

¹⁹² Ibid: 130.

The real roots of the ['temperance', anti-toddy] movement were probably a combination of the antipathy of orthodox Hindus and Muslims to alcoholic drink, the inducement of claiming ritual purity to backward castes which abandoned alcohol as part of a campaign of sanskritization.¹⁹³

In the light of the above comments the temperance movement can therefore be read as a cultural selection which became a part of the 'don't touch the government' campaign, without actually having been planned or anticipated by Gandhi or Congress. Gandhi went so far as to state in the 'Young India' journal that 'the deprivation to the government of the drink revenue is of the least importance to the campaign'¹⁹⁴ although, once the temperance movement started to grow, Congress leaders were happy to incorporate it into their political programme.

In other important ways the central dominance of nationalist groups such as Congress is implicitly rejected by the Kanthapurian *satyagrahis*. Perhaps this is most evident in the derisive humour with which Achakka relates 'Advocate Sankara's' attempts to instil Hindi as the 'national language' in his own home:

[Sankara] said Hindi would be the national language of India ... though Kannada is good enough for our province ... But what was shameful was the way he began to talk Hindi to his mother, who understood not a word of it.¹⁹⁵

As I will point out in the next chapter, after Independence the issue of state representation through regional-languages proved to be one of the most emotive issues faced by Nehru, who was forced to re-map the boundaries of certain southern states in order to conform more closely to local linguistic variation.

Communal Exclusion in the Nationalist Text.

Concluding this discussion of the fractures and exclusions which occur as an integral part of the birth of a rural national imagining in *Kanthapura*, I want to turn to Rao's depiction of the Muslim policeman Bade Khan. With the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult not to read this

¹⁹³ Brown 1972: 315.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Rao 1993: 103.

fairly inconsequential character as an ominous symbol of communal antagonism; a disturbingly aggressive, alien intruder in the rural community. Unlike his representation of other reactionary characters such as Bhatta, Rao's depiction of Bade Khan is all the more problematic because of its two-dimensionality. Bade Khan's history or lineage cannot be narrated as a kind of redemption (as is the case when we are told of some of Bhatta's rare acts of generosity) because he is an outsider. All that can be known is that he is 'sent by the government' to Kanthapura and becomes, therefore, a type of malignant religious and cultural other.

Perhaps what Rao's representation of Bade Khan shows above all is the way in which nationalism, allied with divisive colonial administrative procedures, effectively polarised the subcontinent into homogenised communal blocs. C.P. Rameswari Aiyar points us towards this change when he emphasises the traditional flexibility of Hindu doctrine, stating: 'We have no uncontradictable and unquestionable documents, no special revelations, and our scriptures are not final'.¹⁹⁶ Aiyar's statement points up the comparative historical novelty of a Hindu 'orthodoxy',¹⁹⁷ and this is what Romila Thapar stresses in her incisive paper 'Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity':

Early history suggests the existence of multiple ['Hindu'] communities based on various identities ... Given that religious traditions are constantly reformulated, the particular construction of Hinduism in the last two centuries has an obvious historical causation. Deriving largely from the Orientalist construction of Hinduism, emergent national consciousness appropriated this definition of Hinduism as well as what it regarded as the heritage of Hindu culture.¹⁹⁸

Whilst groups such as the Hindu RSS¹⁹⁹ and the Muslim League consolidated this process of national communal identification in the decades leading up to Independence, it is also important here to reassert

¹⁹⁶ C.P. Ramaswari Aiyar, see Fischer 1982: 186.

¹⁹⁷ Ashis Nandy also comments on the relative novelty of a unified vision of Hinduism: 'Only in recent times have the Hindus begun to describe themselves as Hindus ... to use the term Hindu to self-define is to flout the traditional self-definition of the Hindu, and to assert aggressively one's Hinduism is to very nearly deny one's Hinduness'. Nandy 1998: 103

¹⁹⁸ Thapar 1989: 228-29.

¹⁹⁹ The paramilitary *Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh* ('National Volunteer Association') was responsible for plotting Gandhi's assassination. Wolpert 1997: 355.

Sarvepalli Gopal's thesis that 'both as an ideology and a movement, communalism derive[d] from the [colonial] view ... that religious conflicts rather than harmonious living was the hallmark of the mediaeval Indian ethos'.²⁰⁰ This view is exemplified in colonial narratives of the 1880s such as Kipling's short story *On the City Wall*, which had its origins in an earlier article in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, entitled 'The City of Two Creeds'.²⁰¹

It would be a gross misrepresentation of Gandhi's politics to ignore the fact that Hindu-Muslim unity was one of the central tenets of his plan for Home-Rule. Indeed, his decision to halt the first civil disobedience campaign after the communal bloodshed of Chauri-Chaura and his messianic ability to stop communal violence in cities such as Calcutta have passed into a mythologised political history of the independence movement. In *Kanthapura*, this aspect of Gandhism is clearly in evidence, and the *Harikatha*-man, Jayaramachar, lists inter-communal unity as one of the precepts of *Swaraj*: 'Siva is the three-eyed', he says, 'and Swaraj too is three-eyed: Self-purification, Hindu-Moslem unity, Khaddar'.²⁰²

However, we must also retain an awareness that some of the most representative aspects of Gandhi's plan for national *Swaraj*, such as the political 'golden-age' thesis of *Rama Rajya*, and the practical resistance strategies of boycott and *ahimsa*, reproduced, almost exactly the political doctrines and agendas of earlier Congress extremists such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo Ghose.²⁰³ Like Gandhi, Tilak had also attempted to 'transform the nationalist cause from an upper class into a truly popular movement'.²⁰⁴ However, his historical revisioning was rather less ambiguous than Gandhi's vision of village-republic and cottage industry, and he instigated a political cult of the eighteenth-century Maratha warrior-hero *Shivaji*, as part of his campaigning in Maharashtra, and also pressed for a new Ganesh festival (which would coincide with the Muslim festival of Muharram).

For Tilak, scriptures such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, far from espousing the devotional rejection of violence, actually sanctioned its use:

²⁰⁰ Gopal 1993: 102.

²⁰¹ Kipling 1991: 296.

²⁰² Rao 1993: 12.

²⁰³ Ghose was imprisoned by the British and later became Sri Aurobindo.

²⁰⁴ Hay 1988: 142.

With benevolent intentions [Shivaji] murdered [the Mughal] Afzal Khan for the good of others. God has not conferred upon the *Mlecchas* the grant ... of the Kingdom of Hindustan ... Do not circumscribe your vision ... enter into the extremely high atmosphere of the *Bhagavad Gita* and then consider the actions of great men.²⁰⁵

Tilak's speech is notable because it shows how easily the culturally transacted discourses of popular Hinduism, upon which Gandhi advanced his programme of national mass mobilisation, could be renarrated, via their bases in various sacred texts, into proclamations of communal identity. Here, the radical temporal and spatial instability which Bhabha has located at the heart of modern narratives of nation finds an analogue in the easy reversibility of the religious symbols employed by Gandhi. As Bhabha puts it, 'the nation reveals, in its ambivalent and vacillating representation, an ethnography of its own claim to being *the* norm of social contemporaneity'.²⁰⁶

Little wonder, then, that as Gandhi's popularity started to wane in the latter part of the 1930s, many Muslims saw the shadow of politicians like Tilak and Sarvarkar behind the figure of the Mahatma, and translated his slogan of *Rama Rajya*, as a call for 'Hindu-Raj'. Indeed, in *Kanthapura*, Sankara's father makes an innocent connection between the two politicians when he tells the children who visit his shop 'stories of Tilak and Gandhi'.²⁰⁷ The results of a 'national-communal' consolidation of Hindu and Muslim identities will be examined more fully in the 'Partition texts' addressed in my next chapter. To conclude this examination of *Kanthapura*, however, we must return to Bhabha's reading of nationhood, which qualifies the text we have just been looking at as one of the 'entitling' metaphors of nationality: an ideological form which, he argues, consists of a 'continual slippage of categories'²⁰⁸ and a unity which consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space'.²⁰⁹

In relation to *Kanthapura*, Bhabha's thesis is informative, especially

²⁰⁵ Bal Gangadhar Tilak, see Hay 1988: 143.

²⁰⁶ Bhabha 1994: 149.

²⁰⁷ Rao 1993: 100.

²⁰⁸ Bhabha 1994: 140.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*: 149.

when we think of the structure of the narrative, in which the initial 'introductory' cultural setting of Kanthapura is balanced, at the end of the novel, with the parable of unificatory political redemption which Achakka offers us:

No, sister, no, nothing can ever be the same again. You will say we have lost this, you will say we have lost that ... [but] ... an abundance ... has entered our hearts ... Like the Himavathy on Guari's night, when lights come floating down from Rampur and Maddur ... and they will go down to the Ghats to the morning of the sea ... and the Mahatma will gather it all.²¹⁰

Here, the entry to nationhood is finally realised in a combined image of diaspora and rebirth, conveyed in the 'transmigratory' drifting and 'gathering' of Diwali lights by the Mahatma. The original homeland (Kanthapura) has been razed to the ground but, as Achakka emphasises, the 'abundance' of a collective vision of freedom has been kindled in the hearts of its inhabitants, and remains viable as often as the symbolic Kanthapura is re-narrated.

²¹⁰ Rao 1993: 188.

Chapter Three**Borders, Boundaries, and Crossings:
The Experience of Partition in South-Asian Writing.**

It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality, and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits, and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction, if we fail to revise our notions in time ... The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literature[s]. They never intermarry, nor interdine together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations ... [Muslims] are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and they must have their homelands, their territory and their State.

(Muhammad Ali Jinnah: Presidential Address to the Muslim League, Lahore, March 1940)¹

There is grave danger in the possibility of Partition ... Disintegration will be in the air and all manner of groups, who are otherwise agreeable to a joint and unified existence will claim separate states for themselves... that way lies supreme folly. (Jawaharlal Nehru: *The Discovery of India*)²

In this chapter I will concentrate on a selection of writings produced after Independence which deal with the experience of Indo-Pakistani Partition. Because the fictional material I have chosen represents work published across a considerable time-period, I have divided what I shall henceforth term 'Partition Literature' into two chronologically successive sub-sections in my analysis.

The first section covers texts written in the aftermath, and as a direct product of the political and cultural upheavals of Partition. Historically, this literature falls within the first ten years after Independence in 1947. The texts which I will examine from this decade comprise Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan*, and a selection of short stories translated from the Urdu and Hindi, including Sadat Hasan Manto's famous short story *Toba Tek Singh*. In selecting short-stories in translation, I have relied on three recent anthologies of Partition-writing: Mushirul Hasan's *India Partitioned*,³ Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal's *Orphans of the Storm*,⁴ and Alok Bhalla's *Stories about the Partition of India*.⁵ Where possible I have compared different translations of the same text, although one of my

¹ Hasan 1994: 56-57.

² Nehru 1960: 458-59.

³ Hasan 1995.

⁴ Cowasjee and Duggal 1995.

⁵ Bhalla 1994.

selections, Rahi Masoom Reza's *The Feuding Families of Village Gangauli*, only appears in Hasan's anthology.⁶

In the second section I will examine prose works which could be described as part of a literary reexamination of Partition which occurred throughout the 1970s and 1980s; a retrospective which coincided with the violent secession of Bangladesh in 1971, and with renewed political unrest in the Punjab in the 1980s following the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Here I will look at Bapsi Sidhwa's novel of childhood in Lahore during Partition, *Cracking India: a novel* (published under this title in 1991, and referred to henceforth as *Cracking India*),⁷ and Frances Pritchett's translation of Intizar Husain's novel of emigration and remembrance, *Basti* (first published in Urdu in 1979).

The demographic scale of the migrations across Cyril Radcliffe's partition-line between India and 'West' Pakistan has meant that, for many writers working in English and regional languages, it is the bifurcation of the Punjab which has come, solely, to represent 'Partition'. The work of the Calcutta-born writer Amitav Ghosh proves an exception to this general rule,⁸ and his impressive novel *The Shadow Lines* draws attention to the personal dislocations and historical erasures caused concomitantly by the creation of 'East' Pakistan (now Bangladesh). For comparative reasons I have not chosen Ghosh's novel as a primary text, but his presence serves to remind us of the Bengali experience of Partition, an experience which, as I noted in Chapter One, started with Lord Curzon's attempt to divide Bengal over forty years before Independence.

In many ways the critical issues which I want to explore here become clearer when we make broad comparisons between writing which deals with Partition and the nationalist fictions addressed in the last chapter. Reminding us of the overwritten, reconstructed space of the rural village in nationalist fiction, Yasmine Gooneratne points out:

The Asian writer [in English] ... seems to make his first appearance, almost as a matter of psychological necessity, in a pastoral framework ... [for the urban or exiled elite] ... writing about village life may well open a path that beckons as to a

⁶ For an informative review of these anthologies, see Francisco 1996: 227-50.

⁷ Bapsi Sidhwa's novel was originally published in 1988 by William Heinemann. The British edition appeared under the title *Ice-candy-man*.

⁸ Ghosh 1988.

pilgrim.⁹

As I emphasised in the last chapter, even when the reality of the rural community falls short of a political/national ideal, as in Anand's novel, or when the village itself finally breaks up, as in Rao's, the rural community, or 'pastoral framework', still remains a legitimate and largely unified symbol of cultural belonging in pre-Independence fiction.

In contrast, the literature which I will address shortly is notable precisely because of the general tone of disorientation and political cynicism which runs through it; a literary trend which Aijaz Ahmad calls 'a nationalism of mourning, a form of valediction'.¹⁰ Here the ideas or values which won Independence are revised as the birth of nation(s) in the Punjab involves the bloody communal bisection of the region, and the break-up of the rural and urban communities within this region. Interestingly, in these texts it is the currency of the 'idea' of the South-Asian village as an isolated organic settlement somehow beyond political factionalism — Metcalfe's model of the 'village republic' — which makes rural communal strife more unsettling. In Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* the harrowing descriptions of communal violence in the village of Pir Pondo are more dreadful because the inhabitants have already convinced themselves that 'Pir Pondo was too deep in the hinterland of the Punjab, where distances are measured in footsteps and at the speed of bullock-carts, for larger politics to penetrate'.¹¹

In the Partition writings I have selected in this section, Independence and the drawing of new national borders across the Punjab is depicted as a form of structural interruption or transition in the body of each text. The implications of this disjunction are especially interesting when a village setting is employed, because as these texts document the violent communal dislocation of the rural community, they also form a reaction to the village as an overwritten sign in earlier nationalist fictions. As I will show, this reaction often inflects itself in the denial of a realist, or 'mythical-realist', presentation of external reality and narrative continuity within the text, as earlier notions of cultural-political holism are revised. These general changes often herald more disjointed and impressionistic

⁹ Gooneratne 1980: 39.

¹⁰ Ahmad 1994: 119.

¹¹ Sidhwa 1991: 117.

narrative techniques, and this is clearly the case in more retrospective depictions of Partition such as *Cracking India* and *Basti*. Where realism is retained as the working form, as it is in Singh's and some of Manto's writing, we are confronted with a prose which undercuts the more celebratory pastoral modes of the nationalist text, and disallows a unified narrative point of view.

The revisionist nature of Partition literature written in the decade after 1947 is exemplified in Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, which details the gradual communal polarisation and break-up of the village of Mano Majra during Partition. In order to highlight the similarities between Singh's realist depiction of Mano Majra, and nationalist depictions of the rural village, I will start by looking at the importance of setting in *Train to Pakistan*. In particular I will concentrate on the traumatic disassociation of homeland and identity which occurs as a result of militant communalism in both Singh's and Sadat Hasan Manto's texts. I will then go on to discuss the geopolitics of Partition itself, and the inscription of a cartographic boundary through the Punjab. I have chosen to place this contextual and theoretical digression halfway through the first part of this section, rather than at the start, in order to emphasise more fully the impact of Partition as a sociocultural threshold in the modern history of South-Asia. I will conclude by focussing on the problematic depiction of communal violence in Singh's and Manto's prose.

In the second section of this chapter my examination of Sidhwa's and Husain's texts will centre on interrogations of identity and homeland arising out of the past experience of Partition. Here again, exclusive nationalist and communalist constructions of identity, particularly where these rely on forms of historical reinscription, are deliberately problematised, in this case through the supplementary presence of personal memories and familial relations, which are excluded by them.

Thus, where earlier Partition writings can be seen to concentrate upon the violent identity politics generated by the spatial inscription of homeland, in later work we are faced, once again, with the conflicting inscription of cultural and political presence as part of historical discourses. More obviously than in India, the historicising of Pakistan represented an attempt to construct the present by 'overwriting' the past. It

is in Salman Rushdie's novel, *Shame*, that we find the most eloquent description of the effacing political-historical project of the new Muslim homeland, a national history which Rushdie describes as a palimpsest:

A Palimpsest obscures what lies beneath. To build Pakistan it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani Standard Time. The past was rewritten; there was nothing else to be done.¹²

In *Basti* the paradoxes of maintaining a coherent sense of identity across this historical palimpsest are traced out by Husain in the gradual psychological breakdown of his main immigrant-protagonist, during the secession of Bangladesh in 1971. Sidhwa, in *Cracking India*, addresses related issues, but does so from the perspective of other buried histories, the lost narratives of women raped and abducted during Partition.

¹² Rushdie 1984: 87.

**Before Partition: Political Disillusionment
and the Village-Setting in *Train to Pakistan*.**

Recalling the codified rural settings of the nationalist novels examined in my last chapter, comparisons can immediately be drawn between Singh's detailed description of the village of Mano Majra in *Train to Pakistan*, and Achakka's meticulous delineation of the village space in Rao's *Kanthapura*. Like the remote community of Kanthapura, cradled high in the Western Ghats, Mano Majra is a tiny 'oasis of peace', a seemingly closed space situated on 'the remote reaches of the frontier'.¹³ Moreover, like the village representations covered in my last chapter, the way in which Singh foregrounds his rural setting offers us an immediate sense of how to read the community, in this case as an initially balanced and interlocking set of religious and economic orders.

Probably the most important symbol of this sociocultural unity is the triangular common space in the middle of Mano Majra, shaded by a large *peepul* tree. Here, three brick buildings (the mosque, the Sikh *gudawara*, and the house of the Hindu moneylender, Ram Lal) become architectural figureheads of the different religious and economic aspects of the community. The integrated nature of the community is evoked again in the village deity, worshipped secretly by everyone and constructed, like Moorthy's *Shiv-Lingam* in Kanthapura, out of a 'three-foot slab of sandstone that stands upright ... beside the pond'.¹⁴

Singh's 'stage-setting' is so precise here that it has lead critics such as Chirantan Kulshrestha to label his style 'sociological', and to assert that the novel's 'chief protagonist is not a particular person, but a village'.¹⁵ As we have already seen in Rao's treatment of the village in *Kanthapura*, this is a recognisably nationalist device, in which the rural village is transformed into a metonym of 'national community'. And this is the case again in Mano Majra, as the gradual splitting of the village population into communal factions echoes national divisions which have already taken place across the Punjab. As Kulshrestha argues, 'Khushwant Singh sees in the border village of Mano Majra a microcosm of the communal

¹³ Singh 1993a: 10.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Chirantan Kulshrestha, see Mukherjee 1977: 27.

temper of the country in the days following the Partition'.¹⁶

After 1956, the year that saw the publication of *Train to Pakistan*, we find the village becoming a less common setting in South-Asian writing.¹⁷ V. S. Shahane seems to anticipate this general change by highlighting the fact that Singh's novel was originally entitled *Mano Majra*, and arguing that the titular change to *Train to Pakistan* represents a shift 'from the static to the dynamic: *Mano Majra* is a fixed point whereas the train is a symbol of motion'.¹⁸ Although certain changes do occur in the diurnal rhythms of the village, I would like to propose that Singh's change of title symbolises, more clearly, a shift in the way established or fixed nationalist signs such as the pastoral are expressed in literature of this period.

In direct contrast to the culturally affirming, co-simultaneous cycles of time by which the inhabitants of Kanthapura live, Singh is careful to emphasise the numbing tedium of village life: 'By ... 10.30 [in the] morning ... *Mano Majra* has settled down to its dull daily routine'.¹⁹ This is not to say that Singh dismisses the pastoral mode wholeheartedly: his translations of Guru Nanak's poetry and his critical works show a great appreciation for the permutations of an indigenous pastoral tradition. What is denied in Singh's literature is the politicising construction of a pastoral aesthetic as part of this literary form.

Singh's cautious demythologising of motifs such the elegiac description of the natural landscape, or the implicit valourising of place, echoes a similar questioning of pastoral forms or symbols apparent in literature, particularly poetry, written in indigenous languages. In the following passage taken from his poem 'The Dawn of Freedom', we find the great Urdu poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, cannot resist questioning the political symbolism of national 'dawn', substituting his own poignant vision of a disappointed quest for independence in its place:

This leprous brightness, this dawn which reeks of night
This is not the one — the long awaited morn
This is not the shining light which beckoned

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ In the early-mid 1950s writers such as Kamala Markandaya were still exploring rural settings in works such as *Nectar in a Sieve: A Novel of Rural India*, see Markandaya: 1956. Moreover, the village was still a favoured setting of nationalist films such as *Mother India*, which I have already discussed in relation to *Pather Panchali*.

¹⁸ V.S. Shahane, see Amirthanayagam 1982: 347.

¹⁹ Singh 1993a: 13.

Faiz's denial of the 'leprous' dawn of Independence stands as an eloquent riposte to pastoral narratives of homeland, and political jingoism. In Hasan's collection of Partition Literature in translation, a similar reappraisal of the pastoral idiom occurs in the work of the Punjabi poet, Amrita Pritam. The following passage is taken from her poem 'I Say Unto Waris Shah',

Today a million daughters weep
but where is Waris Shah
to give voice to their woes?...
See the plight of your Punjab
Corpses lie strewn in the pastures
and the Chenab has turned crimson.²¹

Looking more closely at this passage from Pritam's poem, we find some interesting formal reappraisals being carried out. The first of these can be located in Pritam's plea to Waris Shah, the Punjabi poet to whom Lalu refers to *The Village*. Here Pritam subverts the archetypal image of waiting lover, who does not implore the return of a corporeal partner, but instead questions the expressive ability of the poet (and therefore the representative capacity of a gendered romantic rhetoric) to 'voice' the 'woes' of the women of the Punjab. By this appeal, Pritam conveys the comparative magnitude of the suffering faced by 'a million daughters' during Partition. In other words, Waris Shah's poem becomes a cultural yardstick against which suffering can(not) be measured. On a more general level, Pritam's poem can be seen to challenge the adequacy of the pastoral-romance form, represented by Waris Shah's work. This idea of an experiential challenge comes across clearly as Pritam creates a kind of surreal 'Partition-pastoral' of her own, in which the sky is 'scarlet red', and the 'waters of the five rivers [of the Punjab] irrigate the land with poison'²²

Returning to *Train to Pakistan*, a similar questioning of pastoral conventions presents itself in Singh's description of the spatial-temporal existence of Mano Majra. For the villagers, life, rather than replicating

²⁰ Faiz 1997.

²¹ Hasan 1995: 277.

²² Ibid: 278.

some more 'natural' rural rhythm, follows the regular time-tabling of trains on the nearby railway line:

Mano Majra [is] very conscious of trains. Before daybreak, the mail train rushes through on its way to Lahore ... In an instant all Mano Majra comes awake ... As the midday express goes by, Mano Majra stops to rest ... When the evening passenger from Lahore comes in, everyone gets to work again.²³

Here, in the first stages of Singh's text, the issue is not, as V. S. Shahane suggests, so much a 'confrontation' between the innocent, natural world of the village and the impersonal modernity of the railway. Rather, Singh presents us with an example of how easily the pastoral space accommodates the railway, and how, even though few trains stop there, Mano Majra negotiates its own economic and local identity in terms of its proximity to the station: 'Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station ... A small colony of shopkeepers ... has grown up around [it]'.²⁴

Providing a natural counterbalance to the 'clockwork' presence of the railway, the Sutlej river which also runs past the village represents a less regular (and more potentially disastrous) set of temporal and spatial cycles: 'In India villages cannot afford to be too close to the banks of rivers [because] rivers change their moods with the seasons and alter their courses without warning'.²⁵ Clearly, the last part of this passage forms an ironic reference to the fact that in the Punjab of 1947, the vicissitudes of national politics prove to be just as devastating as any local disaster. More importantly, the bodies which appear in the river become, like Pritam's subverted pastoral, an ironic comment on the mythological resonance of the stream as a sustaining, or regenerative force. This becomes clear when the villagers realise that the corpses in the river are not the result of flooding: 'Lambadara, they were not drowned they were murdered ... Guru have mercy on us'.²⁶ Singh's literary inventiveness comes to the fore here in his situating of the village as a social node on the intersection of both

²³ Singh 1993a: 12-13.

²⁴ Ibid:11.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid: 165.

rail and river. In this way, Mano Majra, even though it is 'on the frontier' is uniquely placed to receive the psychological and material debris of distant communal conflict.

Multiple Point of View in *Train to Pakistan*.

Another notable aspect of Singh's novel is its division into several points of view (a device which prefigures the fragmented narrative subjectivities explored by later writers such as Rushdie). Like the loss of cultural currency which depictions of the village betray, the splitting of a unified narrative viewpoint can be marked out as a general trend in Partition Literatures. In *Train to Pakistan* this division takes the form of a third-person narrative voice which alternates between the perspectives of three main characters, Iqbal, a communist student activist, Hukum Chand, the corrupt district magistrate, and Juggut, a local dacoit.

In other texts, such as Intizar Husain's famous Urdu short story, *An Unwritten Epic*, the problem of producing a unified narrative of Partition is explored in the unsuccessful attempts of an emigré writer in Pakistan to produce a heroic, 'epic' story, based on a character from his home-town in India. The narrator's friend finally turns up in Pakistan, interrupting the narrative with decidedly unheroic pleas for work, and thus literary-political certainty is replaced by a disturbing sense of the contingency of 'self' and reality. As Lawrence Durrell puts it in his extended investigation into narrative viewpoint, *The Alexandria Quartet* :

Our view of reality is conditioned by our position in space and time — not by our personalities as we like to think ... every interpretation of reality is based upon a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed.²⁷

For Sadat Hasan Manto, arguably the greatest proponent of the short-story in Urdu, the experience of Partition prompted an investigation of the very idea of 'place' or 'belonging': 'what my mind could not resolve was the question: what country did we belong to now, India or Pakistan?'²⁸ More pertinently, in relation to the narrative relativism already mentioned,

²⁷ Durrell: 1958: 89.

¹⁶ Sadat Hasan Manto, see Hasan 1995 vol 1: 36.

Manto commented that, in trying to reply to the violence of Partition, he recognised the 'Indian answer, the Pakistani answer, the British answer' but found that 'when you tried to unravel the truth you were left groping'.²⁹

In *Train to Pakistan*, the division of the narrative between three key characters becomes exactly this, a 'groping' towards the truth. Recalling the use of the figure of the political activist who makes a prodigal return to the village in texts such as *Kanthapura*, we realise that in the character of the communist activist Iqbal (who arrives in Mano Majra at the start of the narrative), Singh is again subverting one of the conventions of the nationalist novel. Unlike Moorthy or Lal Chand, Iqbal can claim no connection with the village. Furthermore, as a cowardly revolutionary who denies his political allegiance, and a 'social-worker' who cannot stand society, Iqbal shows scant willingness or ability to prevent Mano Majra from becoming a stage for communal violence:

[Iqbal] was surprised that Meet Singh had not mentioned the murder of a next-door neighbour all this time. 'Was it communal? [he said] Is it all right for me to be here? I don't suppose I can do much if the village is all excited about a murder'.

'Why, Babu Sahib, you have come to stop killing and you are upset by one murder?' asked Meet Singh, smiling.³⁰

Iqbal's unwillingness to proclaim his political or cultural identity extends to a point where he becomes effectively transparent; 'he could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammed. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand, or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh. It was one of the few names common to all three communities'.³¹ And, in a period in which identity is being invested with new and often fatal significance, Iqbal's attempt to deny his religious background means that he simply becomes a blank slate upon which communal prejudice and expectation can be inscribed. Thus, at the start of the text (before Mano Majra has become a 'communal space') Iqbal is voluntarily labelled as 'metropolitan babu' and as a Sikh by Meet Singh. Then, as the narrative progresses he becomes, variously, Ram Lal's

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Singh 1993a: 51.

³¹ Ibid: 48.

suspected murderer, a 'Muslim League activist,' and a scapegoat for Hukum Chand:

The head constable was speaking again. 'Did any of you see or talk to a young Mussulman babu ... who was a member of the Muslim League?' The lambardar was taken aback. He did not know Iqbal was a Muslim. he vaguely recalled Meet Singh calling him Iqbal Singh ... One could never be sure about educated people; they were all suspiciously cunning. ³²

Singh does not allow us any particular sympathy for the misrepresented Iqbal, and his fate as a puppet in the machinations of the local magistrate and his constables seems almost a fitting punishment for his arrogance and self-seeking political naiveté.

Comparing Iqbal with other characters in the text, we realise that for Singh, political idealism (even where it has not gone rancid like Iqbal's Australian butter) is an imported luxury in a village about to be engulfed in a communal conflagration. Of the central characters in *Train to Pakistan*, the 'magistrate and deputy commissioner of the district',³³ Hukum Chand, is perhaps the most carefully drawn, and certainly the most personally introspective. However, in keeping with the ironic vision of the novel, Hukum Chand can never become anything more than a very morally ambiguous figure. Where Iqbal illustrates the folly of hypocritical or self-seeking idealism, Hukum Chand represents the poverty of a cynical abandonment of ideals: 'Old and ugly ... [with] yellow rheum in the corners of his eyes'³⁴ and reeking of pyorrhoea, the magistrate is a physical sign of the rotteness at the core of the civil administration, a sign which becomes figurative by the local peoples' reference to him as 'the Government'.³⁵

More clearly than any other character, Hukum Chand's personal philosophy is presented in detail. A striking example appears in the following passage in which his childhood experience of his grandmother's death is related:

She had died shrieking with terror, staring and pointing at

³² Ibid: 139.

³³ Ibid: 28.

³⁴ Ibid: 113.

³⁵ Ibid: 40.

the wall. The scene had never left Hukum Chand's mind ... He had got over the immediate terror of death, but the idea of ultimate dissolution was always present in his mind. It made him kind charitable and tolerant. It even made him cheerful in adversity ... Although he accepted gifts and obliged friends ... he was not corrupt. He occasionally joined in parties ... but he was not immoral. What did it really matter in the end?³⁶

Even so, as the narrative progresses we find that Hukum Chand cannot live up to the degree of emotional stoicism which his personal vision demands. Thus, although he assures himself that 'life [is] too short for people to have consciences', he is wracked with periodic self-disgust, especially when a child-prostitute is procured for him who is 'perhaps younger than his own daughter'.³⁷ Furthermore, Hukum Chand's apparent rejection of naive idealism, the 'silly conventions and values'³⁸ of life, hides the fact that throughout the text he becomes increasingly affected by the horrors he has to witness. In this sense, his increasing fear and moral fastidiousness become subtle registers of the worsening situation in Mano Majra; 'a trainload of dead was too much even for Hukum Chand's fatalism ... [the massacre] bewildered and frightened him'.³⁹

Lastly, we must turn our attention to Singh's anti-hero, Juggut, who makes no pretence at humanity, and, paradoxically, shows himself to be the most humane or heroic character in *Train to Pakistan*. As an outlaw, Juggut Singh seems ultimately to exist at a distance from the political or social spheres within which justifications of mass conflict and genocide are generated. Our first experience of him is after he has broken a probationary curfew in order to secretly meet and have sex with (the Muslim) Nooran on the river-bank. Thereafter, Juggut's bestial qualities are emphasised by the fact that he is either hunted or caged like a dangerous creature by the police. Even his personal ethos is one in which 'fate is written on our foreheads and on the lines of our hands', and crime is the product of 'always wanting [instinctively] to do something'.⁴⁰

Juggut's heroism is displayed at the end of the novel when he sacrifices

³⁶ Ibid: 104.

³⁷ Ibid: 39.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid: 104-05.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 76.

his own life in order to save Nooran and other Muslim refugees travelling on a train bound for Pakistan. The sense of formal resolution which this act of bravery brings about is nevertheless only partial, and militates against what Roland Barthes would term a sense of *lisible* interpretative or ethical closure in Singh's text. Instead, Juggut's death on the railway track emphasises the continuing fact of communal conflict, and draws our attention to the other, later trains, which will pass through Mano Majra as literal, moving monuments to the ferocity of communal hatred.

Nation, Identity, and Political Disintegration.

Earlier in my analysis I pointed towards what could roughly be described as a disillusionment with the 'formulations' of national and cultural identity as expressed in the narratives of homeland which form such a salient part of pre-Independence literature. Now I want to go on to investigate a sense of cultural disjuncture or generic dislocation in Singh's and Manto's fiction as a textual response to the geopolitical 'negotiation of nation(s)' which saw its apotheosis in the bisection of Bengal and the Punjab in August 1947.

In an attempt to open up a critical space in which some mediation between these different fictional and political narratives can occur, I have referred to political discourses which, I feel, closely imbricate the fragmenting fictional worlds depicted by both Manto and Singh. Furthermore, what I must foreground here is the way in which the surreal lack of spatial certainty expressed in both Manto's, and, to a lesser extent, Singh's texts serves to emphasise the instability of a cultural-political landscape in which (a) other forms or 'sites' of identity militate against proposed national-communal boundaries and (b) where, even as these boundaries/borders are traced out, their conceptual presence remains highly uncertain.

Thinking about my first point, we find Clifford Geertz, in his structuralist anthropological study of post-colonial nationhood, proposing that the advent of national independence for the 'new states' must be seen as a continual, balancing act between different levels of identity. For Geertz, a primary distinction must be made here between a secular, 'civic'

sense of 'citizenship in the modern state',⁴¹ and a collective sense of older 'primordial' attachments, which he lists as blood-ties, religion, regional ethnicity, language, and 'custom'.⁴²

As a prime example of the lack of congruence between the new political-administrative demarcations of the post-colonial nation, and the 'fuzzier' spatial perimeters of primordial groupings, Geertz cites an interesting admission by Nehru, following the linguistic States Reorganisation Commission in 1955. As its name suggests, the commission sought to investigate the possibility of relocating the boundaries of some southern Indian states 'in closer conformity with traditional linguistic regions'.⁴³ For Nehru, the enquiry was an 'eye-opener':

the work of 60 years of the Indian National Congress was standing before us, face to face with centuries-old India of narrow loyalties, petty jealousies and ignorant prejudices engaged in mortal conflict, and we were simply horrified to see how thin was the ice upon which we were skating. [Regional representatives] came before us and ... stated that language ... represented culture, race, history ... a finally a sub-nation.⁴⁴

The tone of Nehru's words, as he characterises linguistic regionalist sentiments as 'narrow loyalties' and 'petty jealousies' may seem strangely dismissive (particularly in today's world of ethnic and sectarian conflict). However, the almost palpable sense of anxiety which comes across in this passage is more understandable when we think of it as a reaction to the possibility of further national fragmentation, less than ten years after Indo-Pakistani Partition. Nehru's figure of speech is particularly revealing because he characterises the existence of a composite, unified discourse of nation as a sort of ice-sheet, barely strong enough to bear the weight of federal government.

Returning briefly to Geertz's text, we find post-colonial political consciousness, as it is thrust upon the 'mass of a still largely unmodernised population' leading to the growth of *both* an interest in central government and an 'obsessive concern with the relation of one's

⁴¹ Geertz 1963: 108.

⁴² Ibid: 110.

⁴³ Brass 1994: 169.

⁴⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru, see Geertz 1993: 106.

tribe, region, sect to [the] centre'.⁴⁵ As Geertz goes on to say:

It is the very process of the formation of the sovereign civil state that ... stimulates sentiments of ... communalism, racialism and so on, because it introduces into society a valuable new prize over which to fight and a frightening new force with which to contend.⁴⁶

From a post-colonial perspective, the worrying aspect of Geertz's thesis is its rhetorical similarity to the sort of reactionary speeches formerly given by apologists for colonialism, neo-colonialism, and apartheid in which political independence is equated with an inevitable descent into factionalism and anarchy. Moreover, in the majority of his examples, Geertz ignores the complex, interwoven histories and geopolitical interactions of colonialism and emergent nationalism, preferring to address the 'new states' almost as nations without political heritages. Even so, it would be rash to condemn Geertz's work out of hand because in terms of this study his stress on non-national forms of identity brings important new perspectives to bear on Independence as a politically and geographically divisive experience in South-Asia.

Locating the Islamic Homeland: Finding Space(s) for Pakistan.

By the early years of the Second World War, it became clear that Britain would not be able to retain its hold on India indefinitely. The devastating Japanese incursion into South-East Asia in the early months of 1942 prompted Churchill to dispatch the 'Cripps mission' to try to obtain Indian loyalty in exchange for a promise of dominion status for an Indian Union when the hostilities ceased. For Gandhi, the offer was clearly unacceptable; a 'post-dated cheque on a [failing] bank',⁴⁷ and once again the Mahatma launched mass *satyagraha*, now with 'Quit India' as its mobilising slogan.

However, by this time the Muslim League (following its meteoric rise in power after 1937) had plotted out a radically different political course for itself at the historic Lahore Session of 1940. Out of 'at least six different proposals as to how the division of the continent might best be

⁴⁵ Ibid: 120.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Mohandas K. Gandhi, see Akbar 1988: 339.

accomplished',⁴⁸ the league drew up a masterpiece of political ambiguity. The Lahore Resolution stated

that no constitutional plan would be workable ... or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped together to constitute [autonomous and sovereign] independent States.⁴⁹

What the League's 'Pakistan demand' reveals most saliently is the geographically protean nature of the projected 'national'-communal homeland. The clause on 'territorial readjustments' was designed specifically to give Jinnah more room for manoeuvre, and later changes included a demand for the whole of the Punjab and Bengal and 'an 800-mile long "corridor" to link West and East Pakistan'.⁵⁰ Indeed, this first proposal also seemed to suggest the possibility an 'autonomous', independent Bengali state in the east, rather than the divided Pakistan which eventually came into existence.

As I pointed out in Chapter One, after the rebellion of 1857, the political map of India was effectively frozen. Following the disastrous events in Oudh, territorial annexation ceased, and the sub-continent was administered as a patchwork of directly and indirectly ruled territory. Thus, after the British had failed to conciliate the nationalists with the earlier Cripps plan for a disempowered Union, only a few months before Independence Mountbatten showed Nehru a contingency plan (later known as the 'Balkan Plan'), which proposed a division of India along more provincial lines. M. J. Akbar describes it thus; 'The government in Delhi would be weak ... [and] with uncertain power being transferred to so many different points ... at least a dozen confused nations would emerge'.⁵¹

As Geertz's stress on the regional cultural loyalties (revealed by the

⁴⁸ Wolpert 1984: 330.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 184-85.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 325.

⁵¹ Akbar 1988: 408.

States Reorganisation Committee) shows us, the 'Balkanisation' of India was more than a distinct, potentially disastrous, possibility both before and after Independence. Because of this the 'Princely States' were given as little independent leeway as possible by the Congress, and Nehru's strongest condemnation was reserved for schemes like Mountbatten's 'Balkan Plan'.

A divided India, each part trying to help itself and not caring for, or co-operating with, the rest, will lead to an aggravation of the disease [of 'primordial' identification and communalism] and to sinking into a welter of hopeless, helpless misery. It is terribly late already and we have to make up for lost time'.⁵²

In many ways, then, the incredible proliferation of political-geographical models in the years directly before Independence signals the accelerated activity of an indigenous political forum which, as Geertz suggests, came into conflict over whether to 'integrate' the 'primordial' within a secular civic polity, or whether to represent themselves in terms of a religio-political sense of self. For Khushwant Singh, the issue of personal identitie(s) only becomes problematic when it becomes a process of choice and exclusion:

Am I Indian first and Punjabi or Sikh second? Or is it the other way round? I don't like the way these questions are framed. I want to retain my religious and linguistic identity without making them exclusive.⁵³

In the above passage taken from his collected essays, *Not a Nice Man to Know*, Singh inadvertently points to a central concern of the Partition literature addressed here: the representation of communities, families, and individuals who are suddenly persuaded or forced to make exclusive and essentialising choices about their identities. I will come back to the way this political 'essentialising' is depicted in Singh's work shortly.

In the convincing vernacular dialogues which colour the Muslim Shiite writer Rahi Masoom Reza's Hindi novel, *Aadha Gaon* (translated by Gillian Wright as *The Feuding Families of Village Gangauli*), the villagers' cultural, regional, and community identity is challenged, and

⁵² Nehru 1960: 549.

⁴¹ Singh 1993b: 7.

gradually reduced to a communal essence, by the presence of activists from the Muslim college at Aligarh. Again, as in Singh's depiction of Iqbal, the figure of the metropolitan student-activist is depicted in increasingly satirical terms. The casual idiomatic exchange between the Muslim Kammo and his Hindu neighbour contrasts well, in the following passage, with the stilted Urdu and cliched political rhetoric of the Aligarh students:

'We hail From Aligarh', said one of the young men in the correct Urdu of an educated city dweller [he] ... proceeded to deliver a ... speech which Kammo didn't understand in the least because the young man was mentioning matters [which had no connection] with him or Gangauli ... then ... One of them said hotly, 'Very well, but don't complain when the Hindus come and carry off your mothers and sisters'.

'Which *behenchod* can carry off my mother and sisters?' Kammo began to tremble with rage ... A [Hindu] Chamar was heading towards them ...

'Did you hear that ?' Kammo asked him ... 'These people have come from Aligarh to tell me that when Hindustan gets free you people are going to carry off our mothers and sisters,' ... 'Arre, Ram-Ram!' said the Chamar, quite unnerved.⁵⁴

Indeed, throughout *The Feuding Families of Village Gangauli*, a type of dialogic conflict takes place, which pits the increasingly ugly and dogmatic rhetoric of the League activists with the ingenious and emotive counter-rhetoric of the villagers. As this conflict develops, the students lose their identity altogether, becoming simply their anonymous black *shervani* coats. Conversely, characters like Kammo and the war-veteran Tannu become richer as they are forced to defend non-Muslim aspects of their identities. The following passage stands as an example of the emotional meaning of home and a plural sense of 'rootedness'.

'I am not a voter!' Tannu interrupted the black shervani, 'I am a Muslim. But I love this village because I myself am this village. I love the indigo godown, this tank and these mud lanes because they are different forms of myself. On the battle field, when death come very near, I certainly remembered Allah, but instead of Mecca or Karbala, I remembered Gangauli.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Rahi Masoom Reza, see Hasan 1995: 49-50.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 60.

In *Train to Pakistan* this conflict of loyalties is inflected rather differently. As we have already partly seen (in Singh's initial spatial and temporal stage-setting), in the first part of the text a sense of integrated group identity is the defining aspect of Mano Majra. As Singh stresses; 'in the Punjabi code ... truth, honour [and] financial integrity ... were placed lower down the scale of values than being true to one's salt, to one's ... fellow villagers'.⁵⁶

However, for both the community of Gangauli village and the inhabitants of Mano Majra a complacency born of political isolation: 'We live in this little village and know nothing',⁵⁷ and a reliance on older 'primordial' rural codes (Tannu's 'forms of [him]self') are not enough to stop the horror of communal antagonism and violence entering the village. In Singh's text, instead of coming about through conflicting dialogues, the fracturing of the village is expressed as an almost intuitive response to the altered rhythms (and ghoulish cargoes) of the river and the railway:

Early in September the time schedule ... started going wrong. Trains became less punctual than ever before ... it seemed as though the alarm clock had been set for the wrong hour ... ghost trains went past ... between midnight and dawn disturbing the dreams of Mano Majra.⁵⁸

Because of this ominous sense of sociopolitical tachycardia, transmitted down the railway from Lahore and Delhi, and because of the fearful uncertainty generated after Ram Lal's murder, the village is suddenly 'divided ... into two halves as neatly as a knife cuts through a pat of butter'.⁵⁹ More importantly, the resulting sense of communal suspicion starts to crystallise the 'meaning' of Pakistan: as a designated communal space instead of simply a piece of political rhetoric. For the Muslims 'quite suddenly every Sikh in Mano Majra became a stranger with an evil intent ... For the first time the name Pakistan came to mean something to them'.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Singh 1993a: 54.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 61.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 92.

⁵⁹ Ibid: 141.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Radcliffe and the Boundary Commission.

This brings me to the second, geopolitical paradox inherent in the Partitioning of the sub-continent: the fact that the national borders which Cyril Radcliffe was commissioned to trace across the landscape were (because of their existence as nothing more than imagined communal markers), in the first stages of their implementation, strangely 'hyperreal'. I use Jean Baudrillard's self-consciously postmodernist term out of its cultural context here because it provides us with an interesting critical angle on the cartographic 'inscription' of Partition; one, as we shall see, which coincides with certain post-colonial ideas about the ideological function of the colonial map.

By way of an introduction to his famous essay, 'Simulacra and Simulations', Baudrillard cites a story by Jorge Luis Borges in which the cartographers of a fictional empire produce a map so detailed that it covers the 'represented' territory exactly. However, as the empire declines, the map becomes frayed and returns to the soil 'rather as an aging double ends up being confused with the real thing'.⁶¹ For Baudrillard, Borges's story, in its surreal confusion of the 'real' with the 'referential', becomes an example of ('third order') simulacral abstraction in which

Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being [but] the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth it is the map that precedes the territory — precession of simulacra — it is the map that engenders the territory.⁶²

Admittedly, Baudrillard's technologised age of continual, 'simulacral' representation is a far cry from the last, drought-ridden months of the British Raj. However, in the confinement of a bungalow on the edge of the viceregal estate in Delhi, the 'real' India had effectively disappeared for the man the British had charged with the task of drawing the borders between Pakistan and India. Compelled to demarcate as much as 'thirty miles of frontier a day', Radcliffe would never 'walk in a rice paddy or ... visit a single one of the hundreds of villages through which his line

⁶¹ Jean Baudrillard, see Poster 1990: 166.

⁶² Ibid.

would run'.⁶³ In fact, he had been picked for the job precisely because his administrative ignorance of South-Asia was seen as a 'guarantee of impartiality'.⁶⁴

As I have already emphasised in my first chapter, in the early nineteenth century cartographic projects such as the Great Trigonometrical Survey consolidated both the ideological and administrative power of British colonialism in South-Asia. Hitherto, in talking about Lambton's and Everest's survey, I have described a (hybridised) inscriptive act in which the 'mimetic' function of the map is succeeded closely by its status as an ideological, geopolitical construction. In other words, the map 'refers' to territory which has been conquered, surveyed and traversed, and *thus* connects it to the wider political construction of colony.

Conversely, in Radcliffe's trisection of South-Asia, 'the territory', as Baudrillard states, 'no longer precedes the map' ... instead, 'it is the map that engenders the territory'. In neighbouring South-East Asia the same strategy, appropriated from Europe,⁶⁵ underpinned the spatial expression of nationalism in Siam. As the Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul puts it:

In terms of most communication theories ... a map is a scientific abstraction of reality ... In the history I have described, this relationship is reversed. A map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa. In other words, a map ... had become a real instrument to concretize projections on the earth's surface.⁶⁶

As a description of the political-ideological intent of Radcliffe's Partitioning of both East and West Pakistan, Thongchai's analysis is also very apt. In the event, however, the newly 'concretized' nations did not immediately set into contained national and communal blocs. Instead, they endured a terrible interregnum period during which 'millions of people on both sides of the border refused to accept the finality of the

⁶³ Collins and Lapierre 1975: 211-12.

⁶⁴ Khilnani 1997b: 7.

⁶⁵ Reviewing the history of European imperialism, we find numerous instances of this process of geopolitical 'precession', most obviously during the Berlin Conference of 1885, which sought to allocate different parts of sub-Saharan Africa to the colonial powers. See Pakenham: 1991.

⁶⁶ Thongchai Winichakul, see Anderson 1991: 174.

borders',⁶⁷ experiencing them instead as dangerous, politically unstable areas across which lay the safer hinterlands of communal homeland. As Bipan Chandra states:

Independence Day in [both] Punjab and Bengal saw strange scenes. Flags of both India and Pakistan were flown in villages between Lahore and Amritsar as people of both communities believed that they were on the right side of the border.⁶⁸

This brings me to a last important aspect of the political-'simulacral' nature of the boundary award: the fact that for many of the Congress leaders involved in Partition, the political lines which ran through the Punjab and Bengal seemed strangely invalid or impermanent. In the first place, their announcement had been delayed until after Independence, a strategy which was formulated in order to absolve the colonial authorities of any responsibility:

It was stated that Sir Cyril Radcliffe would be ready that evening [9th August] to announce the award of the Punjab Boundary Commission ... it was now for reconsideration whether it would in fact be desirable to publish it straight away. Without question, the earlier it was published the more the British would have to bear the responsibility for the disturbances which would undoubtedly result. Lord Ismay gave his opinion that it would be best to defer publication.⁶⁹

Furthermore, Radcliffe's own description of the boundary decision, quoted in *The Times*, on the eighth of August reveals a repeated, defensive gesturing towards the arbitrary nature of the border. This is signalled particularly clearly in his statement that 'legitimate criticism' could be made of his decision, as of any 'any other line that might [have been] chosen'. Further on in the same edition, Radcliffe concludes 'The award ... cannot go far towards satisfying sentiments and aspirations deeply held on either side'. For the Congress leaders, these were the same sentiments and aspirations for which they had spent long periods in prison, and which had quickened their very political existence.

⁶⁷ Chandra 1989: 502.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 499.

⁶⁹ Singh 1966: 458.

Like the structures of governmental administration, the Congress had inherited the shape of colonial India from the British, as a symbol of the national homeland that they would eventually rule themselves. The origins of this specific national-spatial conceptualising, as Benedict Anderson points out, derive from the habit of using different inks or dyes to demarcate mapped European possessions.

Dyed this way each colony appeared like a detachable piece of a jigsaw puzzle. As this 'jigsaw' effect became normal, each piece could be wholly detached from its geographical context.⁷⁰

In Anderson's view, the jigsaw effect is important because it allows the map to become a 'pure sign': a reproducible logo 'available for transfer to posters, official seals, letterheads ... forming a powerful emblem for the anticolonial nationalisms being born'.⁷¹

Because of the durability of the 'nation as logo' we find, in the wistful rhetoric of the Congress leaders, traces of a spectral unified India which refused to be replaced by the newly truncated national imagining (even though, as I have already stressed, the map of colonial India was really a 'patchwork' of regions and cultures administered under direct and indirect colonial rule). Four months before Independence, Nehru had written to K.P.S. Menon that he had 'no doubt whatever that sooner or later India will have to function as a unified country. Perhaps the best way to reach that stage is to go through some kind of Partition now'.⁷² More forceful than Nehru's words were those of the future Indian education minister, Maulana Azad. At a meeting to ratify the 3rd June Partition plan, he harked back to the lost territory of a proto-national India, proclaiming the older shape of nation as 'real', and Radcliffe's boundaries as cartographic and therefore 'false':

The division is only of the map of the country and not in the hearts of the people, and I am sure it is going to be a short-lived partition ... the picture of India we have learnt to cherish will remain in our minds.⁷³

⁷⁰ Anderson 1991: 175.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Jawaharlal Nehru, see Akbar 1988: 405.

⁷³ Ibid: 414.

Whilst politicians like Nehru and Azad were unsure of the durability of the territorial divisions which Radcliffe had marked out, at a grass-roots level the conceptual shape of 'Pakistan' and its boundaries underwent all the creative permutations which we have already witnessed in narrative 're-presentations' of Gandhian nationalism. Returning briefly to Rahi Masoom Reza's literary depiction of village Gangauli we find one of the the lower caste characters describing Pakistan as an architectural — rather than a geographical — religious structure. "'Eh, Bibi, where is this Pakistan being made?" said Chikuriya ... "If it is made in Ghaziapur then I can go and see it ... I'm thinking that [it] must be some mosque or other"'.⁷⁴

In the first category of Partition Literature located here, Chikuriya's inquiry about the spatial location of Pakistan (and its borders) is reiterated so often that it becomes a kind of *leitmotif*. Ultimately, this repeated inquiry forms part of a wider sense of incomprehension, described by Alok Bhalla as a reaction to the unexpected ferocity of a communal conflict which seems to ignore centuries of shared tradition: 'There is a single common note which informs nearly all the stories written about the Partition and the horror it unleashed — a note of utter bewilderment'.⁷⁵

Following this interpretative angle, we find the central 'bewildering' concern of Manto's lunatic-asylum inmates, in *Toba Tek Singh*, is their (dis)-location in terms of the newly created states:

As to where Pakistan was located the inmates knew nothing ... If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how come that until the other day it was India?⁷⁶

Manto's literary-political strategy in this story is to convey the tragedy of the situation through a form of anecdotal slapstick, which automatically problematises a simple humorous response: 'One inmate got so badly caught up in this India-Pakistan-Pakistan-India rigmarole that one day [he] climbed the nearest tree [and declared] "I wish to live neither in India nor

⁷⁴ Rahi Masoom Reza, see Hasan 1995 vol 1: 54.

⁷⁵ Bhalla 1994 voll: ix.

⁷⁶ Sadat Hasan Manto, see Rushdie and West 1997: 25.

in Pakistan. I wish to live in this tree”'.⁷⁷

I will explore this idiosyncratic use of humour shortly. Before I do, however, I want to draw attention to the curious way in which Radcliffe's choice of rivers as boundary markers contributed to their strange sense of impermanence and unpredictability. I have already stressed the fact that at their inception, the majority of people in the Punjab refused to accept the 'finality' of Radcliffe's boundary lines. Even when these boundaries were recognised (as they followed the dry river-beds of the Sutlej or the Ravi) they were marked more by the significant act of safe transmigration or crossing than by their theoretical status as 'delimiting' lines of state containment.⁷⁸

However, on the 24th of September the monsoon finally arrived, and like 'one last malediction'⁷⁹ the new 'borders' of the Punjab suddenly materialised into torrents of flood-water. Thus, in a few hours, the 'natural' rising of the rivers of the Punjab restricted the columns of refugees more effectively than any purely political border. This change is represented in Singh's text as a counterpoint to the rising communal tension in Mano Majra: 'Until yesterday [said the lambardar] ... we could have helped you to cross the river ... now the only crossings are by rail and road bridges'.⁸⁰

Hence, we find, in South-Asian writing which tries to engage with the experience of national division, a concurrent crisis taking place in the conventional literary depiction of homeland. As works which have literally come apart under the burden of representation, these writings act to revise the comparative unities and aesthetic usages of the nationalist novel, and, on the whole, betray a deep suspicion of overt political statement. Additionally, as part of this process of revisioning, the elaborate intermingling of language and narrative which we saw in *Kanthapura* is replaced by a sparser, more documentary mode.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Anthony Giddens, see Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 34.

⁷⁹ Collins and Lapierre 1975: 341.

⁸⁰ Singh 1993a: 148.

Violence and Representation in Partition Literature.

At the heart of these literary developments is something which I have already made passing references to here, but which now deserves a more detailed appraisal; namely, the problem of a literary engagement with the unprecedented inter-communal violence unleashed by Partition. In Europe a similar difficulty faced those who sought to document their responses to the Holocaust. For Sidra Dekhoven Ezrahi a 'basic tension' is apparent in Holocaust literature between

the instinctive revulsion against allowing the monstrous creatures to emerge and the base sounds to be heard — as if by exposing them to the light of day the artists were somehow affirming or legitimating the deformities of man's nature — and the equally compelling instinct against repressing reality, against the amnesia that comes with concealment.⁸¹

Added to this dual tension is the simple 'indescribability' of what has happened; the feeling that 'the [literary] imagination loses credibility where reality exceeds even the darkest fantasies of the human mind'.⁸²

The points which Ezrahi makes are particularly apposite to the literary representations of violence produced by writers such as Manto and Singh. Manto experienced communal antagonism in Bombay, and Khushwant Singh lived through the latter part of 1947 in Lahore, where the inhabitants endured 'one of the ugliest outbreaks of communal slaughter in India's history'⁸³. Indeed, in direct contrast to the 'retrospective' writings on which I will focus shortly, Manto and Singh are almost too involved in the horrific experience of Partition to enable a full response to the event in their fiction.

Even so, for Manto the very act of writing about the horror of Partition, in his words the retrieval of (very dark) 'pearls' from a 'man-made sea of blood', is justified because it brings about some level of understanding; 'without self-pity or despair'.⁸⁴ We must remember that Manto was often

⁸¹ Ezrahi 1982: 2.

⁸² Ibid: 3.

⁸³ *The Times* August 22nd, 1947.

⁸⁴ Sadat Hasan Manto, see Hasan 1995 vol1: 89.

forced to defend his writing against court prosecutions for obscenity, and criticism from members of the IPWA, who likened his prose to 'desecration of the dead'.⁸⁵ Thus, before querying Manto's ethical standpoint we must recognise his achievement in carrying out this difficult cultural 'self-evaluation' so soon after Independence. As Ezrahi puts it, in this sense Manto was condemned by his critics for simply allowing 'the monstrous' to emerge, even though he was not legitimising or affirming human brutality.

Essentially, for Manto and Singh, the painful process of 'disclosing' Partition involves evasive stratagems and ways of speaking which tend to proclaim a communicative difficulty. As we shall see, for some later authors such as Intizar Husain, the traumatic process of recollection means that the production of a linear, 'rationally comprehensible' narrative about Partition is not even a possibility.⁸⁶ In his work on 'War Trauma, Identity, and Adult Development', the sociologist Robert S. Laufer argues that once an individual has been subjected to extreme stress, 'that trauma becomes embedded in [their] personality and [subsequently] there is an interactive relationship between the memory of the trauma and subsequent stages of adult development'.⁸⁷

Whilst I do not want to assert a deterministic link between the biographical experiences of authors such as Manto and the texts they produce, the 'fractured' responses which these narratives exhibit are strangely appropriate, and rework trauma as striking literary device. Like 'fragments of the ('other', victim or victimising) self which survive as "indelible images"', violence is expressed in this literature as a disorientating series of broken scenes and fractured dialogues. In Manto's *Black Margins* these fragments appear like scattered detritus after some terrible disaster, and it is often these simple disjointed lines of dialogue which are the most poignant, and haunting: 'He isn't dead yet. See, see, he is still gasping for breath' ... 'Let it go, *yaar*. I am already exhausted'.⁸⁸

A related aspect of the 'traumatic', evasive representational strategies apparent in Partition writing is a form of gallows humour present in these texts; a comic treatment of violence which seems altogether too heavy-

⁸⁵ Ibid: 97.

⁸⁶ Bhalla 1994 vol1: xxviii.

⁸⁷ Ibid: 38.

⁸⁸ Sadat Hasan Manto, see Hasan 1995: 99.

handed to qualify as simply ironic social criticism. This humour derives specifically from the way in which passages depicting inter-communal violence are structured. In order to highlight this structuring I want to return, briefly, to one of the fragmentary sub-narratives in *Train to Pakistan*. Here Singh, making a bitterly ironic reference to Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech, sketches out the horrific ways in which some of his secondary characters meet their own violent destinies in the chaos of Partition:

Sunder Singh ... came to his tryst by train, along with his [family] ... There were over five hundred men and women in a compartment meant to carry '40 sitting, 12 sleeping' ... It was 115 degrees in the shade ... Then the train was held up at a station for four days [and] Sunder Singh's children cried for water and food. So did everyone else. Sunder Singh gave them his urine to drink. Then that dried up too. So he pulled out his revolver and shot [his wife and children] ... Then he lost his nerve ... There was no point in killing himself. The train had begun to move.⁸⁹

And the same, anecdotal, almost joking structure can be found in the narrative splinters which make up Manto's *Black Margins*. Here, as in Singh's text, the terror of a particular incident is built up and then subverted by an ironic epiphonema which operates in much the same way as a punch-line:

Rioters brought the running train to a halt. People belonging to the other community were pulled out and slaughtered ... The rest of the passengers were treated to *Halwa*, fruits and milk. The chief assassin made a fairwell speech before the train pulled out of the station: 'Ladies and gentlemen, my apologies. News of this train's arrival was delayed. That is why we have not been able to entertain you lavishly — the way we wanted to.'⁹⁰

Read in relation to the cultural conventions of 'humour' in European literature, the ironic weight of these endings seems gratuitous, and almost a grotesque overstatement of the obvious. However, as Khushwant Singh points out in his commentary on joke-telling in Indian literature, 'Europeans indulge in black humour, making jokes about death and

⁸⁹ Singh 1993a: 203-04.

⁹⁰ Sadat Hasan Manto, see Hasan 1995: 98.

funerals; we in India consider them in bad taste'.⁹¹

It would seem, at this point, that I have reached an interpretative *impasse*, and that my own European notions of what constitutes 'black' humour have lead to a misreading across cultures. Having made this qualification, I will conclude here by pointing out some possible critical pathways around these often disturbingly glib, anecdotal depictions of violence. A possible approach would be to liken their structure to short regional folk narratives which are primarily oral and proverbial — stories which involve farcical, or grotesque situations and often rely on a witty final punch-line for their effect. The following is from Ralph Russell's anthology of translated Urdu Literature: 'A king once asked one of his slaves who was a jester if he could play cards. "No," he said, "I can't even tell the difference between a King and the Slave." (In Urdu the Knave is called the Slave)⁹² The dialogue above gives us a rhetorical template from which to trace the representation of violence in Singh's and Manto's work. If we accept this connection, then these scenes of violence become culturally comprehensible because they inhabit the empty shell of an earlier, more directly meaningful form.

An alternative and more ethnocentric interpretation involves the idea that this 'humorous' literary treatment of Partition is, again, symptomatic of a representational conflict between subject matter and literary form. Once more, a comparison with the representational use of humour in Holocaust literature gives us a potential window on these texts. In his influential work *L'Univers Concentrationnaire*, David Rousset describes a brand of Kafkaesque humour 'discovered' in the Nazi concentration camps which 'enabled many of [the inmates] to survive'.⁹³ For Lawrence Langer

the humour of which Rousset speaks ... derives from the sense of disparity between our preconceptions of the human, and the aberrations from it encountered in the concentration camps ... a humour dwelling on the verge of horror and never far from hysteria.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Singh 1993b: 429.

⁹² Russell 1995: 92.

⁹³ David Rousset, see Langer 1977: 211.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The way in which this type of humour partakes of 'disparity', and exists on the edge of hysteria reminds us of Freud's work, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Admittedly, Freud never examines 'black humour' as such, but he does relate what he calls 'tendentious jokes' to a form of psychological release: 'repression ... is recognised by its function of preventing the impulses subjected to it ... from becoming conscious ... jokes, as we shall see, are able to release pleasure even from sources that have undergone repression'.⁹⁵ Freud makes the point that jokes thus provide a 'pleasurable' expression or outlet for repressed desires, and in the context of black humour we could perhaps apply Freud's formulation to repressed fears or desires arising from traumatic experience.

Whatever interpretative framework we decide upon, the grim comic ironies of Partition Literature invariably derive from the bizarre disparities and contradictions of civil violence: the moral ambivalence of the rioters in Manto's story who slaughter half the passengers on the train and 'entertain' the others 'lavishly'. As Alfred Jarry states, attempting to define comedy in surrealism, 'Laughter ... is born out of the discovery of the contradictory',⁹⁶ and it is therefore fitting that we should leave these disturbing images of communal ferocity without attempting to critically foreclose them, or interpret them in an exclusive way.

⁹⁵ Freud 1991: 184-85.

⁹⁶ Alfred Jarry, see Nadeau 1968: 25.

Literary Retrospectives on Partition.

In the first part of this chapter I focussed on Partition Literature written in the first decade after Independence. Now, I want to address what could be described as a second flowering of literature about Partition, which occurred in the subcontinent from the early 1970s. One of the main obstacles encountered in a critical review of this later category is the sheer number and range of texts which return to, and imaginatively readdress, the divided landscape of 1947. Some of these works, such as Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (published in 1975) reproduce the documentary-style realism of novels such as *Train to Pakistan*, but on a larger scale, incorporating the experience of mass-migration and resettlement into the text. Other prose works, such as Bhisham Sahni's Hindi novel *Tamas* (1974), represent more detailed pieces of historical revisioning, which map out trajectories of communal conflict on a local scale. However, in terms of my main concern, that is, the developing literary representation of the relationship between identity and homeland, Intizar Husain's Urdu novel *Basti*⁹⁷ and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*⁹⁸ are particularly important, because they both set out to redefine personal identity in relation to the gendered, nationalist self-narration of post-colonial Pakistan.

Describing the problems of 'Writing in Colonial Space' the Canadian critic Dennis Lee seems to point towards a similar dissonance, this time between language and 'place'. For Lee 'the act of writing "becomes a problem to itself" when ... to write necessarily involves something that seems to make writing impossible'.⁹⁹ He goes on to argue that 'contradictions in our civil space are one thing that make this happen'.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, the fundamental problem faced by post-colonial writers who readdress a personal or familial experience of 1947 is the (contradictory) slippage between a personal sense of self and the national-historical narratives of Pakistan and India.

The growth of this generic literary reappraisal must be attributed, in part, to the continuing presence of communally-driven political conflict in

⁹⁷ Husain: 1995.

⁹⁸ Sidhwa: 1994.

⁹⁹ Dennis Lee, see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995: 398.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

the subcontinent, which flared up in Delhi after Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, and, more recently, during the Babri Masjid/Ramjanmabhumi incident in Ayodhya in 1992.¹⁰¹ In some fictions, such as Husain's *Basti*, national-communal conflict serves as a trigger for the recollection of memories dislocated by Partition. In Husain's text, the central protagonist, Zakir, develops an obsessive preoccupation with his past, recalled against the backdrop of Lahore during the war for Bangladeshi independence in 1971. Urvashi Butalia, writing about her own attempts to come to terms with the cultural legacy of Partition, recorded a similar pattern of remembrance when she listened to the victims of communal violence in Delhi after Indira Gandhi's assassination. 'Often older people ... would remember that they had been through a similar terror before. "We didn't think it could happen to us in our own country", they would say. "This is like Partition again"'.¹⁰²

However, in retrospective Partition novels, the impetus for a return to 1947 is never solely due to historical triggers such as Indira Gandhi's assassination. In Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, the act of remembering represents a much more independent attempt to relocate self around the historical and spatial caesurae of national division. As Husain points out in an interview with Muhamad Umar Memon,¹⁰³ even those who did not move from their family homes during Partition, and who were therefore not true immigrants or *muhajirs*, found, with the advent of Pakistan, that they had been automatically dislocated from their childhoods and that the past had literally become 'a foreign country'.

For Sidhwa, this challenge is articulated in the creative use of a narrative which reflects the imagistic, contingent impressions of childhood memories, presented to us like a jumbled collection of family snapshots. And to reinforce a sense of the interdependent nature of memory and identity, the adult and childhood viewpoints of Sidhwa's narrator, Lenny, converge and separate throughout the novel. Central to this narrative is a reinvestigation of the experience of Partition to involve the histories of its abducted 'subaltern' casualties: women like Lenny's Ayah who disappeared both literally, and from gendered historiographic

¹⁰¹ Gopal 1991.

¹⁰² Butalia 1997: 15.

¹⁰³ Memon 1983: 153-86.

narratives of the time. In Husain's case, the representation of personal and historical temporalities is both more stylistically varied, and more politically ambivalent. Thus, in *Basti*, events leading up to and 'surrounding' Partition are evoked using a variety of disjointed time sequences, successive first- and third-person narrations, diary entries, and stream of consciousness techniques.

Where the literary techniques and unities of realist fiction seem to start becoming obsolete in literature which recalls Partition, narrative tropes which arise out of a shared religio-cultural tradition are recycled as a way of allegorising the trauma of personal relocation. I have already stressed the way in which Husain's use of form in *An Unwritten Epic* draws attention to the experiential, cultural boundary of Partition. In a similar way, the rehabilitation of classical Urdu forms such as the *Distanbu* (diary) and the *Shahr-e-Ashub* (city-lament)¹⁰⁴ provide generic bridges or linkages, in *Basti*, across the culturally amputating space of what Sidhwa's child-narrator calls the country's 'breaking'.¹⁰⁵

Concurrently, as these writings inscribe memoried narratives of identity across the national and/or historical boundaries of Indo-Pakistani Partition, they also refigure Partition more comprehensively as a rural and an urban experience. In both *Cracking India* and *Basti* the local cultural and physical geography of the ancient Punjab city of Lahore is juxtaposed against the experience of migration and rural conflict, to become a changing tableau across which the effects and ruptures of Partition can be plotted.

Memory and the Boundaries of National History in *Cracking India* and *Basti*.

In an earlier part of this chapter I drew attention to the strangely fragmented narrative foci which form such an original part of Singh's literary response to Partition. What I want to suggest now is that as we recognise the traumatic representational difficulties thrown up by Partition in contemporary literature, we must remain sensitive to its residual effect on the identities of those who experienced it, and the often irredeemable sense of dislocation bought about by the experience of forced

¹⁰⁴ See my analysis of Ghalib's poetry in Chapter One.

¹⁰⁵ Sidhwa 1991: 101.

migration between India and Pakistan.

For the millions of South-Asians who lived through Partition, the practical difficulties of establishing a sense of lived continuity between past and present across the temporal boundary of August 1947 were almost insurmountable. Not only did this date signify the inscription of 'hyperreal' spatial borders, it also represented a national-historical checkpoint across which old cultural and familial continuities were erased, to be replaced by new, nationally acceptable histories. If Jinnah already sensed the artificiality of the divisions he had helped create, his parting words, as he left Delhi for the last time on August 7th 1947, registered only an implacable trust in the concept of Pakistan's historical incarnation. As *The Times* correspondent reported:

Mr Jinnah left Delhi unobtrusively today by air for Karachi ... In a farewell message [he] wished Hindustan prosperity and peace. 'The past must be buried. Let us start again as two independent sovereign states', he said.¹⁰⁶

In the face of such a complete interment of pre-national history, personal narratives or family connections which crossed the Indo-Pakistani border were suddenly suppressed in the public rhetoric of the state, and only survived, hidden like censored literature, in the corners of people's domestic lives. Urvashi Butalia makes this point when she argues that although the 'generality' of Partition still 'exists publicly' in books, 'the particular [is] ... harder to discover [because it only] exists privately in stories told and retold inside so many households in India and Pakistan'.¹⁰⁷ It is this particular type of narrative which provides the cultural provenance of works such as *Basti*, and *Cracking India*.

Thus, it is not surprising to find that the structures of both primary texts I have selected here emulate the actual processes of remembering and automatically subvert the idea of time as the measured, rationalised chronicle. Contrasted against the more synchronised cyclical or linear flow of national and personal time in the texts covered in Chapter Two, Husain's and Sidhwa's work rebels against the 'burial' of the past by situating itself in the disjunctions of civic history.

¹⁰⁶ *The Times*, 1947: August 7th.

¹⁰⁷ Butalia 1997: 14.

A pertinent aspect of memory, or more specifically the act of remembrance, in terms of writing which attempts to use it as a kind of literary structure, is its apparently erratic schematisation. Referring to what he sees as a false consensus in clinical studies of 'autobiographical memory', the psychologist William Brewer stresses that whilst 'time is one aspect that may organise autobiographical memories ... other forms of organisation [such as family relationships, or professional contacts] may be involved'.¹⁰⁸ This is indeed the case in *Basti* and *Cracking India*, where omissions and changing organisational structures appear in the chronology of the narrative as a matter of course. In the case of Husain's novel, the intensity and growing frequency with which the past returns to Zakir (in the form of almost hallucinatory bouts of reverie) renders time as an increasingly episodic process of temporal cross-referencing. Similarly, in Sidhwa's work, a cumulative, episodic narrative construction is employed, which replicates the organisational licence of reverie: 'I pick up a brother. Somewhere down the line I become aware of his elusive existence ... I don't recall him learning to crawl or walk. Where was he? It doesn't matter'.¹⁰⁹

Partition as Anti-Epic: Domestic Narratives in *Cracking India*.

Before I go on to examine my primary texts in more detail it is important to emphasise the way Husain's and Sidhwa's writings differ significantly in their response to the gendering of the nation. Husain's text exhibits some noticeable biases in this respect, and even as he questions the patriotic fervour generated by the events in West Pakistan, and condemns the 'burial' of Indian-Muslim histories, the rigorously patriarchal nature of the culture from which he writes means that the successive objectification of women in these historical narratives goes almost unnoticed. Furthermore, the legacy of a strong Urdu literary tradition means that in Husain's novel, female characters are noticeable by their domesticity, their idealisation and lack of differentiation. Thus, Husain's protagonist, Zakir, who works as a history lecturer and whose name means 'to remember', must be seen, however marginal his personal

¹⁰⁸ William Brewer, see Rubin 1986: 45. Also useful is Ulric Neisser's work on 'Nested Structure in Autobiographical Memory' in the same volume.

¹⁰⁹ Sidhwa 1991: 32.

remembrances make him, to narrate his experiences from a point of erudite institutional and patriarchal authority at the centre of Lahore society.

Conversely, Lenny's adult recollections of her childhood-self provide us with a narrative viewpoint which is limited to her family, neighbours, her ayah, and her ayah's admirers; a perspective in which heroic notes are 'muted in favour, generally, of a deflating satire and instead of deeds of epic proportion, there are shabby betrayals, desperate remedies, and lucky escapes'.¹¹⁰ At the start of the text, Colonel Barucha, the head of the Parsee community in Lahore, 'seal[s] [Lenny's] fate' by stating that 'She doesn't need to become a professor ... No need to strain her with studies and exams'.¹¹¹ Thus, excluded even from school, Lenny is forced to structure her education around different modes of knowledge, learning of 'human needs ... cruelties and joys'.¹¹² This is most obviously the case during Lenny's visits to Mrs Pen, who tries to teach her 'prosaic [and anachronistic] English history'.

despite her efforts to clutter my brain ... I slip in a good bit of learning. The whiff of Mrs Pen enlightens me. It teaches me the biology of spent cells and aging bodies ... of things past and of the British Raj ... of human frailties and vulnerabilities — of spent passion and lingering yearnings. Whereas a whiff of Ayah carries the dark purity of creation, Mrs Pen smells of memories.¹¹³

In Sidhwa's novel, therefore, Lenny's political awareness grows out of a sensitivity to the personal and sexual politics which are played out in her immediate vicinity. This intermingling of civic and domestic worlds is emphasised early in the text by the fact that one of Ayah's suitors, the mercurial Ice-candy-man, 'barters' news of one, in order not to be barred from the other, acting as a travelling raconteur and thus gaining more time in the garden with Lenny's Ayah: 'News and gossip flow off his glib tongue ... his ingenuous toe darts beneath Ayah's sari'.¹¹⁴

Similarly, seated under the statue of Queen Victoria, the cultural

¹¹⁰ Chew 1989: 170.

¹¹¹ Sidhwa 1991: 25.

¹¹² Ibid: 29.

¹¹³ Ibid: 89-90.

¹¹⁴ Ibid: 37-38.

diversity which characterises Ayah's 'court' of admirers — the Hindu masseur, Muslim Ice-candy-man, and Sher Singh the Sikh zoo-keeper — evokes, parodically, the famous image of the June 3rd round-table meeting in which Mountbatten secured agreement to Partition from Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh.¹¹⁵ Taking this analogy to its logical conclusion, the male competition for Ayah's attention, followed so closely by Lenny, becomes a gendered reflection of contemporaneous national negotiations over a post-colonial homeland.

The way in which the political world finds references in the small circle of Lenny's acquaintances is complicated by the fact that on a general level, disguise and the social transformation of identities is very much a part of this world, most obviously in Sidhwa's depiction of Ice-candy-man. In *Cracking India*, Ice-candy-man enacts a polished repertoire of roles, his identity hidden behind the 'transformative' bit-parts which make up his livelihood. These acts include (on cold days) a brutal bird seller, a performance Lenny and her brother 'watch with glee',¹¹⁶ and the lucrative role of a Sufi mystic who is able to petition Allah by 'telephoning' him.

Because of Ice-candy-man's dramatic talents, it is somehow apt that he inadvertently draws our attention to the subtle cultural play which Ayah also enacts in the interests of her job, when he asks her why, as a Punjabi, she does not wear a *shalwar-kamize*: 'Arrey baba' [says Ayah] ... 'do you know what salary ayahs who wear Punjabi clothes get? Half the salary of the Goan ayahs who wear saris! I'm not so simple!'¹¹⁷ What this easy-going, performative exchange embodies in *Cracking India* is a form of secure but flexible urban identity. As the communal violence of Partition engulfs Lahore, this bartering of cultural signs stops, and condenses into religio-cultural essentialism. As Shirley Chew states in her review of Sidhwa's novel, 'with tension among the communities in Lahore beginning to mount ... what were games not so long ago ... become transformed into ugly exercises in oppression ... disguise, once harmless deception, becomes perforce the fashion'.¹¹⁸

In Lenny's world adults thus start to define themselves solely in terms

¹¹⁵ This image is from Mountbatten's Broadlands Archives, see Collins and Lapierre 1975: plate facing 279.

¹¹⁶ Sidhwa 1991: 36.

¹¹⁷ Ibid: 38.

¹¹⁸ Chew 1989: 171.

of exclusive, gendered, national and communal narratives. Elleke Boehmer makes an important point about the gendering of nationalist discourse when she differentiates male roles in nationalism which 'may be characterised as metonymic ... the male is a part of the nation, or contiguous with it', from female roles which 'swell into a trope closer to metaphor'.¹¹⁹ Talking of the representation of women in the Gikuyu author Ngugi wa Thiongo's writing, Boehmer underlines the way in which, even though Ngugi 'comes out in favour of the liberation of women in his non-fictional statements', his fictional depiction of women falls prey to 'thoroughly well worn stereotypes [such as] mother and whore'.¹²⁰ It is around these stereotypes that the metaphorical place of women in nationalist discourse coalesces, since in these categories they are marginalised and 'available either for over-valuation as the heroines of the national troops, or for enlistment as the literal reproducers of those troops — support roles in an essentially male struggle'.¹²¹

Although we must be careful not to oversimplify a connection between the literary representation of two very culturally and politically divergent nationalist movements, Boehmer's criticism of Ngugi sheds considerable light on the 'metaphorical' characterisation of women in the South-Asian nationalist texts. In terms of writing which draws attention to a female experience of Partition, such as *Cracking India*, we find this 'metaphorical' stereotyping also starting to inform women's roles within the grotesque narratives of communal violence.

In her reading, Chew stresses the fact that whilst the cheapness of human life (during Partition) is 'realised in images of the body's vulnerability', simultaneously, 'the life of the body is everywhere asserted'.¹²² What Sidhwa also accomplishes with great subtlety is a depiction of the way in which her female characters use or exploit their physicality, and their metaphorisation as 'bodies' within these narratives. Thus, when a crowd of male looters arrives at Lenny's house, her mother becomes 'the noble embodiment of motherhood. Undaunted. Endearing'.¹²³ Similarly, Godmother's power resides in the energy with

¹¹⁹ Elleke Boehmer, see Rutherford 1992: 233.

¹²⁰ Boehmer 1991: 192.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Chew 1989: 170-71.

¹²³ Sidhwa 1991: 36.

which she defends her 'traditional' role as matriarch in her household. For Lenny, the awakening of her sexuality, and her cousin's infatuation gives her an insight into this indirect form of self-assertion, as Sidhwa states: 'Cousin's infatuation empowers [Lenny] - these are the little things which do empower [institutionally disempowered groups such as] women'.¹²⁴

Even so, the female characters in *Cracking India*, however they conduct their own strategies of resistance, are nonetheless, marginalised and disempowered by their stereotyped narration in gendered cultural and political discourses. As conflict in Lahore worsens, the metaphorical objectification of women as sexually vibrant 'heroines' or 'progenitors' of the nation means that the violence they experience becomes a species of political-communal metaphor: a gendering which we have seen, in a different context, in colonial 'Mutiny' narratives. Where men's bodies, such as the Masseur's, become so much hacked (and sometimes symbolically emasculated) flesh, the violent rape, abduction, and murder of women is invested with an additional significance.

Ayah's fate — she is abducted and raped, and then becomes Ice-candy man's (prostituted) 'wife' — reveals this process of metaphorical translation particularly clearly. After her abduction Ayah is so traumatised that she becomes 'emotionally dead', and only her body remains, which Ice-candy man has transformed, as the gorgeously bedecked 'Mumtaz', into one of the presiding romance-metaphors of Islamic Indian culture; the wife of the emperor Shah Jahan, for whom the Taj Mahal was built. In this sense Ayah becomes nothing more than metaphor, a sign from a non-Pakistani past, and an image which discloses what Dipesh Chakrabarty has called 'history as the (gendered) metanarrative of the nation state'.¹²⁵

Partition as Failed Epic Narrative in *Basti*.

Compared with Sidhwa's work, which exhibits such a sustained strategy of re-orientated narration, Husain's writing offers us a less certain political response to Partition as historical event. In both novels, national self-identity is problematised by locating its omissions or erasures within the space of personal memory. However, in Husain's text, which covers a

¹²⁴ Bapsi Sidhwa, see Jusawalla and Dasenbrock 1992: 203.

¹²⁵ Dipesh Chakrabarty, see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995: 384.

time-period of more than thirty years, the primary concern is the growth of a disillusionment with the nationalist ideal, and the sense of historical disruption, what Rushdie calls a 'past ... that is daily doing battle with the present',¹²⁶ which developed in Pakistan in the years following Partition.

In order to fully appreciate how this process of political disillusionment comes about, some general points must be made about Husain's literary-cultural strategy, an aspect of which is his tendency to shift into an epic mode, in which his protagonists' experiences are read in the light of earlier monumental cultural or religio-historical events. Husain makes a direct reference to this literary technique in an interview with Muhammad Umar Memon: 'It's a strange quirk with me that whenever something strange happens, I try to come to grips with it in terms of the entire past history and psyche of a people, rather than view it simply in the context of a particular period'.¹²⁷

We must keep in mind that Sidhwa also uses a version of this communal remembering, in the scene in which Colonel Barucha reminds the Parsi community of its ability to diplomatically 'run with the hare and hunt with the hounds' in the mythical story of the Zarathustrian emigration from Persia.¹²⁸ Even so, this historical cross-referencing only occurs fleetingly in Sidhwa's text, and its significance is played down as the community meeting becomes an excuse for jokes and innuendo.

Returning to Husain's work, we find the most salient instance of historical 'epic' self-narration occurring in one of Husain's descriptions of his own reaction to the memory of Partition. In Husain's words, the upheaval of Partition must be interpreted in terms of the migration or *hegira* which the prophet Muhammad undertook to Medina in order to escape persecution in his home town of Mecca.¹²⁹ As Husain states

In the history of the Muslim peoples, the *hijrat* holds the position of an experience which repeats itself time and again. With its associations of long enduring pain and sorrow ... it becomes a creative experience ... And if one accepts such a conception of *hijrat*, it can be seen as not merely an external

¹²⁶ Rushdie 1983: 88.

¹²⁷ Intizar Husain, see Memon 1983: 170.

¹²⁸ Sidhwa 1991: 47.

¹²⁹ In his translation of the Qur'an, Marmaduke Pickthall defines *Hijrat* as 'flight', but in the same text William Montgomery Watt deems this outdated, preferring the word 'emigration'. See Pickthall 1992: xix.

event, but as a sort of spiritual state ... The meaning of Pakistan at the time was *hijrat* from one age to another.¹³⁰

Here, Partition is not distinguished by communal violence (which Husain describes as the province of an earlier literary generation), but is seen, in retrospect, as a type of transitional phase which becomes 'for Muslims at least ... a time for renewal'. The durability and importance of the *hijrat* as a religio-cultural concept is most evident (to the non-Muslim) when we realise that Islamic chronology is dated from it, and not, as in Christian theology, from the birth of the prophet. The parallels which Husain draws between the *hijrat* and the birth of Pakistan represent, then, an attempt to draw some kind of political and cultural consolation from the dislocative experience of Partition.

Contrasted with other literary depictions of Partition examined here, what makes Husain's approach exceptional is the way his use of religio-cultural history replicates, in this initial instance, the atavistic historical agendas of the Islamic nation-state. Régis Debray, commenting on the nation's myths of itself, its 'anti-death processes', makes a salient connection between the Muslim *hijrat* and mythical national ontology:

There [is] first of all, the assignation of origins ... A point of origin is fixed, the mythic birth of ... Civilisation or of the Christian era, the Muslim Hegira ... This zero point or starting point is what allows ritual repetition, the ritualization of memory, celebration commemoration — in short all those forms of magical behaviour signifying defeat of the irreversibility of time.¹³¹

Complementing these narratives of epic communal transition and diaspora, the personal stories of the immigrants who have survived the *hijrat* to Pakistan in *Basti* take on a similarly epic tone. However, Husain's attempts to encapsulate and narrate the 'psyche of a people' soon start to become dislocated from the originary myths of the new national 'imagining'.

The refugees told whole long epics about ... the suffering they had endured ... They told about those whom they had left behind ... They told about those who had set out with them ...

¹³⁰ Intizar Husain, see Memon 1983: 133.

¹³¹ Régis Debray, see Brennan 1989: 11.

left on unknown roads, unshrouded and unburied ... Their hearts overflowed.¹³²

Echoing the failed narrative of *An Unwritten Epic*, a sense of disillusionment starts to permeate the text, as Husain's *muhajirs* forget the lessons of shared suffering, and the 'sincerity'¹³³ of their response to one another. Zakir's political disillusionment becomes even more acute during the later events of 1971, which many Pakistanis saw as positive proof that the communal ideals which had won a 'moth-eaten' homeland for the Muslim League had not been enough to sustain its unity.

Cut off from his academic work by the break-up of the very country he has historicised, Zakir is forced to stay at home, where his father's memories remind him of other, earlier, political narratives of Muslim identity: Zakir 'smiled inwardly: ... Even now [his father was] still dreaming of the Khalifat movement'.¹³⁴ As we have already seen in Sidhwa's text, it is in the inherently personal or familial space of memory that the exclusive 'ritual irreversibility' of nationalist time, following Partition, comes most clearly into question. Thus, faced with the public failure of a Pakistani national-communal imagining, Zakir's sense of national belonging becomes destabilised. Frances Pritchett, Husain's translator, puts it particularly well when she locates a correspondence between the worsening political situation in Pakistan, and Zakir's 'effort[s] to recollect', which become 'more intense, more urgent' as time passes.¹³⁵ Here again, the dream-like, proleptic intercutting through different temporal periods in the novel acts as a kind of formal challenge to the 'transverse, cross-time'¹³⁶ of the nation. As Zakir writes in his diary: 'Times and places are scrambled inside me. Where am I going? In what time? In what place? Every direction confused, every place disordered'.¹³⁷

From here it is a short step to a parodic subversion of the nation's mythic 'assignation of origins'. Interestingly, because of the migratory experience of many Pakistanis, the potential for this kind of subversive act is already present in the translated identities that the immigrants bring

¹³² Husain 1995: 90.

¹³³ Ibid: 92.

¹³⁴ Ibid: 23.

¹³⁵ Ibid: xiv.

¹³⁶ Anderson 1991: 24.

¹³⁷ Husain 1995: 172.

to the new nation. As Zakir remembers his first days in Pakistan, we are told of how 'Nuru the bread-seller boasted of being a pure bred Ambala man' and how someone else even claimed 'to be the Navab of Lucknow'.¹³⁸ In a surreal touch worthy of Manto, Husain includes a character called 'Maulvi Matchbox', named because of his fixation with empty matchboxes, which represent for him the 'emptied' towns of his past. Meditating on the way spatial identity persists as a type of residue in the lives of the immigrants, Zakir notices that

They had left [India] but they carried their cities with them as a trust ... That's how it usually is. Even when cities are left behind, they don't stay behind. They seize on you even more. When the earth slips out from under, that's when it really surrounds you.¹³⁹

Hence, contrasted against his 'real' history, Zakir's memories start becoming mythicised themselves, the narrative of his recollection merging with a series of epic cultural intertexts such as the *Qur'an*, the *Mahabharata*, and later, Ghalib's *Distanbu*. This is particularly the case in Zakir's memories of his childhood town, the imaginary Indian 'Rupnagar', which gradually becomes a magical, composite space, like Apu's Nishchindipur, in which the peacocks call 'from the forest of Brindaban', and the stripes on a squirrel seem to be the 'marks of Ramchandarji's fingers'.¹⁴⁰ In these instances, Husain's use of superimposed mythic narrative works against the effacing 'assignation of origins' which Debray talks of in relation to the Muslim *hegira*. Instead, the 'zero-point' or epic originary moment of the nation peels away to reveal the proliferating cultural interconnections of other times and epic narratives which crisscross the subcontinent.

This process is most evident in Husain's use of the Urdu *Shahr-e-Ashub* form, which I examined in detail in Chapter One. The importance of this cultural reference is that it uncovers strata of historical connection between Lahore's history, as a Mughal city, and the Indo-Persian culture of Islam in the subcontinent. During the 1971 war, Zakir's narrative (in Lahore) retraces, through textual fragments and interwoven quotations,

¹³⁸ Ibid: 128.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid: 3.

the lament for a lost city-homeland (in Delhi in 1857) which Ghalib's writing so gracefully articulates: 'Today, ever since the late afternoon, the attacking planes had been flying very low ... Then where does this smoke come from ... the ruined city? But I myself am the ruined city, "It's as if my heart is the city of Delhi" '.¹⁴¹

Hence, paradoxically in *Basti*, the outbreak of war with India, rather than strengthening a sense of collective Pakistani imagining, serves to exacerbate its failure. In the December 7th entry of Zakir's diary, a piece of history is suddenly salvaged by the mention of the Taj Mahal in the war reports; 'with this news a fallen reputation was suddenly restored; otherwise, we had already decided that the Taj Mahal, and the history that gave birth to the Taj Mahal, had no connection with Pakistan'.¹⁴²

Partition Literature and Modernism.

In the use of subjective, impressionistic viewpoints, the disruptive force of personal memory, and the transitional, alienating cityscapes in *Cracking India* and *Basti*, some of the defining points of the European Modernist tradition are reasserted. Perhaps the strongest case for a literary-cultural intersection can be read in the sophisticated formal flexibility of Husain's work, as it switches through different narrative perspectives and different literary registers. Looking more closely at *Basti*, with its complex interweaving of the ephemeral, the journal or diary form (in chapter seven), with the 'eternal myth-narrative' of the *Mahabharata* or fragments of Ghalib's writing,¹⁴³ Baudelaire's definitive statement on modernity seems apposite: 'Modernity ... is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent: it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable'.¹⁴⁴

Attempting to define the 'Modern' more than a century after Baudelaire, Marshall Berman employs a comparable set of oppositional statements:

Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology ... modernity can be said

¹⁴¹ Husain 1995: 206-07.

¹⁴² Ibid: 165.

¹⁴³ Ibid: 185.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Baudelaire, see Harvey 1993: 10.

to unite all mankind ... it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction.¹⁴⁵

The fact that Berman, writing in 1981, can theorise Modernity as a unitary global experience points up the incredible accelerated development of communication, technological proliferation and urban life in this century. More problematically it also privileges the ontological site of the 'modern', which, Jurgen Habermas has argued, can be found in Europe during the Enlightenment.¹⁴⁶

Berman's universal (archetypal, urban) environment of modernity, is located in a constellation of industrialised, European Imperial cities at the end of the nineteenth century (including New York, Moscow and St Petersburg by the end of the First World War). And Malcolm Bradbury's description of these cities as 'culture capitals' points up their importance as generative sites in the theorising of modernity. Bradbury goes on to state:

If Modernism is a particularly urban art, that is partly because the modern artist ... has been caught up in the spirit of the modern city, which is itself the spirit of a modern technological society ... The city has become culture, or perhaps the chaos that succeeds it.¹⁴⁷

Whatever definitions or chronologies we chose to adopt in describing 'High Modernism', by 1920 the European (Imperial) metropolis provided all the cultural props — the synchronised flow of the commuting crowd, the 'commodified' moral vacuity of metropolitan life, the anonymity of urban exile — with which the avant garde would stage a redefinition of art itself.

I have digressed extensively here because I feel it is important to stress the cultural contextuality of a European notion of the Modern. Indeed, Berman's claim, although part of his general introduction, echoes the universalist bias of more recent commentators, who assert the presence of a global culture of postmodernity, whilst overlooking the economic power-relations and cultural differences involved in that experience. As Partha Chatterjee states, 'History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the

¹⁴⁵ Berman 1982: 15.

¹⁴⁶ Jurgen Habermas 1983.

¹⁴⁷ Bradbury and McFarlane 1991: 97.

postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity ... even our imaginations must remain forever colonised.¹⁴⁸ Although Chatterjee is talking of conceptual political models, his argument also serves as a caveat against 'causal' cultural analyses which locate the postcolonial world as a 'consumer' or 'receiver' of the 'modern'.

Hence, although we can place our primary texts within a recognisably Modernist frame of reference, I will argue here that their representations of uncertain urban home or 'place' derive as much from the 'memoried' narratives of Partition and national Independence, as they do from any specifically appropriating literary strategy. Husain makes a similar statement when he challenges the continuing hegemony of European and Russian literature as a comparative template, and argues for a less canonical notion of cultural influence: 'It's true that if I want to do something in the short story I read Chekhov ... If I profit from [it] you praise my short story ... if I take something from Mahatma Buddha, then you ask me what period of history I've retreated into'.¹⁴⁹

The City Torn Apart: Urban Space, Modernity, and Transition.

To highlight a more contextual approach to the depiction of urban modernity in South-Asian literature, therefore, I want to conclude this chapter by addressing the cultural geography of Lahore; to show how several important transitions in the local city-space during 1947 relate to the textual forms and techniques used by Husain and Sidhwa. The first, and perhaps most important of these spatial changes is a breakdown or crisis in the representation of interior and exterior space. We get a clear picture of the older (Mughal) parts of the city of Lahore in Sidhwa's descriptions of the area of town in which Ice-candy man lives, in which, in the city-gates and narrow meandering streets, we see the traditional patterning of Islamic urban architecture replicated.

Attempting to give a summary of domestic forms of Islamic architecture, Ernest J. Grube stresses a 'focus on the enclosed space, on the inside as opposed to the outside' as a defining feature, and goes on to state 'even if (the archetypal) structure has a visible facade or portal, these

¹⁴⁸ Chatterjee 1993: 5.

¹⁴⁹ Intizar Husain, see Memon 1983: 173.

features tell us little if anything about the building'.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, in his work *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City*, Richard Sennett locates domestic Islamic architecture in streets which, although not formally planned, are spatially ordered through qur'anic injunctions on civic construction.¹⁵¹ In South-Asian literature which addresses Partition, the violation or 'disordering' of these bounded spaces is a recurrent theme, and almost always suggests the physical violation of rape. Thus in *Cracking India* one of the most aggressive, sexually 'violatory' acts that Sher Singh's (evicted) tenants can carry out is to stand in the street and 'Expose themselves to [his] women folk', who watch from inside the house.¹⁵²

The communal crowd, funnelling through the constricted lanes of the old city of Lahore like flood-water, exerts a more literal kind of violating pressure on the domestic spaces it passes, breaking into them, and converting them into sites of bizarre public spectacle. In his famous study *Crowds and Power*, Elias Canetti states that often, the 'destructiveness' of the crowd is

simply an attack on all boundaries ... once [windows and doors] are smashed, the house has lost its individuality ... In these houses live the supposed enemies of the crowd ... what separates them has now been destroyed and nothing stands between them and the crowd.¹⁵³

In *Cracking India*, this 'attack on boundaries' is depicted twice, first when the Muslim crowd abducts Ayah, and on a second (more sickeningly detailed) occasion in 'Ranna's Story' when a Sikh mob rape and massacre the villagers of Pir Pondo, dragging Ranna's relatives out of the room in which they have been hiding in order to behead them.

Although, in some ways, it seems to evoke the sleepwalkers on London Bridge in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the communal crowd, in a text such as *Cracking India*, exhibits an explosive violence which has no real analogue in European Modernism. We soon realise the irony of a comparison with, say, Baudelaire's characterisation of the crowded semi-

¹⁵⁰ Ernest J. Grube, see Michell: 1995: 10.

¹⁵¹ Sennett 1994: 193.

¹⁵² Sidhwa 1991: 166.

¹⁵³ Canetti 1962: 20.

public space of the arcade, as a place in which the poet can achieve a kind of transcendent identification across boundaries: 'The poet enjoys the unique privilege of being both himself and other people at will ... he who can readily identify with the crowd enjoys ecstatic heights which are forever denied to the egoist'.¹⁵⁴ In the retrospective representation of Partition, this kind of transcendent movement, which crosses and merges public and private space alike, can only operate on a level of shared culpability or recollected horror.

This is certainly the case in a pivotal scene in *Cracking India*, in which Lenny and Ayah watch the burning city from the roof of Ice-candy-man's tenement: 'The terrible procession ... flows beneath us ... There is the roar of a hundred throats ... [Ice-candy-man's] face [is] tight with a strange exhilaration I never again want to see'.¹⁵⁵ Here, the figure of Baudelaire's *flâneur* -poet 'luxuriate[ing] in the throng ... enjoying a crowd bath'¹⁵⁶ is transmuted, and divided between Ice-candy-man's 'exhilaration', and the 'pulpy red flotsam of a mangled body' glimpsed in the crowd like a corpse 'dissolving in the mainstream [of a] ... sluggish river'.¹⁵⁷

Importantly, the crowd violence which transgresses/penetrates domestic space in *Cracking India* also causes the older 'semi-public' spatial groupings of the city, the neighbourhood *mohallas*, to become sites of suburban identification, although this must only have occurred in *mohallas* organised along communal rather than occupational or geographical lines. In any case, Ice-candy-man points out the old town in terms of these organisational urban blocs as he watches the city burn: 'That's Delhi gate ... There's Lahori gate ... There's Mochi Darwaza ... that's where your masseur stays ... it's a Muslim *mohalla*'.¹⁵⁸ And, even as Ice-candy-man delineates the city, these constituent parts starts to dislocate, symbolised by the horrific dismemberment of a Hindu *Banya* in the street below, who is tied to two jeeps by a Muslim mob and literally pulled apart.

A second important change wrought in Lahore's spatial geography concerns the Pakistani inheritance of the colonial areas of the city. To understand this we must remember the consistency with which British

¹⁵⁴ Baudelaire 1989: 59.

¹⁵⁵ Sidhwa 1991: 145.

¹⁵⁶ Baudelaire 1989: 59.

¹⁵⁷ Sidhwa 1991: 145.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*: 144.

and French colonialism replicated a form of dual town planning in Asia and Africa, building their new administrative and residential municipalities alongside indigenous towns.¹⁵⁹ These *villes nouvelles* served as allegories of difference, their construction demanded little intrusion into the unstable and unsanitary alleyways of the indigenous town, and yet their presence proved the authority of the European by example. In *Basti* an example of the cultural alienation created by these spaces is provided in Zakir's memories of his schooldays in Meerut, where he walks through

The Cantonment, the world of the English, long silent oiled-looking streets ... going on and on until they were lost in the distance. Sometimes a white Englishman ... would hurry past them, quite close.¹⁶⁰

And it is here that Zakir's memories prefigure his subsequent 'wanderings' in the emptied 'European' suburbs of Lahore, where, attempting to place himself as post-colonial subject in the colonial surroundings of the city, he simply drifts: 'He went out and came to a big road. Mall Road ... Everything around was new to him ... From one street to another, from the second to the third, he lost track of time'.¹⁶¹

Once more, we can readily find examples from literary Modernism which will hold as interpretative frames for this kind of experience: Baudelaire's wanderings through Paris during Haussman's programme of reconstruction, or the urban meanderings of Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock. In both these cases, however, the articulation of pedestrian rhetorics¹⁶²—what Benjamin calls a 'leisurely' process of spectative 'botanising on the asphalt'¹⁶³ — always reminds us of the self-consciousness of these 'rhetorical' exercises. Fundamentally, the intense, ambivalent disorientation which characterises Zakir's walks on the 'new earth' of Pakistan represent a significant cultural modification of Modernist narratives of the city.

At first, these peripatetic journeys are a way of celebrating the 'freedom'

¹⁵⁹ For an informative example of this urban division in Cairo, see Abu-Lughod: 1971.

¹⁶⁰ Husain 1995: 42.

¹⁶¹ Ibid: 88.

¹⁶² See Michel de Certeau's influential essay; 'Walking in the City' in *During*: 1993.

¹⁶³ Benjamin 1969: 36.

of post-colonial propriety 'under a fresh sky',¹⁶⁴ and more importantly, an escape from communal violence: 'It had been so long since he had walked around freely, without the fear that at any moment someone passing by would slip a knife into his ribs'.¹⁶⁵ But as Zakir's political disillusionment grows, his search for a kind of continuity-in-memory — 'I'm looking for my first days ... Pushing and shoving through the encircling crowd of [memories]'¹⁶⁶— transforms his walks into a listless quest for fragments of his own past. 'Our final stop was always the pipal tree on the far side of the bridge ... Now that tree isn't even there any more. The bastards have cut it down'.¹⁶⁷

Zakir's attempt to connect past with present in the unfamiliar surroundings of the city brings me to the last and most important spatial change to be wrought in the city-setting of *Cracking India* and *Basti*, that of a migratory merging of spaces and times in the metropolis. Because of the complete 'disappearance' of the city's Hindu and Sikh *mohallas*, and the subsequent arrival of Muslim refugees from the countryside in East Punjab, the distinction between country and city becomes strangely blurred. In *Basti*, Zakir's family, from small-town India, find themselves living in an empty house in the city-suburb of Shamnagar, and in *Cracking India*, Imam Din's relatives, the last survivors from Pir Pondo, come to live in his quarters in Lenny's household.

Coinciding with the appearance of these impromptu 'village'-camps of refugees within the city is a form of literary and cultural repositioning in both Husain's and Sidhwa's work, as they both incorporate an embedded (village) narrative in the main (urban) structure of the text. In *Basti*, the village narrative is part of Zakir's own self-mythologising memory, and in *Cracking India* Sidhwa actually sub-titles it as 'Ranna's Story'. As Sidhwa's narrator recalls her successive visits to Pir Pondo before Partition, 'Ranna's Story' thus appears like a long-suppressed memory, protectively encircled by the main body of the text. 'I can imagine the old mullah [in Ranna's village]'¹⁶⁸ says Sidhwa's narrator, thus imaginatively willing Ranna's memories into her own, in an act of sympathy impossible at the time.

¹⁶⁴ Husain 1995: 89.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid: 88.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid: 87.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid: 129.

¹⁶⁸ Sidhwa 1991: 208.

Furthermore, in *Cracking India*, the village narrative, as a recognisable literary and political idiom, also serves to signpost the supplementary aspect of Sidhwa's historical reorienting, connecting the communal violence in Lahore with that in the countryside.

In *Cracking India* this sense of connection and culpability is symbolised with an incredible double ambiguity in Lenny's 'truth-infected' betrayal of Ayah, an act which reflects the inverted morality of Partition and causes Lenny a form of religious 'guilt'. Apart from reinforcing our sense of her social disempowerment, Lenny's self-disgust also connects her to the communal violence in the city, evoking the fervour with which Muslim Lahoris whip themselves into communal aggression during *Moharram*: 'In the wake of my guilt-driven and flagellating grief ... I punish [my tongue] with rigorous scourings'.¹⁶⁹

And in Husain's text, Zakir's tentative questioning of his friend Irfan betrays the same uncertainty about their complicit historical identity as Pakistanis: 'He paused, then said somewhat hesitantly, "Yar, was it good that Pakistan was created?" ... "I know one thing', Irfan said at last, 'In the hands of the wrong people, even right becomes wrong'.¹⁷⁰ At the end of *Basti*, a sense of epiphanic political accountability provides one of the last images of the text, when Afzal suddenly states 'Yar, we weren't virtuous ... We're cruel ... too'.¹⁷¹

More intriguingly, this sense of disillusionment seems to stretch beyond the text in the final image, in which Zakir and his friends wait for 'a sign' because 'signs always come at times like these'.¹⁷² Here the image of the 'waiting' group acts like the poetic Urdu *Takhallus* or pen-name, traditionally introduced into the last line of a *ghazal*. Usually these names were suitably grandiloquent as in 'Ghalib' (conqueror) or 'Zafar' (triumph). However, in Husain's text the group of friends reminds one of the definition of Husain's name, 'Intizar', which Sultan Nathani translates as 'waiting [for]; expectation'¹⁷³ — a final image which resists any kind of resolution to the search for a post-colonial sense of self. Indeed, it is the increasingly subjective, imaginative nature of this continuing relationship

¹⁶⁹ Ibid:196.

¹⁷⁰ Husain 1995: 129-30.

¹⁷¹ Ibid: 262.

¹⁷² Ibid: 263.

¹⁷³ Nathani: 1992.

between a sense of identity, and 'homeland' which I will be examining in the next chapter.

Chapter Four**City Fictions:
Independence, the Emergency, and Post-colonial Identity.**

Partition's people stitched
Shrouds from a flag, gentlemen scissored Sind.
An opened people, fraying across the cut
Country, reknotted themselves on this island...

Restore us to fire. New refugees,
Wearing blood-red wool in the worst heat,
Come from Tibet, scanning the sea from the north,
Dazed, holes in their cracked feet.

Restore us to fire. Still,
Communities tear and reform; and still, a breeze,
Cooling our garrulous evenings, investigates nothing,
Ruffles no tempers, uncovers no root,

And settles no one adrift of the mainland's histories.
(Adil Jussawalla, 'Sea Breeze, Bombay'¹)

In this final chapter of my thesis I want to examine recent developments in the depiction of homelands in South-Asian literature and film. Before I start to look at these representations in any detail, however, I must point up an important generic difference which separates my primary texts. What I wish to draw attention to here is a split between representations of South-Asia from the subcontinent, and representations produced by 'migrant' writers of South-Asian origin, living in the West. Concentrating briefly on the latter group, we find that from the late 1970s, as a result of earlier post-Partition diasporas to North America and Europe, representations of South-Asia in English have been increasingly shaped by the experience of migration. In post-colonial critical parlance this has been dubbed the literature of 'not-quite' and 'in-between',² and can be summarised, briefly, as a writing which problematises located, exclusive formulations of national and/or cultural identity, through a focus on 'culture clash and metaphysical collision'.³

For Salman Rushdie, the most well-known proponent of this genre, the idea of the former empire 'writing back to the centre' encapsulates a type of literary guerrilla action, in which the English canon is redefined,

¹ See Dharwarker and Ramanujan 1984: 135.

² Boehmer 1995: 232.

³ Ibid: 233.

formally and linguistically, by writers from the ex-colonies. Moreover, because migrant writers such as Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, and Rohinton Mistry all live and work in the West, their writing also inevitably writes back in the opposite direction, drawing on, and creatively reshaping, childhood memories of a South-Asian homeland. Importantly, in their complex mixing of places and histories these writings can also be seen to obstruct the very terms of 'centre' and 'margin' through which colonialism formerly operated.

This literary genre has had considerable influence in shaping the tastes of a Euro-American publishing market and readership, producing idiomatic, culturally coded depictions of South-Asia. The hybrid, migrant aesthetic of writers such as Rushdie has been readily pressed into service as part of a wider theoretical armoury of post-colonial theory — most obviously in terms of Rushdie's sensitivity to the unified narratives of nation and history, and his attack on the binary categories around which difference is asserted, which coincides with aspects of post-structuralist thought. As a representative text I will be looking at Rushdie's most acclaimed novel, *Midnight's Children*, which uses the entire history of independent India, until Indira Gandhi's Emergency, as a structural framework.

Against this example of Rushdie's creatively displaced depiction of an imaginary homeland I want to balance a more located literary expression of South-Asian identity, Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*, which is set during the Emergency of 1975 but uses flashbacks and integral sub-plots to range back across the history of colonial and independent India. Like her literary contemporaries, Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Anita Desai, Sahgal is notable for the sensitive awareness of hybridity that she brings to her work. In the case of the former authors, this sensitivity derives from family histories that cross cultures. Sahgal, on the other hand, attributes her own sense of cultural syncretism to a colonial education, a childhood spent partly in America, and the influence of her family⁴ who were culturally anglophile, even as they took part in, and led, the Independence struggle.

As part of this awareness of fluid cultural intermixing, Sahgal

⁴ Nayantara Sahgal is the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.

constructs a sense of identity in her literature which questions the very term 'post-colonial', and compares it unfavourably with a deeper, sense of the 'ethnic and religious diversity [and] cultural plurality'⁵ of India, and its history. The essential qualification to be made here is that even though Sahgal describes her identity in terms of cultural accommodations and hybrid inheritances, she is determined not to relinquish the bond between the national space of India and her own sense of identity (a bond which was central to Nehru's sense of self). Thus, whilst Rushdie performs ideological and narrative manoeuvres which many Western critics have read as singularly postmodern, Sahgal has conversely reiterated her own sense of political commitment as a form of historical 'trust'. It is this distinction which Sahgal makes in her essay 'Some Thoughts on the Puzzle of Identity':

Many of those who write in English live and write in the west. They are not affected by the raw winds assailing India ... they are not encumbered by the nitty gritty of carving out continuity ... in the on-going process of building a nation that has only in recent times become a nation ... they are reacting to the pressures and concerns of an environment that is not Indian, and are fashioning identities born of choice, not of history.⁶

The last sentence is particularly telling because it highlights the split between Rushdie's sense of the narrative flexibility of history, which can be used to 'fashion identities born of choice', and Sahgal's notion of history as something which moulds identity, connecting the post-colonial subject with 'a piece of territory on the map'.⁷

I will come back to the comparative differences between these positions shortly. Firstly, however, I must draw attention to shared patterns of chronological structuring in the post-colonial visions of both writers. In the texts I will examine in this chapter, there is a common urge to invest the thirty years from Independence to the mid 1970s with particular significance. For Rushdie, this particular time span provided the historical shape of *Midnight's Children*: 'It seemed to me that the period between 1947 and 1977 — the period from Independence to Emergency —

⁵ Sahgal 1997: 85.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

has a kind of shape to it; it represents a sort of closed period in the history of the country'.⁸

Similarly, even if Sahgal questions 'post-colonial' as an index of South-Asian identity, we must remember that a novel such as *Rich Like Us* overlaps the same time period and depicts the Emergency as a threatening point of closure to the idealism of the Nehru era. This comes across most clearly in the attitudes of some of the older characters in Sahgal's text, who see Mrs Gandhi's regime as the threshold of a new, repressive national future:

[Keshav] had come to some kind of decision at a boundary he could not cross, as uncle Ram's father must have ... when he told his family, 'I've come this far, I won't go any further because I don't want to learn the language of this particular future'.⁹

The fact that both writers stage the Emergency as such a significant and tragic historical landmark discloses their own identification with the pluralistic ideals of Indian democracy under Nehru. Both Sahgal and Rushdie are writers who came of age during the Nehru era, and it is against the political tenets of Nehru's administration that both writers frame their reaction to the Emergency. I will, therefore, digress briefly at this point in order to underline the main points of Nehru's political philosophy.

Unity in Diversity: Nehru's Political Vision.

Considering the diversity of political, religious and regional-cultural identities which comprised the nation, Nehru's greatest achievement after coming to power was his maintenance of a secular, representative democracy during the years after Indian Independence. In order to forge an ideological base for this new model of government, Nehru's national vision — structured as it was around the industrial basis of the modern state — proposed a 'decentred' idea of national culture which celebrated cultural variety, rather than prescribing any monolithic sense of nation. In Nehru's words, 'Indian culture [was] so widespread all over India that no

⁸ Salman Rushdie, see Dhar 1993: 99.

⁹ Sahgal 1993: 175.

part of the country could be called the heart of that culture'.¹⁰

We have already looked at the sophisticated processes of self-reinvention which nationalist leaders such as Gandhi effected as they returned to India from Europe. And as Sunil Khilnani has perceptively shown, where Tagore and Gandhi remade themselves in terms of indigenous poetic language or religious traditions, Nehru 'discovered India and himself through the medium of history'.¹¹ In an intellectual counter-movement to the divisive discourses of colonialism and communalism, India figured in Nehru's imagination as 'a space of ceaseless cultural mixing, its history a celebration of the soiling effects of cultural miscegenation and accretion'.¹²

Importantly, this historical view of the subcontinent united in cultural diversity allowed Nehru to come to terms with his personal identity, which had been shaped by the elite institutions of the colonial centre, and balance it against what he saw as the indigenous 'soul' or essence of India. The key text here is Nehru's most mature historical study, *The Discovery of India*, written in 1946 during his last term of political imprisonment. In a section entitled 'The Search for India', Nehru reconstructs a sense of national unity by hinting at an elusive, historical 'depth of soul' glimpsed as part of the gendered 'personality' of the nation:

During the election campaigns of 1936-37 ... I travelled extensively throughout India [and the country] with all her infinite charm and variety began to grow on me ... yet the more I saw of her, the more I realised how very difficult it was for me or anyone else to grasp the ideas she had embodied ... It was not [India's] wide spaces that eluded me, or even her diversity, but some depth of soul which I could not fathom, though I had occasional and tantalising glimpses of it ... The unity of India was no longer merely an intellectual conception for me: it was an emotional experience which overpowered me.¹³

Nehru's vision of the 'soul' of India is salient because it forms the paradoxical heart of a gendered nationalist discourse. In short, it is the manifestation of a unifying 'national imagining' which rests on the

¹⁰ Khilnani 1997: 170.

¹¹ *Ibid*: 168.

¹² *Ibid*: 169.

¹³ Nehru 1960: 46.

elusive premise of internal cultural and political differences. With India 'spread out before him' Nehru thus refigures the coloniser's fantasy of gendered virgin territory by troping his nationalist vision in terms of a seduction or 'overpowering' romance. On these terms, the indescribable political fiction of India's pluralised civic unity takes on the intangible quality of romantic love, evoking deep attachment whilst defying concrete description.

Similarly, a sense of identity in Sahgal's writing, although not voiced in quite the same way, depends on an associated, idealising faith in the cultural diversity of the nation's inheritance, which is seen not as a potential source of division, but as a perpetually developing narrative of 'open awareness' and 'continual reinvention'. As Sahgal states:

As an Indian I am [the product of a historical] mix of cultures and influences, of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, of east and west ... I have learnt to make the most of my cultural confusion, to regard it a blessing, not a curse.¹⁴

Continuing this comparative analysis, we again find distinct echoes of Nehru's construction of a culturally plural, secular sense of national identity in some of the metaphors which Sahgal uses to talk about her concept of Indian identity. The connection is probably clearest in Sahgal's formulation of a stratified or palimpsestic model of South-Asian history made up of 'layer upon layer of Indian consciousness'.¹⁵ In *The Discovery of India*, Nehru had already employed the figure of the palimpsest in a similar way, using it to evoke the manifold nature of India's cultural inheritance: '[India] was like some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously'.¹⁶

In both Sahgal's and Rushdie's non-fiction writings, the influence of the decentred secular project of Nehru's administration is referred to explicitly. In Sahgal's case it is described, somewhat diffidently, as an inescapable genetic trait: 'I am tainted by those rarefied times and cannot

¹³ Sahgal 1997: 91.

¹⁵ Ibid: 93.

¹⁶ Nehru 1960: 46.

shed them any more than I can my skin'.¹⁷ And in Rushdie's work the stress is rather more on the persuasiveness of Nehru's vision as an ideology 'bought' by a particular generation; 'I am a member of that generation of Indians who were sold the secular ideal'.¹⁸ As we shall see, both Sahgal and Rushdie use this ideological inheritance to different ends, but in each case a faith in a stratified historical model of tolerant cultural diversity and a liberal suspicion of political or religious dogma lies at the core of their writing.

Metropolitan India: Rushdie's Bombay, Sahgal's New Delhi.

As texts such as *Rich Like Us* and *Midnight's Children* trace a new, secular, and culturally polyvalent diagram of the subcontinent's history, they also map out new imaginative spaces in which to express South-Asian identity — most clearly, the space of the post-colonial metropolis. I have already located the city as a type of transitional setting in literary depictions of Lahore in Chapter Three. However, as we have seen, Sidhwa and Husain, in their Partition writings, are concerned with the connective, migratory relationship between village and town and with village-type social structures such as the *Mohalla*, which are transformed into spaces of conflict within the city. Conversely, the literary texts I have selected in this chapter show a general rejection of the village as a viable literary setting. For the generation of South-Asian writers in English who started becoming successful from about the late 1960s, the conventional literary setting becomes the mixed and often disorientating space of the city, and, on the edge of this sprawling metropolitan space, the family house in a middle-class suburb.

In an analysis of *Midnight's Children* and *Rich Like Us*, the conjunction of city-settings such as Bombay (now officially Mumbai), and New Delhi prove to be particularly revealing as urban stages for the expression of Rushdie's and Sahgal's redeption of post-colonial identity. I have already drawn attention to Benedict Anderson's insightful connection between the novel form and the 'regular synchronised time necessary for a conception of the nation'.¹⁹ And, as Steven Connor argues,

¹⁷ Sahgal 1997: 87.

¹⁸ Rushdie 1991: 16.

¹⁹ Anderson 1991: 30.

Midnight's Children, in all its cacophonous narratives, seems to acknowledge and subvert this link, and suggests that 'the traditional form of the novel is not capacious or internally diversified enough to represent the teeming complexity of the different lives, cultures and languages suddenly brought into the schooled simultaneity of "nation-time"'.²⁰

This sense of a lack of containment — the narratives 'jostling for space' in Rushdie's novel — is brilliantly reiterated in Rushdie's use of Bombay as a setting, because, more than any other Indian city, Bombay's peninsular location makes space its biggest problem. Like Rushdie's apocryphal historical reclamation, in Bombay urban space itself is a type of fiction, constructed or reclaimed from the sea. As the scheming Dr Narlikar reminds Saleem's father: 'Once there were seven islands ... the British joined them up. Sea, brother Ahmed, became land'.²¹

For Rushdie, it is not only the reclaimed, in-between ground of Bombay but also, more specifically, the transverse cosmopolitan exchanges of the port-city which symbolise contemporary Indian identity. The city is described in Rushdie's later novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, as the alternative, 'central' sign of India's diversity:

Bombay was central ... the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding, and yet the most Indian of Indian cities ... all rivers flowed into its human sea. It was an ocean of stories ... O Beautifiers of the City, did you not see that what was beautiful in Bombay was that it belonged to nobody and to all?²²

Here, we must remember the ways in which images of monetary exchange permeate Rushdie's fiction, as a type of extended paean to the entrepreneurial tolerance of Bombay's business environment. As Alice Thorner points out in her study of the city's culture of 'Diversity and Exchange', in Bombay, values, 'rather than hallowed by age-old custom and sanctity, are daily measured and expressed in terms of money'. In Thorner's argument, 'the resulting possibilities for negotiation and the striking of bargains have ensured a climate of flexibility'.²³ Thus,

²⁰ Connor 1996: 30.

²¹ Rushdie 1982: 134.

²² Rushdie 1995: 350-51.

²³ Alice Thorner, see Patel and Thorner 1996: xiv.

constructed and located between land and sea, Rushdie's Bombay is symbolically important because it is both representative of India and separate from it, a centre but also a threshold, a place of (Saleem's 'bastard') origins, and, simultaneously, a site of constant transformation and exchange.

In contrast, Sahgal's use of New Delhi as a metropolitan setting is limited to the government buildings of the capitol, and the hotels, apartments, and suburban mansions of the city's elite. In these muted and claustrophobic spaces, the incremental growth of state repression is measured out in conversational hypocrisies and corrupt, nepotistic business-deals. If we choose to read Rushdie's Bombay in terms of cultural exchanges and transactions across the city, then the setting of New Delhi in *Rich Like Us* must be approached in terms of Sahgal's 'almost epic range of historical reference [which includes] the Persians, the Mogul and British Empires, the Rise of Indian nationalism ... [and] the events leading up to June 1975'.²⁴ Here again, the stratified model of history which Sahgal propounds in her essay 'The Schizophrenic Imagination' comes to the fore, as a brooding presence — a 'subsoil' barely covered by the more 'fluid' identities of the present.²⁵ As the Emergency progresses, the streets of New Delhi are traversed by police vans, and the city's multi-layered heritage becomes a way of readdressing a present which threatens, in the words of Sahgal's heroine, Sonali, to 'get stuck'²⁶ in the frozen time of totalitarianism.

For both Rushdie and Sahgal the smaller domestic confines of the family house can be seen as an archetypal setting within the wider space of the metropolis. Perhaps because of his memories of family life in his childhood home of Anand Bhavan, Nehru himself often talked of India in terms of a house that would shelter its independent and diverse offspring. Indeed, in *The Discovery of India*, Nehru memorably describes a national historical awareness as the 'deep foundations' upon which 'we [are] going to build the house of India's future, strong and secure and beautiful'.²⁷ Again, in the more familiar 'Tryst with Destiny' speech, India's first Prime Minister repeats the domestic metaphor by talking of

²⁴ Walder 1998: 104.

²⁵ Sahgal 1997: 93.

²⁶ See Walder 1998: 109.

²⁷ Nehru 1960: 47.

the 'noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell'.

In the texts I am examining here, the symbolic significance of the suburban house as a national motif is immediately evident. In Rushdie's work a parody of Nehru's 'mansion of free India' can be found in the depiction of the colonial mansions on the Methwold estate in *Midnight's Children*. In Sahgal's novel two family houses, one in Lahore before Independence and one in the suburbs of New Delhi during the Emergency, provide important symbolic structures which support the finer masonry of her cultural and political critique. In accordance with the two houses which Ram's family successively inhabit, Sahgal's urban vision represents a carefully balanced awareness of different metropolitan inheritances, and the historical influences of different colonisations.

Lastly, a parallel reading of the metropolitan and domestic spaces of Rushdie's Bombay and Sahgal's New Delhi offers us a wider sense of contemporary post-colonial India, because it invokes the relationship between indigenous industrial capitalism, the state, and the outside world. In recent years the balance of this relationship has changed significantly, as the older protectionist economic strategies of the Nehru era have led, largely through their abuse under the rule of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, to the devaluation of the Rupee in 1991, and economic liberalisation shortly after. It is not only domestic economic policy which has been transformed in recent years. Because of changes made by Mrs Gandhi to the shape of democratic government before and during the Emergency, and because of a general loss of support, in the last decade, for the increasingly corrupt Congress Party, the Indian political scene has witnessed the rise of opposition parties such as the Hindu fundamentalist *Bharatiya Janata Party* or BJP.

Groups such as this demand recognition within the democratic arena, but rely for their base of identification on caste or communal loyalties, and in the case of the BJP, often use protectionism and organised violence to further their cause. Again, it was during the early 1990s that the political agency of these new fundamentalist groups came to international attention during the Babri Masjid/Ramjanmabhumi incident at Ayodhya, and the communal violence which it precipitated in other parts of India. Both *Midnight's Children* and *Rich Like Us* were written long before

Ayodhya and even before the bloody communal massacre of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984, and in these texts the urban environment is dominated more by the totalitarian excesses of the state, than by any overarching sense of civil communal conflict.

In my analysis I will use Mira Nair's acclaimed workshop film of Bombay's street children, *Salaam Bombay* (1988) to draw out some of the issues and themes which characterise Rushdie's and Sahgal's novels, and to complement these texts by re-articulating the metropolitan space from a subaltern, rather than a middle-class perspective. The importance of the city-setting, the use of a group of child-protagonists and the interrogation of the notion of 'home' as a means of political critique in *Salaam Bombay* produce clear echoes of *Midnight's Children*. Similarly, Nair's depiction of institutions such as the state-orphanage in her text have a direct bearing on Sahgal's careful anatomising of totalitarianism in her novel, and brings us back to issues of direct, rather than ironic social and political comment.

Bombay: The Gateway of India.

In Mira Nair's film, *Salaam Bombay*, which charts the lives of Bombay's street children, there is a memorable opening sequence in which Nair's main child-protagonist, Krishna, is abandoned by the travelling circus in which he has been employed in the middle of a bleak stretch of countryside. Krishna goes to a local town, buys a train ticket for 'the nearest city', and promptly arrives in Bombay. As the title of the film suggests, with its gesture of greeting/prayer to the city, Nair's cinematic narrative really starts at this point, as the bemused Krishna is propelled out of the Victoria terminus and into the chaotic streets of Bombay. The sense of urban rush and disorientation is built up by Nair in a montage sequence of city-images: traffic, garish billboards, monumental colonial statues, and moving crowds, into which Krishna gradually disappears in a series of long panoramic shots.

In this drama of urban entry Nair exploits a trope which is repeated many times over in literatures written out of the experience of migration. Indeed, Jonathan Raban is quick to emphasise the ubiquity of the 'arrival' motif in Jewish-American literature, describing it in terms of a 'mythology of initiation':

The 'greenhorn' is the central character in this mythology of initiation to the city; he is the prototypical stranger, the raw innocent ... We relish his loss, his poignant sense of displacement. For he is the past we have somehow survived: and he may tell us, in innocence or naive imitation who we are now ... city writing lavishes attention on the newcomer at this point of entrance: the greenhorn, at once the city's hero and its most vulnerable victim, is urban man at the crucial stage of emergence and transformation.²⁸

In Krishna's case, however, the sense of a loss of innocence is made more problematic by the fact that it is also, irrevocably, the loss of his childhood. Nair's child-protagonist is 'transformed' into urban man before he is even an adolescent.

Thus, as Krishna embarks upon a process of urban self-reincarnation, the metropolitan space of Bombay develops in Nair's text as a strangely

²⁸ Raban 1988: 45.

liminal space. Indeed, it is this aspect of Bombay which has been renarrated so positively by Rushdie in his literary re-creations of the plural cosmopolitan borrowings of the city. Alice Thorner takes up this point in her study of Bombay as place of cultural and mercantile transaction:

The very essence of the city's cultural life [and] its economy, is constituted by its openness to winds blowing from all directions, from across the seas and from the mainland of India; its availability as a meeting ground for diverse communities; its prime function as a place of exchange.²⁹

Before the recent rise of militant communal politics in Bombay, the city was popularly considered as a haven of communal tolerance. Indeed, according to Thorner, the expression of a syncretic Hindu-Muslim heritage in Rushdie's work derives 'from the nature of the metropolis in which the multiplicity of commingled faiths and cultures ... creates a remarkably secular ambience'.³⁰

The atmosphere of hybrid worldliness generated in literary and cultural representations of Bombay is underpinned by the city's location as a port, a geographical threshold allegorised in the town's most famous colonial landmark, the 'Gateway of India'. In his poetic elegy to Bombay, Kipling exploits this image of thresholds and gateways, at the same time unconsciously emphasising his own hybrid credentials:

Mother of Cities to me,
But I was born in her gate,
Between the palms and the sea,
Where the world-end steamers wait.³¹

Writing in the introduction to *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha suggests that 'the harbour and the stockmarket [have] become the *paysage moralisé* of a containerized, computerised world of global trade'.³² In the same theoretical preamble, Bhabha argues that to inhabit these transitional environments is to enact a continual movement of 'symbolic interaction' between 'designations of identity'. Indeed, in the light of Bhabha's work, the 'port' of Bombay can be read as a bridge, or a passage-way; a place in

²⁹ Patel and Thorner 1988: xiii.

³⁰ Ibid: xxiii

³¹ Kipling 1994: 180.

³² Bhabha 1994: 8.

which post-colonial identities are redefined 'beyond' or across the consensual boundaries of 'homogeneous national cultures ... or "organic" ethnic communities'.³³

In James Clifford's work on 'Travelling Cultures', this form of 'reterritorialising and deterritorialising' cultural opportunism is refigured as cultures in transit — post-colonial subjects who define themselves not by their 'roots' in the rural village (the static, isolated setting of the 'chronotype' of traditional anthropology),³⁴ but in the *routes* between/within border spaces — the journey and return of the guest worker, the migrant, and the refugee. This de-centring movement holds radical implications for the form of a literary representation of homeland which I have plotted through several historical points in this thesis. Most obviously, it works to undermine or refigure notions of homeland as a natural spiritually, culturally, or geopolitically bounded stage of identity, or of identity as being somehow commensurate with place.

Thus, when itinerant characters in *Salaam Bombay* talk about their respective pasts we can never be sure whether these are 'true' histories, or simply imaginative 'travelling' autobiographies, fabricated to suit the occasion. This is especially the case with Krishna's mentor, the drug-dealer and heroin addict, 'Chillum', whose life story seems to have ironic textual reference both to the narrative lives of national figures such as Nehru or Gandhi — 'before settling down I had thought of making a tour through India travelling third class',³⁵ — and to the picaresque narratives of Anand's *Coolie*, or Kipling's *Kim*. In Chillum's personal history, childhood becomes a similar, extended national tour:

Krishna: When did you come here [to Bombay]?

Chillum: It's ancient history, I forget.

Krishna: How come?

Chillum: I was half your size when I ran away from home. When I was that high I had seen all of India three times by train ... without a ticket.³⁶

Significantly, once Krishna has entered the threshold space of the city,

³³ Ibid: 5.

³⁴ Clifford 1986: 101.

³⁵ Gandhi 1982: 224.

³⁶ Nair: 1988.

his own origins seem to become equally vague. Throughout the film Krishna's rural past, to which his dreams of return are linked, becomes ever more illusory. He tries to send a letter home by employing the services of a professional letter-writer, but the letter is never posted because, as a non-literate, he cannot 'locate' home within the national conventions of postal address. As Chillum says to him with disdain (whilst smoking the drug which will eventually kill him) 'So you think you can go back and breathe sweet village air?'— and the fictional nature of any 'real' originating identity, or reconciliatory link with pastoral homeland thus develops as a central theme in the urban experience of Nair's characters.

Unfixing the Origins of Identity.

In order to elaborate on the way this new narration of identity occurs in contemporary novels such as *Midnight's Children*, I want to turn to the work of the well-known Black-British cultural theorist, Stuart Hall. In his insightful essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', Hall describes Afro-Caribbean cultural identity as a continuous dialogue between self and history, in short, a discursive production. In Hall's words,

cultural identity is not a fixed essence ... it is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return ... The past continues to speak to us . But it is no longer addresses us as a simple factual past ... It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification and suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. ³⁷

Borrowing from Aime Césaire and Leopold Senghor, Hall goes on to describe how this concept of identity as a continual, constructive 'unfolding of meaning' involves an ongoing dance of 'positioning and repositioning'³⁸ in relation to different cultural and historical 'presences'. Hall maps three of these cultural-historical 'presences' across the triangular shipping routes of the slave-trade, naming them respectively as the *Presence Africaine*, the *Presence Européenne* and the *Presence*

³⁷ Stuart Hall, see Williams and Chrisman 1993: 395.

³⁸ Ibid: 398.

Americaine. However, he is quick to make a qualification to this rather neat cultural taxonomy by gesturing towards the proliferation of additional, unacknowledged 'presences' which 'constitute the complexity of Caribbean identity'.³⁹

For our purposes, the most salient thing about Hall's essay is the way it challenges the notion of identity as a fixed or unified ontological concern. Indeed, Hall's idea of multiple diasporic presences disallows even the form of this selective, foundational approach, because every time we encounter what seems like some originating, unified economy of cultural differences (the legacy of what Homi Bhabha calls 'Western modes of representation predicated on an episteme of presence and identity'⁴⁰) the cultural-historical foundation of these discourses break down to reveal underlying, supplementary points of inception.

This layering of cultural origins is best demonstrated, in Rushdie's work, in the concern with nomenclature which runs through *Midnight's Children*. In Rushdie's novel we find that the Indian city, in its proliferation of historical names, becomes a place in which multiple cultural presences, much like the ones Hall theorises, can be invoked by an incantatory, etymological tracing:

The fishermen were here first ... before the East India Company built its Fort ... There [was] the benign presiding influence of the goddess Mumbadevi, whose name — Mumbadevi, Mumbabai, Mumbai — may well have become the city's. But then, the Portuguese named the place Bom Bahia for its harbour ... before you could blink there was a city here, Bombay.⁴¹

In this passage the richness and the sheer variance of the city's inheritance becomes too much to be contained by a single signifier: 'Bombay'. Instead, as part of what has been described by Timothy Brennan as Rushdie's 'elephantiasis of style', the city can only be expressed across a shifting syntagmatic range. As we shall see, this strategy extends to Rushdie's narrator who challenges the idea of a unified subject by 'naming' and presenting himself anew in successive incarnations: 'I, Saleem Sinai, later

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Homi Bhabha, see Barker 1983: 195.

⁴¹ Rushdie 1981: 92.

variously called Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even Piece-of-the-Moon'.⁴²

We have only to look more closely at the work of another 'migrant' post-colonial from Bombay, Homi Bhabha, to realise how much this theoretical stress on the contingency of identity, reflected in both *Midnight's Children* and *Rich Like Us* as a sensitivity to a plurality of origins, intersects with current post-structuralist thinking:

We assume that the problem with post-structuralism, as it contributes to social and political thinking, is always a problem of closure ... as if somehow our politics depend upon forms of closure and fixity. Supposing I suggest to you that the real anxiety posed by post-structuralism is that its temporality is such that it always ... reposes, as it were, from the end the question of where is one starting from, where is one demanding one's authority from.⁴³

For Bhabha, this post-structuralist 'question of where one is starting from' forms a key position in the debate over identity. This is because 'It makes the moment of beginning contingent, so that one can never rest in a kind of primordial, culturally supremacist, historically ascendant position'.

Superficially, Rushdie's emphasis on the precise moment, and miraculous consequences, of the birth of nation in *Midnight's Children* might suggest that his sense of identity is much more theoretically 'post-colonial' than Sahgal's. This may be the case in the historical bias or structure of Rushdie's text, but, as I have pointed out in relation to the naming of Bombay, it belies the fact that Rushdie's representation of cultural identity plunges much deeper, into the layered, intertwining narratives of a proliferating stock of Indian pasts. Here, Rushdie's uncertain overabundance of narrative and historical origins echoes the stories of another narrator-figure in his text, Tai the Kashmiri boatman, who paddles his *shikara* across the bottomless Dal lake and who is even able to contain Christ's mythical arrival in Kashmir within his narrative scope.

⁴² Ibid: 9.

⁴³ Homi Bhabha, see Hogan and Pandit 1995: 252.

Identity and Performance in the Metropolis.

As Bhabha's critical stress on the 'contingency of beginnings' (articulated in Rushdie's bottomless fictions) forces us to rethink ontological aspects of identity, it also unseats an important related concept in the construction of national, communal, and cultural identities; that of identity as somehow part of a unified or 'authentic' historical teleology. As we shall see shortly, this manifold de-centering of identity, especially where it occurs as part of the experience of migration, reveals itself (in language) as a dramatic negotiation and burlesquing of different sexual, political, or cultural narrative subjectivities. Bhabha describes this play of identities succinctly, when he states: 'Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively ... [as] a complex ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorise cultural hybridities'.⁴⁴

Keeping Bhabha's notion of the performativity of cultural engagement in mind, we must remember that texts such as Rushdie's and Nair's invariably stage the point of emergence into the city as an encounter with the massed imagery of commodity capitalism. The implications of this encounter are underlined in Raban's description of the city as an massive 'emporium of styles': a place in which we are 'barraged by images of the people we might become'. In the city 'identity is presented as plastic, a matter of possessions and appearances; and a very large proportion of the urban landscape is taken up by slogans, advertisements, flatly photographed images of folk heroes'.⁴⁵ In this environment, the post-colonial migrant is suddenly introduced to the metonymy of advertising, through which the consumer can be transformed 'into a sophisticated dandy overnight by drinking a particular brand of vodka'.

Raban's words call to mind V.S. Naipaul's poignant description of his first day (as a Trinidadian scholarship boy) in New York: the immense luxury of American cigarettes, the dream of becoming a 'cosmopolitan' writer, and the disconcerting shift between personal humiliation and the romance of urban life — 'like any peasant coming for the first time to a capital city [I lived] in a world of marvels'.⁴⁶ For Krishna, in *Salaam*

⁴⁴ Bhabha 1994: 2.

⁴⁵ Raban 1988: 64.

⁴⁶ Naipaul 1987: 98.

Bombay, the city also offers itself as a world of marvels, and as a place of multiple, potential identities. And here, the same transformative magic is achieved by spending money. In the middle section of the film, after robbing a house in the neighbourhood, Krishna and his friends enact the excesses of a sort of caricatured wealth by buying garish western clothes, hiring a horse-drawn carriage, and getting drunk.

However, as Raban makes clear, it is not simply the fact of advertising which forces arrivals such as Nair's protagonist into a 'funfair of contradictory imperatives'.⁴⁷ The city also stages the transformation of identity as play, deception, or through subordination to an economic role. Hence, in his first few days working as a tea-delivery boy in the *chawls* and alleyways around the railway station, Krishna (named after the pastoral, flute-playing incarnation of Vishnu) becomes alternately 'Chaipau' (Tea-boy), or, in a name which fixes him at the point of innocent arrival, simply 'bumpkin'. In a similar way, the other subaltern characters in the film lose their identity to a simple, pejorative nick-names, or to functional designations, as in the character of 'Chillum'. For more sinister reasons, the women who are kidnapped or co-opted into the sex-trade in *Salaam Bombay* are also effectively nameless. In Nair's depiction of 'Sweet-Sixteen', who, throughout the film, is 'groomed' by the brothel-madam in preparation for her first customer, the viewer is reminded of the transformation of Ayah at the hands of Ice-candy man in *Cracking India*. The most significant difference between these texts is that like Nair's Krishna/Chaipau, we are not offered any clues as to Sweet-Sixteen's Nepalese background, and she exists only as an empty figure; a cipher in the narrative.

*

I will have more to say about the covert articulation of gendered, overwritten identities (primarily within domestic or familial spaces) in my analysis of Sahgal's text. Nevertheless, to prepare the ground from which to make these points I want, firstly, to develop a reading of the strategic 'performativity' of the migrant, or marginalised subject within the city. To examine the intricacies of this kind of subject-formation, we

⁴⁷ Raban 1988: 64.

must look at another account of childhood in Bombay, this time from an interview given by Homi Bhabha. For Bhabha, the experience of growing up in Bombay's small but economically successful Parsee community provided an impromptu education in the cultural-political potential of marginal and/or hybrid 'positionalities':

In my own life in India I had already encountered, albeit in a very privileged way, a number of anomalous social positions. [As Parsees] we didn't have many great nationalist leaders to call our own or to identify with. All of that gave me a lot of problems. But I think it gave me a sneaking sort of humorous sense of what it was to be seen as the belated one, who comes too late.⁴⁸

As a member of a minority group excluded from, or written over by the discourses of 'nation' or 'region', Bhabha presents us with memories of community celebrations and dramas which deliberately underplay rituals of authenticity or religio-political origin. Instead of 'the great Indian mythological performances that other Indian communities had', Bhabha recalls that on New-Year's Day, the Parsees would go and 'laugh at themselves' in 'very slickly done, but rather humdrum *Nataks* [plays of a very popular, burlesque kind] ... I remember thinking this was a wonderful thing, that where other people could go ... and see some edifying thing, we went to these farces'.⁴⁹

I have already talked about socio-cultural performance and negotiation at some length, in my analysis of the 'mistranslating' politics of colonial diplomacy during the annexation of Oudh in Chapter One of this thesis. Here, in Bhabha's *Natak* anecdote, we find a form of contemporary self-expression which figures as a much more flexible means of survival, a knowing use of the conventions of burlesque which, in its manipulation of discursive stereotypes, provides a form of cultural camouflage. Complementing the various, often divergent, historical presences postulated in my reading of post-colonial representations of origin, this dramatic production of self (on a subtler everyday level) asserts a cultural variant of what Hall would term a 'postmodern' identification. In Hall's definition, 'identity becomes a "movable feast", formed and transformed

⁴⁸ Homi Bhabha, see Hogan and Pandit 1995: 245.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

continuously in relation to the ways we are represented and addressed in the cultural systems which surround us'.⁵⁰

Rushdie describes a variation on this theme of identity as a form of negotiating performance in his critical work *Imaginary Homelands*. In Rushdie's view, post-colonial migration has given rise to nothing less than

radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places ... people who have been obliged to define themselves — because they are so defined by others — by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur.⁵¹

As Saleem states, the majority of the residents of Bombay are well-versed in a basic Hindi-film vocabulary, and it is from cinematic compositional techniques and narratives that some of Rushdie's most interesting cross-textual fusions and re-definitions derive.

Writing on the Indian film industry, Amrit Gangar points out that 'it is in Bombay that Indian cinema was born ... [here] it acquired its theoretical grounding and its polemical edge'.⁵² Consequently, parts of Bombay have been successively incorporated into many popular Hindi films, and it is because of its film-set quality, and because of the immense financial wealth of the city, that 'Bombay is often called *Mayapuri*, the city of *maya* - of illusion ... [or] *swapaner nagari* — a city of dreams'.⁵³ Again, we realise how salient the Bombay-setting is to a work such as *Midnight's Children* which continually blurs the boundaries between representational veracity, and fiction, allegorising the fact that 'reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge'.⁵⁴

Through its prolific film industry, which floods the subcontinent and most of Asia with its products, Bombay transcends its own municipal borders, becoming a 'generic city that exists everywhere in India to a certain extent'.⁵⁵ Hence, as we explore Rushdie's presentation of identity and India, the metropolis reverses or transmutes itself, becoming the sub-

⁵⁰ Hall 1992: 277.

⁵¹ Rushdie 1991: 124.

⁵² Amrit Gangar, see Patel and Thorner 1996: 210.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rushdie 1991: 25.

⁵⁵ Amrit Gangar, see Patel and Thorner 1996: 210.

continent, or more specifically, the stage-set upon which the sub-continental homeland is dramatised, a metropolis where 'everyone is an outsider' anyway, and thus a 'city of migrants among migrants'.⁵⁶

If we unpack the image of Bombay as stage or stage-set, we encounter some interesting correspondences with the critical metaphors that I have already used to describe the city. In short, the idea of the metropolis as 'gate or threshold' can be extended to cover the representational gateway of the theatrical proscenium, or the camera-frame. Stepping into this metropolitan staging-space, the migrant is liberated, and allowed to burlesque cultural stereotypes, like Bhabha, or to satirise the hubris of nationalist narratives which find metaphorical expressions of the nation in the individual. This fluidity of identity is again signalled in Rushdie's interest in names, and the possibilities of renaming or restaging self-identities 'in which character and fate are not decided [irrevocably] by the past'.⁵⁷

The ludic narrative possibilities of the city as a *mise en scene* for the transformation of identities are explored most creatively in *Midnight's Children* in the chapter entitled 'At the Pioneer Cafe'. Here, the ten year old Saleem hides in the boot of the family car in order to find out where his mother goes during her 'urgent shopping trips'. She drives to the Pioneer Cafe, which operates every morning as the informal hiring agency for extras in the Bombay movie industry: 'the focus of all the city's ambitions and hopes', where she secretly meets her former husband, Nadir Khan.

In keeping with the illusory nature of the metropolis as *Mayapuri*, the Pioneer Cafe can be read as a transformative space in which other identities are anticipated or clandestinely acted out, and where reality is interwoven with performance and illusion. Through the metamorphic business of the film studios 'all the goondas and taxi drivers and petty smugglers ... in the city' fill the cafe, hoping to 'stage' themselves with enough skill to get onto a real film-set. After lunch, the cafe empties of cinema hopefuls, the scenes change, and the place becomes a forum for the local Communist Party, through which Nadir Khan acts out his new political role as Qasim Khan, or 'Qasim the Red'. Consolidating these

⁵⁶ Ibid: 212.

⁵⁷ Cundy 1997: 42.

transformative sequences, Rushdie overlays the space of the cafe with another drama in Amina's meetings with Nadir, for which Rushdie employs the descriptive conventions of a cinematic story-board. Significantly, in the following passage, the very architecture of the cafe and the window through which Saleem peers becomes a screen between 'movie and reality':

through the dirty, square, glassy cinema-screen of the Pioneer cafe's window, I watched Amina Sinai and the no-longer-Nadir play out their love scene; they performed with the ineptitude of genuine amateurs.⁵⁸

Through the formal impact of different camera-angles in these film-sequences, and through the repeated splicing of real and filmic elements, the issue of perspective is underlined in the text. Again the idea of the contemporary city as a place of illusion, within the terms of the Hindu concept of *maya*, is reiterated, debunking, in Catherine Cundy's opinion, the romantic cadences of Forster's and Scott's constructions of an 'Indian' metaphysics, by re-articulating them within the popular cultural registers of the Bombay talkie.⁵⁹

As we would expect in Rushdie's reinscribed, 'interminable' national epic, with its dense textual network of anecdotes, jokes, and interconnected narratives, the depiction of the urban homeland as a stage for transformative, migrant identities is not confined to cinematic sets or film-locations. Looking across the city of Saleem's childhood, we soon encounter other, less formally defined stages upon which language is put under acrobatic stress in order to convey the complexities of urban post-colonial experience. Here I am thinking specifically of the circus or entertainer figures which appear throughout *Midnight's Children*, and whom Rushdie charges with an almost custodial role in Saleem's life: 'Ex-conjurers and peepshow-men and singers ... even before I was born, the mould was set. Entertainers would orchestrate my life'.⁶⁰

It is vital, in analysing these figures of Rushdie's text, to remember that rather than excluding and classifying the crowd within the disciplined, staged space of the theatre or cinema, their performances often take place

⁵⁸ Rushdie 1981: 216-17.

⁵⁹ Cundy 1997: 38.

⁶⁰ Rushdie 1981: 101.

outside, in the roadways and semi-public spaces of the city, in impromptu amphitheatres formed by the crowd itself. Indeed they evoke the various performances of the agora during markets or festivals and become a variant of the carnivalesque, which I will be exploring in more detail shortly. Rarely scripted, these shows are improvisations, cobbled together out of pieces of song, jokes, and fragments of punning sales patter; encapsulated in the following speech by Saleem's surrogate father, Wee Willie Winkie: 'Wee Willie Winkie is my name; to sing for my supper is my fame! ... I hope you are com-for-table! ... Or are you come for tea? Oh, joke-joke, ladies and ladahs' ... After which, a song: 'Daisy, Daisy ...'.⁶¹

Elsewhere in *Midnight's Children*, other characters exhibit a burlesquing side-show ability to perform themselves, exemplified in the compelling figure of the expatriate American, Evie Burns, who dramatises herself confidently in the cultural discourses of the Hollywood musical. A mixture of Annie Oakley and (with 'hair made from scarecrow straw') Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, Evie's acrobatic, berating performance ensures that the the 'circus ring' in the middle of the Methwold estate 'finds its mistress',

Hey you! Alla you! Hey whassamatter? You all deaf or what?
... Evie Burns began to ride her bike fasterfasterfaster, around
the edges of the circus ring "Lookit me now: watch me go, ya
dummies". On and off the [bicycle] seat, Evie performed.⁶²

The endlessly renewing, logorrhoeaic performance which characterises Evie Burns also frames the urban landscape of Nair's *Salaam Bombay*. In Nair's film, at the point of Krishna's arrival in the city, we are presented with a close shot of a local street-child directing and defying passing motorists with a stream of invective: 'My queens, where are you going? Salaam the king of Bombay you stupid sods!'⁶³ Through these multiple performances Rushdie stages a celebration of the diversity of India, by picking voices and attitudes out of the metropolitan crowd itself. As Rushdie states, it is this endlessly self-dramatising crowd which is

the best way to grasp the idea of India ... The selfhood of India

⁶¹ Ibid: 101-02.

⁶² Rushdie 1981: 182.

⁶³ Nair: 1988.

is so capacious, so elastic, that it accommodates one billion kinds of difference. It agrees with its billion selves to call all of them Indian.⁶⁴

Unreliable Narrations: Language and *Midnight's Children*.

In his study of the spatial relationship between the body and the city in Western society, Richard Sennett makes a connection between the rise of individualism and the growing verbal silences of the metropolis: 'In the course of the development of modern, urban individualism, the individual fell silent in the city. [Our cities] became places of the gaze rather than scenes of discourse ... ours is a purely visual agora'.⁶⁵ Conversely, for Rushdie, the Indian city of Bombay, as a many-faceted expression of homeland and a place in which 'the individual sees his own nature writ large', is characterised by an almost uncontrollable abundance of individual voices and discourses.

As we see in Rushdie's comment on the 'selfhood of India', quoted above, it is through these proliferating voices that Rushdie links the plurality of Saleem's subjectivity, and the city of his birth, with a common sense of the wider diversity of India. Thus, the voices of the Bombay crowds and performers find their analogue in the combined voices of the nation's children, which reverberate insistently through the aural conference hall of Saleem's telepathic mind:

The inner monologues of all the so-called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike, jostling for space within my head ... The voices babbled in everything from Malayalam to Naga dialects, from the purity of Lucknow Urdu to the Southern slurrings of Tamil.⁶⁶

Furthermore, the formal sophistication and narrative profusion apparent in Saleem's radiophonic depiction of the voices of the *Midnight's Children*, can be interpreted as another challenge to the homogeneous time of the realist novel. 'The irony of the radio metaphor in the novel is that it is at once the characteristic form of [national] modernity, in its ...

⁶⁴ Rushdie: 1997: 15.

⁶⁵ Sennett 1994: 358.

⁶⁶ Rushdie 1981: 168.

ubiquitous reach and address',⁶⁷ and also the telepathic form by which Saleem constructs space for the diverse, contradictory experiences enshrined in the Midnight Children's Congress.

The underlying satire in Rushdie's choice of the radio as speaker/mouth-piece in *Midnight's Children* is that, as well as acting as a conduit for state propaganda, it evokes one of the most repressive policies of Mrs Gandhi's regime, the awarding of transistor radios for voluntary, and often forced, sterilisation during the government's birth-control programme. Indeed, the ambivalence of Saleem's use of India's national radio address: '*Ye Akashvani hai, This is All-india Radio*',⁶⁸ warns us against making too clear a connection between idiosyncratic or impressionistic linguistic forms and an enabling cultural pluralism that we might ascribe to the migrant experience.

In her study of Rushdie's work, Catherine Cundy argues that '*Midnight's Children* shows that subversion of realism can be used as much for the purposes of oppression as liberation'.⁶⁹ Rushdie allegorises this linguistic ambivalence in the speech of Saleem's alter-ego, Shiva, who is characterised by his articulation of 'matter of fact descriptions of the outre and bizarre, and their reverse, namely heightened, stylised versions of the everyday'.⁷⁰ In Shiva's case, this linguistic flexibility, rather than celebrating diversity or a cosmopolitan tolerance of difference, works to reinforce a terrifyingly nonchalant violence: '[These linguistic techniques] were applied entirely without conscious thought, and their effect was to create a picture of the world of startling uniformity, in which one could mention casually ... dreadful murders'.⁷¹ The linguistic ambivalence apparent in Saleem/Shiva's narration underpins the other personalised voices and narratives of Rushdie's text, and in order to explore them in more detail, I will now turn to one of the most famous theorists of speech and discursivity in literature, Mikhail Bakhtin.

As a Soviet critic who inherits, and works within, the broad political framework of Russian Formalism, Bakhtin's contribution to Marxist criticism lies in his analysis of 'language ... and ideology as a material

⁶⁷ Connor 1996: 31.

⁶⁸ Rushdie 1981: 166.

⁶⁹ Cundy 1996: 39.

⁷⁰ Rushdie 1981: 218.

⁷¹ Ibid: 219.

embodiment of social interaction'.⁷² In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin's concern with linguistic-ideological 'articulations' in medieval society emerges in his binary distinction of the 'generative and changing ... unofficial consciousness' of popular carnival, as opposed to the 'static unchanging [order of] official medieval culture'.⁷³ In its political intent, this reading can be seen to correspond loosely with Bakhtin's description of the dialogic text as one which 'give[s] freedom to the individual character by subverting ... authoritarian and monologic discourse'.⁷⁴ Here, language becomes the linguistic equivalent of a revolutionary gesture; countering the bounds of official discourses by revelling in an inherently uncontainable idiomatic flexibility.

Reading *Rabelais and His World*, we find an interesting account of popular market-place speech which echoes the ambivalent, improvising style of the performative language that I have located in Rushdie's text. In the following passage, Bakhtin provides a linguistic gloss on the market-place idiom of Rabelais' 'hawker of chapbooks', who alternately praises the public; 'o most illustrious and valorous champions, gentlemen ... I address this book to you', and then hurls curses at them if they question the veracity of the 'chronicles' he is selling. In Bakhtin's commentary

These are typical billingsgate abuses [and] the passing from excessive praise to excessive invective is characteristic ... and perfectly legitimate. Praise and abuse are, so to speak, the two sides of the same coin ... Though divided in form they belong to the same body, or to the two bodies in one, which abuses while praising and praises while abusing ... this grotesque language, particularly in its oldest form, was oriented toward ... all the world's phenomena in their condition of unfinished metamorphosis.⁷⁵

Juxtaposed against Rushdie's novel, Bakhtin's market book-seller produces a sense of uncanny correspondence — when Rushdie employs the self-aggrandising tone of this hyperbolic, performative dialogue to stage Saleem's 'othered' authorial legislation in the texts, as he 'sells' his chutnified personal chronicle to the reader:

⁷² Jefferson and Robey 1989: 193.

⁷³ Morris 1994: 20-21.

⁷⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, see Morris 1994: 196.

⁷⁵ Bakhtin 1984: 49.

Let me obfuscate no further: I, Saleem Sinai, possessor of the most delicately-gifted olfactory organ in history, have dedicated my latter days to the large-scale preparation of condiments ... such mastery of the multiple gifts of cookery and language is rare indeed; yet I possess it.⁷⁶

In his influential critical study, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, Tim Brennan's reading of *Midnight's Children* also seems to point towards a connection between Rushdie's representation of cosmopolitan, or deracinated, 'migrant' subject-positions and the ambivalent, polarised structure of the language forms which Bakhtin describes. In Brennan's view, the split narratorial arrangement of the novel, in which Saleem's story is interrupted and questioned by Padma, is indicative of a tension between two divergent cultural subject-positions 'conceived as always at the level of verbal conflict'.⁷⁷

In this critical scenario, it is Padma who seems to be the representative of a fecund and subversive Rabelaisian sensibility, available to the non-literate masses of India, as opposed to the impotent, urbane bookishness of the metropolitan Saleem. Padma, we must remember, is Rushdie's plebeian archetype: 'She "stirs a bubbling vat all day for a living", calls Saleem "city boy", is illiterate, and has a name common among 'village folk' that means 'The One who Possesses Dung'.⁷⁸ Again, in the latter aspect, she seems to fulfil one of the prime functions of Bakhtin's 'grotesque realism', degradation. In other words, 'the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract: ... a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity'. In Brennan's opinion, this sort of authorial self-consciousness can be seen to dramatise literary artifice, at the same time as it reveals Rushdie's guilty self-identification with the post-colonial elite, as *chamchas* who 'continue the logic' of imperial or national domination in the post-colonial world.

However, if we look closely at Rushdie's text, the binary social determinism of Bakhtin's linguistic model starts to break down. If the characters of Saleem and Padma are meant to allegorise Rushdie's relationship with some objectified, non-literate 'South Asianness', then this relationship is much more complex than the conflicting one between

⁷⁶ Rushdie 1981: 37-38.

⁷⁷ Brennan 1989: 108.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*: 103.

feudal official and peasant trader in Bakhtin's Rabelaisian marketplace. Brennan points out that as well as representing a kind of robust energy, a regenerative grotesque realism, the proletarian figures in *Midnight's Children* also come to represent simply the crude, negative aspects of mass, 'folkloric simplicity'. Tai the boatman may be able to challenge the world with his 'gargantuan', grandiloquent stock of narrative, but in Brennan's words he still represents of 'small-town ignorance and reaction', just as Padma represents 'ignorance and superstition'.⁷⁹

Brennan's reading is revealing, but it could be questioned for taking the authorial depiction in Rushdie's texts rather too literally. As I have shown here, Saleem also exploits aspects of performative or grotesque lingual registers in order to stage his own identity, and this representative shifting occurs even in the famous opening lines of *Midnight's Children*, in which Saleem hesitates over the generic style of his narrative: 'I was born in Bombay ... once upon a time. No that won't do ... The time matters too ... no it's important to be more ... On the stroke of midnight'.⁸⁰

Recalling the marginal positionalities enacted in the Parsee *Natak* characters like Saleem in *Midnight's Children* can thus be seen to exploit what Bhabha would term identity as a 'split site of enunciation' as part of their cultural existence. 'Identification ... is always the return of an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting in the Other place from which it comes'.⁸¹ And if we accept this definition of post-colonial identification, then the bipartite or tripartite relationships which Rushdie sets up between Saleem and Padma; Aadam and Tai; Saleem, Shiva and Parvati, can be read metaphorically as 'images of identity that bear the mark of splitting'. In short, these characterisations are fragments of scripted self which are available to the migrant subject as a self-hood which exists, like the world invoked by Bakhtin's hawker, in a state of 'unfinished metamorphosis'.

We have seen how Rushdie constructs the subject through a shifting performance of styles and genres, and in relation to the qualifications I have already made, it is perhaps more accurate to think of his use of cultural-linguistic performativity in terms of Bakhtin's notion of

⁷⁹ Ibid: 104.

⁸⁰ Rushdie 1981: 9.

⁸¹ Bhabha: 1994: 45.

heteroglossia. This term, which Bakhtin uses to describe Dostoevski's fiction, defines speech as a process of continual borrowing and retrieval, whereby self-expression, through language, is always the handling of second hand-goods: 'Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated — overpopulated — with the intentions of others'.⁸² Bakhtin closes his description by warning that 'expropriating [or] forcing [language] to submit to one's own intentions and accents is a difficult and complicated process'.⁸³ However, what Rushdie's use of language (across cultural and political levels) shows us is that, for him, identity is not expressed by forcing language 'to submit' to meaning, but by exploiting the ambiguities and residual meanings in language to produce a constant staging and restaging of hybrid identity.

⁸² Mikhail Bakhtin, see Morris 1994: 35.

⁸³ Ibid.

Rewriting the Emergency.

In the previous section of this chapter I concentrated on Mira Nair's and Rushdie's representations of migrant identities within the liminal metropolitan space of Bombay. Needless to say, the Bombay sections of Rushdie's novel only cover the period from 1947 to 1958 (with a brief return to the city at the end of the text, in 1977) and my metropolitan critical focus belies the fact that in *Midnight's Children* over sixty years of Indian colonial and post-colonial history are reclaimed in Saleem's personal chronicle. In Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*, a similarly wide-ranging historical perspective is employed, and although the narrative present of the novel covers only four months, from July 1975, flash-backs and intertextual links take us back as far as the 1820s,⁸⁴ and further if we include the architectural history of Delhi itself.

As I have stressed in my preamble to this chapter, in both novels Indira Gandhi's declaration of a state of national emergency and her suspension of democratic rights during this time operate as a form of closure to the values of the Nehru era, and prompt an enquiry into the condition of the country, and into the history of the immediate post-independence period. However, where the Emergency is only one bitter episode at the end (or the beginning) of Saleem's story, the covert violence of totalitarian rule hangs over Sahgal's narrative like a pall, making a retreat into history an almost necessary response to the present. Therefore, in the following section I will concern myself with Sahgal's re-presentation of metropolitan South-Asian identity as an extended process of negotiation with history. I will also make further critical contrasts between Sahgal's and Rushdie's use of language, as a means of pointing out a divergence in both writers depiction of a sense of post-colonial identity. Firstly, however, I must digress in order to give an outline of the Emergency as a political and historical event.

By the mid 1970s, Indira Gandhi's second successive term of leadership was not progressing well. She could no longer count on the mass support which bought her back to office in 1971 in the wake of the victory over Pakistan, and the repressive measures she had taken against striking

⁸⁴ Walder 1998: 107.

railway workers earlier in the year had eroded public confidence even further. Threatened politically by Jayaprakash Narayan's alliance with the Jan Sangh, the crisis point in Indira Gandhi's premiership came when the High Court in Allahabad found her guilty of electoral malpractice for 'using government transport and personnel'⁸⁵ during her election campaign four years earlier. The press and the opposition leaders demanded that Indira 'step down' from high office.⁸⁶ However, instead of resigning Mrs Gandhi 'proclaim[ed] a state of national emergency, "suspend[ed]" all civil rights, including *habeas corpus*, clamp[ed] a lid on the press' and hustl[ed] thousands of 'politicians, students, journalists and lawyers off to jail'.⁸⁷

On June 26th, 1975, Indira Gandhi gave the following broadcast to the Indian nation:

I am sure you are conscious of the deep and widespread conspiracy which has been brewing ever since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit to the common man and woman of India. In the name of democracy it has been sought to negate the very functioning of democracy ... certain persons have gone to the length of inciting our armed forces to mutiny and our police to rebel ... The forces of disintegration are in full play and communal passions are being aroused, threatening our unity ... Any situation which weakens the capacity of the national government to act decisively inside the country is bound to encourage dangers from outside. It is our paramount duty to safeguard unity and stability. The nation's integrity demands firm action.⁸⁸

Unconcerned that the 'incitements to mutiny' had come in direct response to her refusal to be accountable to parliament, Indira labelled her new totalitarian regime 'Disciplined Democracy' in a misplaced and highly ironic gesture towards the interdependence of self- and national-responsibility in Mohandas Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*.

Barely a week after she had implemented the Emergency, Indira Gandhi announced her Twenty-Point Programme of economic reforms, which included 'bringing down prices', land reforms, developmental

⁸⁵ Ali 1991: 184.

⁸⁶ Wolpert 1997: 397.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Gandhi 1975: 1.

goals, and greater industrial efficiency.⁸⁹ What is often overlooked in analyses of *Indira Raj* is the fact that for those who did not fall foul of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, which sanctioned the detention without trial of an incredible 34,630 people during the Emergency,⁹⁰ the economic successes of the Twenty-Point programme proved very popular. It was not only corrupt businessmen favoured by the new regime who prospered. The record harvests of 1975 helped bring commodity prices back to 1971 levels, and within a month of the implementation of the the Emergency the price of rice and barley had fallen 5 percent.⁹¹

Black market hoarding and price gouging stopped overnight. Smugglers and tax evaders quickly realised that 'Madam' was determined to enforce her program ... The climate of order and the 'work is worship' ethic stimulated capital investment ... during the first year of emergency.⁹²

At the same time as she courted poorer sections of Indian society through price cuts and an aggressive campaign of personality politics, Indira Gandhi groomed one of her sons, Sanjay, as her political successor even though he had never held an official position in the Congress. Indeed, the two most repressive public measures of the Emergency government, slum clearance (most notoriously of Muslim communities around Delhi's ancient Jama Masjid) and forced sterilisation, were both carried out under Sanjay's direction.

On January 18th 1977, Mrs Gandhi suddenly called off the Emergency, released opposition politicians from prison, and called for elections to be held the following March. Retrospective opinion is divided as to why she suddenly allowed the resumption of democracy, but whatever her reasons she sorely misjudged the Indian electorate, who, having been deprived of rights of self-representation for over eighteen months, voted *en masse* for Morarji Desai's and Jayaprakash Narayan's opposition Janata party. Once in power, however, the Janata Morcha proved to be faction-ridden, corrupt, and incompetent, and within three years Mrs Gandhi was voted back for a third term as prime minister. Her 'heir apparent', Sanjay, died in

⁸⁹ Wolpert 1997: 398.

⁹⁰ Ali 1991: 187.

⁹¹ Wolpert 1997: 339.

⁹² *Ibid*: 339-401.

an air-crash a few months later and consequently it was towards Indira's second son, Rajiv, that 'dynastic' expectation turned.

Delhi: The City in History.

In order to address this incredible interlude in India's modern history, Sahgal splits *Rich Like Us* into two main narrative threads, and the first of these focuses, in third-person and through extensive flashbacks, on the character of Rose, a cockney shop-assistant who meets the entrepreneurial Ram whilst he is visiting London in 1932, and returns to India to live with him and his family (which already includes Ram's first wife, Mona, and their new-born son, Dev). The second thread of Sahgal's novel is narrated in first-person, and follows the story of Sonali, a young Indian civil servant who is effectively sacked at the start of the text for questioning corrupt business deals carried out under the Emergency.

For characters caught up in the fraudulent business opportunities of the Emergency such as the (now adult) Dev, a sense of the history of the subcontinent is patently absent: There was 'nothing in his head except the present ... [he was] cut off from continuity before or behind'.⁹³ However, for Sonali, who is compelled to review her own part in the stealthy implementation of totalitarian rule, the Emergency prompts a concomitant interrogation of personal identity in the multiple histories of the subcontinent.

Hence, whilst it is possible to read Rushdie's *Bombay* as a site of migrant arrivals and performative transformations, symbolised in the spatial metaphors of the stage and the threshold, Sahgal's depiction of New Delhi alerts us to the equally important post-colonial predicament of a sense of personal migratory dislocation in history. As Sahgal states in what has become, perhaps, her most famous essay, 'The Schizophrenic Imagination', 'a schizophrenic' (someone who has to reconcile different cultural influences within themselves) can be described as 'a migrant who may never have left his people or his soil'.⁹⁴ Rushdie also speaks of temporal migration, 'a migration across history',⁹⁵ in his review of Gunter Grass. However, it is in Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* that the implications of this

⁹³ Sahgal 1993: 180.

⁹⁴ Sahgal 1997: 93.

⁹⁵ Rushdie 1991: 276.

sense of historical migration are really explored in detail.

In Sahgal's novel, historical depth is emphasised both in the recollections and sub-narratives in which Rose and Sonali immerse themselves, and also in the presence of history in the very topography of the city. The setting of the Emergency sections of the text in New Delhi is particularly interesting, because the affluent spacious suburbs of Lutyen's colonial capitol, laid out in mathematical grids south of the parliamentary buildings on Raj Path, are punctuated by much older monuments from the Mughal and Lodi dynasties.

In the grounds of the mansion which Ram builds for his family in this part of New Delhi, just such a cultural remnant reveals itself in the ruins of a tomb from the Lodi period: 'it was during the building of the house that Rose had discovered the tomb for herself. Thirteenth century, when Delhi was in the hands of Turkish adventurers'.⁹⁶ It is especially apt that Rose should discover this part of Delhi's past, because her own history is composed of a similar layering of historical presences: 'she felt tempted to ask herself why [she was in the tomb] but the question seemed a much older one, going all the way back to an ocean voyage [she had made] in 1932'.⁹⁷ Rose experiences similar cultural historical mixings when she first meets Ram's Muslim friend, Zafar, soon after she has arrived in India. Puzzled by Ram's and Zafar's lack of concern for the divisive potential of their religious differences, she tells them they 'look like brothers'. In reply, she gets a good-natured speech on cultural syncretism from Zafar:

'Our grandfather's great-grandfather two thousand years removed was Alexander the Great's ambassador to the Punjab'

... 'You mean you're descended from the Greeks'

'And the Afghans, the Turks, the Mongols and the Persians, not necessarily in that order'.⁹⁸

Furthermore, during the first days of the Emergency the historical presence of a later subcontinental colonisation in Delhi, that of the British Raj, makes itself felt in Sonali's recollections of the rigid governmental 'architecture' of the civil service: 'Our job was to stay free of the political

⁹⁶ Sahgal 1993: 218.

⁹⁷ Ibid: 219.

⁹⁸ Ibid: 73.

circus. We were successors to the ICS, the “steel frame” the British had ruled India with ... we had a new tradition to create, our own independent worth to prove’.⁹⁹ The question of how successful the creation of a new independent political tradition has been, is posed in Sonali’s musing recognition that ‘We partook of a mystique ... as the civil service elite we were closer than a class. We were a club and we knew we would survive’.¹⁰⁰

In her reading of *Rich Like Us*, Shirley Chew suggests that Sonali’s use of words such as ‘club’, ‘elite’, and ‘mystique’, ‘hark back with disturbing anachronism to Kipling’s stories about the ICS and suggest in part the nature of the malaise’.¹⁰¹ In her recognition of the elitist, self-perpetuating aspects of the Indian civil service after Independence, Sonali’s progressive view of history, derived from the idealism of her days as a communist student activist at Oxford, is thus suddenly threatened. And her response is to ‘venture further back into the past’,¹⁰² beyond British colonialism.

Again, we see a precursor of this strategy of cultural historicising in *The Discovery of India*, when Nehru, contemplating ‘five thousand years of Indian history’, suddenly feels the ‘burden of the [colonial] present ... grow lighter’, and realises that ‘the hundred and eighty years of British rule in India were *just one* of the unhappy interludes in her long story’.¹⁰³ This sort of oneiric historical contemplation develops into the more expansive statements on history and identity which Sahgal is able to make in ‘The Schizophrenic Imagination’, when she counters the critical ‘Anno Domini’ of ‘post-colonial’ with her own ‘awareness as a writer [which] reaches back to x-thousand B.C. at the very end of which measureless ... time the British came, and stayed, and left’.¹⁰⁴

However, unlike nationalist reclamations of history such as the *Discovery of India*, which attempted to minimise ambivalence and to stress positive continuities with the past, the awareness of a ‘measureless’ precolonial history in *Rich Like Us* is also potentially problematic, bringing with it a disturbing sense of the past as something which cannot

⁹⁹ Ibid: 28.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid: 28-29.

¹⁰¹ Shirley Chew, see Nasta 1991: 54.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Nehru 1960: 39.

¹⁰⁴ Sahgal 1997: 93.

be escaped. This ambivalence towards a co-simultaneous past is articulated in 'The Schizophrenic Imagination' in Sahgal's emphasis on a South-Asian identity as fluid 'above ground' but also 'rooted in a particular subsoil'.¹⁰⁵ In *Rich Like Us*, the point is explored more fully by Rose, when she becomes aware of her increasing sensitivity to the past since her husband's illness:

Her power of recall since Ram's illness astonished her. Not that she thought about the past when she lay in bed or walked about near the tomb. It was catching up with her all the time ... convincing her that nothing was ever lost, only held in a larger than human memory. No good or evil deed, nothing wonderful or disappointing, great or small, was ever wiped out.¹⁰⁶

What is particularly telling in Rose's sense of the continuation of the past is that it reiterates the cyclical and regenerative model of time, derived from Shivaite cosmology, which we first encountered in nationalist texts such as Rao's *Kanthapura*. In Sahgal's novel, however, with the country gripped by totalitarianism, this sense of temporal repetition starts to seem more like a curse than a culturally enabling pattern of continuities.

Hence, confronted with her familial past in a manuscript belonging to her paternal uncle — which recounts the terrible memories of the ritual self-immolation of the writer's mother in 1905 — Sonali finds that it is not only the British administration which stands accused 'in the light of retrospective account', but Hindu society as well. As Sonali's grandfather writes at the end of the manuscript: 'if evil has lead us to where we stand then the ground beneath our feet ... is far from firm'.¹⁰⁷ Sahgal points towards this questioning of the cultural weight of Hinduism when she describes *Rich Like Us* as a way of asking, in relation to the Emergency, 'whether Hinduism inclines a whole society to the status quo'.¹⁰⁸ Certainly, this is the substance of the transhistorical connections which work themselves into Sonali's consciousness, as she connects her great grandmother's act of *sati* and her grandfather's attempt to stop the sacrifice with her own recollection of watching a young man, arrested under

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Sahgal 1993: 115.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid: 152.

¹⁰⁸ Sahgal 1997: 98.

Emergency rulings against public gatherings, being 'dragged struggling and shouting'¹⁰⁹ to a waiting police van in Delhi's Connaught Place.

Reclaiming Voices: Language in *Rich Like Us*.

As Rose thinks about the past, and contemplates the location of a space where the past time might 'remain for transmission', she envisages this transmission in explicitly verbal forms: 'an entire chat between herself and Minnie for example, or the Ramayana chanted in the house in Lahore, or any one of the thousands upon thousands of words people had spoken since speaking began'.¹¹⁰ Simultaneously, Sonali's interrogation of her own historical identity, and her reactions to the Emergency are closely bound up with issues of speech and silence; with the censoring state mechanisms of totalitarianism and the discursive silences historically inflicted on subaltern groups in South-Asia, such as Hindu widows, untouchables, and bonded labourers.

Thus, where linguistic flexibility, or verbosity is used in *Midnight's Children* to signal a performative resistance to the repressive bounded discourses of religion, ethnicity and nation, and simultaneously to parody these discourses, in Sahgal's novel it is associated more singularly with the *realpolitik* of corrupt government. The self-seeking minister Ravi Kachru personifies this almost thespian command of the rhetoric of statecraft:

Experience had taught Neuman that key figures were never to be underestimated. They had to excel at something, if only the fine art of surviving through changing times ... [the minister's] uses of speech gave an air of distinction to anything he said. Neuman had known actors [with a similar] mastery of inflection.¹¹¹

Complementing Ravi Kachru's empty 'uses of speech', the deadening silence of censorship is maintained by the members of the civil service in a general verbal consensus which relieves their talk of everything but surface meaning:

We were all taking part in a thinly disguised masquerade,

¹⁰⁹ Sahgal 1993: 27.

¹¹⁰ Ibid: 115.

¹¹¹ Ibid: 15.

preparing the stage for family rule. And we were involved in a conspiracy of silence ... we were careful not to do more than say hello when we passed each other in the building.¹¹²

In Sahgal's description of both Ravi Kachru's polished rhetoric and the 'masquerade' of administrative normality which Sonali and her colleagues enact, the concept of 'performance' (when applied to representative politics) recovers its pejorative sense as a sham, or an artificial production, rather than, as we have seen in Rushdie's work, a dynamic form of expression.

Apart from striking images of repression, such as the sight of sterilisation vans 'roaming the streets' after dark, or the drama of Kishori Lal's arrest, Sahgal depicts the Emergency largely through its effect on the informal discussion of the capital's elite. This kind of indirect reference works particularly well to emphasise the ironic limits of 'official' language. At a dinner party given by Sonali's sister and her husband attended by lawyers, two professors, and a newspaper editor ('people on the winning side',¹¹³) the conversation reflects the political complacency, and complicity, of those present. Their talk is anodyne, like 'a lake, milky and mild'.¹¹⁴ Again, images of show or performance are adopted by Sahgal to underline the falsity of the situation. The guests at the party put on a 'demonstration of what the Third World's upper crust talks about when its country's democratic institutions have just been engulfed by a tidal wave'.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, as if in a continual state of Orwellian self-rehearsal, the men at the dinner party 'seem anxious to record statements though there [is] no tape-recorder in the room'.¹¹⁶

The ironies of this domestic connivance in totalitarianism are cleverly reemphasised in another meeting of the elite in *Rich Like Us*, in which the wives of the 'New Entrepreneurs' gather at one of the city-centre hotels to discuss how they can 'popularise the emergency'. Here, again, a type of performance occurs as Nishi, wife of the corrupt Dev and protégé of Ravi Kachru, chairs the meeting in a room which she suspects may be bugged. The real impact of the scene lies in the banality of the situation, as

¹¹² Ibid: 29.

¹¹³ Ibid: 91.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid: 94.

¹¹⁶ Ibid: 92.

the familiar, patriarchally-regulated space of the women's group (which, at other times might involve itself in charitable works, flower-arranging or campaigning, in a non-militant way, for 'women's rights'¹¹⁷) is transformed into a channel for state repression.

At the New Entrepreneur's wives meeting, the political agenda refracts, and subverts the construction of women within nationalist discourse, as their talk retains a domestic setting, but now deals with birth-control methods, thus taking on the aggressive emasculating aspects of (the Hindu mother-goddess) Devi — a symbolic connection I will look at in more detail shortly, in relation to Mrs Gandhi. Here, the implementation of birth-control is discussed in a travesty of the secular ideals of the Nehru government:

'It's perfectly obvious what our priority should be ... Birth control ... That's the kind of businesslike programme we've got to start for domestic servants' ... They could decide what to do about [Muslim servants] when the Hindus had been vasectomized ... Nishi moved the azaleas further to the right and bravely seized the pause ... 'We shouldn't worry about whose religion is what'. 'Quite right', Leila supported her, 'it's a secular state'.¹¹⁸

Sahgal stresses the irony of the situation not only through this 'modification' of the humanitarian ideals of the secular freedom movement, but also through the way in which one of the 'wives' present, an Austrian called Mrs Mathur, mistakenly starts to praise an outlawed ecological movement which follows the 'tradition of Mahatma Gandhi': "Mrs Mathur, Mrs Mathur"— Nishi agitated softly, trying to stem the torrent, remembering that the contracts for felling had been given by the ministry for industry himself, and that satyagraha was jailable'.¹¹⁹

In Sahgal's text, therefore, linguistic licence cannot be seen to frame 'identity' as textual, or discursive *melange*. Instead, identity and meaning must be reclaimed and conveyed in spite of the oppressive rhetorical obfuscation of corrupt government. Importantly, in one of her critical essays, Sahgal also connects profuse 'verbiage' with the decentred, relativistic aspects of global information-culture and postmodern

¹¹⁷ Ibid: 88.

¹¹⁸ Ibid: 87-88.

¹¹⁹ Ibid: 89.

literature.

Floods of words, like affluence beyond a point, or speed beyond a point, leave me stunned and stupid. It may also be that I have a natural bent for brevity and for leaving *out* as much as I can. It may be my way of countering the explosion of verbiage that has hit us ... Do readers crouch in wait for hidden meanings, and writers labour to supply ever more 'special effects'. The truth may be far more simple, far less contorted and acrobatic.¹²⁰

And, in *Rich Like Us*, loss of freedom of speech is depicted, paradoxically, against just such a 'stupefying flood of words'. Here, Sahgal uses both Rose and Sonali as mouthpieces for 'simpler' truths, not about identity *per se*, but about the importance of political and personal liberty as the basis for expressing one's identity.

In this sense both Rose's and Sonali's uses of speech remind us of the subversive aspect of Bakhtin's Rabelaisian grotesque. Some of Rose's cockney utterances are literally 'Billingsgate', and Sahgal depicts her speech as a blunt instrument, cutting through the euphemistic cant which Kachru uses. In response to Kachru's talk of 'rural belts', 'requisitioned villages', and compensation paid for land which is to be developed, Rose breaks in: 'And I suppose it would be all the same to you if a bulldozer came along and levelled this 'ouse and you were given com-peng-say-tion ... 'ow do we know if it was enough compengsaytion?'¹²¹ In relation to Bakhtin's idea of the market-place speech, these interjected truths cannot be seen as 'grotesque', yet they do operate as an insistent questioning of the universalising discourses of state and nation.

*

If Rose's and Sonali's voices can be heard to subvert, or counter in some limited way, the verbal performances of the Emergency, the retrieval of similar voices from history or from the historical archive is less certain. Here I am thinking in particular of the manuscript which Sonali finds, detailing her great grandmother's act of *sati*. As Chew has argued,¹²²

¹²⁰ Sahgal 1997: 89-90.

¹²¹ Sahgal 1993: 15.

¹²² Shirley Chew, see Nasta 1991.

following Spivak's work on another woman 'constructed' as a potential *sati* in the colonial archives, the 'Rani of Simur', the point here is that after the 'planned epistemic violence of the imperial project' the 'self' of the colonies is lost, effaced in the discursive construction of a colonial 'self-consolidating other'. Thus, in Spivak's reading of the archives, a very Derridean suspicion of 'logocentric' pure meaning beyond the text, or beyond discourse combines with the totalising reach of colonialism to efface the presence of the Rani herself. Here the reader is caught in a double bind, since not only does the textuality of the document itself work against a logocentric 'recovery' of a referent beyond it, but, in this case, depends on the erasure of the 'referent' for its cultural authority.

Talking of the impossibility of recovering a signified meaning beyond the text, Derrida states: 'the [critical] reading ... cannot legitimately transgress the text towards something other than it, toward a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc) or towards a signified outside the text'.¹²³ This is exactly the point which underpins Rushdie's approach to identity and history in *Midnight's Children*, and which prompts the deliberate 'unreliability' of Saleem's narration. However, for Sahgal, even though a retrieval of historical voices or subjectivities may be an impossibility — only once in her grandfather's text does Sonali hear her great grandmother's voice, and even then it is the oblique, interrogative phrase 'What shall we do?', which echoes Sonali's own self-interrogation back at her — the ambivalent possibility of a volitional subjectivity cannot be relinquished.

Thus in Sahgal's text, we find a variant of what Stuart Hall would term a sociological, 'interactive' concept of 'identity and the self'. In this model, the subject retains the possibility of an essential self, even though 'this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds "outside" and the identities which they offer'.¹²⁴ Judith Butler also emphasises this model of identity when she uses it as the basis from which to launch her own, more radical critique of a discursively constituted female subject. The former model, according to Butler, shows that even though the subject is 'culturally constructed it is nevertheless vested with an agency, usually figured as a capacity for reflexive

¹²³ Derrida 1976: 158.

¹²⁴ Hall 1992: 276.

meditation, that remains intact regardless of its cultural embeddedness'. For Butler, in 'such a model, 'culture' and 'discourse' *mire* the subject, but do not constitute that subject'.¹²⁵

In the following passage, taken from her article 'The Virtuous Woman' Sahgal talks of her great-grandmother, sacrificed in a village in Maharashtra, who provided the basis of the *sati* subnarrative in *Rich Like Us*, and emphasises the 'merciless' weight of cultural conditioning against which the event must be comprehended:

[*Sati*, as a sacrifice] entails ceremonial, spectacle, witness. And if it is by free will, that will is the result of conditioning since the cradle, in a scenario where male 'honour' and female 'virtue' are a cult ferocious in its connotations and merciless in its demands.¹²⁶

Evidently, in cases such as this it is difficult to uncover a coherent or unified subjectivity that is 'intact' from which agency can be articulated, and what we find in the analogous manuscript-narrative embedded in Sahgal's novel is not so much a reclaimed subaltern identity, as the ambivalence of its potential presence, the space from which it might be articulated.

This space is evoked not only in Sonali's great-grandmother's question 'What shall we do?', but at another point in the manuscript narrative, after the *sati* has taken place:

Afterwards they walked back the way they had come, through the same meadows, watched by the same men ploughing the fields behind the same oxen, to eat and sleep as though nothing had happened ... perhaps the men behind the ploughs watching them pass also knew where they were taking her; to a high caste death as arcane and commonplace, after all, as the horizontal furrows their ploughs made. Yet the question remains: what kind of society is it that demands human sacrifice to appease the blood thirst of what kind of gods?¹²⁷

Here, the shocking nature of the sacrifice is highlighted, in the writer's words, by its juxtaposition with the 'arcane and commonplace' rituals of

¹²⁵ Butler 1990: 142-43.

¹²⁶ Sahgal 1997: 32.

¹²⁷ Sahgal 1993: 151.

daily life. Even though Sonali's grandfather can only narrate/reconstruct his mother in terms of stereotyped images: devout, pious, a 'Hindu wife and ... nothing else',¹²⁸ the question that he appends to the scene of the villagers returning through the fields, the question 'that remains' to interrogate the silences which surround her act opens up a space of uncertainty in which post-colonial women such as Sonali can eventually 'lay claim to some measure of power as reinterpreters of stories and of their destinies'.¹²⁹

The Meaning of Home: Domestic Spaces and Public Lives in *Midnight's Children* and *Rich Like Us*.

In both Rushdie's and Sahgal's texts the exploration of new senses of self (across broad themes of transformative or historically reclaimed identity in the metropolis) also develops into an exploration of perhaps the primary site upon which narratives of 'belonging' are inscribed: the space of the home. The sheer scope of the symbolic economy of 'home' is pointed out by Rosemary George, when she emphasises the flexibility of the term:

If, as Douglas Porteous claims, 'home [is] the territorial core' of all societies then it becomes useful to examine how this territory is made to fit into larger maps of nations and of empires. When is the word "home" shrunk to donate the private, domestic sphere and when is the "domestic" enlarged to donate 'the affairs of the nation'?¹³⁰

In both *Midnight's Children* and *Rich Like Us*, the creative possibilities of this territorial interchangeability are exploited to the full as the connections between identity and place are re-narrated and revised from a post-colonial vantage-point. In his essay, 'Imaginary Homelands' Rushdie talks movingly about the impact of returning to his childhood home in Bombay, and locates this emotionally 'overwhelming' visit as the moment when '*Midnight's Children* was born'.¹³¹ However, his depiction of houses such as the mansions on the Methwold estate are also,

¹²⁸ Ibid: 143.

¹²⁹ Shirley Chew, see Nasta 1991: 60.

¹³⁰ George 1996: 13.

¹³¹ Rushdie 1991: 9.

implicitly, spaces in which a wider sense of cultural and historical identity is re-evaluated.

Rushdie effects a complex allegory of Mountbatten's handover of the (governmentally furnished) space of the nation, in Methwold's eccentric plan that his Indian tenants should move into the colonial spaces of the mansions without moving any of the furniture. And the fluid connection between national and domestic space is reinforced in Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech, delivered (like Saleem and Shiva) at the stroke of midnight, which described the newly independent nation as a 'mansion' in which 'all [India's] children' could dwell.

Given our awareness of the palimpsestic Nehruvian model of history re-articulated by Sahgal in 'The Schizophrenic Imagination', Ram's family home, with its vertical 'cultural layers', (through which the sounds of its inhabitant's voices seep) can readily be analysed as a dense allegory of subcontinental history: 'Rose and Mona lived on different floors, but ... how the sounds carried! ... fasts and prayers and Mona's loud insistent tears'.¹³² Sahgal's emphasis on the absence of privacy in Ram's home; 'with its high ceilings, rooms opening onto other rooms, acres of sparsely furnished space and no privacy at all',¹³³ even though it belies Rose's and Mona's lack of freedom, grows in the first part of the novel into a symbolic cross-cultural accommodation, which even seems to contain the communal differences which flare up between the domestic servants.

Sahgal produces a more compact political allegory of the nation in the modern, suburban New Delhi house in which Rose and Ram live after Independence. Here, in the basement, Dev's illegally imported car-parts are stored, privately registered as machinery for the new soft-drinks factory: a direct reference to the nepotism surrounding Sanjay Gandhi's failed Maruti automobile project. 'Now [the house] ... was unfeelingly owned and possessed as only bricks and mortar could be by Ram's son'.¹³⁴

Even though the space of the house provides such a rich store of national-political metaphors, we must remember that the house as a space of familial life also has a more direct political relevance in literary representations of India during the Emergency. This is because of the

¹³² Sahgal 1993: 45-46.

¹³³ Ibid: 59.

¹³⁴ Sahgal 1993: 248.

blurring of private and public life which helped bring Indira Gandhi to power, as the 'natural', and as some ministers thought, 'tractable' guardian of Nehru's political legacy.¹³⁵ As I stressed earlier, this dynastic element continued in Mrs Gandhi's installation of Sanjay as one of the primary political figures of the Emergency, and it provided the impetus, after her death, for Rajiv's political successes.

In her excellent essay 'Gender, Leadership and Representation, The "case" of Indira Gandhi', Rajeswari Sunder Rajan traces out the ways in which Mrs Gandhi also transposed the familial and the political in her exploitation of the metaphorical connection between maternity and nation. As Rajan goes on to argue:

It was during the 1967 election ... that Indira was first hailed as 'Mother India'. In a speech she said to her village audience, 'Your burdens are relatively light because your families are limited and viable. But my burden is manifold because crores of my family members are poverty-stricken and I have to look after them'.¹³⁶

The metaphorical and mythical associations of a specifically Hindu concept of motherhood, which proved so integral to the personality cult which surrounded Indira, re-presented her both as India itself and as a form of Devi, the mother-goddess. Indeed it is these mythical references which are exploited in Rushdie's portrayal of Indira Gandhi as 'the Widow ... the mother-goddess in her most terrible aspect, possessor of the *shakti* of the gods, a multi-limbed divinity with a centre-parting and schizophrenic hair'.¹³⁷ Furthermore, as Rajan points out, the twinning of self and nation which characterised Mrs Gandhi's political role are parodied by Rushdie in the hubris of Saleem's 'belief in the equation between the State and [him]self'.¹³⁸

The expansion and imbrication of a rhetoric of domesticity into the public arena of the state, and the concomitant intrusion of the state into private life becomes a repeated feature of Sahgal's depiction of the Emergency in *Rich Like Us*. Before she is forced to leave the civil service,

¹³⁵ Rajan 1993: 107.

¹³⁶ Ibid: 110.

¹³⁷ Rushdie 1982: 438.

¹³⁸ Ibid: 420.

Sonali realises that a process of insidious reversal is taking place: 'The two sides were hopelessly mixed, with politicians meddling in administration, and favourites ... like Kachru ... playing politics'.¹³⁹ In New Delhi, the imposition of totalitarian rule is rendered more ironic by the fact that its authority is regulated partly through the civil sector. Thus Nishi's domestic campaign to get all her servants sterilised is facilitated by Pritam who lends her a biscuit-van with 'Custard Cream Crunchies for Tea' painted on the side, and when Nishi's father becomes a political detainee, his arrest is replicated in the domestic space of his house: 'the shop-servant had got word of the arrest to the family, but soon afterwards their telephone had been disconnected ... [and] the electricity had been cut off'.¹⁴⁰

At the start of her narrative Sonali states that 'it's uncanny what a bare month of censorship can do',¹⁴¹ and her emphasis on the bizarre effects of the Emergency evoke Homi Bhabha's reworking of the Freudian uncanny or *unheimlich* as a moment which brings about a 'disturbing of the symmetry of private and public ... a redrawing of the domestic space as the space of the normalising, pastoralising ... techniques of modern power and police'.¹⁴² To understand Bhabha's theoretical reconstellation of Freud, it is necessary to return to Freud's original enquiry into the uncanny, which centres upon the story of 'The Sand-Man' in Hoffmann's *Nachtstücken*.

As Freud makes clear in his essay: '*Heimlich* [or homely] is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*'.¹⁴³ However, the 'uncanny; expressed as a feeling that something is 'uncanny'; a sense of *deja vu*, is also, crucially, part of the intimate space of the 'homely'. In Hoffmann's surreal narrative, a student, Nathaniel, is plagued by memories of his childhood fear of dreaded figure of the Sand-Man, whom he identifies in the person of his father's friend, Coppelius. Nathaniel is convinced that the Sand-Man wants to blind him, and becomes terror-stricken when he recognises this 'phantom of horror' in later life. Freud relates 'the uncanny effect of the Sand-Man to the anxiety belonging to the

¹³⁹ Sahgal 1993: 28.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid: 223.

¹⁴¹ Ibid: 27.

¹⁴² Bhabha 1994: 11.

¹⁴³ Sigmund Freud 1985: 347.

castration effect of childhood'.¹⁴⁴ Thus, for Freud, the uncanny comes about through a recurrence of this kind of repressed childhood anxiety. As he argues, 'this reference to the factor of repression enables us ... to understand Schelling's definition of the uncanny as something which ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light'.¹⁴⁵

Turning to Bhabha's reworking of the unhomely, we find that the problem we face in trying to apply Bhabha's formulation is the range of applications which Bhabha himself finds for the concept, as he uses it across a range of disparate 'transhistorical' literary sites, from Black-American fiction, to the work of V.S. Naipaul and Nadine Gordimer. Bhabha has recently reworked his introductory definition of the unhomely in a paper entitled 'The World and the Home',¹⁴⁶ which opens out its critical trajectories to an even greater extent. Like Freud, Bhabha does not conceive of the relationship of the homely-unhomely as a dialectic: 'to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into public and private spheres'.¹⁴⁷ Instead, the 'unhomely' appears, in works such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story* as unsettling, unconscious displacements and alterities which, in these novels, 'dramatises — in the figure of woman — the ambivalent structure of the civil state'.¹⁴⁸

For Bhabha, these novels both deny the forgetting of the 'ascriptive domestic sphere' (woman's 'place') in civil society, and therefore disturb the patriarchal, gendered 'symmetry of public and private which is now uncannily doubled and does not 'map neatly on to the private and public'.¹⁴⁹ In 'The World and The Home' Bhabha frames the idea of the unhomely in more detail, by reading Naipaul's tragi-comic hero in *A House for Mr Biswas* against the 'limits' of Iris Murdoch's liberal 'Catholic existentialist' pronouncement that 'A novel must be a house for free people to live in'.¹⁵⁰ As Bhabha stresses:

¹⁴⁴ Ibid: 161.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid: 166.

¹⁴⁶ Bhabha, see McLintock 1997.

¹⁴⁷ Bhabha 1994: 9.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid: 10.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid: 11.

¹⁵⁰ Homi Bhabha, see McLintock 1997: 446.

'the image of the house has always been used to talk about the expansive, mimetic nature of the novel, but in *Biswas* you have a form of realism that is unable to contain the anguish of cultural displacement and diasporic movement'.¹⁵¹

Here again, the fictional boundaries of public and private are disturbed, 'unable to contain' the ambivalences of 'personal psychic history' and the 'wider disjunctions of political existence'.¹⁵²

Returning to *Rich Like Us* we find that, as in Bhabha's reading of the unhomely lives in Morrison's and Gordimer's work, the critical idea of the unhomely seems most effective when it is used to frame the disturbing 'domestic' silences and erasures which characterise retrieved personal/social histories such as that of Sonali's ancestor. Here the underlying questions which are posed by the historical event of the *sati*, and its location in the concealed space of Sonali's familial past, seem to bring about an unhomely blurring, which opens up a 'contiguous' rather than an oppositional space of political agency and potential.¹⁵³

Similarly, in the house which Rose shares with Ram's family in Lahore, before Partition, the ambivalent relationship of mutual deprivation which she (silently) enters into with Ram's first wife, Mona, shifts their repressed frustrations onto a psychic or ghostly level, as Rose's hatred becomes an almost palpable domestic presence.

There was no denying that houses breathe in and out, sighs sink into walls and walls exhale them ... Any normal person would perish with the weight of feeling a house holds yet hate could become too heavy even for a house ... She and Mona would never have been twinned in anguish but for her, Rose, aggressor and tormentor.¹⁵⁴

After Rose saves Mona from burning to death, an event which uncannily evokes the *sati* narrative at the centre of the text, their personal lives are reconciled, and the 'succulent' hidden 'world' of Mona's life with Ram (before his marriage to Rose) is also revealed.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Bhabha 1994: 11.

¹⁵³ Moore-Gilbert 1996: 140.

¹⁵⁴ Sahgal 1993: 154.

Having made these connections we also find the limitations of Bhabha's notion of the unhomely becoming clear, when we think of them in relation to the 'uncanny' effects of totalitarianism in Sahgal's novel. In most cases, the reversals and connections which the Emergency produces across domestic and public space, are simply a product of the pervasive reach of state power. Furthermore, the unhomely, articulated in terms of censorship and the policing of the communities (and bodies) of the population, does not represent a potential space of post-colonial agency here, but rather, exists as an effect of repressive political authority.

Like the political detainees in both *Rich Like Us* and *Midnight's Children*, Nair's child-protagonists in *Salaam Bombay* experience an unhomely, disturbed symmetry of public and private in the regimented government orphanage to which they are taken by the police. In this space, the mechanisms of government diminish themselves in a grim parody of familial value and community. And here again, there seems little possibility that the unhomely, as part of the rhetorical flexibility of the term 'home' in nationalist rhetoric, will afford the children a viable, alternative place of identity as they are made to chant a litany of their belonging to the domestic 'family of the state: 'You are my mother / You are my father / You are my all / We are the flowers that never bloom / We are the dust beneath your feet / Long live India!'

Post-colonial Subjectivities.

In some very significant ways, Sahgal's theoretical standpoint in her depictions of Rose and Sonali points up the potential failings of the critical orthodoxy which surrounds 'migrant' texts such as *Midnight's Children*, and which insist on politicising post-colonial interests solely through 'a struggle around positionalities' — rather than from potential terms of difference. For Sahgal, 'reality' does not necessarily become metaphorical in order to reinscribe or negate the fantastic monstrosity of totalitarianism. Nor do Sahgal's protagonists necessarily become ironic embodiments of their own discursive objectification. Instead, characters like Rose and Sonali, although conditioned or disempowered throughout the text, represent an interrogative force which will not be thwarted. As Mona says

to Rose 'It's questions we're all hanging on to, not answers'.¹⁵⁵

I have emphasised the fact that both Sahgal's and Rushdie's underlying political beliefs derive from a liberal Marxist agenda, enshrined in Nehru's non-aligned national vision. Furthermore, for both writers this theoretical model is immediately problematised as they both start to question notions of history as a teleological ethnocentric narrative. Indeed, in Rushdie's writing this develops into a deconstructive cultural theorising which departs significantly from Marx, especially from Marxist concepts of ideology. Enlarging on this theoretical distinction, Christopher Norris makes the point that 'The textual "ideology" uncovered by Derrida's readings is a kind of aboriginal swerve into metaphor and figurative detour which language embraces through an error of thought unaccountable in Marxist terms'.¹⁵⁶ And as we have seen in Rushdie's work, a similar 'swerve into metaphor and figurative detour' disallows any 'real' sense of political self outside 'the categories of "subject" and "object" [constructed] as *linguistic functions*'.

A form of this cultural re-narration may be what we observe in Sonali's or Rose's interior lives, and certainly the theorising of a textual space from which women's narratives can be historically or memorially reclaimed seems to involve a partisan, deconstructive strategy which articulates itself as an unhomely prising open of the linguistic interstices in which these narrative subjectivities have been constituted. But Sahgal's novel, and her sensitivity to totalitarian ideology as a 'political false-consciousness' warns us away from shifting the grounds of combat entirely onto the level of the objectified subject-in-language. In Sahgal's work, as we have already seen, the metaphorical construction of the self in language is allied with a 'schizophrenic' distancing awareness of these constructions.

In trying to point up the contrasts between Sahgal's vision of contemporary South-Asian identity and Rushdie's, I am again drawn back to Nehru's political career, and in particular to his famous non-alignment policy exemplified in the aims of the 1955 Bandung conference. For Nehru the values enshrined in his historic meeting with other non-aligned leaders, such as Nasser, included the provision of 'a radical alternative to

¹⁵⁵ Sahgal 1993: 236.

¹⁵⁶ Norris 1982: 80.

the hegemonic capitalist-socialist power blocs of the post-war period',¹⁵⁷ an agenda which underlay the original, positive, coinage of the term 'Third World', during the conference. Echoing this sense of the preciousness of national autonomy, Sahgal refuses to accept the economic, political or intellectual hegemony of the west, and the very title of her novel, which derives from one of her European character's arrogant suppositions that if India 'did [like the West] ... they'd be rich like us',¹⁵⁸ signals this clearly.

In modes of cultural representation such as Rushdie's there is a danger, emphasised by Tim Parnell, that the ideological and political realities of the post-colonial world will be relegated to a form of textual 'play' which has lost its subversive potential and has become coded specifically for the publishing markets of the West.¹⁵⁹ The relative unavailability of Sahgal's work, as opposed to the continuing success of cosmopolitan writers such as Rushdie could be said to attest to the continuing dominance of a literary and critical readership in this country which has gone 'beyond' the level of economic or cultural opposition, and which has a curiously selective vision towards '[culturally] different ways of apprehending or evaluating the world'.¹⁶⁰

For Tim Brennan, in his discussion of cosmopolitanism, the 'weakness' of current cultural theory lies in its failure to see cosmopolitanism, and the theoretical concepts associated with it 'as less an expansive ethos than an expansionist policy'. In his argument, contemporary theory gives 'the banishment of the idea of colonial [or post-colonial] victim an almost routine feel',¹⁶¹ and makes it seem as though 'decolonisation [or resistance to forms of post-colonial state repression] is no longer necessary since liberation [has] already occurred at the level of the subject if only one cared to look'.¹⁶² Brennan's attack on cosmopolitanism inevitably glosses over the fact that theorists such as Bhabha never deny the economic force of globalism, or refuse to accept that agency can exist on the level of explicit cultural and political

¹⁵⁷ Young 1990: 11-12.

¹⁵⁸ Sahgal 1993: 16.

¹⁵⁹ Tim Parnell, see Moore-Gilbert 1996: 249.

¹⁶⁰ Brennan 1997: 56.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

resistance. However, Brennan's thesis does prompt us to try to formulate a critical position something akin to Sahgal's, in which the integrity of 'alternate' subject positions allows us to exist with dignity in relation to each other. This critical stance does not veil some latent neocolonial sense of 'self and other', rather, it is a manifesto of tolerant reconciliation. For me, this idea is best expressed in the last paragraph of Sahgal's essay 'Illusion and Reality', in which she warns that her cultural position should not be equated with national exclusion or the absurdity of 'separateness'.

It is not time for me to become more like you, and to pattern myself on your ways, or to write what pleases you. What it is time for is for us to harmonise our ways of living and thinking, so that we will never be strangers to one another again; so that from a relationship that partakes of all our identities, a truly cosmopolitan world, and a genuinely universal literature can arise.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Sahgal 1997: 65.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have carried out an extensive analysis of cultural and political narratives of identity and place, and examined these narratives in terms of successive depictions of homeland. Across the four chapters of my text, I have shown how representations of homeland and belonging have reflected, implicitly and explicitly, changes in the political landscapes of South-Asia in the colonial and post-independence eras. In order to summarise these changes, I would like to turn to two basic definitions of belonging employed by Edward Said.

In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Said draws an important distinction between 'the two kinds of affinity that an individual can hold'.¹⁶² Said terms the first of these a 'filiative' bond, and describes it as a sense of belonging which derives from natal or biological ties to a certain place. The second expression of affinity is termed 'affiliative', and describes the links formed with 'institutions, associations, communities and other social creations'. In Said's view, European writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have traced out a broad movement from 'filiative' to 'affiliative' identifications in their fictions. He describes this 'passage from nature to culture' in the following way:

a filial relationship was held together by natural bonds ... involving obedience, fear, love, respect, and instinctual conflict ... the new affiliative relationship changes these bonds into what seem to be transpersonal forms — such as guild consciousness, consensus collegiality, professional respect, class and hegemony of a dominant culture. The filiative scheme belongs to the realm of nature and 'life', whereas affiliations belong exclusively to culture and society.¹⁶³

To a certain extent, my own work has interrogated narrative expressions of identity which work across different levels of affinity, and this is most clearly the case in my use of Clifford Geertz's (similarly bifurcated) distinction between 'primordial' and 'civic' ties¹⁶⁴ in Chapter

¹⁶² Edward Said, see George 1996: 16.

¹⁶³ Ibid: 17.

¹⁶⁴ Geertz 1993: 255.

Three. However, if we accept Geertz's arguments that, in the situation of the colonised, the propagation of nationalist discourses of homeland involves an immediate reappraisal of regional and ethnic identities, then we must also question whether Said's filiative/affiliative progression can be applied to South-Asian literatures. In this thesis I have attempted to formulate a model of identity in relation to homeland which sees narratives of belonging, as represented in South-Asian writing, as part of a more fluid, composite model of identity.

Rosemary George questions Said's model by challenging his distinction between 'natural' and 'artificial' forms of belonging, and argues, conversely, for the inherently constructed quality of all discourses which situate the subject 'at home' in a certain place: 'The discourses that construct "home" in the contexts of colonialism and postcolonialism suggest that ultimately both affiliations and filiations are learned, created, recalled and/or forgotten in everyday history'.¹⁶⁵ My work in this thesis has corroborated George's argument by drawing attention to the narrative recreations, translations, and selections apparent not only in South-Asian nationalism, but in the more 'natural' ties of regional culture and religion inscribed and reinscribed across the landscape of South-Asia.

Hence, in attempting to make a conclusive statement about broad historical shifts in the narration of identity and homeland in my primary texts (a reading strategy which I have problematised theoretically in my introduction) I must point towards the interaction and synthesis of differently mediated, but intrinsically textual, narratives of belonging as a central issue. More specifically, I must characterise the exploration of identity and 'home' in South-Asian literature and film in terms of a continuous and growing interest in the cross-cultural genealogies of these discourses, and ultimately in the textuality of identity itself. Even where post-colonial writers qualify or defend their literary agenda against poststructuralist theory or postmodern literary techniques, as Sahgal does, identity in their work is still very much a matter of personally articulated cultural and historical expression.

On the level of literary form these changes have revealed themselves in a noticeable shift from realism, or realism which incorporates indigenous mythical and narrative elements, to an exploration of more

¹⁶⁵ George 1996: 17.

impressionistic or surreal narrative modes, or a layering of different narratives within the text. This change is also reflected in the creative reclamation of history and in a chronological flexibility in contemporary South-Asian writing.

*

In contrast to a growing sense of cultural plurality and a mixedness in the literary debate over identity and belonging, the political environment of South-Asia, and in particular India, has in the last ten years seen the rise of a communal politics which is implacable in its perception of religion as the primary signifier of both national identity and sociopolitical legitimacy. The ruling coalition party is now dominated by the Hindu fundamentalist BJP, and in the last weeks of writing this thesis another hard-line Hindu nationalist party, the Bajrang Dal, shifted the direction of communal hatred towards India's minority Christian community, demolishing churches and burning bibles at mission schools. Furthermore, both India and Pakistan have recently re-articulated their mutual national antagonism by participating in successive demonstrations of nuclear readiness.

In relation to the narratives and constructions of homeland discussed in this analysis perhaps the most far reaching implications of the rise of the Hindu nationalism are the changes which groups such as the BJP want to make to the official text of India's political vision of itself: the Indian constitution. Outlining these changes, Sunil Khilnani observes:

The BJP's conception of law and of the state's relation to society is entirely its own ... The pluralistic nationalism outlined after 1947 was certainly informed by the language of Western constitutional theory ... It saw [that political formations in India's past] ... had been sustained by relatively limited interference in the society's religious practices. The political proposals of Hindu nationalism veer away from this historical pattern: they hope to bring the array of Indian religious and cultural activities under command of the state, to tidy up the compromises and accommodations that litter Indian life and bring them into a regimented design, presided over by a single legal system.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Khilnani 1997: 190.

For me, the grave inferences of this shift towards Hindu nationalism in Indian politics are conveyed in Khilnani's description of the BJP as a party intent on tidying up 'the compromises and accommodations' of Indian life.

Among its definitions of the word accommodation, the Oxford English Dictionary lists both 'Room and provision for the reception of people, lodgings', and 'Adaptation [or] adjustment'. As I have shown throughout this thesis, the relationship between place and identity in South-Asian texts can thus be read as a series of invigorating exchanges, appropriations, and readjustments. How far a culture of accommodation, or a sense of unity in religious or cultural diversity can survive under the BJP remains unclear. Indeed, it is difficult for me to discuss the popular aspect of their politics without immediately conjuring up the spectres of violent communal hatred which haunt literary representations of Partition.

I will conclude, therefore, with another image of accommodation, which seems, in its very emotive dignity, to evoke alternatives to the political future represented by the BJP. In her recent investigation of the Hindu right-wing Shiv Sena group, and the increasing incidence of communal violence which accompanied its rising power in Bombay, Suketu Mehta asked a local social worker, Asad Bin Saif, if he felt pessimistic about humanity. He replied, 'Not at all', and said 'Look at the hands from the trains':

If you are late for work in Bombay, and reach the station as the train is leaving the platform, you can run up to the packed compartments and you will find many hands stretching out to grab you on board, unfolding outward from the train like petals. As you run alongside you will be picked up, and some tiny space will be made for your feet on the edge of the open doorway ... consider what has happened: your fellow passengers, already packed tighter than cattle ... retain an empathy for you ... At the moment of contact, they do not know if the hand that is reaching for theirs belongs to a Hindu or Muslim or Christian or Brahmin ... whether you're from Bombay or Mumbai or New York. All they know is that you're trying to get to the city of gold, and that's enough. Come on board, they say. We'll adjust.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Mehta: 1997: 126.

Bibliography

Primary Texts

Chapter One:

Selected poetry and prose. Please refer to Bibliography of Secondary Texts.

Chapter Two:

Banerji, Bibhutibhushan. 1968. *Pather Panchali: Song of the Road*, T.W Clark and Tarapada Mukherji trans., London: George Allen and Unwin.

Anand, Mulk Raj. (no date) *The Village* New Delhi: Asia Publishing.

Rao, Raja. 1989. *Kanthapura*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Chapter Three:

Bhalla, Alok (ed.). 1994. *Stories about the Partition of India*, 3 vols., New Delhi: Indus, Harper Collins.

Cowasjee, Saros and Duggal, K. S (eds.). 1995. *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India*, New Delhi: UBSPD.

Hasan, Mushirul (ed.). 1995. *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, 2 vols., New Delhi: Lotus.

Singh, Khushwant. 1988. *Train to Pakistan*, New Delhi: Ravi Dayal.

Sidhwa, Bapsi. 1991. *Cracking India, A Novel*, Minneapolis: Milkweed.

Husain, Intizar. 1995. *Basti*, Francis W. Pritchett trans., New Delhi: Indus, Harper Collins.

Chapter Four:

Rushdie, Salman. 1982. *Midnight's Children*, London: Picador.

Sahgal, Nayantara. 1987. *Rich Like Us*, London: Sceptre

Primary Cinematic Texts

Ray, Satyajit. 1955. *Pather Panchali*, State of West Bengal.

_____. 1977. *The Chess Players*. State of West Bengal.

Nair, Mira. 1988. *Salaam Bombay*. Mirabai.

Secondary Texts

- Abu-Lughod, Janet. 1971. *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Acland, Rev. Charles. 1847. *A Popular Account of the Manners and Customs of India*, London: John Murray.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. 1971. *Ghazals of Ghalib: Versions from the Urdu*, Columbia: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 1994. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Akbar, M. J. 1988 *Nehru: The Making of India*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Alatas, Syed Hussain. 1977. *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, London: Frank Cass.
- Alexander, Meena. 1993. *Faultlines*, New York: The Feminist Press.
- Ali, Ahmed (ed., trans.). 1992. *The Golden Tradition: An Anthology of Urdu Poetry*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ali, Tariq. 1991. *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty*, London: Picador.
- Amirthanayagam, Guy (ed.). 1982. *Writers in East-West Encounter, New Cultural Bearings*, London: Macmillan.
- Amur, G. S., Desai, S. K., Naik, M. K (eds.). 1977. *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, Delhi: Macmillan.
- Anand, Mulk Raj. 1963. *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilization?* London: Asia.
- _____. 1970. *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, London: The Bodley Head.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Antlov, Hans, and Tonneson, Stein (eds.). 1996. *Asian Forms of the Nation*, Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Appiganesi, L. and Maitland, S (eds.). 1989. *The Rushdie File*, London: Fourth Estate.

- Arnold, William Delafield. 1973. *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*, New York: Leicester University Press.
- Ashcroft, Bill. Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. 1989. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, London: Routledge.
- _____. (eds.). 1995. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Bachelard, Gaston. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*, Maria Jolas trans., Boston: Beacon.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Michael Holquist ed., Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson trans., Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- _____. 1984. *Rabelais and His World*, Helen Iswolsky trans., Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Barker, Francis. Hulme, Peter. Iverson, Margaret and Loxley, Diana. (eds.) .1983. *The Politics of Theory: Proceedings of the Essex Sociology of Literature Conference*, Colchester: University of Essex.
- _____. 1985 *Europe and its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, 2 vols., Cochester University of Essex.
- Barth, Fredrik (ed.). 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Baudelaire, Charles. 1996. *The Poems in Prose*, Francis Scarfe trans., London: Anvil.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1973. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, Harry Zohn trans., London: N.L.B.
- _____. 1992. *Illuminations*, Harry Zohn trans., London: Fontana.
- Berman, Marshall. 1983. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, London: Verso.
- Berry, Margaret. 1971. *Mulk Raj Anand: The Man and the Novelist*, Amsterdam: Oriental Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge.

_____. 1995. 'The Post-colonial Critic: Homi Bhabha Interviewed by David Bennett and Terry Collits', see Hogan and Pandit, 237-54.

_____. 1997. 'The World and the Home', see McClintock, 445-55.

Bhave, Acharya Vinoba. 1964. *Revolutionary Sarvodaya*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Boehmer, Elleke. 1991. 'The Master's Dance to the Master's Voice: Revolutionary Nationalism and the Representation of Women in the Writing of Ngugi wa Thiong'o', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 26.1, 188-197.

_____. 1992. 'Motherlands, Mothers and Nationalist Sons: Representations of Nationalism and Women in African Literature', see Rutherford, 229-74.

_____. 1995. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. (ed.). 1998. *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature 1870-1918*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bradbury, Malcolm and McFarlane, James (eds.). 1991. *Modernism 1890-1930*, London: Penguin.

Brass, Paul. 1994. *The Politics of India Since Independence: New Cambridge History of India Vol .4*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Breckenridge, Carol and Van der Veer, Peter (eds.). 1993. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania.

Brennan, Timothy. 1989. *Salman Rushdie and the Third World, Myths of the Nation*, London: Macmillan.

_____. 1997. *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*, Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Brooke, Rupert. 1989. *The Poems of Rupert Brooke: A Centenary Edition*, London: Black Swan.

Brooker, Peter. (ed.). 1995. *Modernism/Postmodernism*, London: Longman.

Brown, Judith M. 1972. *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1916-1922*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- _____. 1977. *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience: The Mahatma in Indian Politics 1928-34*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Butalia, Urvashi. 1997. 'Blood', *Granta*, 57, 15-23.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge.
- Canetti, Elias. 1962. *Crowds and Power*, Carol Stewart trans., London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.
- Caws, Mary Ann, (ed.). 1991. *City Images: Perspectives from Literature, Philosophy, and Film*, Pennsylvania: Gordon and Breach.
- Chandra, Bipan. Mukherjee, Mridula. Mukherjee, Aditya. Pannikar, K.N. Mahajan, Sucheta. 1989. *India's Struggle for Independence*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Chandra, Sudhir. 1992. *The Oppressive Present*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 1986. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World - A Derivative Discourse?* London: Zed.
- _____. 1993. *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chaudhuri, Nirad C. 1987. *Thy Hand, Great Anarch! India 1921-1952*, London: The Hogarth Press.
- Chew, Shirley. 1989. 'Tearing the Punjab', *Third World Quarterly*, 11.1, 169-71.
- _____. 1991. 'Searching Voices: Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* and Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich like Us*', see *Nasta*, 43-63.
- Chunder, Bholanauth. 1869. *The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India*, London: N. Trubner.
- Clifford, James, and Marcus, George (eds.). 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London: University of California Press.
- Collins, Larry, and Lapierre, Dominique. 1975. *Freedom at Midnight*, London: Book Club Associates.

- Connor, Steven. 1996. *The English Novel in History 1950-1995*, London: Routledge.
- Conrad, Joseph. 1989. *Heart of Darkness*, London: Penguin.
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. 1956. *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, New York: Denver Publications.
- Cosgrove, Denis and Daniels, Stephen (eds.). 1988. *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cowasjee, Saros. 1977. *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fictions of Mulk Raj Anand*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Crane, Ralph J. 1992. *Inventing India: A History of India in English Language Fiction*, London: Macmillan.
- Cronin, Richard. 1989. *Imagining India*, London: Macmillan.
- Culler, Jonathan. 1994. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, London: Routledge.
- Cunningham, Alexander. 1963. *The Ancient Geography of India*, Varanasi: Indological Book House.
- Cundy, Catherine. 1997. *Salman Rushdie*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Dahbour, Omar and Ishay, Micheline R (eds.). 1995. *The Nationalism Reader*, New Jersey: Humanities Press.
- Davidson, Basil. 1994. *The Search for Africa: A History in the Making*, London: James Currey.
- Das, G.K. 1977. *E.M. Forster's India*, London: Macmillan.
- de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. 1984. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane trans., London: Athlone.
- _____. 1988. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Brian Massumi trans., London: Athlone.

- Derozio, Henry. 1972. *Poems*, Calcutta: Writers Workshop.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1976. *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Spivak trans., London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- _____. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass trans., London: Routledge.
- Desai, A.R., (ed.). 1969. *Rural Sociology in India*, Bombay: Popular Prakshan.
- Dhar, T. N. 1993. 'Problematising History with Rushdie in *Midnight's Children*', *Journal of South Asian Literature*, 28. 2, 93-111.
- Dharwadker, Vinay, and Ramanujan, A.K (eds.). 1994. *The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Dimock, Edward C. Gerow, Edwin. Naim, C.M. Roadarmel, Gordon. van Buiten, J.A.B. 1978. *The Literatures of India: An Introduction*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Donne, John. 1987. *Selected Prose*, Neil Rhodes ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- During, Simon (ed.). 1993. *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Durrell, Lawrence. 1958. *Balthazar*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Dutt, Toru. 1969. *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*, Allahabad: Kitabistan.
- Dutta, Krishna, and Robinson, Andrew. 1995. *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad Minded Man*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1991. *Ideology: An Introduction*, London: Verso.
- _____. 1994. *Literary Theory, An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Eakambaram, E., Nagarajan, M.S., Natarajan, A (eds.) 1991. *Essays in Criticism on Indian Literature in English*, New Delhi: S. Chand and Co.

- Edney, Matthew H. 1997. *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1945. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, New York: Pantheon.
- Embree, Ainslie T. (ed.). 1992. *Sources of Indian Tradition; Vol. 1, From the Beginning to 1800*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Emerson, Rupert. 1954. 'Paradoxes of Asian Nationalism', *The Far East Quarterly*, 13. 2. 131-142.
- Evinson, Norma. 1989. *The Indian Metropolis: A View Towards the West*, Yale: Yale University Press.
- Ezrahi, Sidra Dekoven. 1982. *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Faiz, Faiz Ahmed. 1997. 'The Dawn of Freedom', Shoaib Hashmi trans., *Kunapipi*, 19. 3, 1.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Constance Farrington trans., London: Penguin.
- _____. 1986. *Black Skin, White Masks*, Charles Lam Markmann trans., London: Pluto.
- Fernbach, David (ed.). 1973. *Karl Marx, Surveys from Exile, Political Writings, vol 2*, London: Allen Lane.
- Fischer, Louis. 1982. *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, London: Granada.
- Fisher, Michael H. 1991. *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System 1764-1858*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Fleming, Leslie A. 1985. *Another Lonely Voice: The Life and Works of Sadat Hasan Manto*, Lahore: Vanguard.
- Forster, E.M. 1979. *A Passage to India*, London: Penguin.
- Foster, Hal. (ed.). 1983. *Class struggle in the industrial revolution*, London.
- Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon ed., Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper trans., Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Weatsheaf.

- _____. 1989a. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, A. M. Sheridan Smith trans., London: Routledge.
- _____. 1989b. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Tavistock Publications trans., London: Routledge.
- Francisco, Jason. 1996. 'In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India's Partition Burning Freshly (A Review Article)', *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, 11, 227-50.
- Fraser, Sir Andrew H, L. 1911. *Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots*, London: Seely and Co.
- Fraser, John. 1974. *Violence in the Arts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1985. *Art and Literature*, The Penguin Freud Library Vol 14, Angela Richards and Albert Dickson eds., James Strachey trans., Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- _____. 1991. *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, The Penguin Freud Library Vol 6, Angela Richards ed., James Strachey trans., Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Gandhi, Indira. 1975. *Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on Emergency in India*, New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs Publication.
- Gandhi, Mohandas K. 1948. *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing.
- _____. 1961. *Non-Violent Resistance (Satyagraha)*, New York: Schocken Books.
- _____. 1982. *An Autobiography or 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth'*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- _____. 1997. *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, Anthony J. Parel ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gasiorek, Andrzej. 1995. *Post-War British Fiction: Realism and After*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Gates, Henry Louis Jr (ed.). 1986. *"Race", Writing, and Difference*, London: University of Chicago Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1963. *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, London: Collier-Macmillan.

- _____. 1993. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London: Fontana.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism: New Perspectives on the Past*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- George, Rosemary. 1996. *The Politics of Home*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghosh, Amitav. 1988. *The Shadow Lines*, London: Bloomsbury.
- _____. 1992. *In an Antique Land*, London: Granta.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press/Verso.
- Glicksberg, Charles I. 1963. *The Self in Modern Literature*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Gooneratne, Yasmine. 1980. *Diverse Inheritance: A Personal Perspective on Commonwealth Literature*, Adelaide: Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English.
- Gopal, Sarvepalli, (ed.). 1993. *Anatomy of a Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, London: Zed Books.
- Grant, Damien. 1970. *Realism*, London: Methuen and Co.
- Gregory, Derek. 1994. *Geographical Imaginations*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grossberg, Lawrence. Nelson, Cary. Treichler, Paula (eds.). 1992. *Cultural Studies*, New York: Routledge.
- Guha, Ranajit. 1983. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Guha, Ranajit, and Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, (eds.). 1988. *Selected Subaltern Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gurr, Andrew. 1981. *Writers in Exile*, Brighton: Harvester Press.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 1983. 'Modernity: an incomplete project'. See H. Foster.
- Hall, Stuart. Held, David, and McGrew, Tony. 1992. *Modernity and its Futures*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hali (Maulvi Saiyid Altas Husain Ansari Panipati). 1904. *The Quatrains of Hali*, G. E. Ward ed., trans., London: Henry Frowde.

- Harlow, Barbara. 1987. *Resistance Literature*, London: Methuen.
- Harris, Mrs J.P. 1858. *A Lady's Diary of the Siege of Lucknow*, London: John Murray.
- Harris, Nigel. 1990. *National Liberation*, London: Penguin.
- Harvey, David. 1993. *The Condition of Postmodernity An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hasan, Mushirul, and Gupta, Narayani (eds.). 1993. *India's Colonial Encounter: Essays in Memory of Eric Stokes*, New Delhi: Manohar.
- Hasan, Mushirul, (ed.). 1994. *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1995. *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, 2 vols., New Delhi: Lotus/Roli.
- Hawkes, David. 1996. *Ideology*, London: Routledge.
- Hay, Stephen, (ed.). 1988. *Sources of Indian Tradition: Vol.2, Modern India and Pakistan*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hibbert, Christopher. 1980. *The Great Mutiny, India 1857*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Ranger, Terence. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. 1992. *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Calcutta: Rupa.
- _____. 1996. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London: Abacus.
- Hogan, Patrick Colm, and Pandit, Lalita. (eds.). 1995. *Literary India: Comparative Studies in Aesthetics, Colonialism and Culture*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hubel, Teresa. 1996. *Whose India? The Independence Struggle in British and Indian Fiction and History*, London: Leicester University Press.
- Hutcheon, Linda. 1996. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction.*, London: Routledge.
- Hutchins, Francis G. 1997. *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hutchinson, John, and Smith, Anthony D (eds.). 1994. *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Inden, Ronald. 1992. *Imagining India*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Islam, Khurshidul, and Russell, Ralph. 1994. *Three Mughal Poets, Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. 1985. *Indian Writing in English*, New Delhi: Sterling.

Jackson, Peter. 1992. *Maps of Meaning*, London: Routledge.

Jameson, Fredric. 1989. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, London: Routledge.

_____. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso.

Jessop, Bob and Malcolm-Brown, Charlie (eds.). 1990. *Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought; Critical Assessments. Vol.2, Social Class and Class Conflict*, London: Routledge.

Jussawall, Feroza, and Desenbrock, Reedway. (eds.). 1992 *Interviews with Writers of the Post-colonial World*, Jackson: University of Mississippi.

Kabir, Humayun. 1960. *The Indian Heritage*, Bombay: Asia Publishing.

Kakar, Sudhir. 1989. *Intimate Relations, Exploring Indian Sexuality*, New Delhi: Penguin.

_____. 1994. *The Inner World, A Psycho-analytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, Second Edition.

Kautsky, John. H (ed). 1962. *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries*, New York: John Wiley.

Kedourie, Elie. 1998. *Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.

_____. (ed.). 1971. *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, London: Weidenfield and Nicholson.

- Kellner, Douglas. 1989. *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Khilnani, Sunil. 1997a. *The Idea of India*, London: Hamish Hamilton.
- _____. 1997b 'India's Mapmaker', *The Observer*, 22 June, 7.
- King, Russel, Connell, John, White, Paul. 1995. *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, London: Routledge.
- Kipling, Rudyard. 1937. *Something of Myself, For My Friends Known and Unknown*, London: Macmillan.
- _____. 1966. *Kim*, London: Macmillan.
- _____. 1987. *The Man Who Would be King and Other Stories*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1994. *The Works of Rudyard Kipling*, Ware: Wordsworth.
- Klostermaier, Klaus K. 1994. *A Survey of Hinduism*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Knighton, William. 1921. *The Private Life of an Eastern King Together with Elihu Jan's Story, or, The Private Life of an Eastern Queen*, S. B. Smith ed., London: Humphrey Milford.
- La Capra, Dominick, and Kaplan, Stephen. (eds.). 1982. *Modern European History, Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Lacan, Jacques. 1989. *Ecrits: A Selection*, Alan Sheridan trans., London: Routledge.
- Lago, Mary, and Warwick, Ronald (eds.). 1989. *Rabindranath Tagore: Perspectives in Time*, London: Macmillan.
- Langer, Lawrence L. 1977. *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lascelles, Mary. 1980. *The Story-Teller Retrieves the Past*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lawrence, George. 1875. *Reminiscences of Forty-Three Years in India*, London: John Murray.

- Lawrence, John and Woodiwiss, Audrey (eds.). 1980. *The Journals of Honoria Lawrence*, London: Hodder and Staughton.
- Lee-Warner, William. 1894. *The Protected Princes of India*, London: Macmillan.
- Lewis, I. M. 1971. *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lodge, David. 1981. *Working with Structuralism: Essays and Reviews on Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Literature*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- _____. (ed.). 1991. *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, London: Longman.
- Lowenthal, David. 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lukacs, Georg. 1962. *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, John and Necke Mander trans., London: Merlin.
- McClane, John R. 1977. *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- McClintock, Anne. Mufti, Amir. Shohat, Ella. (eds.). 1997. *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- MacDonnel, Diane. 1986. *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Madan, T. N (ed.). 1991. *Religion in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Markandaya, Kamala. 1994. *Nectar in the Sieve, A Novel of Rural India*, Bombay: Jaico.
- Mason, Philip. 1953. *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- Massey, Doreen. 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mayerhoff, Hans. 1955. *Time in Literature*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Meadows-Taylor, Philip. 1873. *Confessions of a Thug*, London: Henry King.
- Mehrotra, S. R. 1979. *Towards India's Freedom and Partition*, New Delhi: Vikas.
- Mehta, Suketu. 1997 'Mumbai', *Granta*, 57, 98-126.
- Mehta, Ved. 1977. *Mahatma Gandhi and His Apostles*, London: Andre Deutsch.
- Memon, Muhamad Umar. 1983. 'Interview with Intizar Husain', *Journal of South Asian Literature*, 18, 153-86.
- Michell, George, (ed.). 1978. *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mill, James. 1975. *The History of British India*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Mohanti, Prafulla. 1991. *Changing Village, Changing Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Moi, Toril, (ed.). 1992. *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- _____. 1985. *Sexual /Textual Politics*, London: Routledge.
- Moon, Penderel. 1961. *Divide and Quit*, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart (ed.). 1996. *Writing India 1757-1990: The Literature of British India*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- _____. 1997. *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*, London: Verso.
- Moore, Henrietta. 1986. *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morris, Pam. (ed.). 1994. *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Arnold.
- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. 1977. *The Twice Born Fiction*, New Delhi: Heinemann.
- _____. 1985. *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- Mukherjee, Sujit. 1981. *Translation as Discovery*, New Delhi: Allied.
- Müller, Friedrich Max. 1855. *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East: With a Survey of the Three Families of Language, Semitic, Arian and Turanian*, London: Williams and Norgate.
- _____. 1880. *Chips from a German Workshop*, London: Longman.
- Mumford, Lewis. 1991. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations and Its Prospects*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Munshi, K. M., and Diwakar, R. R., (eds.). 1959a. *Indian Inheritance: Literature, Philosophy and Religion*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- _____. 1959b. *Indian Inheritance: Art, History and Culture*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- _____. 1960. *Indian Inheritance: Science and Society*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- Nadeau, Maurice, 1968. *The History of Surrealism*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- Nagarajan, M. S., Eakambaram, C., Natarajan, A (eds.). 1991. *Essays in Criticism on Indian Literature in English*, New Delhi: S. Chand.
- Naipaul, V.S. 1964. *An Area of Darkness*, London: Andre Deutsch.
- _____. 1972. *The Overcrowded Baracoon and Other Articles*, London: Andre Deutsch.
- _____. 1977. *India: A Wounded Civilization*, London: Penguin.
- _____. 1990. *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, London: Minerva Mandarin.
- _____. 1987. *The Enigma of Arrival*, London: Penguin.
- Nairn, Tom. 1981. *The Breakup of Britain*, London: Verso
- Nandy, Ashis. 1988. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Narang, Gopi Chand. 1991. *Urdu Language and Literature, Critical Perspectives*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

- Narasimhaiah, C.D. 1968. *The Swan and the Eagle: Essays on Indian English Literature*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- _____. 1970. *Indian Literature of the Past Fifty Years: 1917-1967*, Mysore: Prasaranga.
- _____. 1983. *Raja Rao*, New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann.
- Narayan, R.K. 1972. *The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic (Suggested by the Tamil Version of Kamban)*, New York: Viking.
- Nasta, Susheila. (ed.). 1991. *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia*, London: The Women's Press.
- Nathani, Sultan. (ed.). 1992. *Intekhab-o-Lughat: Urdu for Pleasure for Ghazal Lovers*, Bombay: Mansoor.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. 1960. *The Discovery of India*, London: Meridian.
- Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds.). 1988. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Niranjana, Tejaswini. 1992. *Siting Translation- History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Niven, Alastair. 1972. *A Study of the Relationship between the Individual and his Community as Depicted in Selected English Language Novels from Asia, Africa, and the West Indies*, Leeds: Ph.D. Thesis.
- Norris, Christopher. 1982. *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*, London: Methuen.
- Nyce, Ben. 1988. *Satyajit Ray: A Study of His Films*, New York: Praeger.
- Oberoi, Harjot. 1994. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ong, Walter J. 1982. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the World*, London: Methuen.
- Paranjape, Makarand. 1993. *Decolonization and Development: Hind Svaraj Revisited*, New Delhi: Sage.

- Pakenham, Thomas. 1991. *The Scramble for Africa 1876-1912*, London: Weidenfield and Nicholson.
- Parker, Andrew, Russo, Mary. Sommer, Doris. Yeager, Patricia. (eds.) . 1992. *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, London: Routledge.
- Parnell, Tim. 1996. 'Salman Rushdie: from Colonial Politics to Postmodern Poetics', see Moore-Gilbert, 236-262.
- Pandey, Gayanendra. 1992. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Patel, Sujata and Thorner, Alice. (eds.). 1996. *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Phillimore, R. H (ed.). 1950. *Historical Records of the Survey of India, Vol ii, 1800-1815*, Dehra Dun: Surveyor General of India.
- _____. (ed.). 1958. *Historical Records of the Survey of India, Vol iv, 1830-1845, George Everest*, Dehra Dun: Surveyor General of India.
- Pickthall, Marmaduke (trans.). 1992. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, London: Everyman.
- Poster, Mark (ed.). 1990. *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, Oxford: Polity.
- Premchand. 1988. *Deliverance and Other Stories*, David Rubin trans., New Delhi: Penguin.
- Raban, Jonathan. 1988. *Soft City*, London: Harvill.
- Rajan, Rajeswari Sunder. 1993. *Real and Imagined Women Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*, London: Routledge.
- Ramamurti, K.S. 1987. *Rise of the Indian Novel in English*, New Delhi: Sterling.
- Ramanujan, A.K. 1986. *Second Sight*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1986. *Selected Poems*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ray, Satyajit. 1976. *Our Films, Their Films*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

- Riemenschneider, Dieter. 1991. 'The Function of Labour in Mulk Raj Anand's Novels'. See Nagarajan, 67-83.
- Rivkin, Julie, and Ryan, Michael. (eds.). 1998. *Literary Theory : An Anthology*, Blackwell: Oxford.
- Rizvi, S. A. A. 1987. *The Wonder That Was India, Vol ii, 1200-1700*, London: Sidgwick and Jackson.
- Robinson, Andrew. 1989. *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, London: Andre Deutsch.
- Robinson, Andrew and Dutta, Krishna. 1995. *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Robinson, Francis. 1974. *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims 1860-1923*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, Gillian. 1993. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Royle, Trevor. 1989. *The Last Days of the Raj*, London: Michael Joseph.
- Rubin, David C (ed.). 1986. *Autobiographical Memory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Rudolph, Susanne H. 1967. *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rushdie, Salman. 1984. *Shame*, London: Picador.
- _____. 1991. *Imaginary Homelands*, London, Granta.
- _____. 1992. *The Wizard of Oz*, London B.F.I. Publishing.
- _____. 1995. *The Moor's Last Sigh*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- _____. 1997. 'Tell Me, What is There to Celebrate?' *The Observer*, 10th August. 14-15.
- Rushdie, Salman and West, Elizabeth. (eds.). 1997. *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing, 1947-1997*, London: Vintage.
- Russell, Ralph, and Islam, Kirshidul. (trans., ed.). 1969. *Ghalib 1797-1869 Vol i , Life and Letters*, London: George Allen and Unwin.

- Russell, Ralph. (ed.). 1972. *Ghalib; The Poet and His Age*, London: George Allen and Unwin.
- _____. 1992. *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature: A Select History*, London: Zed Books.
- _____. (ed., trans.) 1995. *Hidden in the Lute: An Anthology of Two Centuries of Urdu Literature*, Manchester: Carcanet.
- Rutherford, Anna (ed.). 1992. *From Commonwealth to Post-Colonial*, Sydney: Dangaroo Press.
- Sahgal, Nayantara. 1983. *Indira Gandhi: Her Road to Power*, London: MacDonald.
- _____. 1997. *Point of View: A Personal Response to Life, Literature and Politics*, New Delhi: Prestige.
- Said, Edward. 1975. *Beginnings, Intention and Method*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 1991a. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, London: Vintage.
- _____. 1991b. *Orientalism*, London: Penguin.
- _____. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Sanyal, Samares C. 1984. *Indianness in Major Indo-English Novels*, Bareilly: Prakash.
- Sattin, Anthony. (ed.). 1986. *An Englishwoman in India, The Memoirs of Harriet Tytler 1828-1858*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. 1975. *Classical Urdu Literature, from the Beginning to Iqbal*, London: Henry King.
- Scott, David. 1995. 'Colonial Governmentality', *Social Text*, 43.
- Seal, Anil and Johnson, Gordon, (eds.). 1973. *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 870 to 1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sen, Sukumar. 1979. *A History of Bengali Literature*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Sennett, Richard. 1994. *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, London: Faber and Faber.

- _____. 1996. *The Uses of Disorder, Personal Identity and City Life*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Seth, Vikram. 1985. *The Humble Administrator's Garden*, London: Carcanet.
- _____. 1994. *A Suitable Boy*, London: Phoenix.
- Sharma, K.K. (ed.). 1980. *Perspectives on Raja Rao*, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakshan.
- Sharpe, Jenny. 1993. *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Sharrad, Paul. 1987. *Raja Rao and Cultural Tradition*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Sherwani, Latif Ahmed. 1986. *The Partition of India and Mountbatten*, Karachi: Council for Pakistan Studies.
- Shils, Edward. 1981. *Tradition*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Singh, Jyotsana G. 1996. *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues : Discoveries' of India in the Language of Colonialism*, London: Routledge.
- Singh, Khushwant. 1963. *A History of the Sikhs, Vol 1, 1469-1839* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1966. *A History of the Sikhs , Vol 2, 1839-1964*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1993b. *Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Khushwant Singh*, New Delhi: Penguin India.
- Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sontag, Susan (ed.). 1993. *A Roland Barthes Reader*, London: Vintage.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1985. 'The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives', *History and Theory* 24, 247-72.
- _____. 1988a. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, London: Routledge.

- _____. 1988b. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in Nelson and Grossberg (eds.). 1988. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education. 271-313.
- _____. 1990. *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, Sarah Harasym ed., London: Routledge.
- _____. 1993. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, London: Routledge.
- Stevenson, Randall. 1992. *Modernist Fiction, An Introduction*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Stokes, Eric. 1960. *The Political Idea of British Imperialism*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Suleri, Sara. 1991. *Meatless Days*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1992. *The Rhetoric of English India*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Swaminath, K. and Patel, C.N (eds.) *A Gandhi Reader*, Madras: Orient Longman.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. 1974. *Later Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*, London: Peter Owen.
- _____. 1985. *The Home and the World*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- _____. 1985. *Nationalism*, New Delhi: Macmillan.
- _____. 1991. *My Reminiscences*, London: Papermac.
- Thapar, Romila. 1989. 'Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern search for a Hindu Identity', *Modern Asian Studies*, 23.2, 209-31.
- _____. 1993. *Interpreting Early India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Tharu, Susie, and Lalita, K (eds.). 1993. *Women Writing in India , Vol 2: The 20th Century*, London: Pandora Press.
- Thompson, Edward. 1943. *The Making of the Indian Princes*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, Paul. 1988. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Thorner, Daniel. 1981. *The Shaping of Modern India*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers.
- Tindall, Gillian. 1992. *City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Trivedi, Harish. 1993. *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India*, Calcutta: Papyrus.
- Turner, Roy (ed.). 1962. *India's Urban Future*, Berkley: University of California Press.
- Turner, Victor. 1974. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Walder, Dennis (ed.). 1993. *Literature in the Modern World, Critical Essays and Documents*, Oxford: Oxford University Press/Open University.
- _____. 1998. *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Walsh, William. 1990. *Indian Literature in English*, Harlow: Longman.
- Williams, Patrick, and Chrisman, Laura (eds.). 1993. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory : A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester.
- Wolpert, Stanley. 1997. *A New History of British India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Young, Robert J. C (ed.). 1981. *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- _____. 1990. *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, London: Routledge.
- _____. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London: Routledge.
- _____. 1996. *Torn Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.