

Chapter 4

*The Culture of Travel and
the Gendering of Colonial Modernity
in Nineteenth-Century India*



The idea of the copy that we have been discussing counterposes national and foreign, original and imitative. These are unreal oppositions which do not allow us to see the share of the foreign in the nationally specific, of the imitative in the original and of the original in the imitative. . . . This schema is also unreal, and it obscures the organized cumulative nature of the process, the potent strength even of bad tradition and the power relations, both national and international, that are in play.¹

In two of his essays, Sudipta Kaviraj has attempted to define the “we” that became articulated in nineteenth-century Indian writers, a “we” that has often been described as nationalist.² His framework is rather narrow—he examines only Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya in depth so that he refers only to a single though complex notion of identity in middle-class colonial Bengal, and he does not see gender as one aspect of the political construct he examines. But Kaviraj’s work makes some crucial points. First of all he distinguishes a nationalist consciousness from an anticolonial consciousness, which he argues is not nationalist in that the nation-state is not imagined yet as a possibility. Then he argues that notions of community much before they become nationalist have to be looked at carefully to see how they are created. Thus he sees two kinds of communities, “fuzzy” and “enumerated.”³ Earlier communities are fuzzy in two ways: first, because “they have fuzzy boundaries, because some of the most significant collective identities are not territorially based,” and second, “because those communities, unlike modern ones, are not enumerated,” with the consequence that a notion of a collective will that could be mobilized is not present. Such a notion of community is antecedent to nationalism but is not

nationalist by itself. Thus he argues, “their sense of community being multiple and layered, no single community could make demands of preemptive belonging as comprehensive as that made by the modern nation state” (66). Nationalism comes into existence when the fuzzy community becomes enumerated.

The notion of enumeration poses its own ideologies, which Kaviraj does not go into and which must also be examined to understand specificities of communityness of a particular nationalist form. Nevertheless, the idea of a fuzzy community is helpful to the purpose of understanding prenationalist or extranationalist forms of identity in India, especially gendered ones. Even the anticolonial consciousness that Kaviraj reveals in the writings of Bankim does not account for the complex sense of a Self in Toru Dutt or even in Behramji Malabari, both of whom do not oppose British rule as clearly as does Bankim. Yet both construct forms of identity that reveal emerging understandings of what it means to be “native.” Being native, having a native place, being “home,” mapping one’s land—all of these can be seen as attempts to articulate a sense of Self and community that are not as dominant as those articulated by Indian nationalism’s canonical male texts. The term *fuzzy* is appropriate here, in that these notions of “we,” so clearly visible in articulations of home, of what is not-home, of binaries such as urban/rural and India/England, of public and private spheres, are not synchronous. Within these conflicting, “fuzzy,” and emergent notions of the national Self or Selves, modernity is an important issue.

The relation between modernity, reformist movements (especially on the “woman question”), and nationalism in India has engendered much interest, as is clear in the work of such scholars as Uma Chakravarty, Susie Tharu, KumKum Sangari, Partha Chatterjee, Sumit Sarkar, and Sudipta Kaviraj, among others.⁴ The general view is that modernity was seen as a condition for nationalism, even though scholars disagree on the forms and the content of the modernity as well as its intersection with localized and indigenous practices. Sudipta Kaviraj, for instance, points out that “it was clear by the early twentieth century that Indian nationalism was marked by a deep attraction for modernity, it saw independence as a condition for achieving modernity.”⁵

The South Asian historical view that colonialism and modernity

were in collusion is foundational in my analysis of colonial traveling subjects since discourses of travel created new forms of historical self-consciousness that were modern. This modernity came from the imposition of European modernity which was in a hegemonic relation to it; as Tani Barlow suggests when speaking of East Asia, “Asian modernities perform their own recordings of the discourses of modernity within a hegemonic, capitalist world. Modernities in East Asia were undertaken in multiple, overlapping colonial dominations and participated in the shaping of global forces under numerous local exigencies it behooves us to understand.”⁶ The framework of colonial modernity, utilized by much recent historiography on South Asia, requires that we look carefully at the subjects created out of this modernity (as were the traveling subjects who are the topic of this chapter) and the discourses and contexts that created them. In this chapter, I look at gendered constructions of the “we” that colonial modernity gave rise to. I examine various appropriations of the European culture of travel as it was negotiated by Indian men and women under colonial rule. I argue that this form of travel, as it is reconstructed in terms of other traditions of travel and socioeconomic contexts, enables a mode of conceptualizing a Self that utilizes European Romanticism in conjunction with local cultural practices whose outcomes are quite different. The question then is how these new notions of the Self are created and what they consist of.

I argue that in order to understand this question, we need to understand above all that colonial modernity is a gendered issue, that is, the Selves that are created are gendered selves. The collection of essays *Recasting Women* has inaugurated such a project and scholars such as Dipesh Chakrabarty have added to it by discussing reconstitutions of domestic space under conditions of colonial modernity.⁷ An attention to notions of travel that become altered in many ways during the nineteenth century in India can reveal how this colonial modernity created these gendered selves through the comparative framework of East and West and its homologues such as unfreedom and freedom that European modes of travel encouraged. Since forms of European travel above all created the demarcations between “home” and “abroad” through comparative perspectives dependent on the binary of Self and Other, the utilization of this binary by Indians was central to creating new forms of the Self.

The comparative framework, especially, enables the conceptualization of what is “home” and what is not. Women such as Toru Dutt (1856–1877) conceive of home as a problematic space that is both an embodied space of unfreedom and a spatial and temporal articulation of a Self. For Behramji Malabari (1853–1912), reformer and columnist, “home” is to be mapped in concentric circles of belonging, where the core is the place where one is born, spreading out to a regional and national identity. For Malabari too, the comparison between India and England enabled by European travel, of India with England, is central to the construction of an Indian Self.

“Home” and its distinction from abroad / market or from “harem” was a concept-metaphor that was fundamental to the comparative framework of colonial modernity. The formation of colonial subjects and the effects of English education resulted in the internalization of modes of travel and the formation of traveling subjects that are modern. Yet colonialism constructs something else: a colonial modernity that is seen as inexorable but foreign, as a hegemonic formation that is accepted in its epistemological framework that defines the relation between colonizer and colonized as a binary opposition, even while colonial domination is refused at many levels.

In the European culture of travel, mobility not only came to signify an unequal relation between the tourist/traveler and the “native,” but also a notion of freedom. This freedom was directly related to notions of England as a “civilized” country in which parliamentary rule signified representational politics and the voice of the citizens. Paradoxically, even Englishwomen who were not able to vote participated in the discourse of “freedom,” thus implicitly validating the discourse. Although believed to be ever present for the English, this “freedom” was especially dominant within the discourse of travel, for it was there that it was manifested and constructed within the discourse of English imperial nationalism through the contrast of the English as “free” with “Eastern” people as “unfree.” Rule of the people in England was contrasted with the “despotic” and “monarchical” rule within non-European countries. Utilizing the prerevolutionary *ancien régime* in France as a universal model for all despotisms, parliamentary democracy in Europe was contrasted with despotism of non-European rulers of all kinds. The darkness and opacity of this despotism was seen as the past of Europe, and English travelers and

colonizers believed in the superiority of their form of government as one that benefited all people rather than just a few. As Lisa Lowe points out, for the writers of the Enlightenment such as Montesquieu, despotism was “the Other of the French political system, figured in the Orient of Persia” in works such as *Persian Letters*.⁸

By the end of the eighteenth century in Europe, a new notion of “freedom” was constituted as mobility also through Romantic constructs (spurred in England by fervor for the French Revolution), which required a merging with nature and which enabled the enjoyment of land and new places in new ways. Freedom, within the European Enlightenment, was seen as a natural right, one that in Romantic philosophy was essential for the unalienated Self. With the rise of Romanticism, Europeans had new reasons to venture into areas that no one hitherto had desired to visit. Romanticism, combined with the scientific imperative, enabled exploration and mapping in the search for the noble savage, for the “Other” required by the Romantic Self to be complete.⁹ This was a search for the past, for what was authentic in contrast to the alienation of the industrial age, and led to a new perception of nature within the discourse of the needs of the all-important Self.¹⁰

In this chapter, I turn to those who utilized these discourses of travel for different ends. These were travelers from India, men and women. As the colonized, they incorporated Western structures of travel but could not and did not deploy them in similar ways. For the most part, many of these travelers worked within agendas through which they tried to establish their new relations to colonial contexts, to English education, and to conceptualizing themselves in new ways.

Even though, for many Indian women and men, travel became a method through which education and certain forms of agency could be acquired, it was complicated both by imperial notions of travel within which Indians were seen as being liberated by European modernity constructed through notions of education and progress, and by the Indian travelers’ desire to take advantage of these discourses but for various ends that reconstituted and sometimes, though not always, subverted European cultural superiority. Furthermore, travel was not always seen in terms of European Romanticism by those who were not educated in British literature or through English education, since for those outside European notions of travel, mobility and

movement did not carry the same meanings. Nor did the concern for imitation or comparison become as much of a concern as it did for the upper classes or for such groups as the Bengali Bhadrak. ¹¹

Just as Englishwomen utilized the discourse of colonialism and nationalism in order to construct themselves as subjects, Indian women of the upper classes, who were of the higher castes as well, utilized European Romanticism. Toru Dutt, whom I will be speaking of at length in this chapter, absorbed and deployed English Romantic notions of Selfhood, of the land, and of the discourse of freedom as mobility in order to be able to construct her own sense of Self. Since she was educated in English literature, was reading the literature of empire, and came into frequent contact with English in India and England, she felt the need to construct such an agency. In examining the ways in which Toru Dutt participated in the European culture of travel, we can see not only the kinds of epistemic violence, as Spivak calls it, that is demanded by this insertion, but also the results of this violence in the reconstruction of new gender, caste, and class categories out of preexisting gender, caste, class, and familial ones. ¹² That is, a Bengali woman such as Toru, having had an English education, utilized the culture of travel to see herself as a subject and as modern, and in doing so enabled the reconstruction of cultural formations relating to gender; traveling to England, remaining unmarried, and learning English were all practices that were new to women of her class and caste. As has been suggested by many scholars, this modernity, which recast various social divisions, became central in anti-colonial and nationalist responses. ¹³

This alteration in the discourse of travel occurred because English Romantic notions of travel were reconstituted within the context of very different cultural assumptions and formations of travel that were part of Indian cultures, as well as within the context of the new relations between the state and its people through colonial interventions in the economic and social realms. The demands of colonial power structures altered many of these assumptions while also challenging, in some instances, the discourse of freedom as mobility. Among the upper classes, travel had a different valence in regard to freedom, but the hegemony of Western travel was apparent among Indian elites in that both freedom and education through travel, which had antecedents in the Grand Tour as well as in the discourses of anthropology

and exploration, became tropes for many English-educated Indians as well as for the English.

*Restrictions for Caste Hindus on
Crossing the Black Water*

If European notions of travel were intrinsically linked to modernity, colonial modernity, as the way in which modernity was imposed in colonial contexts and utilized by colonized peoples, was apparent in the new ways in which people from India traveled. These changes ranged from the new forms of employment available to middle-class men, new locations for legal and registration work related to land—both of which changed people's relations to their villages and cities—to the emerging ways of living for women accompanying the men to places of employment in the colonial bureaucracy or even staying home by themselves. There were new ways of traveling enabled by the railways and roads being constructed by the colonial regime and by the different conceptualization of the West, of England, of Europe, and of America that colonialism brought to the people of India.

For those Indians who were Hindus, travel overseas violated religious and caste laws. It was seen as a religious violation even when eating beef, which was also proscribed, was not. Yet these views began to change by the last decade of the nineteenth century. In his *History of Hindu Civilization during British Rule*, Pramatha Nath Bose writes that “the present practice is to excommunicate those who go for purposes of education or travel to Europe or America.”¹⁴ While suggesting that this proscription may have been due to the belief that forbidden food or food not prepared under correct caste conditions would be consumed during such travel, Bose considers the travel proscriptions to be a contradiction because dietary restrictions do not, in and of themselves, cause excommunication. A proposition to remove this sea voyage restriction upon condition of keeping caste rules was rejected in the Sixth National Conference. However, in 1894 a resolution passed at a provincial conference in Bengal enabled sea voyage. In part the resolution said: “in the opinion of this Conference, the time has come when, having regard to the important

political, educational and industrial issues which are involved, practical steps should be taken to give effect to the sea-voyage movement among Hindus, by organizing at an early date a trip across the seas to be undertaken by Hindus, due regard being had to Hindu customs and usages.”¹⁵

Since access to higher education, the British civil service, and professions could not be obtained under colonial rule without trips to England, it is understandable that such a resolution was passed. It is also understandable that there were such restrictions for upper-caste Hindus against sea voyages, for until mid-century, only the poor, lower castes, and of course, non-Hindus went on overseas voyages to Europe as servants and sailors.¹⁶

While Muslims did not have such proscriptions, their notions of travel to foreign lands were structured within religious notions of the hajj, that is, as pilgrimage, a form of travel widely shared among people of all religions in India. Moreover, for traders from India, movements from the subcontinent to Africa and other parts of Asia had been going on for centuries. Trade routes between India and what is now the Middle East had a long history, for instance, that had reached its height in the Mughal period. Muslim and Jewish traders had had cordial relations with Indian merchants and a thriving trade that was interrupted and overtaken by Europeans. Within this trade, Indian merchants and slaves would also have moved across the oceans and land masses of West Asia.¹⁷ The travels of Ibn Battuta and Alberuni, for instance, record these trading caravans' movements and a very different notion of travel of Muslims in India that focuses on religious differences rather than racial or cultural ones understood within a hierarchy.¹⁸ Yet, under colonialism even longstanding trading practices and movements related to commerce were altered, leading to new identities and relations between communities and trading partners. Traders of all religions within India had to respond to changed relations between politics, commerce, and agriculture during the nineteenth century.¹⁹

Even though these changed trading forms are not my focus, the changed nature of employment under colonialism had a more direct impact on forms of travel for middle- and upper-class men and women. These new forms of employment and education also signified class mobility in that they implied entry into the English educated

classes. Moving to Calcutta from the villages for education or employment for many Bengali males marked such mobility.²⁰ For upper-class and caste Hindus, going to England for higher studies was a means for getting jobs or advancement in the colonial bureaucracy and signaled prosperity and high status. It also meant that they had to perform atonement on their return. Furthermore, restrictions for Hindus against sea voyage may have had much to do with concerns with Westernization and the desire on the part of many sections of the populace to maintain gender and caste structures in the face of European colonization. These caste restrictions did not weaken until the end of the nineteenth century, when more Indians began to travel overseas. Whereas earlier, those who violated such caste rules were put out of caste, this practice, as suggested by the 1894 resolution, weakened by the end of the century when, for instance, Hindu society in Bengal could not expel all those who had traveled abroad.²¹ Furthermore, sea voyage also began to be seen as an issue of modernization that was integral to progress. Thus in the debates on the sea voyage issue, one tract argued that “as society advances gradually in religion and morals, the objections against sea-voyages will disappear . . . so long as the full measure of advance is not attained, so long it will be impossible to make sea-voyages acceptable to society.”²²

Furthermore, for many poor men and women, such restrictions may not have been relevant to the economic forces governing their decisions. Since the eighteenth century, as Rosina Vizram has revealed, the English had taken Indians to England as servants and sailors. Women went as nursery attendants and maids, and many of them were abandoned and ill-treated and left to find their own way home. Men and boys went as sailors, servants, and exotic pages. Many were virtual slaves, for they were not paid and could not leave their service. None of these early visitors to England went for the education that motivated middle-class and upper-class Indian travelers at the end of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, caste restrictions were, in many instances, not the decisive factor in their lives because they were either not Hindus, were not caste Hindus, or were too poor, lacking many choices under British rule.²³ Another category of persons for whom travel did not imply upper-class understandings of education was the indentured labor from India who were taken to various British colonies after the abolition of slavery.

*Indian Travelers:
English Education and Indian Masculinity*

Yet where European travel made its impact on the colonized in India was by altering modes of observation and creating new relations of Self to history among those classes and castes directly influenced by English education.²⁴ The new perceptions constructed colonized subjects with altered relations to their own land. These perceptions were also essential in creating new forms of knowledge for the colonized. In *Masks of Conquest*, Gauri Viswanathan argues that English education created a historical consciousness that “was intended to bring the Indian in touch with himself, recovering his true essence and identity from the degradation to which it had become subject through native despotism.” Such an education presented itself as “restoring Indian youth to an essential self and, in turn, reinserting him into the course of Western civilization.”²⁵ Further, it inculcated a historical consciousness that was part of the Enlightenment, even while it purportedly left “native” cultural practices untouched. In addition, the consistent, pervasive, and ongoing construction of knowledge as an understanding of the division between “native” and “English” or “European” was one that informed all discourses in the colonial context and was part of the comparative method essential to colonial discourses. Viswanathan’s use of the male pronoun in the quote above indicates that this subject of history was also masculine. For such a subject, the new concepts of Self and community came out of the movement from the multiple fuzzy Self, as Kaviraj calls it, to a more mapped (rather than enumerated) and clear idea of community. The relation of the English-educated male elite with the English rulers comprised not only a utilization and adaptation of a hegemonic English culture and values that constructed modern masculine subjectivity, but also one that argued for equality from/with the British. Thus the terms of colonial modernity, termed “tragic” by some scholars who see it as taken at the cost of freedom, can also be seen as more complex in that these offered new modes of patriarchal power in a hegemonic relation to British culture.²⁶

While Viswanathan focuses on English education only in terms of the discourses of the British, the effects on those colonized were

complex and multiple. The levels of incorporation and influence of this education are also complex and different for those directly educated by them, and for those for whom the influence is indirect but no less significant. Furthermore, another question remains as to how these influences interact with local cultural formations and practices to reconstitute colonialism for colonial hegemony and new subject positions that become available to the Indian middle classes.²⁷ The process of creating history in relation to emerging concepts of communities cannot be seen as totally indebted to modernity or even to the orientalist narratives about India, for oral and written narratives of heroes and legends dealing with love and adventure existed, as did the episodes from the epics and the Puranas. As Meenakshi Mukherjee argues, these genres joined with the Romantic novel from England to create a new kind of historical novel.²⁸ These novels created a golden past that had to be regained from the colonizers. Within the narratives of travel analyzed in this chapter, instead of a directly anticolonial rhetoric there is the notion of this lost past, indicating the emerging process of self-definition as emergent historical consciousness at work. Indian novelists who used history to write historical novels, for instance, utilized far more explicitly many notions of history, chronicle, and fiction to reach an Indian audience, as Meenakshi Mukherjee reveals in her work.²⁹ Yet writing as travel writers rather than as novelists, as Behramji Malabari and Bholanath Chandra did, reveals a rather different focus and subject position that argues that European epistemology's effect was the focus not on the family or familial relation but rather on the description of a culture and society as one that was mappable and knowable through authorial mobility, distance, and comparative skills.

In narratives of travel, subjects of colonial modernity such as Malabari and Chandra appear most clearly in their complexity. In works such as Behramji Malabari's *The Indian Eye on English Life* (1893) and *Gujarat and the Gujaratis* (1882), Bholanath Chandra's *Travels of a Hindoo* (1867), and Devendra N. Das's *Sketches of Hindoo Life* (1887) such colonized and gendered subjects formed out of English education are visible in their complex relation to the colonial episteme and to their own land soon to be conceived in nationalist terms.³⁰ Malabari, a fervent supporter of colonial rule, saw modernity not only in terms of progress and reform of tradition, but also as a past and a

present that was being lost, literally and metaphorically, through lack of appreciation (i.e., through a nonappreciation of history) as well as through colonization. Travel, as a mode of understanding and as a discourse of power that constructs authenticity through separation and alienation from what is traditional, was a means to regain that land, and it created subjects such as Malabari with complex modes of connection to European constructs as well as to an emerging notion of Self and community.

*Malabari and Reform:
An Emerging Male Public Sphere*

Behramji Malabari saw himself as a traveler and reformer in the mode of English writers such as Addison and Steele, who utilized the periodical press in order to address concerns within England. This model of the periodical essay became widespread among many Indians to attack colonial rule or questions of reform,³¹ showing the operation of that complex process often seen by scholars such as Homi Bhabha as “colonial mimicry” but which an attention to class and a rejection of authenticity can enable us to understand as the preoccupation and power of a particular class reconstructed through local and specific hegemonic formations.³² While Bhabha’s work is useful in pointing out that such mimicry is not merely a slavish following of English models, his notion of the ambivalence of colonial authority and its excess does not address the multiplicity of responses that constitute available subject positions for the colonized. Nor does this account for class differences that are fostered by colonialism and its international divisions of labor through notions of copying, inauthenticity, or provincialism as Roberto Schwartz had pointed out in the case of Brazil.³³ Instead of looking at Malabari’s writings as simply colonial mimicry, his subject positions can be understood rather through carefully accounting for his diverse audiences, the tasks Malabari has at hand, his own position in terms of gender and class, as well as his approval of colonial rule as necessary for progress. It would be necessary to unpack all of these elements in order to analyze the effect of colonialism and English education on middle- and upper-class Indians in the nineteenth century as they are differently positioned in terms of gen-

der, religion, caste, and class. Malabari's complex positionality becomes apparent especially in his understanding and utilization of travel. While travel conveys to Malabari the "real India" in terms of its distinction from what is English, the reforming imperative then utilizes modernist ideas to construct difference within European notions of history. The distinctions between Self and Other, "home" and "abroad," modern and traditional all constitute forms of distancing within colonial modernity that come from the Western epistemological tradition, and specifically in Malabari of history as an unbiased and objective construct. This utilization of difference works also in anticolonial nationalism as it utilizes modernity.³⁴

Malabari called himself the "Indian Spectator" and worked for reform of Indian society, supporting widow remarriage and against "traditions" such as child marriage. He worked with the colonial government in order to create legislation to enable reforms in the condition of Indian women, even to the extent of going to England to get the support of the English public for his cause. This is most visible in his initiating and championing of the Age of Consent Bill, which was to cause tremendous controversy among reformers and orthodox groups of Indians in India, and for which Malabari obtained support from prominent Englishmen as well as women such as Millicent Fawcett.³⁵ He was supportive of British rule, writing poems dedicated to the British royal family in addition to those that were composed on reformist themes. His poetry revealed the influence of writers such as Alexander Pope in addition to the folk poetry of the Khailis of Surat, which consisted of spontaneous poetry sung satirically in singing contests. It is suggested that his taste for the English satirical poets came from his participation among the Khailis.³⁶

As a reformist leader, he articulated the problems of Hindu customs and represented these to the British in both India and England. As reformer and periodical essayist, he revealed in his writings and position an emerging public sphere in which he participated and helped construct. In this sphere the newspaper columnist as a didactic and detached observer of mores came to play an important role. Malabari's writings suggest the emergence of a class, predominantly male (since few women knew English or were literate), that knew English and was used to buying the newspaper to learn about current affairs and news (and therefore possessed an emerging modern relation to

time). These periodicals were also read by the English, so that Malabari saw as his audience colonial bureaucrats, benevolent English reformers, the Indian reformers, and “leaders of society.” In Malabari’s accounts, those responsible for the so-called decline of Indian society were not the colonial rulers, but a lack of historical consciousness and a decontextualized “tradition.” For instance, he sees in the practice of child marriage the “cause of many of our social grievances, including enforced widowhood” leading to sickly children, “poverty and dependence.”³⁷ He believed that child marriage had no religious sanction in the shastras and that “tradition” was a problem for such practices, so that, in fact, absent religious sanction, the British government could prohibit it. The problem was religion, the solution was the colonial state.

Furthermore, writings such as Malabari’s created masculine subjects by articulating a gendered authority relative to Indian women. In the Age of Consent Bill issue, for instance, his appeal in England was entitled “An Appeal from the Daughters of India,” thus speaking for women of India.³⁸ In his columns he argued for greater knowledge and understanding of India by Indians and regretted that educated Indians “own to no concern in the fortunes of the vulgar herd.”³⁹ Since the column would only be read by “educated” (which meant English-educated) men, that is, the upper classes, the existence of this new voice revealed the creation of an opposition between the “vulgar herd,” that is, the masses, which included women of all classes and castes (though not seen monolithically), and a paternalistic elite, a discourse that maintained class distinctions over those of caste, religion, region, and language. The process of civilizing the “herd” becomes therefore the concern of an Indian male elite, which sees itself as educated, modern, and paternalistic. An issue such as the Age of Consent Bill was argued through the construction of a public sphere conceptualized by his close associate, Dayaram Gidumal, who put together an ambitious symposium of “Hindu domestic reformers and anti-reformers,” who were all men, from various parts of India, the deliberations of which were published in 1889.⁴⁰ The colonial government collaborated with this masculinization of authority in various ways. In this instance, the government instituted in 1884 a process of consultation of the public that involved “such officials or non-officials as were considered to be well-acquainted with native

feeling on the question.” Not one woman was asked, even though Pandita Ramabai had given testimony to the Hunter Commission in 1882 and was well qualified to give her opinion. Unsurprisingly, “native” opinion was found to be against raising the age of consent and the issue was dropped by the government.

When Malabari called for consideration of child widows and the illiterate and the poor, his mode of relating to them seemed to be within Romantic notions of “rural folk” or the “poor” in relation to the poet as Self (as in Wordsworth, though different in content), a position that connects him with the English men and women who see themselves as benevolent to Indians. Thus the reformist position on widow remarriage and against child marriage is viewed by him as a process of mediation between the “leaders of society and the State,” as his biographer hagiographically puts it. His position did not earn him much approval with the group of people seen as “educated natives.”⁴¹ Despite such opposition, this “benevolent” colonial community along with those Indians interested in reform became a community in which he saw himself as an equal, not only in class but also in race since he subscribed to Max Muller’s constructions of a common Aryan ancestry for Europeans and Indians. This belief in the benevolent colonial state is clearly obvious in *The Indian Eye on English Life*, which is subtitled *Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer*, in his description of colonial bureaucrats such as a Mr. Patrick Ryan, whom he describes in the following words: “As a magistrate he was more humane, perhaps, than just, always siding with the helpless and the ignorant, as against the powerful police or the unscrupulous limbs of the law.” When Malabari mentions that Ryan “put me straight on the Home Rule and other political problems,” the magistrate is presented as more in tune with Indian nationalism than Malabari himself.⁴²

Other English men and women in his community are those who responded to his poetry and writings on reform. Thus, he mentioned, in a speech on Max Muller, that his book on English verse enabled him to be acquainted with the “noblest of Englishmen and Englishwomen . . . ,” namely “The Earl of Shaftesbury, Miss Nightingale, Tennyson, Gladstone, Max Muller,” and so on.⁴³ No doubt this list of names is influenced by an audience consisting of English military officers from whom he solicited donations, in this case, for translations of Muller’s Hibbert Lectures. Believing that English rule was

necessary to the progress of India was thus not unsurprising in a writer who worked on reform and education while believing that greatness was to be the equal of English politicians and writers. Thus, paradoxically, when he complained that the system of education was not teaching Indians empathy with the poor, he wrote: “Will it [English education] even give us a Shaftesbury or a Stansfeld, a Howard or a Penn, a Nightingale or a Fry?”⁴⁴ His understanding of India was marked by a belief in an emergent “native” community, of which he was a part, that aimed at equality with English models of greatness who were, however, clearly superior. It was therefore not surprising that after the symposium on the Age of Consent Bill created much controversy, Malabari went to England to get sympathy from the British public to get the bill passed. The English committee for the Age of Consent Bill was composed of many of the British elite.⁴⁵

*The Indian Spectator and the Colonial Gaze:
Malabari and Nightingale*

Yet, while Malabari participates in colonial modernity as a traveling subject, his position is by no means continuous with that of the English who insert him into a different location in their self-construction as Euroimperial traveling subjects precisely by seeing Malabari as the object of their gaze. This inequality also marks the fractures in the public sphere of colonial India consisting of benevolent British and reformist Indian men that Malabari attempts to constitute through his columns. Thus, at one point, while he sees Florence Nightingale as a model of compassion for the poor, Florence Nightingale sees him as a “native” who needs to be helped. Her views on Malabari and her relation to India are clear in the introduction she wrote to a book on Malabari’s life and works, *Behramji M. Malabari: A Biographical Sketch*. In the introduction, the very inequality that Malabari is conscious of in relation to the poor of India is directed at him, whereas he has constructed himself as part of a community within which Nightingale was included. Nightingale, who had never been to India but thought herself an authority on matters of hygiene in India,⁴⁶ begins: “The most interesting portions of this book are those which give us a peep into an Indian home—that of Mr. Malabari and his family. . . .”⁴⁷

This is also where Malabari's account of those he sees as needing help from English-educated Indians is markedly different from Nightingale's account of Malabari as the "native." Whereas Nightingale seems intent on "unveiling" the "native," as it were, and structures her position as an outsider/traveler concerned with comprehending another culture through a brief "peep" as she moves along, Malabari sees the child widows and the Indian poor as persons to be brought into progress, as did the other Indian reformers, a progress which inserted him, along with those he could reform, into modernity. Nightingale's voyeurism, her need to uncover and to obtain knowledge, and her assumption of her own modernity, is to be contrasted with Malabari's desire to *become* modern that is revealed in his patriarchal notion of Indian culture and its unfortunates who need the paternalism of Indian reformers and of British rule.

Consequently, the relations between Nightingale and Malabari and between Malabari and the objects of reform are not quite the same, even though Malabari assumes that they are. For Nightingale, the view of Malabari's house constitutes a "peep" into the workings of a monolithic category termed the "Indian family," in which Malabari's mother exerted the supposed influence that made Malabari an exemplary native. Thus, to understand the workings of this house is, for Nightingale, the key to knowledge of Indian women that is vital to the project of "civilizing" the colonized. Nightingale's "peep" into the Malabari household is, we are told, in the service of that laudable goal. In the introduction to Malabari's biography, Nightingale sees Indian women as the "moral strongholds" who exert an "unbounded" influence and thus need to be utilized for "social" progress, at the same time as she says that she knows little about them: "We Englishwomen understand as little the lives and circumstances, the ideas and feelings, of these hundred millions of women of India as if they lived in another Planet."⁴⁸

A further difference between Malabari and Nightingale in their perceptions of India is the reason for travel and for gaining knowledge. In the year 1892, when colonial power was at its height, Nightingale revealed little of the Romantic notion of merging with a more natural Other. Romantic relations between colonizer and colonized were no longer evident; instead there was a functional approach that was bent on continued colonial rule. Malabari, however, operated

through Romanticized ideas of the poor that positioned them within Indian idylls of rural life and called on a glorious past of perfect harmony. That Malabari admired Max Muller and wanted to translate some of Muller's lectures into the vernacular is indicative of his use of an Indian and Aryan past. Uma Chakravarty points out that Muller "vastly popularized a racist version of the Orientalist Hindu golden age and it was this newly formulated golden age that became so influential in later Indian thought."⁴⁹ What is clear, however, is that while English men and women see India in functional terms, the utilization by the colonized of Romantic constructs enables knowledges of India that are seen in terms of progress into modernity.

Travel, Comparative Knowledge, and Modernity

Such differences between English travelers such as Nightingale and Indian traveling subjects are to be noted even while it is clear that Malabari's construction of Self as traveler follows upon European forms of travel, within which notions such as progress, historical consciousness, the comparative nature of cultures, and objectivity and authenticity are evident. For these notions, as Viswanathan points out, were the result of English education.⁵⁰ Yet when Malabari presents himself in the opening pages of *The Indian Eye on English Life: Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer* as a "pilgrim in search of the truths of life," adding that "there is so much to learn and to unlearn from contact with a different civilization," we see travel as a pilgrimage, so much a part of the experience of many in India, becoming reconstituted into the reformist method of comparative study that aims, not at personal salvation, but at a secular salvation of a group of people being identified as Indians or "natives" who belong to the East as the English belong to the West.⁵¹

In an essay in *The Indian Spectator* that explains his methodology in works such as *Gujarat and the Gujaratis* and *The Indian Eye on English Life*, Malabari writes that he has not absorbed European notions of travel and that he has never been to Europe. Yet even without traveling to Europe, his English education taught him how to be a traveling subject, that is, to utilize a binary epistemology for the construction of the Self. Thus he maps his "home" within a framework of colonial

modernity that is particular to upper-class and caste Indian men. In writings before and after the tour of England that he records in *The Indian Eye on English Life*, it is apparent that Malabari's masculine modernity includes the utilization of a comparative method that enables both a new appreciation of "home" and a critique of "abroad" / England for its dirt, poverty, and lack of interest in India. Thus the comparative method enables not only a construction of home but also a critical view of England as one that does not fulfill the rhetoric of the colonizers.

The movement to understand a category of persons that Malabari calls "Indians," "natives," at "home" is part of the process that ends in nationalism, although Malabari had no part in that since he was interested in reforming India within continued British rule. Yet his modernity consists in the mapping of the characteristics of this group termed "Indians," thus taking on the categorizing and mapmaking power of imperialist geography. The ability to map his surroundings emerges in Malabari's way of looking at India and is elucidated in an essay on travel in his column in *The Indian Spectator* in July 1888. What is apparent in this essay is his mode of travel, which is presented as a series of concentric and methodical movements that enable him to map his surroundings, with digressions that construct nodes of authenticity: "The first tour I remember having made was round grandmother's kitchen. Thence I transferred my attention to the front yard of the house, thence to the street, the neighboring street, the whole suburb of Nampura, and the surrounding suburbs. . . . The climbing of trees and roofs in search of paper kites was another round of useful tours. (Kiteflying is one of the best Indian sports, and I am sorry to find it discouraged . . .)"⁵²

It is this systematic mapping, intermingled with the digression on kite flying that creates a narrative voice concerned with the Indian past and its particular and quirky forms found nowhere else, that marks this traveler's difference from the Europeans writing about India. In Malabari's accounts, alongside this emerging appreciation of India as a lost past is its construction as a disappearing present. Thus there are two kinds of historical consciousness visible here: one is of the golden past that is compared to a degenerate present, and the other is what Renato Rosaldo has termed "imperialist nostalgia" and which he describes as a hegemonic relation to disappearing cultural forms.⁵³

Such a relation is not only fundamental to anthropology but also to tourism, so that both forms of movement and knowledge are deeply implicated in the experience of modernity. Dean MacCannell has argued that tourism is the attempt to create a totality out of the fragmentation that all moderns experience.⁵⁴ Thus a tourist attempts to historicize culture and to museumize the past in order to achieve this totality and ordering. In the context of colonialism, and in the attempts of colonized people to see themselves as subjects, the fragmentation of modernity implies something else—a sense of distancing brought about by alien others that is different from the experience of modernity among people in the West. This is the specificity of colonial modernity.

Yet Malabari, unlike those who held either Muslim rule or British colonialism responsible for the loss of the golden age, never mentions who or what is responsible for the disappearance of kite flying; like Wordsworth naturalizing the poverty of rural folk, Malabari naturalizes problematic formations, or he presumes, as did the British, that they were “traditions” that were the result of degenerate religions and political norms. Here lies his difference from the anticolonialists or the nationalists even though his comparative framework is similar to theirs.

In addition, there is the relativist notion of culture in the comparative model, one that Malabari sees as acquired by first knowing about an entity called “home,” seen as the domestic space that then becomes encircled by the larger entity of India and the “East” before one ventures out. Such a method also erases knowledge of power relations in the understanding of relations between cultures; incorporation of this method becomes a sign of colonial modernity that can compare “East” and “West.” Thus he says, “No study is so absorbing for man as a study of human progress; no method so successful for it as the comparative method.”⁵⁵ For Malabari, therefore, the comparative method enables one to admire foreign lands and monuments without being “ashamed of your own.” Thus in the essay on travel he writes, “I honour you for your desire to examine the arts, sciences and philosophies of the West: but you cannot do this with advantage to yourself and the world unless you have already made yourself familiar with the *national* systems” (my emphasis).⁵⁶ For Malabari, travel in India is essential before travel abroad; and travel is seen as the acquiring of

knowledge that enables one to “see or see through them” rather than merely “look at things.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, travel enables the comparisons between “nations” which have a “system” that is apparent to scientific rationality; India is seen as a “nation” at this point through a quasi-scientific discourse that is authorized by traveling. Malabari’s identity is a national one rather than one that suggests caste, religious, or regional affiliation. Perhaps being a Parsi, he could position himself more easily within a nation in speaking of reform of Hindu customs.

Paradoxically, even when, in a different context, Malabari had constructed English men and women as models of greatness that seem to have no parallels among Indians, he argues here that Indian cultural forms are quite comparable to European ones: “it makes me sick to hear a man rave about this thing or that 10,000 miles away, when a much better, perhaps the original thing, is lying unnoticed in his own land. Bah! I hate our Anglicised Aryan.”⁵⁸ Here the problem of colonial education is attacked as creating subjects who appreciate English objects while they have no appreciation for their own; objects seen as English and Indian are not only equivalent, since they are both Aryan, but Indian ones are seen as originary, as authentic in a way that English ones are not. The reliance on Max Muller’s ideas, whose essays he had helped to translate into the vernacular and which came out in 1882, are obvious here.⁵⁹ The discourse of alienation from an originary and authentic past is available through the Romantic discourse of travel. Such a form of colonial modernity is seen as distinct from an unauthentic condemnation of India by those educated through Indian education. Thus there are seen to be two forms of modernity: one that embraces an authentic Indian past and one that despises everything Indian. The former is valorized while the latter is often ridiculed by both English and Indians.

Yet in Malabari’s discursive practices, along with the understanding of loss, there is also a desire for modernity, one that becomes embodied by England and which is available only in England. In this form of colonial modernity, Malabari constructs England as the destination for pilgrimage and where salvation is to be found. This notion of England, which I address more extensively in looking at the writings of Toru Dutt, is a gendered one that in Malabari becomes a site of learning and enlightenment instead of one of freedom as it is for Indian women. For Malabari, this destination is one of a pilgrimage

that is to resolve the condition of colonial modernity that leads to being perplexed or ambivalent. England becomes the place where the potential and the failure of “humanity” is visible; what is clear is that these are notions adjudicated with the help of colonial epistemology. Thus Malabari writes that London is “pulsating with the highest aspirations and the lowest passions of humanity. With all its unattractiveness, London is still a Mecca for the traveler in search of truth, a Medina of rest for the persecuted or perplexed in spirit. . . . To the searcher after enlightenment it is a Budh-gaya; a Benaras for the sinner in search of emancipation.”⁶⁰ Since Malabari elsewhere writes about the injustices of colonial rule even though he supports it, such a view of London must be read as a condition of travel in England that resulted from colonial education, from reformist views, and from the construction of a bourgeois male elite that based its power on utilization of colonial knowledge. The Indian notion of pilgrimage as a search for spiritual salvation is reconstituted into a search for an unalienated and authentic Self.

A Brief Aside on Bankim and Colonial Modernity

Yet comparative frameworks of knowledge work somewhat differently for a writer such as Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, whose acceptance of English rationalist philosophy later enabled his ideas about the superiority of Hinduism. Here the comparative knowledge can be turned around to an ironic look at the British themselves and to deny English claims of superiority. Thus in his letters on Hinduism, Bankim writes:

Suppose a Hindu, ignorant of European languages, travelled through Europe, and like most Europeans in his situation, set about writing an account of his travels? What would be his account of Christianity? Observing the worship of the Virgin and the Saints in Catholic countries, he would take Christianity to be a polytheism. The worship of images would lead him to believe that Christianity was an idolatry too, and the reverence to the crucifix would induce him to think that there was also a leaven of fetishism in it.⁶¹

This anticolonial possibility of travel as a way to deconstruct difference, while retaining an Indian masculinist authority, is markedly

different from the utilization of travel by Malabari. Malabari's view of England, different from that of the British in India, was that it needed reform too, especially in regard to women and the working classes, while Bankim's turns colonial discourse on itself to create discursive knowledges of Britain as were those created by the British about India. Furthermore, Bankim's understanding of the Self and community, more a notion of Bengali and Hindu identity rather than one that spoke of other communities in British India, came from what Partha Chatterjee calls a masculinist belief in rationally creating a glorious history that was distinct from histories created by Muslims. Chatterjee calls this belief one that "sought to create a national leadership in the image of ideal masculinity—strong, proud, just, wise, a protector of the righteous, and a terror to the mischievous."⁶² Thus Bankim's travels become a way to understand and wield discourse as a political tool for a Bengali middle class that was employed by the British government, the awareness of which is not visible in Malabari's writings.

*Bholanath Chandra:
Subjection and Modernity*

Bholanath Chandra's *Travels of a Hindoo* (1869) suggests another related traveling subject created out of English education, whose travelogue maps an emerging sense of what it means to be an authentic "native." Chandra's work constructs him as the authentic "native" who is able to mediate between the English and an "authentic" India, but whose sense of Self, authenticity, and India is also partly indebted to Romantic notions of place and landscape. Such Romanticism, in the context of colonization, provides a means to articulate a new form of alienation that constructs a home and a Self intimate with and emotionally connected to that home as well as having the masculine authority to represent it, at the same time as it feels alienated from it. The cause of this alienation differs among these writers, as they are not always anticolonial or even nationalist. In the case of Chandra, the cause of this alienation is often ambiguous, sometimes represented as the passing of time and sometimes as progress.

The text begins with a letter to the viceroy of India, thanking him for permission to publish the book, which is presented as the result of

English education. The book, he says, contains the impressions produced by a journey undertaken by one “who is indebted for his education to the paternal government of the British in India,” mentioning that he wishes colonial rule to continue for the benefit of the Indians.⁶³ It is clear that the subject position that Chandra inhabits in order to write and publish his travelogue to an English audience is that of a faithful Indian subject as the “native.” Moreover, it is as a modern subject, because he begins by invoking the lost past of India—by saying that modes of travel were different twenty years ago and that travel is much faster now. Such notations of changes under colonial rule (in the name of a progress not unmixed with nostalgia) become a mark of travel narratives written by an English-educated Indian. Furthermore, despite Chandra’s prefatory inaugural eulogy to the viceroy and to colonial rule, there are also indications that the writer is aware that the British see the Indians as inferior: “Ethnologically, he (the Hindoo) is the same with an Englishmen—both being of the Aryan-house. Morally and intellectually, he can easily Anglicize himself. Politically, he may, sooner or later, be raised to an equality.”⁶⁴ While Chandra sees himself as belonging to the same *race* as the British, the statement about equality seems somewhat ambiguous in terms of the agency that will bring about political equality. Even though Chandra hesitates to blame colonial rulers for their prejudices, he clearly feels that his modernity has made him an equal, as will be all Indians once they begin to progress.

Once again, a comparative framework that organizes past and present structures this narrative, inserting Chandra into modernity in the process of mapping and representing the landscape of “home,” one that later writers would build upon as an emotional connection to Self and nation. Chandra’s narrative itself works in two different registers to reveal the violence of the colonial episteme as it constructs its subjects. On the one hand it makes the Indian landscape picturesque, thus inserting it into a Western aesthetic and mode of observation that eliminates social problems and conflicts. For instance, one passage describes an area in Bengal in the following way: “The banks of the Hoogly, for miles, present the most gay and picturesque scenery. On either hand are gardens and orchards decked in an eternal verdure, and the eyes revel upon landscapes of the richest luxuriance. From the groves shire out the white villas of most tasteful and variegated archi-

ecture. . . . No part of Bengal exhibits such a high degree of populousness, and wealth, and civilization, as the valley of the Hoogly.”⁶⁵ On the other hand, the narrative authenticates itself through its invocation of the past, depicting places as the former dwellings of sages and writers and as sites of famous incidents in religious and oral tradition. Here again, the traveler/narrator is seen as knowledgeable in ways that English readers would appreciate, indicating the creation of a class of persons, predominantly male, who mediate between Indian cultures and the British by reconstituting knowledge of India through colonial epistemology. Thus, in this genre, combined with the knowledge about Indian practices are motives of travel that are clearly inculcated from English education. For instance, in describing the hills of Byjnath (Baijnath), Chandra says they are a welcome sight to “him ‘who long hath been in populous cities pent,’ ” thus revealing that this is not a pilgrimage that is motivated by religious salvation but a Romantic need for nature for one who is living in urban spaces.⁶⁶

Chandra’s narrative brings together religious and folk history expressed in the appreciation and knowledge of places of pilgrimage with a Romantic sensibility derived from English education. This combination is a specific form of colonial modernity, which sees itself as alienated from ancient and valorized forms and traditions. Thus he writes, “The palace of the Sultan is traced in the altered building that is now occupied as the shop of Thomas and Co., and where we saw a Mussulman gent come and buy an English spelling-book.”⁶⁷ There is an ambivalence built into this narrative, where the changes that can be seen by later readers as an erasure of an Indian past by a colonial occupation can only come into play through English education as well, revealing the problematic of colonial hegemony in which opposition can only take place through colonial paradigms. The narrative of “tradition” is created through a juxtaposition with changes brought about that are conceived of as “modernity.” The headings of sections in Chandra’s text reveal such a juxtaposition: *Nana and his council*; *Miss Wheeler*; *The House of Massacre*; . . . *Ancient Khetreyas and modern Sepoy*; . . . *Idolatry in Hindoostan and Bengal*; . . . *Former insecurity and present security of travelling in the Doab*; *European fugitives during the mutiny*; *Ferozabad*; *Field of the Wreck of Hindoo independence*; *Approach to Agra*. The fact that this text is aimed at European readers is evident in its viewpoint about colonial rule; however,

this text would also be read by English-educated Indians interested in learning about their own country, thus articulating an understanding of “home” in time and space. Chandra’s text reveals that knowing about India for the English-educated Indians meant reading texts that presented the colonial hegemonic even if the content included more “native” knowledges about India.

While forms of travel as pilgrimage are clearly present in Chandra’s attention to a mapping of India within a religious itinerary, his narrative utilizes also the genre of the European travelogue. The difference between the pilgrimages and Chandra’s own narrative is evident in both the attention to places to stay, forms of transportation, and the evaluation of these in terms of efficiency and comfort in the Western or Indian style. In fact, it is clear that Chandra’s narrative is similar to English travelogues, taking as its audience the armchair traveler as well as the actual traveler; as with guidebooks, descriptions of India are not only for those who like to read about it but for those who intend to visit.

If colonial paradigms are evident in this presentation of “authentic” India, what is particularly pertinent to the forms of Western travel is this focus on authenticity. As Dean MacCannell argues, for European travelers/ tourists to go in search of what is authentic and natural marks their modernity.⁶⁸ Authenticity is not only presented through knowledges that are seen as “native” but also, more specifically, through an introduction by an Englishman that suggests the ideal kinds of colonial subjects that were to be created through English education:

That the author was a Hindoo seemed scarcely open to question. His thoughts and expressions respecting family and social life were evidently moulded by a Hindoo training; whilst his observations and opinions, especially as regards places of pilgrimage and other matters connected with religion, were eminently Hindoo. At the same time however, his thorough mastery of the English language, and his wonderful familiarity with English ideas and turns of thought, which could only have been obtained by an extensive course of English reading, appear to have led some to suspect that after all the real knight-errant might prove to be a European in the disguise of a Hindoo.⁶⁹

What is evident is that where the colonial subjects remain Hindoo is in the areas of family, “social life,” and religion—these are supposedly unchanged by English education as was believed proper for colonial rule. Colonial rule in India presented itself as not interfering with Indian customs. This colonial belief in an unchanging “Indian” family and religious life is taken by the English writer of this introduction, J. Talboys Wheeler, to authorize Chandra to write his book of travels; in contrast, it is the ability of European travelers to perform being “native” that often authorizes their travel narratives.⁷⁰ Where English education has an impact, according to Talboys, also the author of *A History of India*, is in language and a “familiarity” with “English ideas and turns of thought,” none of which are believed to have encroached on family and “social life.” This denial of the effect of colonial education on the private spheres was also utilized by Indian nationalists for a masculinist discourse maintaining that, according to Partha Chatterjee, the home as the spiritual element had been kept sacrosanct from colonial intervention.⁷¹ Thus the colonized, English-educated, reformist male subject, as he appears to the English, is one that uses English language and ideas to express and reveal an unchanging religious and familial social existence. Yet the Indian traveler created by English education was one whose epistemology reflected social conditions altered by colonial rule, but one whose subject positions reflected these changes through new relations to religion, land, caste, class, and family. Authenticity, therefore, is utilized for divergent purposes by both English and Indians who see it as a means to articulate an emerging sense of a “native” identity.

Indian Women and Travel under Colonization

Although by the middle of the nineteenth century caste restrictions had weakened for Hindu men, they had changed in different ways for Indian women as well. Travel for women was undertaken for visiting relatives or for pilgrimages; travel to visit strange and unknown lands or for direct or indirect educational purposes was unknown, particularly since women were not supposed to have any formal education. For instance, when Sasipada Bannerjee proposed to take his wife,

Rajkumari, with him to England in 1871, they were stoned by Hindus of his caste when he went to pay a farewell visit to his ancestral home.⁷² There was less of an outcry when Debendranath Tagore's wife went to England with her two children in 1877. Yet these journeys by women were still considered to be extremely reprehensible and, as Ghulam Mushid points out, they not only changed the women considerably but also had a tremendous impact on many Bengali men.⁷³

Furthermore, by the end of the century, people from many regions of India were getting used to the idea of travel for secular reasons, particularly the desire for professional advancement and employment. The colonial structure of India led to greater mobility for Indians because middle-class Indian men began to pursue career opportunities in the government service all over India, which often necessitated their taking wife and children with them.⁷⁴ This was the case with the Bengali middle class or *Bhadralok*, that is, the professional class who were English-educated. As Meredith Borthwick suggests, one consequence of this mobility was that such women were "brought into direct contact with the larger, impersonal society beyond the normal narrow scope of the *antahpur* [women's part of the house] and its immediate locality."⁷⁵ While this version of "broadening of the horizons" can be seen as the educational aspect of travel, which derived from European travel's participation in scientific and anthropological discourses, it also subverted colonial power by empowering Indian women in many ways. Such empowerment violated the object status and the silence that colonial rule and local patriarchies had imposed on Indian women.

It must be noted, however, that for the purpose of both "Indian" identity and Selfhood, the group of people who took on the idea of travel as a process of becoming modern were predominantly of the upper classes and had been influenced by English education. Yet there were many for whom such a culture of travel was meaningless since they were not concerned with constructing a Self or a history and who were also outside the framework of either anticolonial, reformist, or nationalist discourse. These were migrant labor who from 1807, when slavery ended in the British empire, were taken to various parts of the world as contract labor. Ships' records, as examined by Surendra Bhana, show that by 1836, out of twenty-six thousand laborers to

Mauritius, one thousand were women. Legislation set in 1850 allowed that 25 percent of migrant labor were women. Indian migrant labor were sent to Mauritius, Fiji, West Indies, and Africa. In the second half of the nineteenth century, colonial policies combined with natural disasters had created many landless peasants and the goods from England had taken away the livelihood of many craftsmen and craftswomen. Internal migration and migration abroad came out of these socioeconomic groups and from the need for labor on colonial plantations after the abolition of slavery.⁷⁶ These indentured women became objects in the discourse of nationalism and of colonialism. For the colonizers they were seen, as with migrant women in Fiji, as sexually promiscuous, and the terrible conditions under which they lived were ascribed to their promiscuity rather than to conditions on the plantations. For nationalists in the early part of the century, they became symbols of the bravery and patience ascribed to Indian women.⁷⁷ Questions of authenticity or modernity were not relevant to the lives of the laborers, even though their conditions of existence were impacted by colonial and nationalist agendas.

If conditions for female indentured laborers were dangerous and difficult, since they were exploited both for sexual services and for their labor by both English and the Indian male laborers, conditions for upper-class women to travel within India were not encouraging. Travel within India by rail was often described as fraught with dangers; and loss of modesty or *purdah*, the threat of rape, and caste violations were implicit in this control of Indian women. For instance, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, in writing of the problems of *purdah* among Muslim women, recounts many anecdotes of railway travel.⁷⁸ She tells of women separated on the train from their husbands who cannot mention their names, and of the trouble and difficulty of trying to maintain *purdah* during travel by rail. Here new modes of travel as well as new ways in which women come into contact with strangers in railway stations and trains are seen as incommensurable with the practice of *purdah*. Hossain focuses on *purdah* as a problem, which it most certainly was, rather than on the ways in which modern modes of living were changing conditions for women. Because men's modernization was not seen to be the problem that women's modernization was, railway travel was not the issue for men that it became for women. This discourse of women's problematic insertion into moder-

nity as a problem more threatening than that of men remained powerful even when women became used to accompanying husbands and families to places of employment.⁷⁹

Yet, there were many in the upper classes and castes for whom travel was suggested by English education as a mode of broadening the mind, as an educational experience that taught about other parts of India and was necessary for the formation of the Self, as it was in European culture. One can assume that this was the materialist version of travel that complemented the binary of pilgrimage that would occur for spiritual reasons. The former also gained through incorporating notions of pilgrimage, as it had done in European culture, as is evident even in the titles of narratives such as Richard Burton's *Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Mecca and Al-Madinah*.⁸⁰

This European version of travel fostered, as Borthwick suggests, a notion of India as one country, a consciousness that had not been there before. Such movement and understanding contributed to the belief that women across India had much in common and contributed to a discourse of "Indian womanhood" that erased regional differences and constructed the "Indian woman," a model that Uma Chakravarty argues was taken from the Sanskrit tradition of a "traditional Hindu woman."⁸¹ Bengali women, for instance, became conscious that "their own region was but a small part of a much larger entity."⁸² According to Borthwick, women's lives in one part of the country were compared with those of other parts of India as well as those abroad.⁸³

Most Indian women who traveled abroad in the nineteenth century went either to obtain an education or to accompany their husbands. One instance of a woman who went to further her studies was Kadambari Ganguly, the first Indian woman to become qualified as a medical doctor in 1886, who left her husband and family and went to England in 1893. She returned with qualifications from Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. Jamini Sen became a doctor in 1897 and went to Glasgow and England for further studies. Anandibai Joshi went to the United States in 1883, leaving her husband in India, to obtain a medical degree.

Yet there were some who traveled because they combined many Indian cultural norms with an acceptance of modernity and British values. The Dutt family of Calcutta was one upper-class family that

converted to Christianity and adopted many English customs, including mode of dress, education, and culture. The family went to Europe in 1869, so Govind Chunder Dutt's wife and daughters, Aru and Toru, became the first Bengali women to travel abroad for reasons of pleasure and education. Since they had converted to Christianity, they were not in danger of losing caste by taking a sea voyage.

The Dutt Family and the Gendering of English Education

Though Govind Chunder Dutt's desire to educate his daughters through travel to Europe was the first such effort, in this period the education of Bengali women was not unusual. The first regular girls' school open to all Bengali girls opened in 1819, and schools opened by Christian missionaries followed.⁸⁴ The first secular Bengali school was the Bethune School, which opened in 1847. With the formation of the Brahma Samaj movement by reformist Hindus, other schools were opened and the idea of the education of women took strong hold among the upper-class Bengalis. Many girls, including Aru and Toru Dutt, were educated at home as *zenana* (the women's quarters) education became the mode for those who would not send their girls to school but were wealthy enough to hire tutors. Toru and Aru Dutt were similarly educated at home. Although some Hindu families disregarded the belief that education of women was sinful or that an educated woman was destined to become a widow, there were many Christian converts who were educated, so that a Bengali Christian woman was one of the first two women to sit for the Calcutta University exam in 1878.⁸⁵

While most education for women was given so that they could be good wives and mothers, the Dutt sisters were unusual in that their scholarship and the knowledge of Western literature and culture was pursued for no domestic or professional end. While ideas of wifhood or motherhood as structured within Bengali Bhadrak society may certainly have entered their thoughts, what was most unusual was that English education would become a means for them to be writers. Even though many men were writing and publishing works that were negotiating with English genres and traditions of literature, women writing in English were still unusual. There were women who were

writing, and one estimate tells us that from 1856 to 1910 about 190-odd women authors produced about four hundred works.⁸⁶ Yet writing in English placed Toru Dutt in a community of male writers from whom she was isolated by her gender. For the English, she was among a group of nonnative English writers writing in English for whom appreciation was to be given for their ability to write in English⁸⁷ and who were claimed by the English as part of the empire and as evidence of its benevolence. Edmund Gosse, the English critic responsible in some part for Toru's fame in English circles, said of Toru Dutt, "when the history of the literature of our country comes to be written, there is sure to be a page in it dedicated to this fragile blossom of song."⁸⁸ For Toru to write romances in English such as "Bianca" (1878) and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* (1879)⁸⁹ was quite unprecedented, and this could be one reason why the protagonists of these works were clearly derived from English and French romances. These narratives were also similar to European romances of the time, with chance meetings and misunderstandings, rather than the very different mode of marriage relations belonging to the Bengali middle class or to the oral romance traditions of India. European-style travel, with its possibilities of adventure, meetings, and romances, influenced the choice of genre and style for Toru.

Aru and Toru had developed a love for European literature from their father, and for them, education was the pursuit of what in Arnoldian terms would be called "culture." Such a consequence was not unthinkable after the publication of Macaulay's famous "Minute" on education in 1835, in which he advised the use of English rather than Sanskrit for higher education in colonial India. The need to educate middle- and upper-class Bengalis to assist in trade and administration was also acknowledged by the government in India. Rasamoy Dutt, Toru and Aru's grandfather, was one of the first upper-class Bengalis to become familiar with English culture and literature. He was influential in spreading English education and possessed a large collection of English books. His son, Govind Chunder Dutt, loved English Romantic poetry, and he passed on this love to his daughter, Toru.

Toru's writing and poetry reveals the extent to which the Indian middle-class men in Bengal had participated in this discourse of the Enlightenment through English education. The lineage of English

education at that point in colonial history is male. Thus in a later letter to Miss Martin, a friend she made in England, Toru writes, “Without Papa I should never have known good poetry from bad. . . . He has himself a most discriminating mind, and is an excellent judge of poetry. I wonder what I should have been without my father; nothing enviable or desirable, I know; without Papa we should never have learnt how to appreciate good books and good poetry.”⁹⁰ Govind Chunder is a ubiquitous presence in Toru’s letters, and it is within the Indian patriarchy that Romantic poetry has a place. More men than women had English education, since the education was aimed at creating employees of the English government, so that modernization as it derived from notions of education in Western culture became a patriarchal formation. In contrast to the frequent mention of her father, Toru’s mother is largely absent in Toru’s accounts of her education and studies; in fact, Toru’s mother was not happy initially to be baptized to Christianity and did it out of obedience to her husband, though later she did develop a firm belief in Christianity. She does not figure at all in the narrative of Toru’s English education.

Within the context of colonial modernity, the influence of the Romantics, Govind Chunder Dutt’s favorite poets, translated into a yearning for change that initially was depoliticizing. Badri Raina argues that the influence of the English Romantics on the Young Bengal movement led by Henry Derozio, who taught at one of the first colleges for Bengali upper-class men, Hindu College, was to “produce patterns of behavior that effectively dissolved the possibility of any rigorous enquiry into Bohemia.”⁹¹ While for Raina the influence of the Romantics was mostly on this first generation of English-educated Bengalis, the example of Toru Dutt demonstrates that the modes of thought linked with the English Romantics continued through the nineteenth century in India to become part of a nationalist epistemology of the Self as nation. The politics of the Romantic movement in England, which was a critique of contemporary urban social values and a championing of an idealized working class, became negotiated in very different terms by English-educated Indians. Class conflict was neglected and instead, notions of home and Self, which were also the concerns of English Romantic poetry, were taken up as dominant forms.

Romanticism, Freedom, and Travel

Partha Chatterjee suggests that the nationalist subject that was interpellated by Indian nationalism was complicit with the subject of the European Enlightenment.⁹² More specifically, one could argue that European Romanticism, with its stress on the formation of the Self, both freedom loving and alienated, was responsible for the acceptance of English culture and for the center/periphery division that structured the relations between the colonizers and the colonized. It was also responsible for the resistance to this division, for it led to the formation of the gendered Selves that could rebel against colonialism. Thus the incorporation of the Romantic Self, with its recognitions of the binary structure of freedom and unfreedom, underlay the recognition by Indian women of their lives as unfree and that of Englishwomen as free.

It is important to examine the connection between this Bengali upper-class notion of education, a learned appreciation for Romantic poetry, and the gendering of colonial modernity. This nexus led to a belief in progress for both individual and society and to the need for educating women toward that end. It also inculcated two main ideas among those who were colonized by the English: first, a belief that the Enlightenment notions of freedom and equality, which were claimed by the English as a sign of their superior civilization, were in fact to be found in England, and second, that people in India had become alienated from a Self to which they had to be reconciled. Thus there appears the belief that the freedom found in England in the nineteenth century was to be found in ancient Hindu India. The reason for this alienation was differently conceived by various writers, some blaming a lack of modernity, some colonial rule, and some an unfocused and general notion of degradation. These ideas were not unlinked to colonial discourses but were combined with local and indigenous social and religious articulations, as we have seen in the earlier sections of this chapter. Thus the problem of colonial modernity, deemed “tragic” by Sudipta Kaviraj and a “torturous psycho-cultural situation” by Susie Tharu,⁹³ could be negotiated through Romanticism in terms of alienation.

Yet what was ironic was that for the Romantic poets such as Words-

worth, the abode of freedom and liberty was not England but France, where the revolution had demanded equality, liberty, and fraternity. In the nineteenth century, for the Romantic poets, the hope that England would become like France was shattered, for these poets saw that oppression and the power of the monarchy and the upper classes seemed to have a stranglehold on the common folk. Wordsworth's poem, *The Prelude*, records both this hope and the death of this hope. The nineteenth century in England was a period of tremendous struggle for the rights of the working class and for women to obtain their freedoms and assert their equality to those who ruled them.

Consequently, it was paradoxical that this nonexistent equality was the basis of the claims of the colonizer about the superiority of English civilization and the inferiority of the Indian. As a result of such claims that were used to promulgate imperial rule as a positive development, for many of those upper-class Indians who were influenced by English education, freedom became a value available in England and not available in India. This became the case for many upper-class Indian women especially, women who were, as was often suggested by both English and Indians, "caged" in their homes; home here becomes a cage from which modernity would free women. Thus freedom, in colonial discourses, was interpreted in spatial terms. Amazingly enough, it was not colonialism that was seen as denying liberty, but rather Indian "tradition" that was seen as the problem. Indian women were unfree because women were in purdah in their *homes*; Englishwomen were free because they were not in purdah, could associate with men and women who were not necessarily their kin, and could move about *in the streets*. What was erased in these discourses were the constraints on Englishwomen, the domestic ideologies that regulated their lives, the fact that they did not have the vote, and the terrible conditions under which poor and working-class Englishwomen lived during the industrial age in the nineteenth century. Colonial writers such as James Mill participated in such colonial discourses on women by stating in *History of India*, published in 1817, that "among rude people the women are generally degraded; among civilized people they are exalted."⁹⁴

What was important in Toru's work was the process of utilizing the Romantic aesthetic to fashion a Self through a poetry of landscape of "home" and the past that presents a heritage of freedom. In her work,

the “home” as a cage and the “home” as a place of pastoral refuge are not synchronous but are formulations of particular and connected discourses, the former from ideas of liberty and natural rights that combine with reformist thinking and the latter from the Wordsworthian connection to a landscape of “home.” Susie Tharu, in her essay, “Tracing Savitri’s Pedigree,” correctly identifies the signification of freedom in Dutt’s poetry but does not connect it with the Romantic aesthetic. Such a connection is obvious in the poem “Savitri,” where the narrative of the legend—“far-off primeval days / Fair India’s daughters were not pent / In closed zenanas”—is placed against a backdrop of a quasi-English landscape of thatches, cornfield, and hedgerows. Dutt’s poetics is later pressed into the service of nationalism, of which Toru had no part, for example in the work of Sarojini Naidu. However, Romanticism enables Toru Dutt to see herself as a Self to be brought into existence through poetry. The knowledge created by orientalists such as Max Muller is present here combined with Dutt’s own studies of Sanskrit verses and legends. Her imagination utilizes what Uma Chakravarty argues was an “internalized notion of the ‘golden’ age of the Hindus, and of the highminded and Vedic qualities of Vedic women.”⁹⁵ Chakravarty reveals that many women participated in this belief. Such a Hindu- and Vedic-idealized female freedom is believed available only in ancient India and recuperated in terms of Victorian morality—claiming for Savitri, for instance in Toru’s poem of that name, “the very sexual refinement, the purity, . . . that the British insisted Hindu society lacked.”⁹⁶

Tharu argues that in this colonial context, comparative knowledge led those like Toru Dutt to refute British discourse on the Indian woman as unfree at all periods of history and to suggest that in the past Indian women were free. Thus in Dutt’s poem “Savitri,” which constructs a “free” past for Indian women that is clearly related to Victorian myths of sexual purity, “what has been so efficiently controlled are the very terms in which freedom may be imagined, not just by the writer but also by the reader.”⁹⁷ One may say then, that freedom became hegemonic, in that it incorporated both consent to the forms of knowledge and intervention in its content. This discourse of freedom is examined by Gyan Prakash in relation to the history of bonded labor in India. Prakash argues that history itself, which was part of Enlightenment philosophy, was conceptualized as the move-

alized notion of English life, the patriarchal ideal of which became the norm for many English-educated Indians. Critiques of this discourse, negotiated in two different ways, are present in the travel narratives of Behramji Malabari and Bankimchandra Chatterji, as I have discussed earlier.

There may have been specific reasons why Toru Dutt began to see her home as a “cage” and England as a place of freedom, even though neither Toru nor Aru had experienced the oppressions, such as widowhood or child marriage, that colonial and reformist discourse stated had burdened Indian women’s lives. One reason was that they had become isolated from their extended family. Though the Dutt women became Christians, many of their extended family remained Hindu, so that the Dutt women were quite isolated at home. As Meredith Borthwick notes of Christian converts, “They alienated themselves from their own culture by doing so [i.e., converting], and as a result were left to fraternize mainly with each other or with British missionaries.”⁹⁹ The women in these families may have been even more isolated, for they would not be able to “fraternize,” as Borthwick puts it, with the missionaries. Toru’s mother’s resistance to her husband’s conversion is understandable because she would have been cut off from her circle of women relatives, whereas her husband with his job and his English friends would not have been similarly affected.

Though Padmini Sengupta writes that Toru’s life in Calcutta “was exciting and happy enough, with her parents, her pets, her numerous relations and illustrious friends, her books and her writing,” and that the Bengali and English cultures blended together happily, this may not be an accurate reflection of the conflicts within Toru’s life, short though it was (she died at the age of twenty-one).¹⁰⁰ From her letters and from an understanding of Bengali society of the time, we find out that she and her sister socialized with only some relatives, since those who were Hindus ostracized them not only for their conversion but because they disregarded many Hindu practices. For instance, many Hindu girls were married even before they were twelve, and Toru and Aru’s not being married may have been considered reprehensible. In a letter to Mary Martin, Toru mentions the visit of a cousin who is younger than she (Toru would have been twenty then) and who has a boy of four and has lost her two younger children (78). During this

visit, Toru reports playing with the children rather than conversing with the mother, with whom Toru may have had little in common. The incident indicates the ways in which, being unmarried, Toru did not have much in common with her married peers within her family who had different lives and interests; she played with the children instead. Since most women did not seek companionship with others outside of their homes and families, Toru and Aru saw few outsiders or even many of their relatives. Further, their education and interests in English literature and culture may have isolated them even more and also may have increased their absorption in their education. The feeling of restriction may have been augmented by this isolation.

When they went to Europe in 1869, they became the first Bengali family to visit England under their own impetus and finances. However, they did so not only to see Europe, but having absorbed English ideas on education and literature, also to be educated. On reaching Europe, their first stop was in France. In Nice, Toru and Aru stayed at a French pension, where they learned French. In 1870 they went to England, where they rented a house. Aru and Toru studied with private tutors and took music and singing lessons under a Mrs. Lawless, a “lady of birth,” went to the theater, and had Indian dishes prepared by their cook. The family was involved in absorbing English culture and in social life with those interested in meeting an Indian family, for this was the first time any upper-class Indian women had visited England. They met many English who had Indian connections, and to those who visited them, their presence in England became a sign of the progress of India and of the value of English imperialism. The vice-chancellor of the University of London spoke of Aru and Toru as signs of “social progress” and said to Govind Chunder Dutt that “you have brought such evidence [of progress] with you, that I can hardly believe my own senses” (25–28).

Walking, Mobility, and Freedom

When the family moved to Cambridge, Toru and Aru attended the Higher Lectures for Women. They impressed people with their knowledge of English and of European life and thought. Mary Martin, who would later become Toru’s friend, mentions that they became “a

familiar sight in Cambridge, and the two sisters were often seen walking on the Trumpington Road and elsewhere” (39). It is important to note that they often went for walks, for this was part of the Romantic conjunction of mobility with freedom, and very much a part of the European discourse of travel and the construction of the Self through travel.¹⁰¹ Going for walks had become an important aspect of English life, for it not only enabled the appreciation of nature that had become an integral part of English Romanticism, but also incorporated the movement and mobility that was required for such appreciation. The Romantic incorporation of the Self with nature was also accomplished by walking. As John Elder suggests, walking for Wordsworth was a “process of reconciliation” that provided the “dynamic unity of Wordsworth’s life.”¹⁰² These walking tours were very distinct from the wanderings of the poor vagrants and pedlars who were seen as thieves and a threat to society, and were a way to reconcile the changes brought to the land by the enclosures. Thus, as Anne Wallace argues, Wordsworth’s “peripatetic” was an answer to the changes brought about by the transport revolution and by the enclosures that made travel a form of “moving out into the world but continually returning to recover familiar ground.”¹⁰³ By the middle of the nineteenth century, walking tours were an important pastime, and such tours occurred most often in the Lake District that Wordsworth had written about and publicized as a place where he had learned about nature.

For those who were influenced by English education, walking became an exercise both in connecting with the English landscape in England and with a “native” one that it claimed as the “home,” as the place of return. Govind Chunder Dutt’s favorite poet was Wordsworth, and so we can surmise that the experience of walking was an important element of the English experience through the incorporation of the Romantic traveling Self. Walks were important for Toru and Aru in that they enabled the experience of freedom that seemed denied to them in life in Bengal. Toru’s letters, after her return to Calcutta, reveal the internalization of the discourse of freedom and unfreedom and the way in which this is connected to physical movements and travel outside the home. In one letter she writes, “We want so much to return to England. We miss the free life we led there; here we hardly go out of the limits of our Garden, but Baumaree [their

home outside Calcutta] happily is a pretty big place and we walk round our park as much as we like. If we can fulfill our wishes and return to England, I think we shall probably settle in some quiet country place. The English villages are so pretty” (64). And in another letter: “We see very few people here, except our own relatives and friends—indeed we seldom go out of our own house and garden. Oh, for the walks in Cambridge with you” (69).

What is evident here is the equating of “free life” with England and its walks and social circle. The appreciation of the English country villlage, mentioned in her letter above, also comes from an immersion in English Romantic poetry and paintings, from reading Wordsworth and seeing Constable paintings. City life in Calcutta is limiting but Baugmaree, because it is not in the city but in the country (the incorporation of the city/country divide is also in Romantic terms), where nature is closer and where walks are possible, is seen as less constraining, though the sisters may have been just as isolated as in Calcutta. It is also clear that since walking is not possible in Calcutta, it is not possible to have a Romantic connection to Calcutta, while this connection can occur in Baugmaree.

Free life becomes synonymous not only with mobility but with the ability to have a social life that is not limited to family and relatives, where men and women associate as friends and acquaintances. In comparison, the life of Bengali women is thought to be unfree because social life is mostly with neighbors and relatives, mostly with those of the same sex, and going for walks was not considered beneficial or important. Romantic notions of nature being tied mostly to the English countryside, to areas considered sublime, beautiful, or picturesque, it was not to be expected that the “dirty” streets of Calcutta, as Toru saw them, could be incorporated within the Romantic aesthetic. If the idea of the Picturesque could be used to describe Calcutta, it could only be so for Europeans, and not for those for whom the streets were familiar and were called home.

Furthermore, socioeconomic contexts in Bengal recuperated this binary division between urban and rural. Accounts of nineteenth-century Bengal present the country/city divide in colonial terms; that is, the city, Calcutta, is the place of employment and the country is the escape to “home” from this colonial state. While home as village and city as place of colonial alienation is the response of English-educated

Indians in middle-class Bengal to colonial contexts, those outside of this class also reconceptualized the city as a place where ties of kin were absent since many men could not bring their families to the city. For Bengali Hindu spiritual leaders such as Ramakrishna, the village remains the spiritual home.¹⁰⁴

Yet even while Baugmaree becomes the true “home,” where a limited “freedom” becomes possible, in contrast to Calcutta, where social norms may have been more constraining for women, movement outside Calcutta and to other parts of India is conceptualized in changing ways in this period. Outside of their own communities women were often more lax about cultural norms. For instance, they were less careful about the observance of the rules of purdah while away from their home locations. British notions of travel as a holiday also became incorporated into Bengali middle-class culture. For Bengali women, this holiday implied a change from the restriction of home into a relatively more mobile life. Borthwick mentions one Sarasibala Ray, who saw a trip to Murshidabad as an escape from the normal conventions of the antahpur.¹⁰⁵ Her community is Bengal rather than a larger India, so escape comes from being away from Bengal, which is seen as home.

This discourse of mobility and freedom translates not only into the country/city divide but also is seen as homologous to that of England/Calcutta in Toru Dutt’s writings. This movement is apparent in another letter where Toru writes, “The free air of Europe and the free life there, are things not to be had here. We cannot stir out from our own garden without being stared at, of having a sun-stroke. And the streets are so dirty and narrow, that one feels suffocated in them” (67). Here Toru equates England with freedom and Calcutta with restriction for women. Calcutta is seen as restrictive because the Dutt sisters are anomalous to Bengali society (they wore Western clothes) as well as because of the weather. The colonial discourse of the detrimental effects of the Indian climate is visible here, as is the way in which Toru and Aru see themselves as anomalous in Calcutta but not in London, where they also stood out, as Mary Martin reveals in a letter to Toru. Furthermore, the weather affects them in ways different from other Bengali women who suffered the climate in closed and small rooms in the inner parts of their houses. Toru Dutt complains that the weather prevents her from going outside for walks.

While the rural landscape was being appreciated by a new aesthetics, this aesthetic was one of nostalgia. That is, the rural countryside was celebrated through its opposition to the industrial city, where the problem of alienation from other human beings was to be felt. However, this nostalgia took the form of celebrating nature because it was a reminder of past connections and not for itself or for its importance in providing food and shelter. Instead, and this is visible in Toru's poetry, nature is celebrated because it provides a reminder of moments in which the poet was connected to some human being. Such is the poetry of Wordsworth, and Wordsworthian influences are obvious in Toru's work. In her most celebrated poem, "Our Casuarina Tree," the tree is remembered and celebrated because it reminds the poet of childhood companions with whom she played under the tree and who are now dead:

But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:
Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
For your sakes, shall the tree be ever dear!¹⁰⁶

Such a relationship to nature is most visible in Wordsworth's *Prelude*. Furthermore, the tree enables a poetics of place that constructs a Self as "native" to a place where there is no alienation. Thus the tree becomes a marker of a native place to which the speaker must be reconciled:

And every time the music rose, —before
Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,
Thy form, O Tree, as in my happy prime
I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.

Within the context of colonialism, such a Romantic connection to the Indian countryside becomes extremely significant. Since the English landscape becomes the originary landscape of alienation, English education left some Indians nostalgic for England. However, and this is important for the emergence of nationalism, the elements of which begin to emerge in Toru's work in the last years of her life, it inculcated a consciousness of India, within which the Indian landscape, as it does in "Our Casuarina Tree," also becomes an element

for nostalgia. Under colonialism, this nostalgia enables a feeling of loss for an Indian landscape and nature that was being appreciated with the Romantic aesthetic. Thus the Casuarina tree can become a reminder of the lost past under colonialism, a reading that explains why this poem has been so popular since it was written and why it became a staple in anthologies of Indian poetry after independence.

Not surprisingly, in Toru's letters as in her poems, the landscape of Baugmaree enables the union with nature that was so much a part of the Romantic experience. To extend this appreciation of nature into the context of Bengal was what was remarkable about the poems of Toru Dutt that are even now interesting. While many of her translations of French and Sanskrit poems seem to us now written in tortuous style, the poems about Baugmaree seem more direct—perhaps because they convey the alienation of colonial modernity. Here the alienation that made her write in her diary that she was a “steadfast French woman” is absent.¹⁰⁷ The first paragraph of description of the Casuarina tree, in the poem of that name, which seems also derivative of Romantic poetry, is relieved by the description of the “kokilas.” The use of Bengali words comes as a relief to the Romantic style and much of its pleasure comes from the contrast to that style as well as its incorporation within it. More of the contrast appears in her letters to Mary Martin, especially one in which she describes the fruits of summer: “I wish I could send you a basket of our fruits of the season. It would gladden your eyes! Yellow or vermilion mangoes, red leechies, white jumrools and deep violet ‘jams’” (312). Sarojini Naidu's work later picks up this exotic landscape and its details to present a more nationalist notion of place as India. In Toru's poetry, her reconciliation with a “native” land cannot but be deemed “exotic” in the context of poetry written in English. If Toru sees herself as a “native” then she has to take on the “native's” task of representing herself and her land to the English, as she does in her letters to Mary Martin. In doing so, then, being “native” becomes a way of articulating a Self in colonial terms, even though these terms also exceed the intention for which they are created.

Romantic alienation, evident in Toru's relation to the Bengali countryside, is also evident in her representation of other Indians. Thus in Toru's letters to Mary Martin, we see her use of “native” to refer to “Bengalis” and “Indians.” The European term “native” seems to

come from readings of English literature, English (published by the English) and Indian newspapers in English, and other texts that were mainly for and by the English. Mary Martin took her to task for the use of this term and Toru acknowledges her error. However, she does use it again, revealing the extent to which colonial modernity is experienced as alienation. Gauri Viswanathan has pointed out that this phenomenon is evident in other Indian writers such as Nobinchunder Dass, who also refers to other Indians as “natives.” Viswanathan sees this as the “identification of the subject with the ruler,” that recreated the subject and reveals the “culminating moment of affirmation, the endorsement of the Macaulayan dream.”¹⁰⁸ Yet more than the fulfilling of the colonial dream, such use of the term “native” suggests the excess that recasts colonized subjects. Identifying herself and other Indians as “natives” enables a conceptualizing of herself as one sympathetic to those suffering from the injustices of British rule. In her later letters to Mary Martin, Toru mentions incidents of British injustice, revealing an altering set of concerns about colonial rule. The colonized Romantic Self also becomes an oppositional one when Toru begins to learn Sanskrit and to protest about the practices and injustices of colonial rule during the last two years of her life.

It is of course difficult to write much about a woman who died at an early age, as did Toru. On the one hand, one cannot be too critical about the work of such a young woman, for no doubt she was changing and would have changed had she lived. On the other hand, the body of work she left behind has had a considerable influence; she is often taken as the first Indian woman to inaugurate what has been termed Indo-English literature. Thus we need to pay considerable attention to her. Furthermore, it is also important to see her as an Indian woman who accomplished something that few Indians or Europeans thought an Indian woman could do, and therefore to trace out the circumstances that made it possible for her to accomplish what she did. In the aftermath of Macaulay’s “Minute” on Indian education in 1835, promoting English education among the Indian people, Toru Dutt became one of the few Indian women to take advantage of this education when only Bengali men were doing so.

The effect of colonial modernity was the gendered acceptance of colonial discourses by some Indians who had come to see themselves

as belonging to an ancient culture that had degenerated from former glories while England had progressed. To accept this idea was to designate “native” customs as a problem and thus to accept one’s own belonging to this unmodern and constraining culture. What the boundaries of this culture and community were changed from person to person; the process of delineating and articulating this community was also part of this emerging sense of Self constructed through a Romantic epistemology.

Many among the Bengali Bhadrakok accepted these ideas of modernity as progress; Toru Dutt and her family reveal the acceptance of such discourses. Some Indians, such as Pandita Ramabai, did not; she accepted English education in certain ways and rejected it in others. Ramabai did not see her travel to England as the attainment of freedom that lay within English culture. She had traveled all over India for much of her life so that spatial mobility did not have a special significance. The effect of the European culture of travel on these women not educated by English education forms the topic of my next chapter.