Introduction: English Language in the Colonies—Cultures and Reception:

Locating Indigenous Writing in English in Bengal

Customarily, the narrative of Indian Writing in English is perceived to have been inaugurated in the 1930s. This idea has been built on the erasure of the nineteenth century lineage of Indian Writing in English which has been given little literary, historical or even archival value. While the poetry written in English by Indians in the nineteenth century has received some critical attention, fiction and drama have been dismissingly treated as “crude”, “exotic”, and “rootless”, finding place solely in literary histories such as those by K. R. S. Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (1973), M. K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature* (1982), S. K. Das, *A History of Indian Literature 1800-1910* (1991), and more recently A. K. Mehrotra (ed.), *An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English* (2003), and these literary histories too trace the “true” beginnings of Indian Writing in English to the trio of R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand, all of whose works were first published in the 1930s.

Such has been the spate of critical amnesia in this field that Meenakshi Mukherjee could write in 1971 in her book *The Twice Born Fiction* that most of the “early Indo-Anglian experiments in literature were done in verse”. She further states that, “the novel, the genre of imaginative literature, which gives artistic form to the relationship of man and society, was conspicuously absent until the 1920s” (17-18).

Later, in *The Perishable Empire*, she admits her oversight, admitting that “like most people in the field, I used to believe that until the 1930s English writing in India was a freak phenomenon and that the sporadic books were to be regarded merely as historical curiosities.” Mukherjee goes on to say that “the reasons for this selective
amnesia and the asymmetrical destinies of the English and Indian language novels of the
colonial period need to be explored” (7-8).

This kind of a forgetting the colonial past is not a solo phenomenon and has
been posited by postcolonial theorists. Leela Gandhi observes that the “anti-colonial and
independent nation-States” that have emerged after colonialism desire to “forget” their
“colonial past”. Gandhi says that this “will to forget” is prompted by “a variety of
cultural and political motivations”, and this “postcolonial amnesia” is chiefly
“symptomatic of the urge for historical self-invention or the need to make a new start—
to erase memories of colonial subordination” (L. Gandhi, 4).

If the “will to forget” is the psychological reality behind the neglect of the
nineteenth century texts, it is then a psychological necessity today to undertake the task
of revisiting, re-membering, and, crucially, interrogating the texts of the colonial past.
The forgotten archive of the colonial encounter narrates manifold chronicles of
contestation. The therapeutic retrieval of India’s textual colonial past is also absolutely
necessary today because “the colonial archive preserves those versions of knowledge
and agency that were produced in response to the particular pressures of the colonial
encounter” (L. Gandhi, 5). India’s colonial past was the scene of intense discursive and
conceptual activity, characterized by a profusion of thought and writing about the
cultural and political identities of the Indians, not only by the colonisers, but also by the
Indians themselves, both in the indigenous languages as well as in English.4

This study is an attempt, to fill the gap, at least partly, of critical study of the
body of English writings (prose fiction and drama) produced in nineteenth century
(post)colonial Bengal which, as I hope to be able to show, was neither “crude”, nor
“exotic”, nor “rootless”, but intimately connected with the contemporary Indian experience and often rooted deeply in Indian tradition and culture. In this study I look at nineteenth century Indian Writing in English in Bengal (a product of the colonial encounter, particularly colonial education, and the Bengal-Britain cultural interface) as postcolonial voices that were engaged in the act of representation, and of interrogating colonialism much before postcolonialism took shape as a theoretical practice. The first imperative of this study would be to examine how far this literature enclosed within it the inescapable multi-tensions of the cultural negotiation, of which it was the product. The second, equally important task would be to see how far this literature was implicated in the process of indigenous identity formation and in the formulation of *desh-bodh*.

The use, abuse and the relevance of English in the (post)colonial societies has always been a widely discussed and debated matter. It is, in current academic circles an extensively theorized subject as well. Postcolonial studies consistently stress that one of the main characteristics of colonial domination is control over language, which becomes the medium through which “a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’, and ‘reality’ become established” (Ashcroft et al, 7). Thus postcolonial studies emphasize that in the colonised countries, English literature was “invented” as a hegemonic discourse to create, sustain and communicate the myth of British cultural hegemony.

In *Orientalism* (1978), the founding text of postcolonialism, Edward Said posited that the West had not only dominated the East politically but also that Western scholars appropriated the exploration and interpretation of the Orient’s languages, history and culture for themselves. They “wrote” Asia’s past and constructed its modern identities
from a perspective that takes Europe as the norm, from which the “exotic”, “inscrutable” Orient deviates. Said further contended that Western writings about the Orient depicted it as an irrational, weak, feminised “Other”, contrasted with the rational, strong, masculine West, a contrast he suggests derives from the need to create “difference” between West and East that can be attributed to immutable “essences” in the Oriental make-up.

In her well-known thesis *Masks of Conquest*, Gauri Viswanathan argued that in the colonial period the literary text functioned as a mirror of the ideal Englishman and thereby became a mask of exploitation that masked/disguised the material activities of the colonizing British government. Viswanathan draws upon Antonio Gramsci’s theory on the associations of culture and power, that cultural domination works by consent and can (and often does) precede conquest by force. Gramsci posits that intellectual and physical power operate parallel to each other:

...the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership”... It seems clear... that there can and indeed must be hegemonic activity even before the rise to power, and that one should not count only on the material force which power gives in order to exercise an effective leadership (Hoare and Smith 57).

Postcolonial studies thus accentuate that cultural conquest/colonization accompanies, indeed preludes, military/political colonization. My contention in this thesis is that while it is true that Western cultural colonization operated parallel to the political and military subordination of its colonies, in India this cultural colonization was not uncontested, and that the results of this cultural imposition were not always in cue.
with the English expectations. Very strong voices, voices that we may today label as postcolonial, are to be found in the writings by Indians in the nineteenth century, both in the vernacular languages as well as in the acquired language of the colonisers, English. However, unlike the classic postcolonial example of Shakespeare's Caliban—the colonised Indian/Bengali did not learn the coloniser's language just to go on to curse his master. The response was much more complex and assorted, subtle and sustained. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) Fanon argues that because of colonialism and the cultural hegemony that goes with colonialism, native intellectuals respond by rejecting Western culture and embracing pre-colonial history and a way of life. To escape from the hegemony of the Western culture, Fanon argues that the native intellectual feels the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots.

Fanon conjectures that the native intellectual goes through three different phases to arrive at this level. The first phase is when the native intellectual assimilates the culture of the occupying power and all his or her sources of inspiration are European. The second phase is characterised by the disturbance of the native intellectual. In this phase the native intellectual decides to remember who and what he is. The third phase Fanon calls a fighting phase. In this phase the native intellectual turns himself to be an awakener of the people: "...hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature" (179).

Fanon's hypothesis may be relevant in the African context, but it does not hold true for the "native intellectuals" of all colonies. Thus we see that the nineteenth century Western educated colonised Indian/ Bengali's response/strategy was to use the new language for his own purposes—to participate in the ongoing discourses and to produce a
vast body of discursive, polemical and literary texts. Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) is the one of the first, but by no means the sole representative, of this group of, to use Fanon’s terminology, native intellectuals.

Rammohan was not only participating in the discourses of his day, and carrying on a dialogue with the dominant ideology (the government policy of education for instance) he was also, by the act of translation, foregrounding his rich indigenous heritage to meet the challenges of a foreign culture. He was not only translating indigenous religious texts for the purposes of “reform” (campaigning against sati for example), but he was also critiquing “sacrosanct” texts of his master coloniser’s religion (The Precepts of Jesus).9 In A. K. Mehrotra’s (Ed.) An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English, Bruce Robertson has noted three stages in Rammohan Ray’s use of the English language. Robertson says that Rammohan’s focus “changed from petition to polemic and finally exclusively to public instruction”. He further observes that for Rammohan, English was “not only the language of command but also that of documentation, of histories, of narrative, theological disputation and personal reflection”. Rammohan argued that “no one owns a language”, “not the Brahmins, not the English”. He believed that all the evils of his society “could be traced to the Brahmin assumption that their interpretation of sacred literature, of the Sanatana Dharma, could be locked away in the Sanskrit language” (36).

There are, however, complexities and perplexities around the concept of how a colonised country can reclaim or reconstitute its identity in the coloniser’s language and genres. Raja Rao’s oft quoted foreword to Kanthapura (1938) not only articulates this
"anxiety of Indianness" of all Indian authors writing in English, but also spells out the strategy devised by Rao for negotiating the contesting claims of English language and Indian culture. A major factor that is responsible for this urgency of establishing one's Indianness when writing in English is the fact that English is not just any language—it was the language of our colonial masters, and thus, related to issues of history, power, politics, identity and social consciousness.

For many authors such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) (both of whom gave up writing in English and opted for Bengali), dilemma over their choice of the language of creative writing was particularly problematical. Madhusudan, who aimed to become an "English" poet, and wrote exclusively in English in his early years, celebrated his "return" to his mother tongue in the famous Bangabhasha sonnet in which he discovers the gems and the possibilities of his native language, and which is today mandatory reading for every Bengali school child (Sonnet 3, "Chaturdashpadi Kabitabali", Madhusudan Rachanabali 159). The same Madhusudan had exclaimed in his earlier days:

It is the Mission of the Anglo-Saxon, to renovate, to regenerate, to Christianize the Hindu... I acknowledge to you, and I need not blush to do so—that I love the language of the Anglo Saxon. Yes—love the language—the glorious language... My imagination visions forth before me the language of the Anglo Saxon in all its radiant beauty, and I feel silenced and abashed... Give me, I say, the beautiful language of the Anglo-Saxon" ("The Anglo Saxon and the Hindu", in Amit Chaudhuri (Ed.) The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature 6-7).
The educationist J.E.D. Bethune had suggested to Madhusudan's school friend Gour Dass Bysack (to whom Madhusudan wrote a large number of letters in English where he freely articulated his thoughts and feelings on a wide range of matters), that Madhusudan might employ his time to a better advantage than in writing poetry...he could render far greater service to his country and have a better chance of achieving a lasting reputation for himself, if he will employ the taste and talents, which he has cultivated by the study of English, in improving the standard and adding to the stock of the poems of his own language ... (Mehrotra 51).

This presages Bankim's similar counsel to Romesh Chunder Dutt.

Bankim's solitary English novel, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), was regarded as a false start both by the author himself as well as by later critics and literary historians, and while continuing to write discursive prose in English, Bankim never again ventured to use English for creative purposes. In a paper read before the Bengal Social Science Association on 28 February 1870, Bankim made the following comments:

We preach in English and harangue in English and write in English, completely forgetful that the great masses, whom it is absolutely necessary to move in order to carry out any great project of social reform, remain stone deaf to all our eloquence.

But in the same paper he had also said that,

...as long as the higher education continues to have English for its medium, as long as English literature and English science continue to
maintain their present immeasurable superiority, these will form the sources of intellectual cultivation to the more educated classes.

To Bankim the particular importance of Bengali language was that it was the language of the masses:

To Bengali literature must continue to be assigned the subordinate function of being the literature for the people of Bengal, and it is as yet hardly capable of occupying even that subordinate, but extremely important, position (Amit Chaudhuri 13-14).

Bankim's compartmentalization of the roles of the two languages largely explains why he chose to write exclusively in Bengali when writing literature, and in English as well as in Bengali when writing discursive prose.

Tagore (1861-1941) who would later receive the Nobel Prize for his English "translation" of the Gitanjali, has recorded his complex responses to the English language in his autobiography Jiban Smriti (1911; translated into English as My Reminiscences). To quote Amit Chaudhuri,

Tagore...hated English lessons intensely. In his memoirs, Tagore writes of his earliest encounters with that language... His memory goes back to a song he had heard learnt in class, which was there transformed into the childhood pidgin of a Bengali boy. Capturing all the bafflement, agony and energy of cultural confusion and intermingling, Tagore transcribes the verse that inhabited the boy's consciousness thus: Kallokee pullokee singilli mellaling mellaling mellaling.
After much thought I have been able to guess at the original of a part of it. Of what words *kallokee* is the transformation still baffles me. The rest I think was:

...full of glee, singing merrily, merrily, merrily!

Tagore goes on to inform the reader, in subsequent pages, of the boredom and terror he felt, as a boy, learning English; describes the trepidation with which he and his cousins waited, in rainy weather, to see if the English teacher Aghore Babu’s black umbrella would appear, as it invariably did; and says several hard things about the language itself. A quality not generally associated today with English—risibility—was obvious to Tagore and his fellow pupils: How well I do remember the day our tutor tried to impress on us the attractiveness of the English language. With this object he recited to us with great unction some lines—prose or poetry we could not tell—out of an English book. It had a most unlooked for effect on us. We laughed so immoderately that he dismissed us for the evening. (Amit Chaudhuri, “The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore”, in Mehrotra 104).

But in the same *Jiban Smriti* he also records his later positive reception of British English literature: “At that time English literature provided us with more intoxication than nourishment. Our literary gods were Shakespeare, Milton and Byron” (Meenakshi Mukherjee’s translation) (Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire* 6).

In *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927), Tagore’s contemporary, M. K. Gandhi (1869-1948) records a similar childhood dislike for English,
English became the medium of instruction in most subjects from the fourth standard. I found myself completely at sea. Geometry was a new subject in which I was not particularly strong, and the English medium made it still more difficult for me...It is now my opinion that in all Indian curriculum of higher education there should be a place for Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and English, besides of course the vernacular. This big list need not frighten anyone, if our education were more systematic, and the boys free from the burden of having to learn their subjects through a foreign medium, I am sure, learning all these languages would not be an irksome task, but a pleasure (Gandhi 15-17).

On the contrary, for Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), who learned English as his first language (he did not learn Bengali and Sanskrit till he became an Indian Civil Services probationer at Cambridge), English always remained his “natural” if not his “native” language.

Discourse and dilemma, debate and disagreement over the use of English are not confined to English educated Indians but rather a shared experienced for all writers in the postcolonial situation. In his collection of essays, Decolonising The Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature (1986), the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o explains the promise he made when his novel Petals of Blood was published in 1977, to stop writing in English and to write from that point onwards in either Gikuyu, his first language, or Kiswahili, the Kenyan national language.\textsuperscript{13} Ngugi’s disapproval of English bears affinity with Bankim’s ideas as expressed in the Bengal Social Science Association Paper quoted above.
On the other hand, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe has a different appreciation of the English issue. In “English and the African Writer” (1965) Achebe argues strongly for a “national” as opposed to what he calls an “ethnic” literature. For Achebe the imposition of English, however arbitrary, has made it possible for Africans to talk to one another. If, as he puts it, “the British failed to give the Africans a song, they at least gave them a tongue, for sighing”. He acknowledges that English is “a world language which history has forced down our throats”, but is convinced that to insist that “any true African literature must be written in African languages… would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity and frustration”. He continues,

What I do see is a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world language. So my answer to the question, can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing? is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask: can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker? I should say, I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use”. (Transition: A Journal of the Arts, Culture and Society, vol.4, no. 18, 27-30).

In other words, for Achebe (as for Rammohan, Raja Rao and many others), his use of English entails “altering”, “making new”, a language which he has claimed as his own. This appropriation of the language of the coloniser is what constitutes Achebe’s strength.
The Thai writer Pira Sudham, who always writes in English, regards English as a psychotropic medicine: “[Pira Sudham] is hailed as a voice from the grassroots of Thailand but he writes in English and refuses to have his books translated to Thai — although this would immediately widen his national audience… “Language is a product of the mind,” Pira explains, and says that “The Thai language … cripples the mind. As does the Thai tradition and culture, which teaches children not to see, not to hear and not to speak… it is…an apparatus to maim the mind for life. To me, writing in English is like using to catch up with more able bodied people (Italics mine) (Report by James Moy in Asia Magazine, Nov 17-19, 1995). This is analogous to the argument put forward by Rammohan in his 1823 letter to Lord Amherst, pleading for the establishment of an English education:

A Sanskrit School… can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the society… but as the improvement of the native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy with other useful sciences (Italics mine) (17-18).

Rammohan was but echoing the public demand for western education with the English language as the medium of instruction.

In The Empire Writes Back, Bill Ashcroft et al suggest that when the “natives” start writing in the coloniser’s language, “for instance the large body of poetry and prose produced in the nineteenth century by the English educated Indian upper class or African
"missionary literature"", the very act of their writing in the language of the dominant culture signifies that “they have temporarily or permanently entered a specific and privileged class endowed with the language, education, and leisure necessary to produce such works”. Ashcroft finds it “characteristic” of these early post-colonial texts that the “potential for subversion” in these texts “cannot be fully realized… [these] texts … come into being within the constraints of a discourse and the institutional practice of a patronage system which limits and undercuts their assertion of a different perspective” (Ashcroft et al 5-6).

It is rather naïve to draw such conclusions without properly examining postcolonial literatures of different countries. India cannot, for the sake of theoretical convenience, be clubbed together with other postcolonial nations (nor can nineteenth century Indian writing in English be clubbed with African missionary literature). When the British came to India, India had already a highly developed indigenous tradition and culture. A rich cultural and literary heritage already existed in the country. Thus the English culture did not come in to fill any void. If anything, it had a catalytic effect in arousing the dormant energy/potential of Indian literary abilities.14

The positive reception, of certain Western ideas, and the fact that the early Indian writers were influenced by their Western counterparts, and wrote in English, and not in the indigenous languages, should not be immediately read as “cultural colonization”. A radical postcolonial vision on culture ought not to be opposed to diverse cultures (including Western cultures) and their influences thereof. If anything, the use of the English language by these authors is tongue in cheek, because the English language was being used to articulate indigenous identities and to voice social and
national consciousnesses. English language and the ideas it brought with it acted as a mirror which helped the native intellectual to read him/her self.

The emergence of English writing in nineteenth century Bengal raises vital questions: Is this body of writing emblematic of a global literature articulated through hybrid forms that cannot be slotted into the "colony-metropolis binary" or does belong to the canon of Indian nationalist literature? In what way does this literature expand our notions of nineteenth century aesthetic practices? To which aesthetic tradition are we to trace this body of writing— to the indigenous Sanskrit literary tradition, to the British English literary school, or to the then emerging postcolonial tradition of Indian Writing in English? How does it illuminate the emergence of colonial and postcolonial modernity?

The following chapters try to find answers to the above questions. They illustrate that the authors writing in English in nineteenth century were not "imperial agents" paralysed by the choice of their medium of creative writing. Rather, they were all involved, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, in the creation of an indigenous identity and desh-bodh and in representing the self and the predicament of the colonised self against colonial power. Texts such as Kylas Chunder Dutt’s *A Journal of forty-eight hours of the year 1945*, (Published in Calcutta Literary Gazette, 6 June, 1835) Shoshee Dutt’s *The Republic of Orissa: Annals from the pages of the Twentieth Century* (published in Saturday Evening Hurkura, 25 May, 1845), have the bold theme of rebellion against the British rule, years before the first major rebellion against the British actually happened.
Shoshee Dutt’s *Shunker: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny of 1857* (published in *Bengaliana*, 1892), interrogates British historiography of the ‘mutiny’ of 1857, and *The Young Zemindar: His Erratic Wanderings and Eventual Return: Being a Record of Life, Manners, and Events in Bengal of from Forty to Fifty Years ago* (1885) takes the reader on a tour of India under the guidance of a mysterious *sanyasi* who inspires the people of India to unitedly fight the *ferangis* irrespective of their religion. However, the texts that documented the effort of Indians to assert themselves and build an indigenous identity did not always do so through the theme of rebellion against the colonial power. There are many texts that attempted to bring to fore the indigenous identity by depicting local life and tradition, manners and customs, totems and taboos, beliefs and superstitions. The endeavour was to project themselves as the inheritors of a rich heritage and folk culture. In this category belong works such as *Bengal Peasant Life* by Lal Behari Day and *Sarala and Hingana* (first published as a book in 1896) by Kshetrapal Chakravarty. Again, texts like *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864) by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Sarala and Hingana* by Kshetrapal Chakravarty, Toru Dutt’s *Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden* (serialized in the *Bengal Magazine* between 1877-78) are important for their representations of family and gender, while Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *Reminiscences of a Kerani’s Life* (published in *Bengaliana*, 1892) displays strong self-determination and subverts the stereotypical notions about the *kerani*.

It is a pertinent project to study the themes, conventions, and the use of the English language in nineteenth century Indian writing in English. This literature is often (though not always) self-consciously a literature of otherness and resistance, and is written out of the specific local experience. It assumes great significance as the voice
of the native intelligentsia—postcolonial voices engaged in the formulation of an indigenous identity and *desh-bodh* through a unique use of indigenous mythology, heritage, history, and contemporary reality, representing indigenous tradition, culture and milieu, disrupting the attempt of homogenizing the entire colonised empire through a common hegemonic discourse.
Notes and References:


2 Interestingly, one of the earliest critical works in this field was written in Bengali: Pallab Sengupta’s *Ingreji Sahitye Bangali Lekhak (A Study of Creative English Writings by Bengali Authors in the Nineteenth Century)* (2001). Some other recent works in this area are Govind Prasad Sharma’s *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction*, though it is not a very analytical work, Subhendu Mund’s edition of Toru Dutt’s *Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden* and *Rise of the Indian Novel in English: Its Birth and Development*, K. S. Ramamurti’s *Rise of the Indian Novel in English*, and more recently Meenakshi Mukherjee’s edition of *Rajmohan’s Wife*. Makarand Paranjape has recently published an interesting reading of *Rajmohan’s Wife*. Alex Tickell’s edition of Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *Bengaliana*, and his publication of Kylas Dutt’s *Journal of Forty Eight Hours of the Year 1945* is a great step forward in Nineteenth Century Indian Writing in English (fiction) studies. See bibliography for details.

3 What is today generally known as “Indian Writing in English” has had a chequered history nomenclature. It has been variously known as “Angle Indian Literature”, “Indo-Anglian Literature”, “Indo-English Literature”, “Indian English Literature”, and so forth.

4 It is widely held by scholars and literary historians that the rise and growth of indigenous literatures in nineteenth century India largely owes itself to the introduction of the English education. Amit Chaudhuri echoes the same idea when he says: “… the rise of the Bengali language, the subsequent Bengal and Indian Renaissance, and the creation, in Bengali, of the first modern Indian literature were related directly to the fact Bengali became a respectable, and then the principle, medium of expression among the educated Bengali middle classes, who had, before, in the early days of education, preferred to write in
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English. The story of other vernaculars and their increasingly significant literatures is more or less similar...” (Picador xxi).

5 In this thesis I am focusing exclusively on Bengal because Indian writing in English began in Bengal, which was the first to experience the consequences of the Indo-British political, social, religious and cultural encounters.

6 All the culture affected by the colonial process from the moment of colonization to the present day is termed postcolonial. The term postcolonial means to suggest both resistance to the colonial and also that the colonial and its discourses have shaped and continue to shape cultures whose revolutions have overthrown formal ties to their former colonial rulers. Writers and critics are troubled by the periodicity the term postcolonial evokes since it is arguable that the colonial period has been followed by a ‘post’—in the sense of an after—colonial one. However, the term postcolonial refers not to a simple periodization but rather to a methodological revisionism. Thus the implied chronological separation between colonialism and its aftermath is not really valid. It is true that postcolonial as a concept enters critical discourse in its current meanings in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but both the practice and the theory of postcolonial resistance go back much further. In fact the postcolonial condition is inaugurated with the onset rather than with the end of the colonial occupation. Figures like M.K.Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, the Carribean “negritude” writers presaged some of the positions now labeled postcolonial.

7 Desh-bodh is an utterly untranslatable term, because while bodh in Bangla corresponds to the English consciousness/perception, the exact nuances of the term desh is difficult, almost impossible, to convey. The terms that come nearest are ‘motherland’/‘homeland’, ‘nation’ and ‘country’, but while ‘nation’, with all its political baggage, is not ‘country’, or ‘country’ is not ‘motherland’, desh is at the same time ‘motherland’/‘homeland’, ‘nation’ and ‘country’. Desh relates to the notion of psychological and emotional belonging.

8 Rosinka Chaudhuri observes that this impression is so persistent that, ‘almost any book on literary studies in nineteenth century India or any reference to English-educated Indian brings Macaulay’s unsavoury role in the institution of English education in India into focus, from Gauri Viswanathan’s serious analysis in her academic study Masks of Conquests to a Salman Rushdie character who sarcastically quotes an entire paragraph from the infamous Minute in The Moors Last Sigh’ (Gentlemen Poets 13).
In the next chapter I have touched upon the variety, scope and volume of Rammohan’s English writings.

"The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not... Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it. After language the next problem is of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression..." (Rao, Kanthapura 5).

The paraphrase of the sonnet is as follows: O Bengal, your treasury is full of various gems. Ignoring them I foolishly traveled abroad, infatuated with the wealth of others. I spent long unhappy days without food or sleep striving to achieve what was not worth striving for. Forgetting the lotus garden I trudged through moss and slime. Then kula-lakshmi appeared in my dream and said: "when your mother's store is full of treasure, why do you roam around like a beggar? Go back, ignorant one, go home." I obeyed her and discovered in time the wealth of my mother tongue, replete with precious jewels. (Meenakshi Mukherjee's translation, Mukherjee Perishable Empire 25).

I have used the nineteenth century spellings for the proper names in my thesis.

Bankim influenced Romesh Chunder Dutt, one of the earliest members of the Indian Civil Service and author of The Economic History of India (1902 and 1904), to write in Bengali: "When Romeshchandra... expressed his admiration and envy for Bankimchandra's Bangla writing, lamenting his own loss of mother tongue, caused by his education in England, he was reprimanded by the elder writer. Bankim urged him to write in Bangla even if he was not formally trained in the language, insisting that whatever educated young men like him spoke could become the standard language when written down. He cited the negative examples of Govin Chunder Dutt and Soshee Chunder Dutt from Govin's own family, whose talents, Bankim rightly predicted, would go unrecognized because they had chosen to write in English. Romeshchandra took this advice and went on to write six novels in Bangla (two of which he himself..."
translated into English as *The Slave Girl of Agra* and *The Lake of Palms* to gain considerable fame as a Bangla novelist. He continued to write discursive and scholarly prose in English..." (Mukherjee: 200: 11).

Ngugi was influenced by Frantz Fanon. *Black Skins White Masks* (1952) represents Fanon’s personal experience in a white world and elaborates the ways in which the coloniser/colonised relationship is normalized as psychology. For Fanon, being colonised by a language has larger implications for one’s consciousness: “To speak... means to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (17-18). In an attempt to escape the association of blackness with evil, the black man dons a white mask, or thinks of himself as a universal subject, participating in a society that advocates an equality supposedly abstracted from personal appearance. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) Fanon develops the Manichean perspective implicit in *Black Skins White Masks*. To overcome the binary system in which black is bad, and white is good, Fanon argues that an entirely new world must come into being. Fanon thus advocates a total rejection of the coloniser’s culture, including his language.

14 See Chapter One for historian Tapan Raychaudhuri’s thesis on the matter.

16 In general terms, the ‘other’ is anyone who is separate from one’s self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is ‘normal’ and in locating one’s own place in the world. The colonised subject is characterized as ‘other’ through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the coloniser and the colonised and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world-view. There are, however, complexities to the concepts of otherness and resistance. Otherness includes doubleness, both identity and difference, so that every other, every different than and excluded by is dialectically created and includes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture. Again, the concept of resistance as subversion, or opposition, or mimicry is a two-edged sword. Resistance always inscribes the resisted into the texture of the resisting and carries with it or can carry with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality, etc, which primarily, are Eurocentric ideas.