APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Bankim Chandra on Craft of Novels — Direct and Indirect Utterances:

There are some features related to novels that require special notice. Broadly speaking, they are of three types: Bankim Chandra's observations on novels, his obtrusive remarks within the body of some of his novels, and some of their preparatory and concluding chapters. In Chap. IV, I have called the second element extra-structural; the other two elements, also, belong to the same category.

Not much scope is left to write on the first point, as Bankim was one of the most uncommitted of authors about novels in general and his own in particular. His successors like Rabindranath and Saratchandra, were immensely more vocal; in essays, letters, stray notes, they touched on many aspects of fictional literature. The opportunity for such utterances became perhaps riper as fiction itself became a maturer subject of discussion. Bankim's time was too early for that.

Except notices of publications, he left no record in this regard in the pages of the Yagnadarsan. Almost all conceivable topics are dealt with in the essays, but not a one about novels in particular. When he spoke about Bengali literature in an English essay, or in the course of commenting upon an author, his point was mainly matter and diction. Technique was as yet too insignificant a subject to merit a larger treatment.
But the occasional prefaces and forewards to the novels proper, contain very little of it. Reference has been made in Chap V to the introduction to Indira, which relates to elongation from its original anecdotal condition. I have stressed that Bankim was rightly convinced of the fictional character of little Indira (1st ed.). It is said that he had a second plan of revision, perhaps on more logical and realistic lines. The preface to Rashmi has a direct bearing on craft. Certain extraordinary things expressed in the novel, have been sought to be justified in the context of a first person narrative. The extent of validity of the author's claim has been fully discussed in Chap. V.

The preface to Raisingha is the most important of the series. It contains a bold but accurate enunciation of the art of the historical novelist, as different from that of the pure historian. Bankim placed proper emphasis on the need for recreating history to make it fit for fictional treatment. As a corollary, he discarded, as harmful to the novelist, blind subservience to traditional history. But he used materials with great care and caution: he was true to the kindred points of history and fiction. In Chap. IX, sufficient indication has been given to this side of the author's craft.

The use of the historical element in Raisingha has been made in accordance with his declared policy as stated in the Introduction.
The second aspect of the obtrusive author, seems to be an offshoot of the general technique of Bankim Chandra. He detailed his narratives with great confidence, and sometimes projected his personality at appropriate emotional turns. Thus it is that occur the famous purple passages that more often than not enhance the tone of the story and give the design a peculiar dignity and grandeur. In Chap. IV, reference has been made to the suggestiveness and magnitude of these passages and their effectiveness in relation to the design.

The nature of Bankim's craftsmanship may be best appreciated by a comparative study of this art in some foreign novelists. There is the extreme type of the obtrusive author like Samuel Butler, overloading his novels with *obiter dicta* selected from a note-book. Practically to the same category belongs George Meredith; as Dr. Mendilow notes in *Time and the Novel*, he was for ever "worrying and badgering the creatures of his imagination" by adding commentaries upon their conduct. This
technique was fatal to dramatic tension and illusion. Conventional comments of an omniscient author, as found in Scott, Thackeray, Trollope, etc., form yet a third variety. A typical example from Vanity Fair of Thackeray will show how completely the reader's illusion of participating in the time and place of the action, is shattered: *"the present writer claimed the privilege of peeping into Miss Amelia Sedley's bedroom."

It is very rarely that Bankim uses this Victorian device. One occurs in Durgeshandini:

The Bankim technique of the obtrusive author is generally different and fundamentally of a different nature. He does not obtrude himself qua author into the body of the novel in the popular fashion of the omniscient novelist; he comes into the picture in a very subtle way almost by the force of circumstances. On such occasions, the narrative has been enriched by the incorporation of substantial materials. An objective mind works behind these passages which spread a wider influence upon the entire design by the very solid character of their pattern. The other varieties of author comments appear to be trifles in comparison. In Chap. IV, brief reference has been made to this craft which is peculiar to Bankim Chandra.

Perhaps the earliest and one of the best of the types is to be found in the first novel which also contains the stock example quoted above. The passage on time (Chap. III) is an
original Bankim specimen: in the rather unrefined design of the novel, it shines like a bright jewel. Its literary value seems to be on a par with its technical beauty. As a foreshortening device, it is an excellent piece, and the weight of its context is reflected on the design of the novel.

Of the two passages in Vishavriksha, one is on the baneful effect of the poison-tree, another, an apostrophe to the hubble-bubble. The first one has been considered in Chap. IV. As a deviation from the main theme, the second one has a different character. The plot does not develop by its addition, but the weight of its matter and its general reaction upon the main narrative, give the story a significance and an emotional sequence which are more logical and significant than the laws of inevitability.

The passage on the cuckoo in Krishnokantir Villa has a dramatic force like the one on the passage of time in Durgeshendini. This point has been elaborated in Chap. IV. A reversion to the technique of the hubble-bubble occurs in Devi Chaudhurani, in which there is an impassioned address to the indigenous bamboo club, the lāthi:
Evidently, this extract has more dramatic value than the one on the bubble-bubble. It seems to be coherent with the pattern of the novel and its apparent irrelevancy is more than neutralised by the emotional tone that it adds to the narrative. There is another excerpt on the two hills of Khandagiri and Udaigiri in *Sitāraṃ* which is of this type. But it seems to possess a more artistic touch and realistic force, and has practically become a part of the main pattern. Only the skilful craft of Bankim Chandra could absorb such magnificent passages into the body of the design. The matter has been dealt with in detail in Chap. VI.

The third type of utterances has a limited use in Bankim’s novels. Perhaps the boldest of them is the brief inset on devotion in *Ānanda Math*, which sets forth in clear outline the character of the novel itself. Its tone fits in with the elevated nature of the design of the book. Only in the two other thematic novels of Bankim Chandra might such an extra-structural piece have been accommodated with propriety. This sense of structure is an important factor in his craft of fiction. In the same book the author preferred to enunciate certain principles about the role of the wife and the then political situation; these were inserted on the title page of the first edition. Both the introductory chapter and the title-page statements have the same point and force. It has been possible for Bankim’s design alone to incorporate and assimilate these ornamental passages.
The preliminary three chapters in Chandrasekhar are dramatic and objective, the appendix in Raîsincha is purely personal. In Chap. IV (Chandrasekhar) adequate treatment has been made of the force and significance of the first item. Those of the second, the remarks on the subject-matter of Raîsincha, are to be justified in the context of the social forces of the age of Bankim. It is apparent such a passage has no claim whatsoever from the point of view of harmony of the whole plot.