Chapter 3
Tradition versus Modernity

The opening chapter of Bhattacharya's novel Music for Mohini presents a typical urban domestic scene--two upper middle class teenage siblings having great fun exchanging odd names for a hobby, pulling each other's leg, teasing each other, and getting caught and punished by a parent. Mohini Ray, seventeen, and Heeralal Ray, fourteen, are the children of Professor Ray. They have lost their mother early in life and have since been brought up by their maternal grandmother, known as Old Mother (Bhattacharya, Music for Mohini, Ch.1).\(^1\)

Old Mother is known for her old world spirit. She still calls her forty-seven-year-old son "childling" and rarely calls him by his name. When her son playfully suggests that they should use bean oil since it is cheaper than electric current, Old Mother readily agrees with him. She thinks that electricity is obtained by trapping lightning and fears that the lightning may one day break free and blow the powerhouse sky high. She objects to her grand daughter Mohini recording her songs on discs for sale, so that any person can buy it. To her it is as if the buyer buys part of Mohini herself. She is ashamed of the fact Mohini's name is printed on
the disc for every eye to feel. She objects to rogues, roughs, scamps, vagabonds and cutthroats in the bazaars mouthing Mohini's name and making her sing at their bidding. She regards it as a disgrace to the family and wants it to be stopped. If it is not possible, she asks to be sent to the Holy City so that she may not take one more mouthful of her son's food or even drink one drop of water in that house (Music 15-16).

Mohini's father is a modern to whom it is a matter of pride that his daughter's songs are recorded, that she has made a name for herself in the world of music, that she has a contract to sing for All-India Radio once a week and that, as her father, he will soon be a celebrity. He points out that girls of the most respectable houses and ladies of the highest social status have put their songs on gramophone records. At the same time, however, he cannot bear the thought of Old Mother going away to Benares, the city of Siva, where thousands of Hindu widows live in self-chosen exile, dedicated to grim austerity and so he chooses to let Old Mother have her own way in the house. However, he draws the line firmly where Mohini is concerned and clashes with Old Mother, though they have reached a fair adjustment on many points of orthodox living (Music 15-16).
Years earlier, when Mohini's father decided to send her to an English convent school, Old Mother sternly opposed him. She wanted Mohini to be trained at home, learning classical Sanskrit, "the language of the gods, the precious vase that holds the essence of true knowledge and wisdom." But Mohini's father stood his ground, determined to mould Mohini in "a modern way, which was his way." He shrugged aside Old Mother's usual threat to go away to the Holy City. Old Mother had to accept defeat, though she did not speak to him for weeks and moved about the house like a pale ghost, sighing and always near tears (Music 16-17).

Old Mother chides Mohini's father for putting her to shame by pulling her ear, forgetting that she is of age and no longer a child. Old Mother reminds him that Mohini is seventeen and yet her horoscope has not been made (Music 17-18). Mohini's father, the modern man, mocks Old Mother's orthodox ideas:

"Horoscope, Mother? In this age of microscope, who needs a horoscope? Eight stellar beings controlling the life story of every man, woman and child! Everything worked out in advance. And a good astrologer sees it all in the position of the stars at your birth hour. Our ancestors who devised this amazing joke on
their pigheaded progeny—all credit to them!"
He chuckled and shook his head, "No we aren't as benighted as all that, are we, Mother?"

(Music 18)

Old Mother's response is to look well at the slim gold chain on his neck with its pendant amulet, intended to shield him from the Evil Eye and remember how he firmly refused to wear it until she wielded her usual weapon of a threat to go to the Holy City (Music 18). Ultimately, however, Mohini's father agrees to look for a groom for his daughter (Music 19).

Like a typical modern girl, Mohini regards love as the light, the savour of life. She is proud of having a few admirers: Ananda Babu, her brother's tutor; Somir, the tall and handsome elder brother of her school friend Reba, a programme director at the Calcutta station of All-India Radio; Arun, who cycles past her house hands folded over his chest to impress her; and, Vishnu, a football player who has befriended her brother so that he could come to her house. Mohini appreciates the admirer of her neighbour Khuki sending her a love letter via a kite in flight. She is surprised and impressed when Reba says that she gets a love letter almost everyday. She observes that even their cook-woman's fourteen-year-old daughter Bindu has an admirer in the snake-charmer, who tries to use Heeralal as his messenger
to Hindu. Mohini sighs that she has no real lover of her own (Music 19-25).

Old Mother, despite her orthodox views, enjoys even English films but foregoes the pleasure if the day happens to coincide with the fortnightly fast of **Ekadashi**, eleventh-night-of-moon, which all Hindu widows must observe. Father, however, is loath to deny the children their week-end treat because of Old Mother's fasting. During the show Old Mother usually guards the innocence of her grandchildren, whenever a love scene unfit for children flashes on the screen, by asking Heeralal to shut his eyes tight and by drawing the free end of Mohini's sari over her head. But Heeralal simply trains himself to see clearly through half-closed eyes. During the evening study on week days, Old Mother sets an image of Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, before them and lights a long, slow-burning stick of incense instructing them to study till the stick burns itself out entirely before having their meal. The children simply stare at the ash of the incense and they blow on it to make it burn more quickly (Music 30-31).

One Sunday evening, Father drives the children to the cinema and goes off to keep on engagement, telling them to see their fill, since he does not approve of
Old Mother's stern injunction regarding love scenes. During the interval Somir calls out to Mohini from a box seat behind her. Since he has a pass for two, he invites her to share the box. Heeralal allows her to go to the box and she is excited at sitting alone in a cinema house with a handsome youth. When Somir takes her hand in the dark, her heart beats rapidly. But she is nervous and Somir lets go of her hand and lights a cigarette. After that Mohini feels miserable (Music 32-34).

One day, finding herself alone, Mohini hunts in Father's desk and finds an envelope containing several clippings from the 'Matrimonial' section of an English newspaper. She reads them and also the advertisement published by her father for a suitable match for her. However, she is disturbed by the fact that Father has given his name and address and not a box number. She fears that her school friends will laugh at her because the girls read the matrimonial column regularly (Music 34-35).

Old Mother wants Heeralal to wear an amulet round his neck against the Evil Eye, since he is so skinny. Heeralal is horrified. Already he has gone without a haircut for six months because his hair has been dedicated to the Daughter of the Mountains. He fears that his schoolmates will laugh if he wears an amulet.
whose string will be visible on his neck. Old Mother is horrified at the way children mock a charm. Heeralal appeals by gestures to Mohini for help. Mohini comes to his rescue by taking the amulet from Old Mother and tying it round Heeralal's upper arm (Music 38-39).

Mohini has to go through the traditional bride-showing ceremony. One old-fashioned party of elders comes without the groom-to-be. One of the elders asks her tricky questions. Mohini gives half-answers or keeps silent. The head of the party wants more than the dowry offered because Mohini is not well versed in Ancient Culture. Old Mother is infuriated by their hypocrisy. The second party behaves vulgarly, putting Mohini to shame by their inspection, till Father chases them away (Music 41-42).

Mohini speaks bitterly to Old Mother about the shameful ceremony of bride-showing, suggesting a monthly bride fair or a swayamvara, as in ancient times. A third groom arrives a month later without elders, but with his friends. The party approves of Mohini, but Old Mother disapproves of them because they have no tradition, no true culture, but are apes of Westernism. Father is impatient of Old Mother's "antiquated outlooks," but Old Mother browbeats him by her usual threat. Mohini too is angry with Old Mother for her antiquated outlook,
fixed ideas, and, iron prejudice against modernism.
Though she wishes to set her will against Old Mother's she is speechless and helpless because of "the taboo of countless centuries" (Music 42-45).

One day Mohini befriends a bangle seller and a fortune-teller who come to her doorstep and serve her. The bangle-seller mentions a groom, Jayadev, Master of Achala, whose mother insists on the bride having all the eight lakshanas on her palm, as Mohini has. Old Mother is favourably impressed. Father too regards it as a good match because he has heard of the brilliant scholar and has even seen him once or twice at the university.

However he has reservations about sending Mohini to live in a village among old-world folk, where she may be unhappy, bored to death. Old Mother produces a copy of Maya, bearing Jayadev's picture and speaks in favour of the match, but Father refuses to budge, though he looks at Jayadev's picture in the magazine and appreciates it (Music 48-52).

After a few days of silence between mother and son, Old Mother asks him for the copy of Maya. It is not to be found. The children are asked. Father catches a secret communication between his children and perceives that the magazine is with Mohini. He has a talk with Mohini and learns that she likes the groom Jayadev. Father consents to the marriage (Music 52-54).
The groom's elder sister, married and living in Calcutta, comes and sees the bride. The horoscopes, when compared, show the rare one-in-ten-thousand conjunction of a "royal union." The groom is content with the photo of the bride and does not need to see her. The pre-nuptial blessing-ritual is held at his sister's house in Calcutta. Father attends it but not Old Mother, since custom does not let her visit her relatives-to-be (Music 5*0).

Mohini is pleased with her groom, particularly because he has not insisted on a formal bride-showing. She is eager to be lovely enough for her groom, like a typical Hindu bride. She enquires after make-up techniques. The success of the bangle-seller makes Father appreciate the value of old customs and conventions, which "seem to suit our mental climate." Father's only worry is about whether the impatient Mohini will take to the new rhythm of things by adapting herself. Old Mother asserts that they have done their best, but wonders what music the gods have in store for Mohini (Music 54-56).

On the eve of the wedding, the day of the bridal bath, Old Mother insists that the bride may not have a bite of food until the turmeric ceremony is done. Father scorns such foolish practice, but Old Mother insists on conforming to time-honoured ways. Heeralal, however, smuggles fried fish to Mohini when Old Mother is engaged.
elsewhere. But Mohini declines the fish, repeating what Old Mother has told her. Moreover, she has to take into account the fact that the groom is also fasting. But Heeralal tempts her and Mohini gives in (Music 57-60).

During the ceremony of the auspicious glance, Mohini, like a typical Hindu maid, prays only for her groom's approval, his contentment, asking nothing in return. Jayadev sees her and is fascinated instantly. More ceremonies follow, strictly in accordance with tradition and custom (Music 63).

The wedding is over and the bride is to leave for her new home. Custom prescribes that a near relative and a maid accompany the bride. So Heeralal and the cook-woman are to go with Mohini. Conforming to custom, the cook-woman, who has tended Mohini from infancy, demands a silver waist-chain from Jayadev and receives money for making an advance to the craftsman. The farewell ritual begins. It is quite emotional. Old Mother advises Mohini in time-honoured fashion. Heeralal has been asked to keep persons and things of ill omen out of the bride's view. Father sees them off at the railway station, "misery straining beneath his eyelids" (Music 63-67).

During the journey to Behula, Jayadev tells Mohini that the Big House will make demands on its mistress which she will find unreasonable and that she will have
to meet some of them with patience and a spirit of give-and-take, while other foolish demands must be resisted. Mohini is determined to be unafraid. Her husband would never have to be ashamed of her. She would remake her ideas and her outlook. At the end of the long journey, the new bride of the Big House enters her village in a palki (palanquin), according to age-old practice (Music 78-80).

A welcome ceremony, known as baran rites, is held to welcome the new bride to the Big House. Her mother-in-law, being a widow, keeps away from the rites. After the ceremony, Mohini sees her mother-in-law on the threshold of the kitchen. Bending her knees, Mohini bows low and takes the dust from the feet of the mother, who welcomes her warmly. She invites Mohini and Heeralal to the noon meal (Music 82-83).

During the meal, Mohini and Heeralal are stunned to see the mother eating with her left hand. A woman explains to them that she has been doing so for the past two decades, ever since she dedicated her right hand to Diva at the Holy City for the health of her son who was then sickly, "a Hindu mother's true sacrifice for her son," which may be mocked at in cities "where women are insincere and tough." Jayadev's sister Rooplekha comes to the rescue of the wincing Mohini by saying that some village women are also insincere (Music 84-85).
Jayadev frets Mohini's heart by asking after one Sudha, who is absent (Music 84-86).

After the meal the mother leads Mohini to the prayer room and asks her to seek her deceased father-in-law's blessings by prostrating before his sandals. Mohini kneels before the wooden sandals on a throne of gold. The women then make Mohini show them her jewels and her clothes. Rooplekha decries this as an absurd old practice. The women describe Jayadev as "a shy, simple ascetic" and as a "bookworm." All the women recall their bridal nights. Mohini absorbs all their talk. They mention Sudha, fair, shapely, beautiful, but known as Saturn's Eyesore. When Mohini enquires why she is so called she is told that there is a story to it, but the story has to wait, because the women are summoned to work (Music 86-89).

Jayadev is keen that Mohini should know the true value of marriage, the deeper meaning of their new relationship, know herself, know the Maitreyi in her. So he tells her, "'Bonds interminable hold us in sacred relation, more sacred than any on earth.'" He feels that his words sound hollow, but adds, "'A common synonym for the wife is partner in faith: She shares her husband's thoughts and ideals just as he shares hers. They have one spiritual income between them.'"
Mohini is a little disturbed by the timing of such talk. Her face shows the power of her passion. Jayadev puts out the lights and touches her with enchantment and she holds her breath and trembles (Music 90-91).

Mohini and Rooplekha become friends. Rooplekha tells how, as a village-bred but city-wed bride, she suffered shame and mockery in her husband's house until she made up her mind and struggled to give up her ideas, her customs and her manners and adopt theirs, giving up her old modesty and becoming a non-vegetarian for her husband's sake since she could not let him down and had to make him happy. She advises Mohini that, being city-bred and village-wed, she will have to adjust the other way round to prevent "ugly talk and scornful behaviour." Mohini says that it would be better to keep the city and the village apart, but Rooplekha argues that they serve a purpose (Music 92-93). Rooplekha says:

"Shall I answer you? We who're so wed, serve some real purpose. It is as though we made a bridge between two banks of a river. We connect culture with culture, Mohini, our old Eastern way of life with the new semi-Western outlook. The city absorbs a little of the 'barbaric' village, the village absorbs a
little of the 'West-polluted' city. Both
change, unaware. They are less angry with
each other. This is more urgent today than
ever before. Our new India must rest on this
foundation." (Music 93-94)

Rooplekha helps Mohini to understand the Big House:

"My mother is the usual orthodox Hindu woman,
only she is more intense than others, and all
her faith is pinned to family tradition. No
deviation for her, not one inch. Stern-willed,
though tender at heart, she is a simple soul,
with singleness of purpose, a one-eyed mind.
She exists for the Big House; she wouldn't
have it changed the least way. Even the age-
grey walls are not to be lime-washed because
Mother loves to see them absorb time. Father's
wooden sandals are an object of worship, you've
seen that. And Jayadev? He has no heart for
such worship; he has no liking for ritual of
any kind, but out of his love for Mother, he
bends to her eccentric will. A strange mixture
of the old and the new is he, my brother. Self-
divided, as it were, if you get me. We've
known him as a scholar in the philosophies of
East and West, but of late he seems to have
become more, much more... the New Learning holds him as much as the old, so that his heart is set on a synthesis, as he calls it. He would have a harmony of cultures for India. He reads ancient thought in today's light. He seeks in ancient thought sanction for the West-influenced ideals of our time. And he finds it. He is a man with a message for his country..." (Music 94)

Nooplekha adds that Jayadev is an idealist but that the Mother is afraid of what she regards as her son's heresy and that he will destroy tradition and ruin the Big House (Music 95).

Rooplekha explains Mohini's role in the Big House:

"You, Mohini. You'll have to be patient with the Big House. Mother is old-world, exacting, but do not fail to see her point of view—and her heart. Jayadev is utterly lonely, idealists always are. He will need all your compassion. And you, Mohini, you'll be lonely too. A house with some twenty rooms, a dozen servants. But I don's mean that. Lonely within... Heart-breaking business, to be the wife of a philosopher and writer! I see all that, being a woman. You know..."
Yes, except for Mother's persistence, which grew fiercer as the days passed, Jayadev wouldn't have married." (Music 95)

Mohini, recalling the past night with Jayadev, wonders how she will be lonely with Jayadev. She assures Hooplekha that the Big House will be happy (Music 95).

Mohini gradually pieces together the story of Sudha, Saturn's Eyesore. Her great-uncle, learning the rudiments of astrology, foretold the evil shadow of Saturn on his own life. As if in fulfilment of his prognostication, several tragedies struck him and his kith and kin. Sudha, the orphaned daughter of his nephew who died prematurely, came to live with him. When she grew into a comely maiden, and was about to be married, her great-uncle cast her horoscope and saw the influence of Saturn on her being. So the wedding was stopped and Sudha earned the nickname of Saturn's Eyesore. She could not get married at all even after Saturn moved away from her life. It was rumoured that she was involved in a secret liaison with a blacksmith youth from a neighbouring village though she was a Brahmin. A deputation of wrathful elders went to the Big House. The Mother commanded that Sudha should not be slandered. She took it upon herself to divert Sudha's attention to knowledge so as to absorb her feelings, the wakened unfulfilled passions of her womanhood.
Budha's affair with the blacksmith ended. Her soul was rescued (Music 95-98).

Heeralal perceives that countryfolk are no fools. He tells them about radio, airplane, elevators, ships, museum, zoo, skyscrapers, underground railway, submarine, x-ray, television and of a fictitious scientist darting moonward in a sealed rocket on a mission of discovery. At the same time he finds out that the village too has its glories, like the smithy, peasants climbing palm trees with ease and skill, and, lads tricking crows into snares, fastening a loop of red thread to their necks and setting them free. He sees a lad drinking goat's milk straight from the goat's teat and he is persuaded to do likewise. The lads take him for a swim. When he confesses that he cannot swim, instead of laughing at him, as urban boys would do, the country lads teach him to swim (Music 96-100).

The Mother tells Mohini the story of her bedstead, both good and bad. She hints at her desire to see a heir to the family soon. She leads Mohini to the family's iron safe and hands over its keys to Mohini, saying that her own trusteeship is ended. She explains that the original contents of the safe were partly depleted in order to feed the poor during the recent famine. She shows Mohini a parchment tracing the genealogy of
Jayadev for seventeen generations spread over a thousand years. Mohini is aware of an unbroken Brahmin commitment to the old values of meditation, self-discipline, faith, charity, renunciation and truthfulness in an unshakable pattern of conduct. Mohini perceives that the three keys have pledged her to a trusteeship of that formula of faith—the family tradition (Music 100-02).

When Mohini's round of evening duties is done and she sits on the balcony, Bindu's mother complains about Mohini working in the kitchen though there are so many servants in the house. Mohini explains that the mistress of the kitchen is the mistress of the house. She appreciates the Mother's eagerness to teach her cooking. Bindu's mother sees that Mohini has outgrown her aversion to the kitchen and to cooking. The woman complains about the absence of fish from the diet. Mohini explains that the Big House is strictly vegetarian with even eggs being prohibited. Bindu's mother also criticises the imposition of the evening puja on a young girl like Mohini who should "eat and sing, and laugh," but Mohini reprimands her for it (Music 103-04).

Mohini is perplexed and worried because Jayadev calls her Maitreyi. With her ignorance, Mohini has no ambitions to be Maitreyi, the wife and inspiration of Yagnavalkya, the greatest thinker of his age, who strove for immortality. She hates serious study for which she
has no patience. What she needs is feeling. She is not curious about East-West culture patterns. But Jayadev, ignorant of the soul of a woman, nourishes his odd illusion and seeks in his wife a source of inspiration to reach his goal. Startled by Mohini's ignorance, Jayadev tries to teach her, starting with lessons in Sanskrit, but Mohini finds them tiresome (Music 104-05).

Mohini feels imprisoned in the Big House wherein life is too different from her mind-picture of it, making it even harder to bear. However, for the sake of her husband, she is determined to absorb new ways of thought and habit, cultivate new interests, and discharge her duties and responsibilities as mistress of the Big House (Music 105-06).

Jayadev has been known to read late into the night. But now he has lost that "centred, rapt, disciplined way of life." Even in the puja room, while he goes through the motions of the rituals, his mind is filled with thoughts of Mohini. He regards it as a measure of their spiritual union. He appreciates her talent for singing. But she is only saddened because propriety forbids her to sing normally and aloud. Jayadev wonders if she is unhappy or lonely. She denies both, deceiving him. He is relieved that, contrary to his original fears, Mohini does not pine for the denied pleasures of the city but
is adaptable and deep. Leading her to bed, Jayadev calls upon his ancestors from the family tree to bless her. His thinking of the family tree and the Big House even in their intimate moments oppresses Mohini and hinders her pleasure in him (Music 106-08).

Mohini learns from the barber woman of a sad event. One day, the barber woman, while ministering to Sudha, told her the latest village news. The seventy-year-old money-lender of the village, whose third wife died two months ago, wished to marry Paru, whose father was neck-deep in debt. The village lads, known as ruffians, refused to permit the union. They threatened to kidnap the money-lender on the day of the marriage and duck him in the village pond. The money-lender rushed to the Big House in panic. But Jayadev refused to interfere in the affair. He even seemed pleased with the ruffians. The village leaders were shocked and ashamed. While gossipping in this fashion, the barber woman observed that Sudha's palm had most of the eight luck signs. She recalled that the Mother was looking for a girl with all the eight signs for the young master of the Big House. So she took Sudha with her to the Big House to show her hand to the Mother. Sudha showed her hand to the Mother, filled with hopes of becoming the mistress of the Big House. The mother saw the signs but she also recalled the stigma of a lover attached to Sudha. Though
The stigma was false, no maid touched by such a stigma could be mistress of the Big House. So the Mother lied that one of the signs was wanting. Sudha collapsed on the floor and sobbed bitterly, hysterically. Jayadev married a city girl and Sudha sank more and more into herself (Music 110-15).

A month after the wedding the Mother makes known her deep longing for a heir. She gives Mohini a pile of cotton cloth and a reel of thread and asks her to stitch thick little quilts for the male heir to be born. The Mother thinks of the family name being carried on and of sacrificial water being poured at the funeral anniversary of the departed. Seeing Mohini engaged in making quilts, Meera, who has become a close friend of Mohini's, understands the Mother's urgency. She then reveals to Mohini that, according to Jayadev's horoscope, he will not live long after his twenty-eighth year unless he gets a child before that. Mohini is elated because it means that the means of saving her husband would come out of her. However, the next moment, she laughs at herself and her elation, because she has no faith in astrology (Music 115-17).

Mohini's life is full with her duties and responsibilities. However, she longs to know what her husband is really like inside. She has to be content to
bears his story from the Mother. She learns from her that once the river Meghmala flooded and, as the Mother's husband fought to rescue his stricken people, he was swept away. The Mother was then on a pilgrimage with her baby girl. Upon her return, she felt that God had sent her away in order to save the heir of the family who was then in her womb. When Jayadev was born, the Mother set about making him worthy of his father's name. He went to the university for his studies, but returned to the village to continue the family tradition (Music 118-22).

Once crisis tested the real man in Jayadev. During the War, when profiteers created the artificial famine of Bengal, Jayadev commanded the peasants of Behula not to sell their rice. The agents of the rich merchants first pleaded with him and then threatened him with ruin. But Jayadev revealed a steel core. When the great famine devastated all Bengal, Behula alone was safe, until the starving peasantry of neighbouring villages began to pour into it in endless streams. Jayadev rose to his full height then. He called for volunteer workers and built a thousand palm-leaf shacks for the destitutes in the open meadow. He gave free meals to whoever needed them. When his barns were empty, he took out all his money in the banks and bought grain from the sharks in cities. He sold many family jewels. The
Mother gave him the full strength of her spirit. She agreed that the Big House must stand by the people in their hour of need because, otherwise it would perish by the weight of its inner defeat. When the famine passed, the Big House had become a legend (Music 122-23).

Jayadev is actually filled with his bride. The ascetic in him is thrilled, overwhelmed, helpless and lost. But he cannot afford to be distracted. He cannot deviate from his single-minded aim of reorienting India's national life on a new social basis. He has overgrown his initial delusions regarding Mohini. He has stopped calling her Maitreyi and giving her Sanskrit lessons. His apparent coldness and neglect bewilder and hurt Mohini. Jayadev realises that his work and the Big House stand between him and Mohini and that she feels oppressed. He begs her to give him her sympathy and to help him till his work is done. In that instant all her hurt is forgotten. Mohini merely wants a reassurance that he loves her and that Sudha means nothing to him, particularly because the barber woman has warned her of the poison of the trampled snake Sudha (Music 123-27).

Jayadev reveals to Mohini his plan to make Behula a model village socially, because political freedom is worth little without social uplift. It will call for
a struggle. If they win, as he believes he will, Behula will be an example for all Bengal. Mohini has a part to play in this difficult undertaking. He is thrilled by the prospect of Mohini becoming his Maitreyi in the dynamic path of action. She will have to teach the women of Behula to read and write and the first elements of knowledge because there is no hope until ignorance is eradicated. Mohini consents but feels incompetent. Jayadev reveals that they will be assisted by Harindra, a young surgeon in Calcutta, whose thinking resembles his own. Harindra is the son of the old Kabiraj who practises the Indian system of medicine in its antique purity and is an iron pillar of orthodoxy. A bold, selfless youth, Harindra has true fire in him and proposes to set up a dispensary in the village. Now that Jayadev has revealed himself to her, Mohini perceives that she has no right to drag him away or trample on his plans and dreams and claim him for herself alone when he belongs to the people. She cannot deny him the help he needs. She decides to play her part in the task ahead, and be his true partner "in feeling, in faith, and in dream" (Music 127-29).

In Calcutta, misled by the cook-woman's prejudiced tales, Old Mother is worried if they have erred in sending Mohini to live in a village. Father is also
worried but he reassures the Old Mother, on the strength of Jayadev's ideas expressed in an article and Mohini's letters that she has nothing to complain about. The Old Mother asks Father to write to Jayadev and ask the young couple to come to Shibpur for a month-long visit (Music 129-30).

Mohini gradually fits herself to the rural design, ruthlessly guided by the Mother. She subdues her sprightliness and her quick girlish laugh. She replaces her cheap trinkets by gold ornaments. She sheds gay-coloured silk for plain cotton woven in village handlooms. Unlike Old Mother, who has compromised with modernity, the Mother of the Big House is stern like iron and passionately resists change. She prohibits the use of powder and rogue, sleeveless blouse, tight blouse, braided hair and the like. She is ever for the old practices (Music 130-31).

One summer afternoon Mohini goes into the garden, climbs up a jamrul tree and sits on a smooth branch, dangling her legs. The freedom fills her with contentment. She recalls how the previous evening the Mother objected to her singing modern songs to the accompaniment of her dilruba and advised her to sing religious songs instead and how, angered by such restriction, she threw her dilruba against the wall and wrecked it. After some time she realized that she had given herself to an
ancient house and its age-old traditions and that her reward would be dignity, authority, trust. However she muses sadly once in a while:

Dignity, authority, trust would please a woman, but as a setting for her life, not as the main theme. Never could they satisfy her. All the same, one passed through an inner change, an expansion. An easy carefree girlhood with its lack of form, with its odd concerts and fancies, was slowly forgotten, tucked away somewhere in memory. One gave in more and more to cast-iron codes, to an old-world design for living. (Music, 132)

Mohini is oppressed by jealousy of Sudha who has returned to the Big House as Jayadev's student. Her faith in her husband is unshaken, but she hates to see Sudha touch the scholar in him. She cannot protest to her husband, because he is only doing his duty and particularly because she herself has failed him in this respect (Music 133).

One source of joy for Mohini is Ranjan, a boy of eight, a motherless relative of Jayadev's. Ranjan passes into Mohini's care. He hangs around Mohini, eager to help with household tasks. She enjoys telling him stories. As she tells Ranjan stories, a secret
dream of motherhood comes upon her (Music 134-38).

Jayadev believes that thought has to be related to action and abstraction resolved in human terms, the philosopher stepping out of his temple of silence and leading his people across the valley of conflict and discord to end social slaveries, whose roots are deep in economic bondage. Jayadev has reached a decision, as shown in his support for the youth of the village in the case of the money-lender (Music 138-39).

Harindra's life is a fine emblem of conflict. His aged father has been practising old style medicine in Behula for a half-century. Harindra, after studying Western style medicine, sets up practice in Behula. Harindra admits the virtues of the Ayurveda system, but points to the efficacy of the Western method of producing medicines, even Ayurveda ones and administering them. Harindra is openly supported by the young master of the Big House and the young ruffians in conducting his "social operation." They have vowed to clean ponds and grounds and fill up shallow pools of water so that the mosquito menace can be contained. The Mother objects to their "demanding" it, but Jayadev defends it because the youth were laughed at when they begged, pleaded and prayed. Jayadev supports the youth's demand that if an old man wants to remarry, he should marry a widow, for, after all, the ancient books approve such a union.
The youth want the age of marriage to be raised to sixteen for girls and Jayadev supports it as sensible. He also supports the youth's programme to end untouchability because mankind has a new charter of equal rights for all, though the Harijans themselves oppose the move as a trick to deprive them of their special privileges (Music 139-43).

When Harindra's own mother is seriously ill, his father refuses permission for Harindra to treat her. His mother also is against it. However, when all hope is lost, Harindra's father permits him to treat her and she is saved in the nick of time, much to the joy of the youth and Jayadev (Music 143-44).

One day the Mother gives a diamond nose-stud to Mohini and asks her to bore her left nostril and wear it. It is a family heirloom and is associated with the birth of a hair. Mohini tells the mother that her nose was dedicated to Kali in her childhood when she caught cold too often and had breathing trouble and that, therefore, the nose may never be decked. The Mother understands and approves (Music 144-45).

Mohini's reaction to such cramping by the Big House is to escape to the garden, to her favourite tree-perch. When the Mother objects to it, Mohini simply says that she likes it (Music 145-46). The result is symbolic,
no i\textit{attacharya comments:}

In so many matters of real significance she had yielded, denying herself, absorbing the heavy strain into her spirit. And this one symbolic act of revolt cancelled out all the submission. Upon her perch she was beyond the reach of the Big House, she was above the restraints of everyday living. She was integrated, and free, free to read, think, feel and dream. (\textit{Music} 146)

One day Ranjan seeks Mohini's permission to bring some friends of his into the garden. Mohini permits them to come, much to the chagrin of the gate-man. She allows them to take all the fruit they want from the garden. She asks them to come every afternoon. At Ranjan's suggestion, it is proposed that the youngsters play cricket in the garden. The next afternoon she is amazed to see Jayadev up in her tree-perch. He seeks a loan of the high seat and says that he loves it. Mohini understands the significance of his action: "By this gesture Jayadev, her husband, gave sanction to her act of revolt, so that it was no revolt, merely a whim, an odd fancy, no more." He reports that her young friends came, saw him and backed out giggling. He is sure they were laughing at him. Mohini explains that
his undignified action, never done in the past one thousand years of the orthodox history of the Big House, signifies danger. Jayadev, unfettered by his inheritance, says that what is needed is danger since there has been enough of the safety of second-hand thoughts (Music 146-48).

Mohini tells Jayadev that the boys want to play cricket after school hours. Jayadev approves of the idea. He offers to buy a cricket set and says that Harindra is the right man to teach the boys. He even proposes cricket as a game in the school, alongside country games. Jayadev says that Harindra has gone to the city and will bring a surprise gift for her. He has already been bringing her light fiction to make her evenings less tedious. That evening a new dilruba lies on her table. Jayadev also tells her that he has asked Harindra to bring a gramophone and records of her own songs. Mohini is excited and impatient to get them. Jayadev is joyous in her joy (Music 148-50).

Meera tells Mohini that the women of Behula have decided to follow her example and sit in trees whenever they are beset by problems—a good sanctuary. Mohini leads her into the garden and plays one of her records on the gramaphone. The news spreads and the womenfolk come crowding to the garden to hear her songs (Music 150). Their reaction is significant:
A worthy mistress of Behula. None like her in the hundred villages around. Their own, their joy, their joy and pride, and she was so human, without any of the plumage of the rich, whose distant look bespoke that they trud the blue pathways of the sky! (Music 150)

The gramophone provides a way of communion with the women and Mohini finds herself plied with questions on all manner of subjects (Music 150).

Inspired by the rapport created with the women, Mohini plans to give talks to them on India—the past and present, cities, rivers, peoples of the world, the wonders of nature and science, animal life. She sees that she will need books to educate herself first and decides to speak to Jayadev. The exciting idea works. The class assembles under a banyan in the garden. Mohini reads from a newspaper, books and magazines. She shows them pictures, revealing the nature of life and the face of the motherland. What is more, she loves this work (Music 151).

The older ones drop out after a day or two because Mohini's teachings contradict their traditional beliefs like the earth resting on Basuki's head, the sun god retiring from the sky world and going back home to his
spouse in Heaven-land at night and the creator bringing forth different castes from different parts of his body rendering it impossible that all men are born equal.

However, they do not grudge the young mistress her fun of telling fancy stories to the girls and amusing herself. But not all the old peasant women are like that. Ratan's mother, for example, past sixty, longs to know the shape of letters, to learn how to read. She listens spellbound to Mohini and exhorts the younger women to acquire knowledge from Mohini (Music 151).

The change wrought by such communication is profound.

So, around the conservative code of the village, Mohini built something of the city—in spirit... But it was give-and-take. The wall of isolation breached, the grateful women took her into their hearts. Mohini was asked to their festivals, some of which had a deep meaning, others were merely picturesque. In the city the festive days slipped by half-noticed. They were valued mainly as public holidays, a respite for the work-stained spirit. But the village celebrated them all with faith and ritual, as though the birth anniversary of a god was the intimate concern
of Behula. Mohini at once loved the legends, the lore of the Hindu god-world. Until then she had heard only snatches of them from the Old Mother. At many festivals a professional story-teller would present to an eager audience the particular legend for an occasion, building up vivid pictures by word and intonation and song, creating suspense, calling forth laughter and tears. The story-teller's art, cultivated with assiduous care, handed down through the centuries from father to son, was the joy of the whole rural community. Those who could afford the story-teller's fee sponsored it and others crowded up to listen. It was their time honoured privilege to come unasked and to fill their ears with tales from the epics or myths from the puranas wherever they were being told. (Music 151-52)

As the day of the brother anointing ceremony approaches, Ranjan secretly wishes that Mohini would anoint him, but he is too proud to ask her. On the day before, however, Mohini invites his entire gang to the Big House for the ceremony. The boys are excited and wonder what they can give her with their pronam. They decide to give her a blue lotus each. Early next morning
they filch the lotus flowers from a pond belonging to Harindra. At the ceremony Mohini anoints each of the twenty-four boys and blesses each of them with a gift of two silver rupees. Mohini misses her brother Heeralal (Music 152-53).

A battle royal takes shape in Behula around Siva's pond, now known as Crocodile Pool. It belongs to an old shrine at the very centre of the village, in the Brahmin Line. It is the biggest pond in the village. It is believed that years ago, when the river Meghmala burst its banks, an enormous crocodile rode the flood waters, entered the temple and found refuge in the pond. The temple priest maintains that, every night, while the village sleeps, the crocodile emerges from the pond and worships the stone god in the temple. The story spreads that the crocodile is actually a Brahmin devotee of Siva doomed by karma to the form of a crocodile. The story lends sanctity to the pond. Hyacinth carpets the water and the seepage is excellent breeding ground for mosquitoes. Harindra tells the temple priest that the pond must be cleaned and the hyacinth removed. The priest protests against the proposal to annoy the devout one and create commotion in the holy abode. Harindra proposes that Father Crocodile will be sent to a zoo where he will be happier feeding on chunks of goat flesh. The priest is scandalised (Music 154-56).
Harindra plans to clean the pond in a surprise operation mounted on a few nights. Jayadev is not to be told or involved in the campaign at this stage because the time is not yet ripe for Jayadev "to come out of his sanctum and join the forces of progress in an open clash with the reaction." Jayadev can take over the leadership after lesser men like Harindra have won mass backing. Harindra observes that it is lucky for the people that Jayadev "works against his own tradition and class interest." Hearing all this, Mohini is excited and hates not to be a part of it (Music 156-57).

Harindra informs Mohini that her classes for women are so efficacious that the menfolk are getting worried, since they fear that a learned wife is a dangerous creature. Harindra requests Mohini to get Sudha to help her in her work. Mohini notices the caress and the enchantment that Harindra gives the name as he speaks it. But she pleads that Sudha avoids her with determination. Harindra pleads that Sudha has been ill. Mohini protests that it was so even before her illness. Harindra pleads that Sudha is unhappy. He says that since they have made a mess of Sudha's life it is their duty to rebuild it. Mohini wonders if Harindra would marry Sudha, but remembers the caste barrier. They agree that if Jayadev speaks to Sudha, she will relent and help Mohini (Music 157-58).
Harindra's plan to attack the hyacinth in the Crocodile Pool secretly is rendered unnecessary by a curious accident. One day, at dusk, the priest's grandson Bistu is found missing. His daughter fears that the pond has swallowed Bistu. Harindra hears the news and his band swings into action. The hyacinth is pulled up. The work continues through the night with every household sending a lantern, the Big House sending scores of them. Everyone fears that the little boy is inside the crocodile's belly though it is a vegetarian and a saint. At dawn a peasant from a neighbouring village brings Bistu on a donkey. It is learnt that Bistu, going after moths, strayed from Behula and lost his way. He now proudly proclaims that he ate fish in the peasant's house, but his Brahmin mother does not protest. Since no crocodile is found, Harindra asks the priest if he knew that the crocodile was a figment of the imagination. The priest angrily says that the devout crocodile has made himself invisible and moved elsewhere. Harindra senses the dawn of a new day because the hyacinth will never again grow in Behula now that the myth of the devout crocodile has been nailed dead along with a hundred other myths (Music 159-60).

Harindra expects a harsher battle over a more vital issue—over the fundamental right of a man or a woman to choose a mate outside his or her caste. He is
aware of the bitterness and the shock the proposal will cause in Behula and stir it to a mad fury. He, a non-Brahmin, is determined to marry Sudha the Brahmin, whatever Behula may do in reaction. He sees himself as the New Free India because he is aware after dark ages, because he hates all chains. However, he is not sure if Sudha is ready to marry him, accepting the challenge of the future. He has received a few intimations of her interest in him, but his interpretation might be wrong. It could all be mere gratitude because he cured her of her illness. His only hope lies in waking Sudha out of herself, of rousing the woman in her to her destiny. It is possible that she is cut out by circumstances for a social rebel and is waiting for a lead, a direction. Once aware of her strength, Sudha will be a revolutionary force (Music 161-62).

Two years after her marriage, Mohini is still childless. However, one morning she feels sick in the puja room. At once the Mother fetches a bamboo chip and sticks it in Mohini's hair-knot to ward off the powers of evil. She dances attendance upon Mohini, not allowing her to do anything that might imperil her pregnancy. She begins to tell tales of the ancestors of the Big House, all addressed to the forming baby. A week later Ranjan asks Mohini about the bamboo chip
in her hair. Unable to explain it to him, Mohini throws it away. Upon finding the chip gone, the Mother is shocked and pitilessly asks Mohini if she is barren (Music 162-63). Then she tells Mohini:

"Vow to the goddess of births that you'll give her a nose-ring set with pearls when she fulfills your wish. If the nose-ring is not enough, then you must give her something more, something of yourself. You'll cut the skin of your bosom and give her the blood in a lotus-leaf bowl. I, too, shall give my heart's blood and pray for the gift of a grandson... We'll visit the shrine in three months, if need be. (Music 163)

Mohini is terrified. The Mother, who has never spared herself, will not spare others. She asks Meera if barren women have been cured by the virgin goddess. Meera answers in the affirmative, but advises Mohini to go to her city home for a month and rest her troubled mind. But Mohini feels that Behula is her real home. She loves it and she is committed to it and to its people. She speaks to Jayadev about a second wife. He is tickled and hopes that Mohini has sense enough not to believe the horoscope (Music 163-65). Jayadev tells Mohini:
"We're fighting ignorance and superstition, aren't we? We're fighting the false clayfoot gods. They've had their day and now they must quit. . . . Or else the true gods will elude us. . . . I tell you, I'm not going to die soon, Mohini, and I don't need a child whose luck will save me—what a fantastic idea! . . . from the malice of the stars. Mother makes herself unhappy because of her crazy faith. . . . Does she make you unhappy, too?" (Music 165-66)

Mohini cannot bring herself to complain against the Mother to Jayadev. She thinks that she can simply defy the Mother when confronted and ask her to speak to her son. However she is troubled by conflicting influences inside her. Often Father's voice of reason urges, "Do not bow down to such insult. You are the New India. The old orthodox ways have been our yoke, have enslaved us. Let us be free." Old Mother's voice of tradition urges, "How can we live without our past? Time is our earth, the earth which feeds our roots. Faith will not be denied. Give yourself to the goddess with grace, if not with faith!" (Music 166).

One day, irritated by the Mother's scrutinising eyes, Mohini declares that she will never have a baby. The Mother retorts by cursing her and walks away.
Nausea grips Mohini. She mutilates the quilts she has stitched. Again she is seized by nausea (Music 167-69).

One day a snake bites Jayadev in the meadow. It turns out to be a harmless snake which bit him in self-defence when he trod on its tail. The Mother interprets the incident as "Fate's ultimate warning." She is sure that Fate will strike again to kill. Their final hope is the Devi in the shrine. They can afford to wait no longer. She decides that she and Mohini will leave early next day for the temple. She commands Mohini not to tell Jayadev, because he will not let her go. Mohini adds that, after the offering of her blood, she will go away home. The Mother agrees to this (Music 170-71).

Sudha sees the cart carrying Mohini and the Mother. She hurries to the cartman's house as if to buy dried cowdung cake for fuel. She learns from the cartman's wife the purpose of the visit. Reaching her house she thinks that Mohini should be prevented from offering her blood to the virgin-goddess and that, instead, she herself should offer her blood. She hurries towards the Big House. Finding Jayadev alone, she tells him of the mission undertaken by Mohini and the Mother. Jayadev is horrified. He calls for the palanquin, and tells Sudha gratefully to go home. He leaves for the temple (Music 176-77).
Jayadev foresees a clash with his mother, with her iron will and misguided faith:

What, he wondered, had happened to the ancient quest of the Hindus, the quest for _satyam_, _sivam_, _sundaram_—Truth, Goodwill and Beauty? The core, the spiritual content had been choked by centuries of evil overgrowth. Misguided faith burned like a great lamp of oil that gave little light but a great deal of smoke. It was this smoke which was pouring over India, this smoke which made the Big House stifling. Jayadev had long known that the conflict between himself and his mother must one day take real shape. It, too, was part of the wider conflict. Today was the beginning, and Jayadev was unhappy because of his love for his mother and his respect for her feelings. (Music 179)

Jayadev arrives at the temple in the nick of time and stops the sacrifice of Mohini's blood, declaring to his mother,

"We are not slaves of the stars... There is no room in the Big House for crazy beliefs. The village looks to us for ideals and a way of living. The pattern we set is not our
private affair; it carries the strongest social sanction." (Music 179)

When the Mother protests that old beliefs, old morals and old values mean nothing to him, Jayadev retorts:

"Values, Mother? There are values beyond your grasp, since you'll always try to reach them with your reason, never with your feelings. . . . Blind belief shapes your thinking; blind belief cannot make a sentiment." (Music 180)

Jayadev asserts that we are greater than our karma and the Mother, crushed with despair, gives in (Music 180).

However, travelling by the palanquin back to the Big House, the Mother plans to use Sudha to defeat the horoscope (Music 182-83).

The Mother plans to send Mohini away with Jayadev but recall her son through a telegram and then let Sudha have her chance. She has already spoken to Sudha. Sudha is at first horrified and then excited. She protests that this is a shameful plan. The Mother confesses that she is now paying for her earlier deception with her honour, with her very soul. She exhorts Sudha to use her power and save her son's life (Music 183-84). For a moment Sudha remembers Harindra's attachment to her, but then she decides that power and ego are all important to her (Music 184).
Unaware of the threat to her position, Mohini prepares to go home. Ranjan has become withdrawn and refuses to go with her. The day before the journey Mohini faints in the kitchen Harindra attends on Mohini and then speaks to the Mother, who excitedly tells Mohini that she is pregnant. What is more, she is in her third month. The Mother is overjoyed but Mohini lies exhausted in bed (Music 186).

Now the Mother's unprincipled plot against Mohini comes to torture her and she sees her son for what he really is:

His ideas, his point of view, molded [sic] by the new spirit in the land, were different from hers and opposed to them, but they were, nonetheless, true ideals. Right or wrong, he had honest faith in his set of values, his set of tools for improving life. How could she have misjudged him so completely or think him debased? In that moment of insight the mother almost understood her son and, through him, the new revolt, the restless spirit of the new dawn. (Music 187)

Change has to be forced to a certain extent in Music for Mohini. Old Mother has to be pushed every time she needs to change and she resists resolutely every time,
often threatening to go away to the Holy City. She is a devout devotee of tradition. The Father is a modern, but, occasionally, particularly on the occasion of Mohini's wedding, he submits to tradition at least to some extent.

Mohini is a modern girl who finds herself a prisoner of tradition in the Big House at the mercy of the Mother. She bows to tradition for some time, but gradually begins to rebel, starting with perching on a tree branch. She opens the doors and windows of the Big House to let in fresh air, though the Mother will not let the walls be lime-washed.

Caught in the middle of the conflict between his mother and his wife, Jayadev is a strange combination of the old and the new. Their tussle is fraught with ominous rumbles for him, forcing him on to a tight-rope until the moment arrives when he decides to assert his modernity in the temple of the virgin goddess. For Mohini, salvation comes out of surrender and she is gracious and magnanimous towards the Mother in her moment of defeat.

Behula itself witnesses and experiences change, thanks to the youth and their leader Harindra. A good deal of pain and effort is required to bring about the change. Ultimately, however, the forces of change
triumph, killing old myths like Father Crocodile and the supreme efficacy of Ayurvedha and, above all, pointing to the impending death of the myth of Saturn's Eyesore, because Sudha is very likely to get married.

One of the major concerns of Music for Mohini is the need for a change of social outlook and reorientation of social values. So the novel presents many traditional beliefs and practices that have become entrenched in society. Orthodoxy reigns in the sphere of religion with strange vows and offerings being made by devotees. Sudha, Saturn's Eyesore, is a living illustration of exaggerated belief in horoscopes and astrology. Mohini finds herself hampered by several prohibitions in the Big House until Jayadev comes forward to ease her condition. However, there are also admirable traditions in the Big House, like the mistress's keen interest in the health and feeding of the servants and the generosity exhibited during the famine. Chandrasekharan rightly says:

Bhattacharya is not an iconoclast who wants to demolish everything old in order to find room for something new. There is a core of conservatism in his thinking which is proved by the respect he shows for many of our traditional values.... (48)
Music for Mohini presents a world of conventions with discontent brewing beneath the surface. While Mohini battles with tradition quietly the young ruffians are not so circumspect about their rebellion. Their patron Harindra openly rebels against tradition and challenges the priest of the temple in the matter of the pond. He is even ready to challenge the whole village in order to marry Sudha across castes. He is prepared to break Behula. In the process he will also break the myth of Saturn's Eyesore. The novel indicates that modernity is destined to triumph over tradition in due course.

Raizada, in "Bhabani Bhattacharya: Novelist of Social Ferment," suggests that the burden of Music for Mohini seems to be the caution that a country which is caught in the deadly mire of obscurantism, superstitions, rituals and obsolete customs cannot make progress even though it may be free (160). Shyam M. Asnani, in "Form, Technique and Style in Bhabani Bhattacharya's Novels," even says that, in Music for Mohini, "the reformist in Bhattacharya seems to have overshadowed the artist in him" (31). On the contrary, S.K. Desai, in "Bhabani Bhattacharya: The Writer Who Rides a Tiger," says,

One feels that Bhattacharya himself is a little nostalgic about the traditional society which, he knows, has to disappear under the
pressure of the new socio-cultural forces, with which he is intellectually in sympathy. _Music for Mohini_ is a product of a happy tension between nostalgia for the past and an intellectual urge for modernization, the author enjoying the tension in a rather non-serious and relaxed manner. (Music 126)

In "Music for Mohini: A Classic of Flawed Perspective," T. Vinoda asserts that, for all its advocacy of modernism, the novel, at its end, shows Mohini finding fulfilment only in her motherhood (22). Tapan Basu, in "With Grace, if not with Faith," points out that Mohini, at the end of the novel, "has re-established harmony with herself only by bowing to the forces of custom and ceremony," by giving herself to the goddess, as per the advice of the Old Mother, "'with grace if not with faith'" (76).

In "Mohini and the Quaterino of the Feminine Principle," Om P. Sharma says, "Mohini seeking to be close to her husband Jayadev exemplifies the new Indian woman—a movement away from the traditional apotheosis of the woman as mother and as archetypal mother goddess" (129).

In "Tradition versus Modernity in Bhattacharya's 'Music for Mohini'," T. Vasudeva Reddy hails Jayadev's final victory over his mother as "a victory to the New
Age and to its new values, a victory to the purity of the ancient Hindu culture which with the passage of time got polluted with false notions, and ultimately a victory to the harmony of the two cultures" (29). In "Microscope versus Horoscope in Bhattacharya's 'Music for Mohini'," Vasudeva Reddy, commenting on the ending of the novel, says:

"While the old Mother reluctantly comes to terms with the age of microscope and gradually drifts unawares to modernism, thus evincing an imperceptible change, her erudite son, essentially upholding the spirit of the microscope, steadily perceives the reality of the potency of the horoscope and the practical relevance of the old ways and customs to the tradition-bound soil, which eventually heralds a congenial beginning of a social as well as psychological synthesis of horoscope and microscope." (33-34)
Note

All subsequent references to the text of Bhattacharya's novel *Music for Mohini* will be indicated by *Music*, followed by the number(s) of the relevant page(s) in parentheses, the text used being the Vision-Orient Paperbacks edition of 1975, rpt. 1984.